

# 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

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Check out BUA's comprehensive [College Admission Guidebook!](#)

## A M I B E I N G R E C R U I T E D ? ? ?

### IMPORTANT DATES

- April 5—deadline to register for May 4 SAT or Subject Tests
- April 28th—Juniors should attend a BISCCA College Fair at Milton Academy (1:00) OR Merrimack College (5:30)
- May 1—Date by which seniors must make an enrollment deposit to one college
- May 4—SAT or Subject Tests offered
- May 3—Registration deadline for June 1st SAT or Subject Tests
- May 20—BUA Commencement!!!
- June 1—SAT or Subject Tests offered

Across grade levels, high school students are receiving countless promotional materials from colleges eager to get students interested in their programs. These mailings may be paper-based, showing up in droves at your home address. Or they may be electronic, filling email inboxes with constant communications.

Once a student takes the PSAT, the SAT, or a Subject Test, their name and address may be made available to colleges. And colleges are savvy marketers to teenagers as they clamor for attention in a crowded market for students.

So here are a few words of wisdom as your child ponders what to do with this sudden popularity:

1. The college likely knows nothing about your child apart from his/her name & mailing address. In some cases, they may know that a student scored within a certain range on a test—but they will not know the actual test score. Because the university hasn't yet seen your child's transcript, rec letters, application or essay, these communications don't mean your child is being 'recruited'. It means the school is casting a wide net for prospective applicants.
2. Because most of the information they receive is available on a school's website, students can ignore the vast majority of these mailings. However, students may want to hold on to a few pieces of "intriguing" marketing to learn about how colleges distinguish themselves from each other, about specific departments or programs of interest, or about events for prospective students.
3. Colleges may offer online 'quizzes' to determine a student's interests. Taking the quiz usually equates to more mail.

Caution your child to look through the mail but to not obsess over it. They should stop by the College Counseling Office with any questions about what the mail means and how to make sense of it all.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE :

Senior Parent Section  
Page 2

Junior Parent Section  
Page 3

Sophomore/Freshman Parent Section  
Page 4

## T H E M Y T H O F S C O R E C H O I C E

The College Board offers a program called "Score Choice" which allows students to choose which scores they submit to colleges as part of an application for admission. However, there are limitations and rules in place that make this more restrictive than one might think.

Some colleges, in fact, do not use Score Choice, so students will still be required to submit ALL of their SAT and Subject Test scores to at least some of the colleges on their list. Yes, most colleges will focus on the highest scores (for each Subject Test, and on each section of the SAT), but colleges care

very much about how many times a student takes the SAT (in most cases, no more than 2 or 3 times!), and whether or not students take Subject Tests (and which ones). Please only encourage your child to sign up for tests for which they can be thoughtfully prepared.

VISITING CAMPUSES IN APRIL

Most colleges host special programs for admitted students in April. Some take place on the weekend, but some are scheduled on weekdays in order to incorporate classes into the day.

Students should be judicious in planning which campuses to visit (or re-visit) with the May 1 enrollment deposit date in mind. Students must work with their instructors (at BU and BUA) about any po-

tential missed classes, gaining permission well in advance and making up any missed work. And parents— **please call BUA's front desk to report a planned absence.**

NOTE: Missing class on a test date is not recommended!

Students may not be able to visit or re-visit every campus to which they've been accepted, so it may be necessary to prioritize options and energy.

If a student cannot visit on a scheduled visit program, they may work with the Admission Office to schedule a visit on a day that works for them.

Campus visits are effective in informing final decisions, for meeting faculty, current students, and potential classmates. A campus can feel much different once a student goes from 'applicant' to 'admitted' student!

Transferring College Credit

Colleges vary on how much (if any) BU credit can be transferred and how it may be used. Students are encouraged to reach out to those colleges to which they've been accepted to inquire. The College Counseling page of the BUA website has [more information](#) regarding transferring BU credits.

