

# College Counseling Newsletter

B O S T O N U N I V E R S I T Y A C A D E M Y

Jill Atkinson, Director of College Counseling  
617.353.9031 jillatk@bu.edu

Ellen Evans, Assistant Director of College Counseling  
617.358.2595 erevans@bu.edu

A new College Counseling  
Newsletter will be posted  
every two weeks

## SUBJECT TESTS

### IMPORTANT DATES

- April 1 @ Noon—  
Submission deadline for  
Fall 2018 Course Regis-  
tration Forms
- April 5—Deadline to  
register for May 4 SAT  
or Subject Tests
- April 28—Juniors are  
invited (and **strongly  
encouraged**) to attend a  
BISCCA College Fair.  
Two options (same  
colleges will be repre-  
sented at both): 1)  
Milton Academy from  
1:00-2:30, or 2) Merr-  
imack College from 5:00  
-6:30pm.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Senior Parent Section  
Page 2

Junior Parent Section  
Page 3

Sophomore/Freshman Parent Section  
Page 4

Students can sit for SAT Sub-  
ject Tests (many colleges re-  
quire two Subject Tests for  
admission, in addition to the  
SAT; Georgetown strongly rec-  
ommends sending three) on  
May 4 (register by April 6) or  
June 1 (register by May 3).

Generally, freshmen and soph-  
omores will take between 0  
and 2 Subject Tests in June,  
while juniors may divide 1 to 3  
tests between May and June.

Students in the following clas-  
ses should consider taking  
specific Subject Tests:

**Physics**—students who enjoy  
physics can consider the Phys-  
ics test following a discussion  
with Dr. Taylor or Dr. Bain.

**Chemistry**—students who enjoy  
Chemistry should consider the  
Chemistry test following a dis-

ussion with Ms. Perrone.

**Latin II or III**—students who  
enjoy Latin should consider  
the Latin Subject Test after  
talking with their BUA Latin  
teacher.

**Pre-Calculus, Calculus, MA  
90/95**—students who are in  
one of these classes who are  
at all interested in math, sci-  
ence or engineering as a po-  
tential major should consider  
taking the Math 1 or Math 2  
Subject Test. Talk with a math  
teacher or a college counselor  
about options. Many Academy  
students take the Math 1 or  
Math 2 test in sophomore or  
junior year (freshmen are gen-  
erally not advised to take it).

**Junior English**—Students who  
are strong in English should  
consider taking the Literature

test at the end of the junior  
year. The test does not de-  
pend on familiarity with any  
specific texts, but the course  
rigor of junior year helps pre-  
pare for the type of thinking  
the test demands.

Academy students often con-  
sider taking US History, Biolo-  
gy, or a Language-specific  
Subject Test. Our experience is  
that students need to do out-  
side preparation for all of the  
tests, but even more so for  
Biology or History tests.

Students should plan on tak-  
ing 2 or 3 Subject Tests by the  
end of Junior Year, and only in  
subjects in which they feel  
confident. The College Board  
website has sample questions  
for all Subject Tests. Please  
see us for individual guidance.

## MARCH SAT SCORES

The College Board plans to  
post March SAT scores online  
beginning March 22.

We will ask juniors to check  
their scores and share them  
with us privately. We actively  
discourage the sharing of  
scores. We will work with each  
student to assess how their

scores fit within the context of  
their own admission process.

We will provide guidance  
about how scores may match  
ranges for the colleges stu-  
dents are considering. Scores  
are not “good” or “bad”, rather  
they are competitive (or less  
so) for their own college list.

March was the first SAT for  
most juniors. This ‘baseline’  
score will inform a student of  
where they stand and if further  
tests might be advisable.

NOTE: The deadline to register  
for the June 1st SAT is May 2.,

VISITING CAMPUSES IN APRIL

Most every college hosts special visit events in April for admitted students. Sometimes these events take place on the weekend, but sometimes they are scheduled on weekdays in order to offer students a chance to visit classes.

Students should be judicious choosing which Visit Days/Open Houses to attend (if any) and when to visit before the May 1 enrollment dead-

line. Students must work with their instructors (at BU and BUA) about potential missed classes and must request permission well in advance of missing a class. Missed work must be made up, and missing a class on a test date should be avoided!

Students may not be able to get to more than 2 or 3 campuses for visits/re-visits in April, so many will face some tough decisions about where

to prioritize their energies.

