



Admissions AcademySM

Admissions Academy Parent Newsletter January 2009

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University of Denver

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To our Admissions Academy Parents,

Happy new year! Fall semester is drawing to a close, if it hasn't already, and it's time to turn our focus to the spring semester and upcoming summer. What sorts of issues are at hand?

Without question, one of the most significant topics of concern is standardized testing. Between the SAT Reasoning Test, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, AP exams, and/or spring finals, there could be a lot of testing in the months ahead! We've discussed test planning to help you navigate some of the larger issues, although we also always encourage our families to talk to us about their unique concerns or questions.

We've also included information about the intercollegiate athletic process, as spring semester is the right time for juniors to begin thinking about their NCAA future in earnest, and information about financial aid, which is a relevant topic to families throughout the collegebound process.

We hope you find this month's newsletter helpful as we kick off the new year together!

Best wishes,

The Admissions Academy Team

Mark Your Calendars Now!

SAT Reasoning / Subject Test Dates

www.collegeboard.com

ACT Test Dates

www.act.org

As a reminder, the SAT/ACT test dates and registration deadlines available this spring are quickly coming up.

The next exams will be offered in the fall, beginning with the September ACT and October SAT.

Some of our students are still interested in trying to take a spring test, while others are planning on studying for the fall exams during the summer. If you need help with any of these topics or issues, definitely let us know!

There is no greater compliment than enrolling new students based on the testimony of families. As a token of our gratitude, any individual listed as a referral on a counseling student's enrollment form receives a \$50 thank you gift from Admissions Academy.

Standardized Test Planning – How to know when you're ready?

Taking the SAT

Juniors have the opportunity to take the SAT in January, March, May and June. But how will you know when you are ready? For starters, it's important to schedule the exam during a convenient time. Avoid cramming the SAT in between academic deadlines, AP tests, or time-consuming extracurricular activities.

Each time you take the SAT, your exam results will appear on your official record. If you plan on taking the SAT more than once, spread out the test dates to allow yourself time to collect your previous scores and to study. Retaking the test multiple times in quick succession is unlikely to translate into a substantial score increase.

Another way to determine if you are ready is by measuring how well you did on the PSAT. If you hope to score higher on the SAT than you did on the PSAT, then you know you need additional studying before taking the exam.

Here are some options available to students to help them prepare:

Classes – Check with your high school to determine if there are any on-campus test prep courses or workshops available. Sometimes these classes are taught on campus, other times they are taught in a center.

One-on-One tutoring – When students meet individually with a tutor, their sessions are customized to their academic needs and abilities. For many students, this individual structure works well, allowing them to focus on areas of weakness and target their prep efficiently.

Self-Prepare – With an abundance of online and print resources, many students opt to purchase online tutorials, books, CD's or guides to help them prepare for their exams. Kaplan, Princeton Review, and Barron's are among the most popular self-prep materials, and the College Board itself publishes an Official Guide to the SAT.

Many students mix and match their preparation from several resources, perhaps taking a class for their first exam and reviewing with a tutor if they take it a second time. And while self-preparation is certainly the most cost-effective option, many students find it challenging to be diligent in self-preparation alongside academic and extracurricular commitments during junior year.

Question to ask

Ask yourself the following questions before determining if you're ready to take the SAT:

- Have you taken the PSAT and/or practice tests, and are you satisfied with your score?
- Have you identified your strengths and weaknesses and prepared to the best of your ability, typically for about 2-4 months?
- Have you taken, or are you taking, math through Algebra 2?
- Have you selected a test date with minimal academic and/or extracurricular conflicts to ensure that you are well-rested and mentally prepared?

The ACT as an alternative

The ACT, like the SAT, is also offered year-round. One advantage to the ACT is that, unlike the SAT, students may submit their best single score to colleges, rather than having to report every test.

Beyond the standardized test prep advice for the SAT, students should familiarize themselves specifically with the content and format of the ACT test. In addition, students and parents should know that although the ACT is gaining in popularity in California, it can still be difficult to find reputable ACT classes or tutors.

Students who are considering the ACT should visit <http://www.acustudent.org> to learn more about the exam and view real sample questions for the test.



Helpful Hints: *When and What to Take?*

Which test better suits your student's learning style?

While one test is not "easier" than another, students often find they're more comfortable with one particular exam. Have your student take timed diagnostics to see if one test may be a better fit.

Should students plan to take both the SAT and ACT?

Because each exam is an intense testing experience, students typically should focus on ONE test, especially since other factors like academics and extracurricular activities are more important than a student's standardized test scores. Students interested in pursuing both the SAT and ACT should be familiar with both the content and format of each exam.

What about SAT Subject Tests?

While subject test requirements vary from college to college, most students will take TWO SAT Subject tests to satisfy the UC requirement. Students should play to their strengths, choosing from: English Literature, US History, World History, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math Level 1, Math Level 2, and foreign language tests. While the UC's do not require that students take Math, students considering Math should take the Level 2 exam, as UC's will not accept scores from the Math Level 1 test.

