



# The Impact of COVID-19 on College Planning

Presented by Cynthia Seidel,  
On Course College Consulting

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# Agenda

COVID-19 – What's Changed? What's the Same?

Grades, AP & IB Exams, SAT & ACT Exams

Choosing your Major, Building your College List

Affordability, Sources of Financial Aid

Applications

Timelines for Junior through Senior Year

Additional Resources

Q&A



# What's Changed? What's Stayed the Same?

# COVID-19's Impact on College Admissions

## Everything's Gone Virtual

Online Learning	Grading, AP & IB Exams	SAT/ACT Testing	Online College Research	Online Info Sessions	Online Campus Tours
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## Uncertainty

Colleges are doing their best to figure out how to serve their current and future students.

## Unprecedented Flexibility

Admissions reps are going through this too, so they get what you're going through, and they want to help.

# What has **not** Changed?

## **There are still colleges.**

Colleges are still looking for the same things:

- Can you do the work?
- Will you stay?
- How are you unique?
- Do you boost our average GPA & scores?
- How much can you pay?

## **There are still students.**

What are you looking for?

- Know your priorities.
- Adopt the mindset that you are interviewing colleges.
- Your objective is to find colleges that offer you the best possible academic, cultural, and financial fit.



# Grades, Test Scores, and Implications for College Applications

# Grades

## High School Grades

- High schools in Washington State will assign actual grades; they will not automatically revert to “Pass/Fail” grades for spring semester courses.
- Policies vary across school districts. Check with your high school to understand their adapted grading policy.

## Running Start

- Keep electronic copies of your course syllabi. The college you attend will use these to determine your eligibility for waiving course(s) in college.

## Implications for College Admissions

- Colleges will evaluate your application in the context of your high school’s grading policy. Your School Profile will provide this context.

# AP & IB Exams

## AP Exams

- Current Status:  
<https://apcoronavirusupdates.collegeboard.org/>
- Abbreviated online exams will be held.

## IB Exams

- Current Status:  
<https://www.ibo.org/news/news-about-the-ib/covid-19-coronavirus-updates/>
- IB Exams for Spring 2020 have been cancelled. Grades will be based on coursework completed through the end of the school year.

## Implications for College Admissions

- Colleges will continue to recognize the rigor of AP, IB, and Running Start courses based on the test scores and/or grades you earn.



# SAT Exams

# ACT Exams

# Subject Tests

## SAT Exams

- Current Status: <https://pages.collegeboard.org/sat-covid-19-updates>
- May and June 2020 cancelled. Registration for 2020-21 school year tests will open during the last week of May with tests planned for the following dates this fall: Aug. 29, Sept. 26 (just SAT, no subject tests), Oct. 3, Nov. 7, Dec. 5. If required, SAT will be delivered in a digital, at-home format later in fall.

## ACT Exams

- Current Status: <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/covid19.html>
- June 13 (make-up June 20) and July 18 (make-up July 25) scheduled. Starting late fall or early winter, ACT plans to introduce at-home online testing using remote proctoring.
- Starting in September, ACT plans to allow virtual section retesting. Only available at centers with virtual testing capability.

## Subject Tests

- No longer required at any college, but some of the most competitive colleges still recommend them (Georgetown, UC Engineering). Check the status with these colleges directly.

# What Does Test Optional Mean?

- Submitted scores will be considered. For Test Optional Colleges, even if you have scores, you should generally submit them only if they'll strengthen your application.
- Without test scores, colleges will place more weight on the other elements of your application, such as GPA.
- Check the average score range for each of your colleges at [www.CollegeData.com](http://www.CollegeData.com) to see how your scores compare.

## Exceptions

- Some colleges will not consider **any** test scores (ex. Cal Poly) for the Class of 2021.
- Some colleges and some competitive majors still require or highly recommend that you submit test scores (ex. Stanford, Engineering at the UC schools).
- Check [www.FairTest.org](http://www.FairTest.org) for the most current test requirements of your colleges.



# Choosing your Major, Building your College List



## Choosing your Major



What subjects do you like?  
What activities do you enjoy?  
What do you do in your free time?

Identify career interests at My Next Move  
<https://www.mynextmove.org/>

Search for majors and careers at Big Future  
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/majors-careers>

Career Exploration Conversations: Join Career Connect at 3:30pm every weekday in May to hear employers in Washington State talk about various careers.  
<https://www.careerconnectathome.org/about>



# What are your Priorities?

## What are some things to consider?

- Check out the NSSE list at [http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/mobile\\_pocket\\_guide.html](http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/mobile_pocket_guide.html)

## Know what's important to you!

- Is the major you want offered?
- Does the campus culture match your values and priorities?
- Is it affordable?
- Check the college's Safety Profile: <https://ope.ed.gov/campussafety/#/>

# Research: The Facts

## Search for Colleges and Majors

- College Navigator:  
<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

## Get the Details

- College Data offers all the specific data you could possibly want: [www.Collegedata.com](http://www.Collegedata.com)

# Research: All the Other Important Factors

## College Websites – Admissions Pages

- Register for Virtual Information Sessions, often located under “Visit” on Admissions page.
- Videos about academic departments, housing, etc.
- Virtual Campus Tours

## Understand the Requirements of your Major

- Identify the course requirements for your major(s).
- Compare these requirements at the colleges you’re considering.