College Counseling Newsletter

WAIT LISTS

If your child received one or more Wait List decisions, please encourage them to come see us ASAP! Not an admit, but certainly NOT a denial, a WL decision can feel confusing. If your child wants to stay on a Wait List, they must first 'opt in' by following the school's instructions. We can provide advice and strategies that might help your child

get a close look IF space becomes available at a college.

Most colleges will not admit students from the Wait List until around—and more likely **after**—May 1, so by that date students should invest in (and enroll at) a school to which they have been admitted.

The Wait List process can drag into June and may ne-

cessitate some targeted, specific outreach on your child's behalf: letter writing, recommendation gathering, etc. We will also advocate once again for your child with certain colleges, so it is important that we be kept in the loop about the process.

Please let us know if you have any questions about how Wait Lists work.

WRAPPING UP AT BUA

Seniors should keep in mind that the graduation requirements of senior year include:

- ◆ Passing their courses (including AND especially Calculus and English!)
- ◆ Completing/Passing Thesis
- ◆ Fulfilling the Community Service requirement

In the vast majority of cases, we see students tackle these requirements head on and with much success. But occasionally, we see students forget to log community service hours, or prioritize things ahead of English papers or Math homework.

We are actively connecting with students and families

when we think that a student may be in danger of not completing one of the graduation requirements. We want all of our seniors to graduate, successfully completing their tenure at the Academy.

Please check in with your child about these requirements, and be in touch with any questions.

Graduation Reminder

Graduation is only about seven weeks away!!!

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

# JUNIOR PARENTS

## SPRING COLLEGE FAIRS

College fairs are easy, inexpensive ways to research and show interest in colleges and meet representatives who may read your child’s application.

There are many area college fairs each spring, but one is particularly important for BUAs. BISCCA (Boston Independent School College Counselors Association) sponsors an annual fair, and BUA juniors are strongly encouraged to attend one of the two sites that

day. (The colleges who participate will be present at both locations.)

**April 28—BISCCA Fair Milton Academy (1:00) OR Merrimack College (5:30)**  
*Over 150 highly selective colleges (from outside New England) typically attend to meet with Boston-area independent school juniors only. Registration not required.*

Other local fairs include:  
**NACAC National College Fair**

**(April 4, 6:00-8:30pm, Seaport World Trade Center).** A MASSIVE fair, which requires some pre-planning and pre-registration:

[www.nacacfairs.org/boston](http://www.nacacfairs.org/boston).

**Colleges That Change Lives Fair (May 18 10am-Noon, Sheraton Boston Hotel <http://ctcl.org/info-sessions/>.** Pre-registration is not required. CTCL is a non-profit organization that stems from Loren Pope’s popular book of the same title.

**Junior Meeting summary**

- **There was no junior meeting on Thursday, April 4th**
- **Friday, April 5:**  
 Three potential college essay/personal statement topics due via Naviance journal entry
- Next up, we will invite the seniors to talk to our juniors and provide tips and guidance on navigating the senior year, college applications and senior thesis. We will also offer juniors the opportunity to do a mock interview with us in April and May as they practice for college interviews.

## LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

All juniors will work with the college counselors to identify two Academy teachers to write letters of recommendation for college applications. Later this week, we will send out more detailed information.

In thinking over their various options, juniors are advised to review the teacher recommendation requirements for some of the colleges they are considering. For example, some col-

leges require that students only ask junior and senior year teachers to write. Others ask for one humanities and one math/science recommender. Others ask that recommendations not come from foreign language teachers.

In most cases, though, colleges simply ask for 1 or 2 letters from high school teachers of the student’s choice.

We work with the juniors and

with their Academy teachers to identify matches, while fulfilling application requirements.

After a conversation with Ms. Evans or Ms. Michelman, students should ask their two teachers and return the signed Teacher Recommendation Form to the College Office by the end of the day on April 26, 2019.

