

TRACEY HYAMS & ASSOCIATES, LLC
YOUR PARTNERS IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

traceyhyams@gmail.com 617-699-4704 WWW.TRACEYHYAMS.COM jessicaakmiquel@gmail.com 617-794-3357

JANUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER - UPDATE FOR JUNIORS

What should I be doing now?

- ❖ **Scheduling biweekly meetings with [Tracey](#) starting now!**
- ❖ **Putting forth your best effort in school - Junior year grades are important!** Do your best work, utilize school and outside resources, and stay ahead.
- ❖ **Continuing involvement in extracurricular and volunteer activities and seeking leadership roles:** There are lots of opportunities to get involved virtually and give back with minimal time commitments.
- ❖ **Thinking about which teachers you'll ask for recommendations:** Ideally, one teacher from math/science and one from English/History/Language, but choose whoever knows you best as a student. Develop and maintain your relationships; you'll be asking teachers in late spring.
- ❖ **Researching colleges online, registering on college websites, and attending virtual admissions events:** Explore the wealth of information available on academic programs, social organizations, and campus activities. Creating your college list is the top priority now - see our resources below!
- ❖ **Starting to plan on-campus visits, and even just driving through local campuses:** Consider a visit or campus drive-through after school or on an early release day, a longer visit on a school holiday, and multiple visits during long weekends or winter/spring vacation weeks.
- ❖ **Demonstrating interest at colleges where it counts - see below for information and ideas!**
- ❖ **Strategizing your [ACT](#) / [SAT](#) testing plan, and, as available, registering for test dates** - see test updates below. **NOTE: [Collegeboard has just announced the elimination of US SAT Subject Tests & the Optional SAT Essay](#)**

*** CLEAN UP YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS ***

Positive content on your Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Tik Tok, Facebook, and other accounts could actually **increase** your chances of admission:

- 59% of colleges report that Admissions Reps utilize online searches during the application process
- 44% found content that left a negative impression, yet 46% found content that left a positive impression
- [Colleges Are Looking at Students' Social Media Posts](#)
- [10 Ways to Manage Your Social Media Footprint](#)



HOW CAN I LEARN ABOUT A COLLEGE IF I CAN'T VISIT? ...AND GETTING AHEAD IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS

We are hopeful that you WILL be able to visit colleges. However, in-person campus visits may happen somewhat later than usual - this summer and through the fall - depending on whether travel is safe and campuses are open for visitors. Some colleges are offering socially distanced in-person visits now, while most are strictly virtual. In the meantime, take advantage of these resources*:

- [Steps to Research a College](#)
- [College Profiles](#)

Focus now on activity development/summer planning, and really dig into college academic departments to get a sense of some career paths/courses of study that may be new to you. We understand that you may not get a real sense of "normal" campus life for some or many colleges on your list, but in the meantime, you can participate in virtual info sessions, student panels, and chats with professors. Please ask us to connect you with a current student at any college you are particularly interested in - they can give you a strong sense of campus life as well.

This spring and summer, complete as many application tasks as you can. The fall of your senior year is going to be very busy with coursework, extracurricular activities, (hopefully) campus visits, and application tasks that cannot be completed in advance (requesting transcripts, for example). The first application deadlines are October 15 (just a handful of colleges; November 1 is more typical). Plan with us to get everything else done in advance:

- Completing the "common" parts of the Common App (watch for Boot Camp dates in the late spring);
- Writing and revising the Personal Statement (main essay) as well as the Additional Information and COVID essays, if applicable;
- Drafting your Activities List (Jessica will meet with you individually to brainstorm and strategize!);
- Drafting your resume (look for our upcoming News Blast with a resume template!)

**please note that these resources are for use by our clients only*

UPCOMING OUT OF OFFICE

Tracey will be away (with email access and WILL continue meeting with students):

Monday, January 25 - Thursday, February 4, 2021

If you are unable to reach Tracey for any reason, always feel free to contact [Jessica Miquel](#).



READ THESE!

