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Suzanne Luse

sue@collegeexpert.net

651.688.0595

Advice For New College Freshmen

June 2019

1st – SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests

8th – ACT

Seniors – thank teachers and others who helped you

Seniors – thank scholarship providers for aid

Seniors – have your final transcript sent to your college

Summer 2019

Do Something Interesting

Job, internship, or community service; summer program

Explore Colleges

Use websites, guidebooks, virtual online tours and on-campus tours and interviews

Rising Seniors

Begin to work on Common Application and other applications as they become available

Craft your essay

Narrow college list

Prepare for fall SATs and/or ACTs

College tours & interviews

Underclassmen

Prepare for fall PSAT

July 13th–ACT (not offered in CA & NY)

Aug. 24th–SAT

One of the best parts of going off to college is the ability to create the “you” whom you want to be. You’ll be without peers who’ve known you for years and have preconceived ideas about you, so you can make a fresh start. Here are some suggestions to help you make a successful transition to campus.

- First impressions still count. The old saying “you never get a second chance to make a first impression” holds true. That doesn’t mean you can’t be yourself, but it does mean that if you’re looking at college as an opportunity to reinvent yourself, don’t wait until the end of freshman year.

- Be outgoing and meet as many people as you can. A lot of social connections are made the first few weeks of school. Most students travel in herds and are open to meeting lots of people. Within a few weeks, students tend to find people for study hours and cafeteria comradery who fit in their comfort zones. It is much easier to “break in” to a range of social groups at the beginning of the year than later on.

- Stretch yourself. Consider joining a variety of clubs and extracurricular activities. Participate in campus-wide activities and intramurals, and step outside your norm. Experiment a little. If you’re an artist, try the Ultimate Frisbee team. If you’ve always been a jock, join the Save Darfur social action club.

- Explore. Check out areas of the college that you never saw on the campus tour, such as the local art museum, the fitness facility, the student health center, etc.

- Don’t wait until a crisis occurs to meet your adviser. Set up an appointment now. Ask him/her about recommended courses in your anticipated major, student services, internships, jobs on campus, research and summer opportunities, as well as study-abroad programs.

- Be smart. OK, so this is the one parents worry about the most: getting used to the freedom can be tough. Respect your own independence and make good decisions. Don’t compare yourself to others, as in, “At least I read more than so-and-so.” Compare yourself to what you want to be: “Is this what I expect of myself?”

- Be safe: Travel in groups, especially at night. Lock your bike -- always. Lock your room and make sure to secure your valuables.

- Strive for balance. Have fun, but don’t go crazy.

- Take a deep breath. Things are rarely likely to be perfect from the get-go, so give yourself some time to integrate and decide how you really want to spend your time. Try to figure out what will work for you, what will make you happy.

Career Paths for Environmental Science Majors

- Environmental consultant
- Environmental education officer
- Environmental engineer
- Environmental manager
- Environmental biologist
- Environmental chemist
- Environmental data analyst
- Environmental geologist
- Environmental writer
- Habitat restoration engineer
- Marine biologist
- Nature conservation officer
- Recycling officer
- Sustainability consultant
- Regulatory compliance manager
- Waste management officer
- Water quality scientist



Environmental Science

With environmental issues such as global warming and the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the world needs more scientists equipped to attack the spiral of damaging human behaviors. Environmental science is a branch of science that seeks to sustain the Earth's environment.

The major is a combination of two different studies. The first considers how physical and biological sciences work together, and the second examines the application of scientific methods to solving environmental problems.

Environmental science is not to be confused with environmental studies. These are separate majors with different concentrations. While environmental science applies scientific knowledge to the environment, environmental studies has a core in the social sciences. Environmental studies looks at legal issues and economic policies, but environmental science looks at chemistry, biology, and physics.

In order to be successful in an environmental science major, students need a strong background in other forms of science. Majors will take classes such as geoscience, ecology, hydrology and land resource science. There will be some required classes in other sciences, and once those are finished, students can decide on a concentration that fits their interests.

Environmental science has many concentrations. Some examples include environmental chemistry, environmental physics, environmental biology, terrestrial ecology, natural resource management and environmental protection. If students find themselves particularly interested in a specific science, such as biology as it relates to the environment, they may choose a concentration similar to the first three. If not, they may specialize in natural resources or protection.

Regardless of the concentration, fieldwork is an important part of the major. Fieldwork provides hands-on experience that labs often cannot provide. Some programs allow students to conduct supervised research with members of the faculty. Paid summer research internships or fellowships are also available for students to

gain practical experience.

Students will gain many skills throughout the study of this major. They will gain knowledge of several sciences, and they will learn how to apply this knowledge to real-world problems. Majors will gain an aptitude for solving problems and thinking outside of the box.