## STANDARDIZED TEST PHILOSOPHY

By the end of junior year, we encourage each student to have taken: the SAT or ACT (no more than twice), and at least two Subject Tests. The general timeline most will follow is:

- SAT in March (or ACT in April, June or July)
- Subject Tests in May and/or June.

There are test dates in the fall (August, October, November for SAT; September and December for ACT) students can use to re-take a test or complete additional testing requirements needed before applying to college. *Generally*, any test taken through the early November date can be considered for Early Decision or Early Action applications, though

there are some exceptions.

Students should continue to discuss their testing plans with us, as we are happy to provide advice and counsel about the SAT, ACT and Subject Tests and when to take them.

As the fall is a VERY BUSY time, we want students to focus on completing a first round of testing this spring.

**Spring College Board Test Dates for Juniors**

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

**ACT (with optional essay)**  
 June 8  
 July 13

## SOPHOMORE PARENTS

SAT Subject Tests are offered on May 4th and June 1st. Sophomores may sit for 0 to 2 Subject Tests on the June test date. Students doing very well in Latin III, pre-calculus, or chemistry are good candidates for the Latin, Math II, or Chemistry exams. Earlier this semester, we discussed SAT Subject Tests with sophomores and posted info to their class conference. Students must register online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) for each test they wish to take. The tests are not offered at BUA. Students must 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 only sign up for Subject Tests for which they feel prepared and confident. 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.

## A D V I S O R M A T C H I N G

Each spring, sophomores are asked to complete a brief survey indicating their preferences for junior/senior year advisors. There is a cadre of Academy adults who advise junior and senior students. These adults are well-versed in the University component of our program and often have direct connections to the thesis program. In the next few weeks, Stacey (Sherpe) Weiskopf will work with the faculty to make advising connections between rising juniors and the upper-class advisors.

Once the matches have been made, we encourage sophomores to reach out to their advisors to say "hello!" and to learn about how the advising program works in the junior year. There is, to a greater extent than sophomore year, an expectation that juniors and seniors are more pro-active about connecting with advisors, and there is built-in time in the weekly schedule to allow for those connections.

## T H E P H Y S I C S S U B J E C T T E S T

Earlier this semester, we talked with BUA freshmen about Subject Tests. For most ninth graders at BUA, the only subject they would likely take would be Physics.

Our strong preference is that all Academy students take at least two Subject Tests by the end of junior year. Because Subject Tests are subject-specific, this year makes sense as the time for freshman to consider the Physics test. And many colleges require two Subject Tests as part of a college application.

**NOT ALL FRESHMAN SHOULD TAKE THE PHYSICS TEST**, though. Because colleges may see all test scores a student receives, we really do encourage that only certain students consider the Physics test.

## FRESHMAN PARENTS

Students should consider the Physics test if:

1. Dr. Bain or Dr. Taylor think they are a good candidate for it.
2. They have earned strong grades in the Physics class.
3. They are strongly considering a math/science/engineering program in college.
4. They are committed to doing some kind of preparation ahead of the test date.

The ideal test date for the Physics Subject test is Saturday, June 1. BUA ninth graders will already be preparing for the BUA Physics final exam, and preparing for one test will help them prepare for the other.

Students must register for the test by May 3 by establishing an account at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org). This account will follow them throughout their high school years for future Subject Tests and for the SAT, so it is

important that students remember their log-in information.

Some of our students take the Physics Subject Test in the fall of senior year to coincide with Physics at the University. So for talented science students, there is often another chance to take the test.

The College Board website provides an overview of concepts covered on each Subject test, as well as practice questions and sample tests.

There are twenty-one different Subject Tests; students have plenty of opportunities to select tests that match their strengths, so students should not take the Physics test unless it is a good match for their talent and interests.

Next year, we will talk with students about the possibility of taking the Chemistry and/or Latin tests. Upon their completion of Pre-Calculus, students might consider taking Math II.