Student Athletes – Register and Recruit

If you are a high school athlete who is interested in becoming a college student-athlete, there are two critical steps to begin the process. The first step is registering with the NCAA Eligibility Center (formerly the NCAA Clearinghouse). The second is understanding that recruiting is about self-advocacy, and is as much your job as it is the coaches’.

STEP ONE: Register

What is the Eligibility Center?

NCAA colleges, regardless of division, require that all prospective student-athletes meet minimum academic standards in order to participate in college athletics. The Eligibility Center independently evaluates a student’s transcripts and standardized test scores to determine if he/she meets the NCAA’s minimum requirements. Typically, students interested in competing at NCAA Division I or II institutions must register with the Eligibility Center.

Registration - Complete the Student Release Form

Once you’ve determined you want to play sports in college, register with the NCAA Eligibility Center, typically during your junior year. To register, complete the Student Release Form and amateurism questionnaire online and send the Eligibility Center the registration fee. The Student Release Form authorizes each high school you have attended to send your academic history, proof of graduation and other necessary information. It also authorizes the Eligibility Center to send your information to colleges that request your eligibility status.

Visit <https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/common/>, select Prospective Student-Athletes, and follow the instructions to complete the Student Release Form.

How do I send my standardized test scores to the Eligibility Center?

When you register to take the SAT or ACT, mark code “9999” as one of your score recipients. The Eligibility Center will not accept test scores reported on high school transcripts.

What if I am interested in a Division III school?

Division III does not require that students use the Eligibility Center, although some Division III colleges and universities do request that students complete this information anyway. Talk to your colleges about their policies and requirements.

STEP TWO: Recruiting

The second step in becoming a college student-athlete is to focus on recruiting. College coaches follow hectic schedules, and because of dead periods and time constraints, you may not always receive a response in a timely manner. Do not get discouraged. Instead, become your own advocate. Take control by recruiting yourself to colleges you are interested in.

Write a letter of introduction to coaches that summarizes your accomplishments and what you can bring to their college team, including a resume with relevant statistics and brief DVD/video that highlights your ability and skills. Talk to your current coach to see if he/she knows the coaches at colleges you are considering and can help advocate on your behalf. If you will be playing in a camp or tournament, let college coaches know in advance in case they can visit you on site. Or, if a particular coach from a college you are interested in is hosting a camp, sign up for that camp. By doing this, the coach will see you in action and get to know you personally. One of the most important aspects of recruiting is that you are seen by coaches and recruiters – and the best way to get seen is to let them know where and when you will be playing.

Each college sport and division has specific recruiting guidelines governing where, when, and how much contact a coach may have with you. Spend time familiarizing yourself with <http://www.ncaastudent.org>, where you can download an official copy of the NCAA’s Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete.

Remember to talk to your current coach – ask him/her to help you create a recruiting strategy. Have them evaluate your skills to determine what type of division best suits your ability, and let them know what colleges you are considering.

Last but not least, don’t put off recruiting until senior year. College coaches are typically able to support only a limited number of applicants each year, and many coaches will press their top-choice recruits to apply Early Action or Early Decision, if available. The longer you wait, the less likely coaches may be able to help you in the admissions process.



Recommended Reading

The Athletic Recruiting and Scholarship Guide

by Wayne Mazzoni

This book helps students and parents understand important topics in athletic recruiting, including:

- Determining which colleges are the best fit for the student, regardless of athletics
- Learning which of these schools have sports programs that fit your individual interests and abilities
- Understanding the rules of recruiting and learning about recruiting from the coach’s perspective
- Understanding academic eligibility and amateurism requirements
- Brainstorming questions to ask players and coaches to help you understand different athletic programs

Financial Aid – Helpful Terms to Know and Use

Navigating through the financial aid process can at times feel foreign. Here are some definitions for common financial aid jargon:

FAFSA – The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is required by all state universities and some private colleges. The FAFSA is available after January 1st from <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

CSS Profile – The College Scholarship Service PROFILE is required by many private colleges to determine eligibility for an institution's own grants, loans, and scholarships. The PROFILE determines financial need differently than the FAFSA, taking into account factors such as whether your family owns a home. The PROFILE is available in the fall from <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp>.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) – EFC is the amount of money that parents and students are expected to be able to contribute to the cost of a college education. The EFC depends on a number of factors, including the student's dependency status, family size, number of family members in college, taxable and nontaxable income, and assets.

Financial Need – Need is defined as the difference between the cost of attendance and a family's EFC. Need-based financial aid will cover some to all of this amount.

Need-Blind – Some private colleges use a need-blind admissions process, meaning that the school will make an offer of admission to a student without considering the student's financial situation. There is no admissions advantage or disadvantage in applying for aid.

Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) – Federal PLUS loans are available to parents of dependent undergraduate students. Parents may borrow up to the full cost of their son/daughter's education, minus the amount of other aid received.

Subsidized Loan – A federal loan for which the government pays the interest while a student is in school or during any deferment periods. Subsidized loans are awarded based on financial need.

