

November 2022

Seniors – File Early Decision/
Early Action applications

Work on remaining college
applications

Check College Board and ACT
websites for testing opportunities
in your area if you still wish to take
an SAT or ACT exam

December 2022

Check College Board and ACT
websites for available test dates
and sites in your area

Underclassmen — Review PSAT
report (if available) with advisor
and map out a plan for test
preparation

Schedule spring SAT/ACT testing
dates

Seniors — File any additional
college applications before
deadline dates

Answering the Unasked Questions

How will you benefit from attending our college? What will you contribute to our college? While you may not see these questions appearing on your college applications, if you address these topics in your applications, you will set yourself apart from other applicants and make a persuasive case for your admission.

It may seem obvious, but students sometimes lose sight of the fact that colleges are academic institutions, and they are looking for people who love to learn. Someone whose idea of fun is discussing Kant's moral philosophy will take full advantage of the opportunities for intellectual engagement in college. When admission officers read an application from a student who has demonstrated this kind of love of learning by pursuing opportunities beyond her high school classroom, they feel confident she will benefit from attending their school.

Admission officers make assumptions about what you will contribute to their college based on what you have contributed to your high school or community. The more selective the college, the greater the impact your contribution needs to have been in order to stand out. While tutoring children who are living in a shelter for homeless families is certainly a valuable contribution, organizing a program to match every child with a mentor, recruiting other students to participate, and expanding that program to other shelters would have the kind of impact that is not very common.

If the activities you pursue have a theme, you can focus your application on that theme, which helps admission officers get a clear picture of your values and interests. When an aspiring anthropologist has

volunteered every Saturday at a museum where he's developed a program to introduce children to other cultures, taken anthropology classes at community college and spent a summer on an archaeological dig, he will be able to put together a cohesive and compelling application.

Of course, not everyone has a defining intellectual or career interest, and students shouldn't feel pressured to choose something to pursue in depth just because it will look good on applications. In fact, balancing a scientific or technical side with an interest in something artistic is another way to stand out. A young woman who loves physics and engineering, but also writes poetry that she reads at a local coffeehouse could be very interesting to admission officers.

If you have a range of interests, spend some time during high school exploring them. But remember, pursuing a FEW activities in depth is generally better than minimal involvement in a lot of activities.

It makes no sense to push yourself into an activity you don't like. Since you want to find something that you can sustain for several years, it should be something you enjoy. Summer is a good time to explore your interests by getting involved in community service or research opportunities. If you can't find an established program or internship, try creating your own.

For example, a student who is on his school's basketball team might combine his love of the sport with community service by organizing a program for children at a recreation center.

Find something you love to do and any impact it may have on your college applications will just be a bonus.

Career Paths for Peace & Conflict Majors

- Business
- Conflict Resolution
- Counseling
- Development
- Diplomacy
- Education
- Global Threat Mitigation
- Government
- Human Rights Advocacy
- Humanitarian Action
- Law
- Non-Profit Management
- Restorative Justice
- Women's Advancement



Focus on Majors: Peace and Conflict Studies

With the political climate in the United States so divisive at this time, a major that focuses on ways to solve problems peacefully may resonate with you. Peace and Conflict Studies focus on ways to improve the justice and peace in the world. The major analyzes universal issues such as racism, sexism, destitution, and war. The goal, of course, is to develop an ability to non-violently solve problems.

The study of this major is part theory and part experience. Some of the curriculum focuses on learning history and concepts. Students will learn about the philosophies of legendary peacemakers such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

There will also be plenty of opportunities for students to get hands-on experiences. The major includes lab situations that allow students to practice conflict resolution tactics. Students might simulate a meeting in an NGO (non-governmental organization), intern, or create their own group.

Students learn how to analyze both local and global issues. Some programs are more globally-based while others focus more on the United States, but all programs delve into the diversity of human cultures. In addition, the major may offer study abroad opportunities for students.

The major includes courses in the philosophy of social science, Marxism, the urban political economy, methods of peacemaking, the history of non-violence, and ecology. International law, the global political economy, postcolonial theory, and international relations are also frequently covered.

Peace and conflict majors gain a plethora of widely-used skills. Majors acquire an aptitude in strategic thinking, teamwork, communication, negotiation, and peaceful problem-solving. They gain research skills, writing skills, and the ability to look at a situation from multiple perspectives. Students leave with an understanding of the complexities of the world and its human issues.

Because the abilities honed in the major are applicable to almost any job, students have a wide variety of career options. Students typically go into careers in one of the following fields: government, law, humanitarian action, counseling, development, conflict resolution, global threat mitigation, and business.

Government jobs may be in diplomatic roles, civil-military relations, the protection of human rights, and post-conflict aid. Careers in law may focus on subjects such as immigration, human trafficking, land and environment, and employment.

Students interested in humanitarian action may work for an NGO to aid in emergency response, healthcare, and social services for areas in crisis.

In counseling, graduates might undertake work as trauma therapists. They may help communities heal from tragedies or deal with the emotional and psychological side of crisis repair.

Careers in development can focus on the following topics: the international economy, urban and housing, microfinance and small businesses, and sustainable agriculture. Students may also work towards improving the state of poverty, hunger, and homelessness at local levels. Some developmental jobs are more numbers-based, such as microfinance and the economy, while others have a strong humanitarian aspect.