Campus visits/re-visits are a great way to inform a final decision (even if it is not possible to attend one of the special visit programs). Your child can meet faculty, potential future classmates, and current students, and sometimes colleges "feel" different after a student is admitted, when the worry about their admissibility is no longer in question.

College Decision News

By April 1st, seniors will receive decisions from most if not all of their colleges. If your child has not heard by this date, please let us know and we can work with a college about their notification schedule. Students should pass along decisions to us within 24 hours of receipt for our record-keeping.

College Counseling Newsletter

WAIT-LISTS

If your child was offered a spot on a college's wait-list, please encourage them to come see us for guidance. Your child has the option of staying on a wait-list or opting out altogether.

If your child wants to stay on a wait-list, we have some advice and strategies that might help your child get a close look IF space becomes available at a

college. Please note that colleges generally will not be able to admit students from the wait-list until after May 1, so students should invest in - and enroll at - one school to which s/he has already been admitted.

The wait-list process can spill into July and may necessitate some targeted and specific outreach by your child: writing

a letter of continued interest, soliciting an extra recommendation, outreach to an admission representative, etc.

We will also advocate once again for your child where possible, so it is imperative they keep us in the loop about their decisions, priorities and thought process. Please let us know if you have any questions.

FINANCIAL AID

If your child is receiving financial aid from a college, there are a few numbers to keep in mind. As financial aid packages can all be structured and conveyed differently, it can be hard to compare apples to apples.

Bottom line—compare the "balance due" for each college. How much will it cost

out of pocket each year for your child to enroll at each college AND what is the loan amount your family is being asked to secure each year? Keep in mind that loan expectations sometimes go up from year to year (as does the cost of attendance!).

Please do not hesitate to be in touch with financial aid

officers with questions about the package, or to ask if there is any wiggle room. Connect with us if you need support in preparing for those phone calls, as we may help direct your efforts a bit.

College is a HUGE investment, and it's important to know all the numbers and costs up front.

Graduation Reminder

Graduation is only about two months away!!!

Seniors should be wrapping up community service hours (and logging them!), making sure their theses are in good shape, returning any over-due library books, and working hard in each class.

# JUNIOR PARENTS

## SPRING COLLEGE FAIRS

There are two upcoming college fairs open to BUA students. All juniors are STRONGLY encouraged to attend one of the April 21st college fairs. College representatives are asked to attend both sessions. College fairs are easy (and inexpensive!) ways to learn about colleges, get on mailing lists, show interest in a college, and meet the representative who might read the applications from New England or Boston area schools.

**Sunday, April 21 (Sunday)**  
 1:00-2:30pm @ Milton Academy OR 5:00-6:30pm @ Merrimack College

150+ highly selective colleges and universities (from *outside* New England) - domestic and international - will be in attendance. ***This fair is specifically for Boston-area independent school juniors***, and it is a busy one! Juniors and their parents are STRONGLY encouraged to attend.

**April 4 (Thursday)**  
**6:00-8:30pm**  
 Hosted by the National Association for College Admission Counseling  
 Location: Seaport World Trade Center, 200 Seaport Blvd.

Over 300 colleges from around the world will be on hand to meet with students. This is a VERY BUSY and large college fair, so come with patience and stamina.

[Pre-registration required](#)

## COURSE REGISTRATION FORMS

It is time to for juniors to select courses for the fall of senior year!

Juniors must submit their course registration forms to the College Office by Monday, April 1st @ noon. These forms require signatures from a parent/guardian, an advisor, and a college counselor, so it's important not to wait until the last minute.

Rising seniors must pick four

courses for the Fall semester; their fifth class is their senior thesis seminar.

All seniors must take an English class each semester, finish Calculus by the end of the year and leave room in their schedule for All-School Meeting. Otherwise, rising seniors have more flexibility in choosing their classes and determining the shape of their schedule than ever before.

In meetings with advisors and the college counselors, students will be advised about time commitments, rigor of courses, and the potential impact on college applications.

Ultimately, we want students to select courses in which they are truly interested and in which they feel they can do well. Again, forms are due by April 1st at noon to the College Office.

## COLLEGE ESSAY TOPICS

We have asked all juniors to brainstorm three potential college essay topics and write a paragraph for each topic outlining the content of the essay. This can be completed through the Naviance journal and is due April 1st.

From these three initial topics, we will work with students on developing one or two potential college essay ideas that they

should consider developing.

