



Senior Letter 2016-17

Dear Senior Student and Parent/s:

I hope you had a restful and productive summer. As your high school counselor I am here to guide you through the numerous events and deadlines associated with the senior year. For your planning purposes, this letter provides you with college transition information. Additionally, a handout, *Senior Dates to Remember*, is enclosed; this handout highlights many other important U-Prep senior-related events and activities.

U-Prep prepares its graduates for the highest possible post-secondary endeavor, but leaves the choice regarding post-secondary plans to students and families. Historically, most all U-Prep graduates have successfully transitioned to a college or university of their choice while a small number have transitioned either to a technical school or a military service school. All are engaged in furthering their post-secondary education. Whatever the interests, your hard work combined with support from your family and school staff has positioned you with multiple post-secondary choices. Further, financing a post-secondary experience does not need to result in unreasonable debt as you will continue to learn about this year. There are options!

The senior year is the capstone of your K-12 education. It is a time to continue meeting new challenges, while maintaining a strong work ethic; U-Prep seniors finish strong and see their commitments through to graduation and beyond. As a step in the process, all seniors are encouraged to enroll in math their senior year. Research indicates a higher percentage of students graduate from college on time if they are prepared for college level math. Further, recent updated California admissions requirements indicate students must show they are **ready for college level coursework** in math (and English) prior to enrollment; seniors not enrolled in a math class are putting themselves in academic jeopardy!

One of our goals at U-Prep is to provide seniors an engaging and meaningful year. We encourage seniors to continue to invest in the school community and culture because they are our leaders on campus and their presence is appreciated. Volunteer/community service, and working part-time are some of the opportunities seniors may learn more about the world around them while seeking independence.

To meet high school graduation requirements, all seniors are required to attend **Senior Transition**. This program occurs during the regular school day. It is designed to assist seniors with college admissions processes, such as financial aid and scholarships. Senior Transition starts Monday, September 12, 2016.

Parents: You are the best advocate for your daughter or son. The anticipation related to your student's attendance at college is both exciting and challenging. The **college application process** involves multiple key deadlines, which explains the importance of keeping the communication open and educating oneself about the details associated the process. If you haven't done so yet, please explore college options with your son/daughter; our online **Naviance** program is an excellent source for this purpose. Schedule a college tour and establish communication with college admissions counselors. Please also plan to attend U-Prep's **Senior Information Night on September 21** and **Financial Aid Night on October 3**. Both of these events will be held in the Marr Auditorium, 6:00-8:00pm.

College Options is an excellent local resource for families. Their primary function is to support preparation for and access to postsecondary educational opportunities in the North State. They provide free programs and services to help families make informed decisions. They also provide assistance with college applications and – for interested families – the federal student aid application (FAFSA). Please plan to attend the 17th Annual College Information Fair **COLLEGE QUEST** sponsored by College Options and its

partners. It is scheduled on Tuesday, September 20 from 5:00-8:00pm at Simpson University Gymnasium. This is a free community event. College Quest will feature booths from regional colleges and universities. Admissions staff will be available to provide students with admissions information.

How many colleges/universities should you apply to? It is recommended that students apply up to eight schools. Applying to several schools provides more opportunities for admission and financial aid considerations. Each campus determines the financial aid package based on the federal student aid application (FAFSA) and their local resources. The information below may help determine how many colleges you should apply to:

- Dream Schools: This may be the long shot. You would love to attend this school. Make sure you meet the admissions requirements before applying.
- Possible Schools: These are the schools that you feel you have a good chance of getting accepted. There is real potential, but no guarantee.
- Safety Schools: This is the 'sure thing'. You should choose a few schools where acceptance isn't a concern. This is just in case the others don't work out.
- Community College: Keep this option open.

Below are some helpful websites to assist you in the college admissions process.

<http://www.uprep.net>.

Current Students-> College Information -> Information for seniors

Naviance: <http://connection.naviance.com/univprep>

Naviance is a comprehensive college and career readiness solution that helps align student strengths and interests to post-secondary goals, and improve student outcomes. Students will have access to career assessments, resume building, college searches, scholarship opportunities, and more.

Shasta College <http://www.shastacollege.edu/>

Shasta Community College (SCC) applications are available in November (2016). Students apply online and there is no application fee. SCC will visit U-Prep early spring to meet with students individually. Seniors are exempt from taking the math and/or English assessment with qualified scores/grades; this will be evaluated at the meeting. After completing the online orientation, assessments or meeting the exemption and completing an educational plan with a counselor, seniors will receive a "Shasta/Northstate Promise" registration date. SCC does not require students to take the SAT or ACT as part of the application process.

CSU System <http://www.csumentor.edu/>

The California State University System has 23 campuses. CSU Mentor is an online resource designed to help students and families learn about the CSU system, research campuses, apply for admission, and inquire about financial aid information.

A CSU application is completed and submitted online. Each campus will charge a \$55 application fee. You may use one application to apply to as many CSU campuses of your choice. The fall 2017 admission filing period is October 1 through November 30, 2016. It's important to save your work as you go and take your time completing the application. The CSU application does not require an essay component. There may be additional requirements for some CSU's depending on the major. Students must pass the A-G admission requirements, take the SAT or ACT, and have a minimum GPA of a 2.0. Please read the CSU admission requirements at the above website.