Peace and conflict majors going into conflict resolution may deal with mediation, inter-faith and intra-faith conflicts, violence prevention, and reconciliation.

Global threat mitigation may address issues such as genocide, gender-based violence, climate change, terrorism, and war. Students might join an organization working to fight one of these threats, or they might found their own organization.

Another option for students is to work in business. Graduates can employ the skills learned in their major in human resources, public relations, and contract negotiation.

Financial Matters: Do You Need to Submit the CSS Profile?



The bulk of college financial aid money comes from the federal government; this aid is distributed by colleges using information supplied by families when they complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), available on October 1st. About 240 colleges, universities and scholarship programs, however, use an additional form, the *CSS Profile*, to gather more information in order to award their own institutional funds to deserving students. Students applying to college should check to see if this form is required by schools on

their list. Some scholarship programs also utilize the CSS Profile. It, too, becomes available on October 1st each year.

The *Profile* provides a more complete picture of your family's finances; it also provides a way for you to describe special circumstances right on your application. Begin by logging on to the College Board website at <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org>.

Use your College Board student account and password to begin the Profile process. Alternatively, parents can create a separate account, since sensitive financial information will be collected. The first step after logging in to your account is to register for the correct year (2023-2024 for this year's senior class). Now, complete the application—as you answer questions, the application will be tailored to your

family's financial situation.

The application may be completed in one sitting or you can save information and come back to complete. You will need a number of financial documents, so get these ready before beginning the application. You will find a list of the needed documents once you sign in. Answer all questions carefully; answers are saved as you change screens. Unlike the FAFSA, there is a processing and reporting fee for this application. After an initial \$25 registration fee (includes one school report), you will be charged \$16 for each report required. After submitting, you will receive an acknowledgement and instructions for making any needed revisions or adding additional colleges. Submit your Profile no later than two weeks before the earliest priority filing date for your college.

Impact

IMPACT is one of the buzz words we've been hearing a lot from college admission officers over the last few years, and the Thanksgiving season seems to be an appropriate time to think about the ways you impact others. Impact is defined as the strong effect of one object or individual on another. By our actions and our words, we all impact the lives of others, both positively and negatively. By a kind word or the offering of support, by an act of random kindness, you have the power to make another person's day so much better. Since the issuing of the 2016 Harvard report, *Turning the Tide*, many colleges have resolved to encourage applicants to show more meaningful contributions to others,

through community service and engagement for the public good.

Why do college admission officers care so much about impact? Their job is to build a community of scholars - students who live together and learn together, and who continuously impact one another. Through their actions in the dorms and dining halls, by their input and effort in the classroom, and by the service they offer to the surrounding community, college students can positively affect the lives of many others.

As you give thanks for all you've been blessed with, resolve to ramp up the positive impact you have on your

schoolmates and community. Are you the student who offers help to someone who is struggling; do you positively engage in the classroom; do you step in to make a difference before being asked? In what ways are you engaged in the extracurricular life of your school - through clubs, sports teams, student government, performing arts groups? What impact do you have on your family - through child care, helping out at home, caring for extended family? How can you have an impact on your community - by volunteer work with a religious organization, an afterschool program, local sports teams, community theatre, philanthropic organizations or hospitals? Each of us can make a difference - find your niche and add force to the impact you have.



Elizabeth Levine

[liz@SignatureCollege
Counseling.com](mailto:liz@SignatureCollegeCounseling.com)

845.551.6946

[www.SignatureCollege
Counseling.com](http://www.SignatureCollegeCounseling.com)

Acing That College Interview

Students who interview with admission officers or alumni from American colleges are often surprised to find that the interviewer made the process much less intimidating than they had anticipated. Interviewers are not trying to trip you up; they simply want to know and will try to determine if you are a good match with their college. Part of the interviewer's job is to get you excited about the school. After a good interview, a well-intentioned alumni interviewer may tell a student that the school would be lucky to have her, and it's natural to believe that means good news is coming. Whether the interviewer is just saying that to reassure an anxious student or genuinely thinks she should be admitted, the student may be in for a major disappointment if she puts too much stock in the interviewer's words.

It is expensive to have admission officers interview all or most applicants, so few colleges actually require interviews. But colleges encourage interviews as a way to help distinguish among all the students who have similarly impressive grades, test scores and extracurricular activities. While a face-to-face interview on campus is ideal, it's not always possible. Expecting students to interview on campus would be especially burdensome to lower-income students, which is why many schools have alumni around the country conduct interviews with local applicants. In addi-

tion, some colleges offer applicants the option of a Zoom or other web-based interview, or possibly a phone interview.

The interviewer may write a glowing report, but interviews are rarely a major factor in admission decisions. Smaller colleges, which can interview more of their applicants, are likely to give interviews more weight than large public universities. But even if an interview won't be a major factor in your admission prospects, it's good practice. You will be interviewing in the future for internships, jobs, and possibly graduate school programs, so developing strong interview skills is important. Never turn down the offer of an interview!

Before you go to an interview, research the school so that you can clearly articulate why you and this college are a perfect match. Also have several questions ready, as interviewers always ask if there is anything you want to know. Engage the interviewer in conversation, and the meeting will be a more pleasant experience for both of you. If it's an alumni interview, remember that alumni interviewers love their school, so asking about the interviewer's experiences at the college can help get the conversation going. Show your enthusiasm for the college and you'll both enjoy the experience. And don't forget to write a thank you letter to the interviewer as soon as you return home.