Please keep in mind that we have each read THOUSANDS of college essays and have a clear sense of topics to avoid, writing styles that work (and don't work), and what aspects of themselves a student may want to get across in an essay. The essay is arguably the most time consuming piece of the college application process for

most students; we put a lot of thought into our feedback to kids about their essay drafts.

When they return this fall, all seniors will submit to us a rough draft of their college essay. By mid-September, they are expected to have completed their college essay, at which point we move on to filling out actual college applications.

### Upcoming Junior Meeting Topics

On March 21st, Jeremy Weprich, Assistant Director of Admissions at MIT, met with our students to discuss the personal statement. He shared great tips and advice on presenting themselves through the essay.

In upcoming meetings we'll be discussing:

- teacher recommendations - each junior will work with us to select two Academy teachers to write rec letters for college applications. In rare instances, students might also ask a BU professor to write on their behalf, but only after working with us on whether that is appropriate.
- extra-curricular activities, resumes, and communicating involvement to colleges

### Spring Standardized Test Dates for Juniors

**SAT (with essay) or Subject Tests**  
 May 4 & June 1

**ACT (with essay)**  
 April 13, June 8 & July 13

## SOPHOMORE PARENTS

SAT Subject Tests are offered on May 4th & June 1st. In most cases, sophomores will sit for 0-2 Subject Tests in June. Students doing very well in Latin III, pre-calculus, or chemistry are good candidates for the Latin, Math II, or Chemistry exams. Recently, we spoke with the sophomore class about the SAT Subject Tests and followed up with information via email. If students wish to take a test, they must register online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). The tests are not offered at BUA, therefore students will take Subject Tests at a testing site close to home (usually the local public high school). All tests taken through the College Board are eligible for review by colleges in their admission processes, so students should sign up for Subject Tests for which they feel well prepared. Many colleges require students to submit two Subject Test scores with an application for admission; we encourage students to sit for these tests at the end of the year in which they took the class.

## FALL 2019 COURSE REGISTRATION FORMS

Course registration forms are due by April 1st at Noon. All sophomores will submit the form to the College Counseling Office, with signatures from a parent/guardian and their advisor. Those who wish to enroll in the optional HAL or STEM seminars must submit the signed form to Dr. White. Most rising juniors will sign up for Biology 107 and for a language at BU; if a student is considering an alternate path, they are strongly encouraged to seek us out for a conversation first. Depending on their language background, a student may need to take an online language placement test in advance of selecting a language course at BU.

All students must, of course, take English each and every semester and successfully complete calculus to satisfy BUA graduation requirements.

Encourage your child to stop by our office with questions.

## MID-SEMESTER GRADES

Mid-semester grade reports will soon be available. As with past reports, each academic course at the Academy will be listed with the teacher's name, mid-term letter grade, a brief summary of course material covered thus far, and an update on your child's progress in the course.

BUA creates these reports four times per year (mid-October, early January, late-March, mid-June). Each includes the grade progression (mid-term, final exams, semester grades) and updated comments.

These comments and mid-term grades will not be sent out to colleges. Colleges will only see final grades (year-end grades for year-long courses; semester grades for semester-long courses like MA 90 or MA 95 and BU courses). In fact, the transcripts we send out to colleges take on an entirely different form than the grade reports we send home now.

## FRESHMAN PARENTS

Please review the grade reports carefully, and feel free to connect with your child's advisor with any questions. Advisor meetings will take place officially on April 2nd and 4th at the Academy. Your conversations with advisors and teachers will be helpful in terms of figuring out ways to help support your child with any challenges they are facing in their school work.

For many first-year students, these grade reports are a bit of a wake-up call. Grading expectations here are tough, and our faculty has high expectations for incoming students. That being said, our faculty members encourage students to meet with them when questions arise and to take advantage of Academic Blocks as an opportunity to improve performance. They also offer guidance and direction to help support students.

If your child is worried about his or her performance in a class, they may want to seek out a

peer tutor through Dr. White. Peer tutors are upper-class students trained in teaching methods to help students improve in their classes. In some cases, just having a dedicated amount of time each week to work with a peer advisor helps improve performance.

Twice each semester, the faculty gather to specifically discuss individual students, collaborate on strategies to help support them, and learn from each other about successes or challenges a student might be experiencing. These meetings coincide with mid-semester grade reports and parent/advisor meetings.

Our goal is to make sure each student is appropriately supported in our program, and that feedback is offered to families in a consistent fashion.

**Contact us with questions about the Language Pilot Program. 9th graders must submit their applications to Dr. White by Noon on 4/11**