Unsubsidized Loan – A federal loan for which the student is responsible for the interest, not the principal, even while the student is in school. Unsubsidized loans are may or may not be based on financial need.

CAL Grants – CAL Grants are need-based aid, up to \$9,700 a year, that can be used at any qualifying California college, university or career or technical school.

Work-Study – Federal work-study is a form of need-based aid to support undergraduate students who wish to work part-time in college.

Families can visit <http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov> to start the financial aid planning process even before the FAFSA is available. Get an early estimate of eligibility for federal aid, become familiar with different types of aid, and complete preliminary FAFSA information that can later be transferred to the official FAFSA application.



Mythbusters The TRUTH About Financial Aid

Myth: I won't qualify for financial aid so I shouldn't bother filling out the FAFSA.

Truth: Just because you may not qualify for need-based grants or scholarships doesn't mean that you won't qualify for something. Completing the FAFSA only takes a few hours. Even an unsubsidized loan typically has more favorable terms than an equivalent loan from a bank, plus students don't have to pay back the principal while they are in school. In addition, some jobs on campus give priority to students who qualify for federal work-study. The bottom line is that it can't hurt to try.

Remember – the FAFSA has to be completed annually. If your family's EFC changes from one year to the next, you might be eligible for different, and more favorable, financial aid packages in the future.



Admissions Academy Community Outreach

At Admissions Academy, we are proud to share our advice and expertise with the entire Peninsula community - including local families, businesses, and organizations - and serve as a comprehensive resource throughout the college application process. For almost ten years now, Admissions Academy has been partnering with local organizations and individuals to offer free educational seminars to local families. The seminars are an invaluable tool in educating the community about topics in and around college admissions, such as the academic record, standardized testing, the extracurricular profile, essays, and financial aid. Our experienced staff works to meet the needs of each audience, from seminar content to location and timing. If you would like to learn more about hosting a college admissions seminar at your home or business, please contact Admissions Academy at paloalto@admissionsacademy.com or 650-463-5530.

College Spotlight

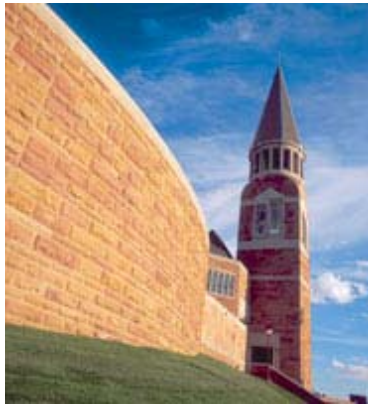
University of

Denver



<http://www.du.edu>

Denver, CO



Quick Facts:

Established: 1864

Campus size: 125 acres

Undergrad Enrollment: 5,285

Faculty: 575

Student/Faculty Ratio: 10:1



Student Life:

Male/Female Ratio: 45/55

Campus Living: DU is a residential campus, as most freshmen and sophomores are required to live on campus. There are more than 100 student organizations, including academic honor societies, Greek life, and professional and service organizations.

Athletics: NCAA Division I, 17 varsity sports. Men's sports: basketball, golf, ice hockey, lacrosse, skiing, soccer, swimming and diving, tennis. Women's sports: basketball, golf, gymnastics, lacrosse, skiing, soccer, swimming and diving, tennis, volleyball. 30 club sports and the Alpine Club. 22 intramural sports.

Academics:

Degree Programs: 12 bachelor's degrees in over 100 programs of study, as well as interdisciplinary and dual degree programs.

Undergraduate Divisions: Arts and Humanities, Business, Engineering and Computer Science, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Social Sciences, Pre-professional Areas

Students at DU will gain the foundation of their education through rigorous and challenging liberal arts course work. The individual academic departments will then provide the advanced training and applied learning that DU students will need to prepare for their career or moving on to post-graduate education.

College Highlights:

More than 40 specialized research centers and institutes in a wide range of disciplines are housed at the University of Denver. The University annually receives about \$13 million in sponsored research support in the areas of biology, genetics, atmospheric sciences, psychology, anthropology, chemistry, physics, engineering, and many more.

DU sends 70% of students abroad, which ranks 2nd nationally among doctoral and research institutions for percentage of students participating. DU sponsors 28 programs to more than 45 countries, and students have access to more than 100 additional study abroad programs through arrangements with other universities.

More than 1,000 students are involved in co-op education, internships and work programs providing career-related enrichment in many areas. The University of Denver is a member of a consortium of 13 colleges and universities that share internship listings to better help students locate positions in areas of the country other than where their schools are located.

Location:

Located in a residential neighborhood eight miles southeast of downtown Denver, the University of Denver is set in an idyllic suburban location. The light rail, which DU students ride for free, connects DU to downtown and the Denver Tech Center with a stop on campus. The Rocky Mountains are one hour west by car, and DU is within a 90 minute drive of six major ski resorts. The city of Denver boasts 300 sunny days a year with a moderate climate.



All information and pictures were taken from the University of Denver Website (www.du.edu).