- ★ [10 Things to Know About Getting Into Your Dream College](#)
- ★ [12 Reasons Scattergrams Lull You Into a False Sense of Security](#)
- ★ [U.S. News Changes Its College-Ranking Methodology Again; Why You Shouldn't Care](#)
- ★ [Check This Box if You're a Good Person](#)

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMONSTRATING INTEREST & HOW TO DEMONSTRATE INTEREST DURING COVID

In an effort to *determine how likely it is that a student will attend a college if admitted, tracking the degree to which the student shows genuine interest* in the school has become an important factor that many colleges now consider in the application process. Many colleges are extremely sensitive to what they refer to as “yield”, a term that quantifies how many admitted students actually matriculate, or select the college. **Colleges may waitlist or even deny very qualified applicants** who have simply not demonstrated interest. While an in-person campus visit is a powerful way to demonstrate interest and to learn more about a school, it’s not the only way. So, what can you do until in-person campus visits are an option? **Here are some great ways to gain information and get noticed!**

- **Fill out an interest form on the college’s admission website:** this will put you on their email list and show that you want to learn more.
- **Interact with any emails from colleges of interest:** open the email, click a link within it, then spend some time on the school’s website. Many colleges use software to track these interactions.
- **Attend virtual sessions and tours:** look for virtual info sessions, campus tours, chats, video presentations, and Q&As on the school’s admissions site.
- **Connect with colleges on social media:** you’ll now find colleges, academic departments, and student ambassadors on apps like Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and YouTube. Follow these accounts to stay informed and to show your interest.
- **Take advantage of virtual and/or in-person rep visits to your high school, regional information sessions, and connecting at virtual college fairs.**
- **Send Admissions Reps you meet thank you notes** or reach out with “why” you are applying and ask a question (something not easily answered online :)
- **Contact professors** at colleges of interest to discuss the curriculum and to ask questions
- **Schedule interviews** through Admissions (typically available beginning spring of Junior year); we are happy to help you prepare in advance! In the meantime, be sure to refer to our [College Interview Prep](#)
- **Take notes!** All of this information will help you in the application process if you need to write a “Why us?” essay - you can **specifically mention** your experiences, conversations with students, professors, and/or anyone else who made an impact!

Simply put, if you pursue the colleges you are excited about, are thoughtful in your application process, and proactively demonstrate interest, **you will increase your chances of admission.** At some colleges, demonstrated interest is almost as important as the transcript and test scores. See [this article](#) for more information on how even highly selective colleges consider demonstrated interest.

"A year from now
you will wish you
had started today."

-Karen Lamb

HELPFUL TEST PREP INFO & TESTING UPDATES

- [Tracey Hyams & Associates Recommended Test Prep Programs](#)
- [SAT Coronavirus Updates](#)
- [ACT Coronavirus Updates](#)
- [Collegeboard Cuts SAT Subject Tests & Optional Essay](#)



UNDERSTANDING COLLEGES' SAT AND ACT TESTING POLICIES

Test-optional: students may decide whether or not to submit test scores with their application (most test-optional colleges will consider SAT and ACT scores if submitted, however, will focus on other factors such as the overall application, including transcripts, essays, recommendations, extracurriculars, etc.

Test-flexible: instead of an SAT or ACT score, students may submit alternative test score(s), such as an International Baccalaureate exam, and/or an AP test, or submit an additional essay.

Test-blind: the college will not consider test scores, even if submitted.

[Fairtest.org](https://www.fairtest.org) provides a list of colleges with test-optional policies (please note that the list has separate sections for *national liberal arts colleges* and *national universities*, followed by *regional colleges*). While many colleges have changed their testing requirements due to COVID-19 for the last application cycle (and for some, beyond), it is important to **check each college website for an updated specific testing policy**, and to note that some merit scholarships and athletic commitments may require testing. Finally, please be sure to discuss any significant changes to your testing plans with us.

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"The college in Maine has a better curriculum,
but the college in New York has better pizza."

FREE STUDENT TO STUDENT TUTORING!

We are happy to share a Student to Student tutoring initiative: Hi Everyone! My name is Abby, I'm a Sophomore at Phillips Academy Andover, and I live in Dover. A few weeks ago, I offered free online tutoring, and I got more responses than I could possibly tutor myself. So, I recruited 30+ friends and created an organization out of it. Student To Student offers tutoring over zoom to any students who sign up at no cost to them. Here's the link to our [website](#) where students can sign up and I will personally pair them with fantastic tutors! Thank you!
[Free Online Tutoring via Zoom](#)