## Connect with Admissions Reps

- Attend Virtual College Fairs: Updated list available at <http://oncoursecc.com/blog/>
- Call or email admissions offices with questions.

# Student Experiences

## What do current students think of their school?

- Check student reviews on [www.Unigo.com](http://www.Unigo.com) & [www.Niche.com](http://www.Niche.com)



## Social Media

- Follow admissions offices, academic departments, alumni, current, and prospective student groups on social media.
- Get your finger on the pulse of how they're handling and responding to COVID-19, how they're treating their students, and what their priorities are.





# College Affordability

# Differences in Affordability



## Community Colleges

- Usually the least expensive option.

## Public

- In-State – Usually the next least expensive option.
- WUE - Search for colleges and majors with regional tuition discounts through Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE): <https://wuesavingsfinder.wiche.edu/>
- Out-of-State - Check whether they offer need-based and/or merit scholarships.

## Private

- Check whether they offer need-based and/or merit scholarships.

## International

Tuition is often less expensive in other countries.

- Canada <https://www.univcan.ca/universities/member-universities/>
- United Kingdom <https://www.ucas.com/>
- Europe <https://www.studyineurope.eu/>



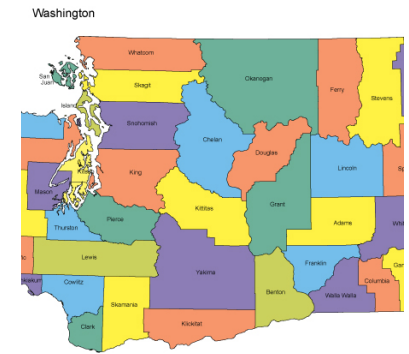
## Seattle Promise

- All Seattle public high school students are eligible.
- Provides the first two years (or up to 90 credits) COA at North, Central, or South Seattle Community College.

<https://seattlepromise.seattlecolleges.edu/about>

## Washington College Grant

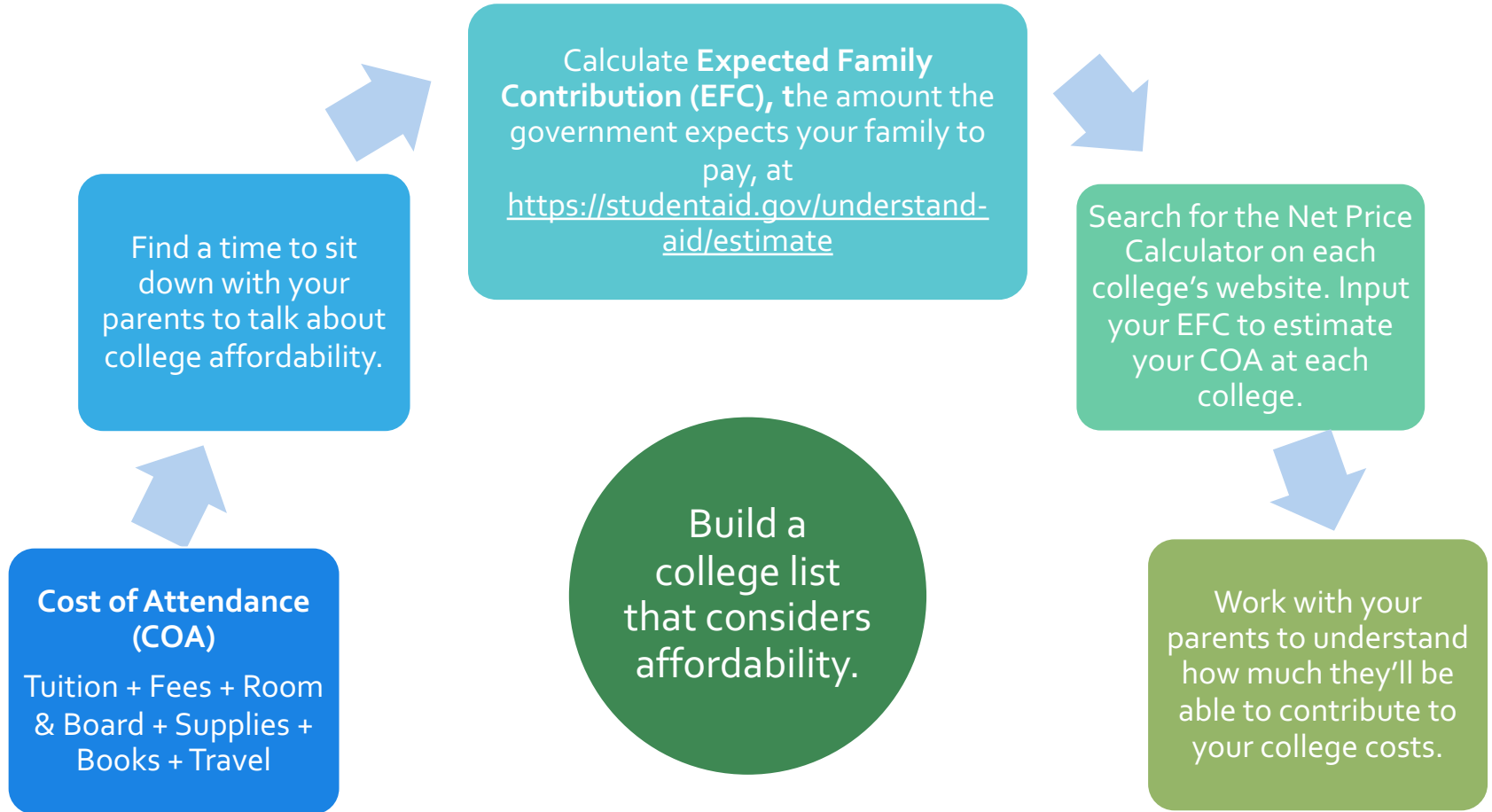
- Washington State residents are eligible based on family income.
- Pays for tuition at In-State Colleges, Universities, and Institutes of Technology on a sliding scale.
- Verify requirements at website.



