

# UC Davis Project

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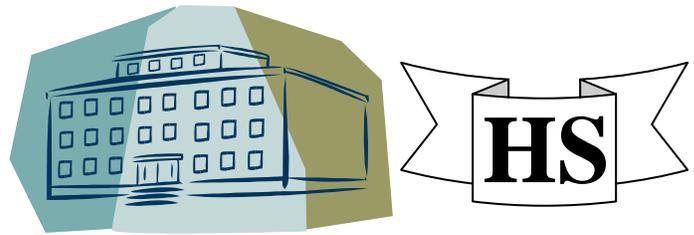
Spring 2004

## A Message from Su Yeong Kim, Chief Researcher

We are very pleased to share with you the following information on how to apply for colleges.

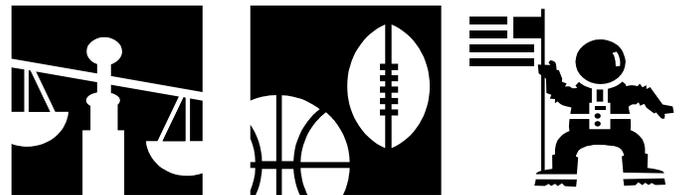
We are planning a follow-up study in the future and ask for your continued participation. If your address or phone number changes, please update us by leaving a message at (415) 271-0390, 1-866-7-FAMILY (toll-free), or by writing us at [kimsu@hawaii.edu](mailto:kimsu@hawaii.edu). You can also update your information on the web at <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~kimsu/ucdavis/>.

We hope that you find the newsletter informative and useful. We sincerely appreciate your participation in the project!



## Ready for College?

*Four years of high school seems like a long time. Most young adults during this time are concerned with academic matters, peer pressures, or simply, the troubles of growing up. Consequently, when you first enter high school at the age of 14 or 15, thinking about colleges is usually not the first thing on your "to-do" list. However, a good college application involves much more than merely filling out forms and writing essays. It should be a process of careful planning and implementation that starts in your freshman or sophomore year. In this newsletter, we will guide you through this process so that you can plan early, start early and hopefully get into the top college on your list.*



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## Put things into Perspective

First of all, you need to think about your possible career interests. High school is a great time for that as you will have the opportunity to explore a variety of different subjects, extracurricular activities and social events. Get involved in your high school, both academically and socially as early as possible to find out what your real interests are.

Following, you can decide what type of education you want--liberal arts or a specialized education (technical, religious, etc)--based on your interests. Big public research universities like the University of California may be a good choice if you want a liberal arts education, because they are more

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concerned with giving you a well-rounded education rather than training you for a specific trade. Even if you have plans to continue with professional schools later, you should be aware that most professional schools do not require candidates to major in related fields at college. For example, most top Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs prefer candidates who did not major in business as an undergraduate. If you are very mature, have great credentials and are considering a career with the military, then service academies (such as West Point with the Army) may be a good choice for you. Service academies, however, have rigorous rules and are very different from regular colleges. Make sure you visit their campuses before making the decision.

Next, keep in mind that there is no statistically significant correlation between where you go to college and how much you will be making afterwards. So instead of focusing on a college's brand name, you may want to delve into what it really has to offer. A good college education develops your skills and helps you further discover what you are good at and what profession you might want to pursue. It should also help you mature socially. Finally, you need also take into account your (or your parents') financial situation to make college choices. Fortunately, the state of California has a large number of excellent public universities, which are relatively inexpensive at resident tuition rates. University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) are the two major state university systems in California. Generally, UC has more rigorous requirements for admission, which usually include a minimum GPA of 3.00, SAT I, three SAT IIs and several College Prep classes. CSU on the other hand, does not require SAT I for students with 3.00 or higher GPA. As far as tuition is concerned, UC has an annual tuition of around \$5,000 in comparison to CSU's \$2,500 (not including books, fees, or living expenses). For students who are considering getting an Associate degree, or using a two-year college as a transitional period before continuing at a four year university, California Community College (CCC) offers excellent opportunities. The CCC consists of 108 two-year colleges and unlike the UC and CSU, requires only the high school diploma.

## *Be a desirable candidate*

*The most important factor in getting into a good college, of course, is to be a qualified candidate, someone who is academically successful, mature, responsible and with good leadership potentials. In order to become desirable to colleges, you need to plan your high school curricular well and work hard with goals in mind.*



## You are in 12th grade

Having the “You are in 12th grade” mentality is the key to success. Start thinking about college applications early. The best time to start is your freshman or sophomore year. Most high schools require less for graduation than colleges require for admission. Different colleges are interested in different academic backgrounds so the classes you take in your sophomore and junior year should correspond to the type of colleges in which you are interested. You also need extra time to participate in an extracurricular activity, which you should strive to excel at and assume a leadership position in. It is what most good colleges will look for.