UC System <http://www.ucop.edu/pathways/>

The University of California system has 10 campuses. UC Pathways is an online resource designed to help students and families learn about the UC system, research campuses, apply for admission, inquire about financial aid information, and learn how the UC evaluates applications. The UC application is completed and submitted online. Each campus will charge a \$70 application fee. You may use one application to apply to as many UC campuses of your choice. The fall 2017 application is currently available for students to access and work on. The application submission period is November 1 through November 30, 2016. It's important to save your work as you go and take your time completing the application.

The "personal insight" questions are required of all UC applicants. You will have 8 questions to choose from. Students must respond to only 4 of the 8 questions. Each response is limited to a maximum of 350 words. Which questions you choose to answer is entirely up to you: But, you should select questions that are most relevant to your experience and that best reflect your individual circumstances. Students must pass the A-G admission requirements, take the SAT or ACT, and have a minimum GPA of a 3.0. Please read the UC admission requirements and personal statement questions at the above website.

Common Application <https://www.commonapp.org>

The Common Application is used by most private colleges/universities for undergraduate admissions. A list of private schools using the Common Application is available on the above website. You may complete one application and submit to as many private schools of your choice. Each campus will charge an application fee. Some private schools waive the application fee if you apply online (please see their admissions website).

SAT <http://sat.collegeboard.org/home>

The College Board website is where students register for the SAT. The SAT essay section is **optional** now. It's strongly recommended that students register for the **SAT with Essay**. This website also provides comprehensive information and a helpful action plan for seniors and parents. Students applying for admission at a four year university/college must take the SAT or ACT. SAT scores are submitted online from the SAT registration website to the college/s of choice using a credit/debit card.

SAT Subject Tests <http://sat.collegeboard.org/home>

These are tests in specific subject areas taken separately from the SAT to help determine college acceptance (please check the admissions website). Starting fall 2012, the UC System no longer requires two SAT Subject Tests as part of the admissions requirement; however, for competitive campuses and majors, it's recommended students take at least two SAT Subject Tests in related subject areas. Most private colleges require at least two SAT Subject Tests. SAT Subject Test scores are submitted online from the SAT registration website to the college/s of choice using a credit/debit card.

ACT <http://www.actstudent.org>

The ACT website is where students register for the ACT. This website also provides helpful college exploration information. Important note: The ACT writing section is **optional**. It's strongly recommended that students take the **optional** writing section. One of the leading college acceptance indicators is how well a student writes. If you choose to take the writing component, you must **select** the optional writing test when you register. ACT test scores are submitted online from the ACT registration website to the college/s of choice using a credit/debit card.

FAFSA Form <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form is used to determine your eligibility for financial aid and is absolutely necessary should you be seeking financial aid to help fund college tuition. Financial aid consists of four basic types: Grants, Employment Programs (work study), Loans, and Scholarships. The first three types are need-based financial aid; scholarships may or may not be need-based. To be eligible for federal student aid, a student must:

- Be a citizen or an eligible non-citizen;
- Be enrolled in a degree or certificated program at a college, occupational or career school or approved by the US Dept. of Ed;
- Have a high school diploma or GED; and,
- Have a valid social security number and register with the US Selective Service, if required.

New this year: The FAFSA form is submitted online on or after **October 1st, 2016**. I encourage students/parents to submit the FAFSA form by January 30th 2017. Beginning with the 2017–18 FAFSA, students will be required to report income information from an earlier tax year. For example, on the 2017–18 FAFSA, students (and parents, as appropriate) will report their 2015 income information, rather than their 2016 income information. Learn more about these changes at our Financial Aid Night, October 3rd. Aid is determined on a variety of factors including family income, size of family and date submitted. The online FAFSA form is signed electronically so a parent and the student must register for a FSA ID. This serves as an electronic signature. You may apply for your FSA ID at <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm>.

Cal Grant <http://www.csac.ca.gov>

Cal Grant awards are state funded monetary grants given to students to help pay for college expenses. The awards do not have to be paid back and are based on family size, income, GPA and other factors. To determine eligibility for Cal Grant, a GPA Verification Form must be submitted by March 2, 2017. U-Prep's Counseling Center will electronically submit students' Cal Grant Verification Form with their GPA to the California Student Aid Commission. Cal Grant uses student and parent information from the FAFSA form as part of the eligibility process so the FAFSA form must be completed and submitted online by March 2, 2017. Using the website above, you may select the link on parents' income and asset ceilings to inquire about potential eligibility.

Letters of Recommendation & Official Transcripts

Students requesting letters of recommendation, official transcripts, or Common Application counselor and teacher reports, must complete a Letter of Recommendation Form available in the Counseling Center or at www.uprep.net under College Info. The request should be submitted to Ms. Haworth or the teacher/s of choice at least 2-3 weeks in advance.

Here's to a wonderful senior year! Remember, DEADLINES are very important. See you at U-Prep's Senior Information Night on September 21st and our Financial Aid Night on October 3rd. Thank you for supporting your senior through this exciting and life-changing year. Please see the "Senior Dates to Remember" handout enclosed.

Sincerely,

Kristen Haworth
High School Counselor
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