<https://wsac.wa.gov/wcg>

# Seattle Promise and Washington College Grant

# Estimate Your Cost of Attendance



# Sources of Financial Aid



## Federal & State Need-Based Aid

General Info: <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types>

Federal (FAFSA): <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/estimate>

State (WASFA): <https://readyssetgrad.wa.gov/wasfa>



## Institutional Merit Scholarships

Applicants are usually automatically considered for institutional merit scholarships but check college admissions pages for deadlines and specific requirements.



## Private Scholarships – Search the following:

The WashBoard.org <https://thewashboard.org/login.aspx>

Cappex <https://www.cappex.com/scholarships>

Chegg <https://www.chegg.com/scholarships>

College Board

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>



# Applications



GRADES



RIGOR OF  
CURRICULUM



TEST SCORES



ACTIVITIES LIST



RECOMMENDATION  
LETTERS



ESSAYS AND SHORT  
ANSWER  
QUESTIONS

# How do Colleges make Admissions Decisions?

Colleges vary in how much weight they put on each factor.

# Activities List



## Extra time on your hands?

How are **you** going to make the most of this unique opportunity?

## Be Creative!

Volunteer • Read • Explore • Contemplate  
Consider: Are your values reflected in the way you are choosing to spend your time?



## Common Application Personal Statement

650-word essay with a variety of prompts to choose from.  
Be personal and introspective. They want to know who you are,  
what matters to you, and what you are passionate about.



Expect a new question: How were you impacted by COVID-19?  
Admissions reps will want to know this! Everyone has been  
impacted in different ways, and they want to take your unique  
experience into consideration.



College-specific essays and short answer questions.

# Essays & Short Answer Questions



# Timelines

# Junior Year Timeline

Complete first draft of Activities List.

Consider exploring areas of interest through online courses or virtual summer camps such as WBW.

Research potential majors.

Research colleges you're interested in.

Become comfortable comparing colleges' programs and culture.

Start narrowing down which colleges you want to apply to.

May/June – Ask for teacher recommendation letters.

# Summer Timeline

Finalize college list, decide on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choice majors at each college.

Know exactly why you've chosen to apply to each college and major on your list.

Decide how you're going to apply to each college. Many have Early Action options with deadlines as early as October 15<sup>th</sup>.

Fill out applications as they open starting in August.

Write your personal statement.

Write the supplementary essays and short answer responses that are unique to each college.

# Senior Year Timeline

Follow your high school's guidelines for requesting teacher and counselor recommendation letters.

File FAFSA and WASFA applications when they open on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Complete all applications at least one week before the deadline. Build in a time buffer.

Submit transcripts and test scores well before deadlines. Follow instructions on the application or on the college's website.

Track your application status in your Student Portals. Be prepared to send updated transcripts after your first semester.

Compare your offers. Don't hesitate to contact the offices of Admissions and/or Financial Services to get your questions answered.



# Additional Resources

# Additional Resources

## NACAC's College Admission Status Update 2020

- Up-to-date information about info sessions, tours, deadlines, test requirements, and other COVID-19 impacts:  
<https://www.nacacnet.org/news-publications/newsroom/college-admission-status-coronavirus/>

## On Course College Consulting Website

- Website <http://oncoursecc.com/>
- COVID-19 Updates <http://oncoursecc.com/covid-19-updates/>
- College Planning Resources <http://oncoursecc.com/resources/>
- Glossary of College Application Terms  
<http://oncoursecc.com/glossary/>
- Upcoming College Fairs and College Info Sessions  
<http://oncoursecc.com/blog/>

## Inside Higher Ed

- News updates on topics that impact higher education  
<https://www.insidehighered.com/>

# Q&A

Cynthia Seidel

On Course College Consulting

[www.onscoursecc.com](http://www.onscoursecc.com)