In order for you to get in the “You are in 12th grade” mentality, consider the following exercise.

First of all, you need “goal setting.” Choose a few colleges and use their college applications material to set you goals. Next, complete an application pretending to be the ideal candidate. Then, let the real you complete another one. Finally, you need to compare and contrast the differences between these two applications. In which areas are you lacking? How may you improve? List the top three areas that you need to work on and create a plan to improve these areas. Take your completed application to you college counselor to ask for advice on meeting your goals.

## You year-by-year

In addition to starting early, you also need to plan well to make sure all requirements are met for admission by the time of graduation. Here is a list of things that you can do starting in the 9th grade.

While in 9th grade, you need to make sure your class schedule includes college preparatory classes throughout high school. Excel in your math and English courses. If you are an "A" student, take the hardest courses you can, either Advanced Placement (AP) or honors. You should include Algebra, a foreign language, a fine art and a hard science with lab. Take PSAT as a practice test to improve SAT I scores. In addition, spend time familiarizing yourself with these tests. It will help you determine what coursework you need in order to increase the scores. Explore a variety of careers by talking with professionals. Have a career assessment done in your high school's career center. Create and maintain a college file that includes copies of your report cards, test scores and diplomas. This will be useful when you apply to college. Read extensively. Outside of your studies, find a sport, an extracurricular activity and one in-school activity that you love, and work as hard as you can to excel at them. Most colleges are not impressed with diversity, but rather, persistence. It is much better to excel and be a leader in one thing than to participate in many and never become good at any. Participate in community services and prove to be a useful member of the society by volunteering in your community.

When you are in 10th grade, review your academic plan with a guidance counselor. Make sure you take all the necessary courses for college admission. Discuss with your counselor the benefits of taking as many honors and AP courses as you can. AP and honors courses boost your grade point average. Strive to be an "A" student. Again, if you are academically successful, then continue to take the most difficult classes you can. Enroll in a test-preparation program for the SAT I. Take the PSAT and SAT I. Begin researching colleges and universities. Continue to participate in sports, extracurricular activities, in-school activities and community services. Strengthen and demonstrate your leadership skills. Plan to do something interesting or impressive over the summer.

When you are in the 11th grade, you should mostly be in honors and AP courses. When completing an AP course, follow up by taking the corresponding AP exam. Take the PSAT in October. This might qualify you for the National Merit Scholarship program. Take the SAT I to earn a higher score. Take the SAT II subject tests after completion of the appropriate courses. Attend college fairs, visit colleges in person or online. Continue involvement in extracurricular, community service and leadership activities. Begin researching scholarships and financial aid opportunities with school counselors. Begin thinking about your college application essay or personal statement and identify a counselor or teacher who might help you proofread it. Participate in summer academic enrichment programs (such as Summer Science camps, astronomy observation trips) offered at university campuses.

Finally, you are really in the 12th grade now! Review your plans for college with your guidance counselor. Make sure your senior year is academically challenging and maintain a high GPA. Take as many AP courses as possible. Take SAT and SAT IIs in October or November. Call colleges in July for applications. Narrow down your list to 5-8 colleges. Start writing application essays and consider who will write you recommendation letters by early September. Make sure you make a good impression on those from whom you are asking for recommendation letters. Use your college file to complete your college application in the fall. File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) between January 1 and March 2. If you need to improve your SAT I score, take the test before December. Apply for all the scholarships for which you might qualify.

The process of college application will be a long and arduous experience, but it is also one of the most important decisions in your life. Therefore, it is worthwhile to carry out a careful investigation and make a well-informed decision based on your interests, so that you can enjoy a wonderful college experience!

## References

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Susan Drachman Van Raalte. *Arco College Applications & Essays (College Applications and Essays, 4th Ed)*. Arco Publishing.

<http://universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/welcome.html>

UC Davis Teenagers Project

Staff Writer:

Qing Tracy Xia

Staff Editors:

Sze Yan Leung and Kellie Kang

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### ARE YOU MOVING?

Please update your address and phone number with us! We would like to keep in touch with you for a follow-up project in the near future.

Updating your information is easy:

By Phone: (415) 271-0390

By Phone: (866) 7-FAMILY (This is a toll-free number.)

By E-mail: [kimsu@hawaii.edu](mailto:kimsu@hawaii.edu)

By Web: <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~kimsu/ucdavis/>

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Su Yeong Kim, Ph.D.

UC Davis Project

Center on the Family, University of Hawaii at Manoa

2515 Campus Road, Miller Hall 103

Honolulu, HI 96822

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