Because environmental science is by nature collaborative, students will work on many assignments in groups. This develops communication skills and allows students to practice the profession's jargon.

Finally, students will become proficient with computers. Throughout the study of the major, students will use computers for data analysis, remote sensing, GIS (geographic information systems) and digital mapping.

The career options for majors depends on their level of continuing study. Many entry-level research or teaching jobs require a masters degree. Advanced research positions or college-level teaching typically require a Ph.D.

That being said, there are many options for students. Those interested in teaching could teach in a high school or work in environmental education programs. There are also a wide variety of jobs in fields indirectly related to science.

Students who are interested in law can become an environmental lawyer. It would be necessary for these students to earn a law degree.

Students may choose to work for the state or federal government as environmental regulators. Another option is to work for advocacy groups or NGOs (non-governmental organizations).

Students interested in the business aspect of things can become environmental consultants or resource managers.

Environmental engineers use principles of engineering and chemistry to solve environmental issues. Environmental engineering technicians collect samples of groundwater and air to analyze pollution levels. Students who want to help fix environmental issues that have already occurred may opt for a career in environmental remediation.

Financial Matters: Pre-College Legal & Financial Matters



There are a few legal and financial issues that should be addressed before your son or daughter goes off to college. If your child has turned or will turn 18 during the next year, she is legally an adult, and you, her parent, lose the legal authority to make decisions on her behalf. That means that you have no legal right to see her grades, to manage her finances (although you remain responsible for paying her college tuition), or to make medical decisions or speak with her doctor. So, before she goes off to college, consider asking her to sign some documents that will keep you informed.

- FERPA release: with your child's permission, you can speak with the college about her performance.

Telling Your Story

It is often with a heady mixture of excitement and trepidation that students confront the challenges of completing their college applications. Most of the components to a successful application are facts, figures and other peoples' words: academic grades, standardized test scores, listings of extracurricular activities and awards, and teacher recommendations. To complete these critical parts, it's required that students work hard, perform as well as they can both in and out of the classroom, participate in some activities and build good relationships with their teachers.

And then, there are the essays. The main essay is typically the Common Application essay with 7 prompts and a 650-word limit - note that they are prompts, not questions to answer. Most selective colleges also require supple-

Colleges often have their own FERPA release forms, so ask your college for a copy.

- HIPAA Authorization: allows you to access your child's health records and speak to her doctors about medical issues.
- Advance Care Directive for Health Care: allows you to act on your adult child's behalf in the event that she is incapacitated and unable to make decisions for herself.
- Durable Power of Attorney: allows you to act on your adult child's behalf regarding legal or financial matters.

You can get the last three forms from your family lawyer. Each of these forms can be revoked at any time, but having them in place while your child is away at college may provide the whole family with extra peace of mind.

This is also a good time to address money management issues.

- Set up a bank account that will allow you to easily transfer money

to her account. An online bank account may be the most useful, especially if the bank has special student accounts available that will give parents access to bank information. Find out which banks have ATMs close to campus—college kids usually don't write many checks. Be sure to check on fees for using an ATM that's not part of your bank's network.

- Make plans to protect student property. College kids tend to have a lot of valuable electronics and computer equipment. Renter's insurance can protect your investment if these items were to disappear. Your homeowner's policy might also cover dorm room possessions—check with your agent.
- Health insurance: check out options provided by the college and compare these policies with your existing family medical coverage.
- Car insurance: check with your agent. If your child will not have a car at college, you may be eligible for a discount on your auto rate.

mental questions and essays of varying lengths.

The essays are your opportunity to share your voice and personalize your application, making the whole package a full and complete story of YOU. Having had several years to perfect the art of an academic essay, you may find it challenging to face the demands from colleges that your essays are personal, unique and interesting. Rarely do young people have the time for self-reflection that such an essay requires – they are so busy – but this self-reflection is important in order to free up the ideas that will ultimately become your best essays.

First and foremost, start EARLY! Make sure you create your Common Applica-

tion (CA) account as soon as possible. The CA prompts for 2019-20 have been released and will be found on the CA website, allowing you to begin brainstorming ideas. Take the time to sit quietly and think about what makes you uniquely "you." What are your passions, life experiences, activities and interests? Make lists; consider your life as a movie and write down the highlights and outcomes; chat with family and friends about what they think makes you special. By early summer, focus on some free writing – write for at least 5 minutes every single day, don't stop, just write, and you'll soon see some themes emerging. Keep refining your ideas and start building some specific outlines. Don't worry about the prompts; if you have a variety of ideas, (continued on p. 4)

Telling Your Story (continued from p. 3)

Suzanne Luse

Ryan Luse

College Expert

3588 Woodland Trail
Eagan, MN 55123

651.688.0595

sue@collegeexpert.net

ryan@collegeexpert.net

www.CollegeExpert.net

you'll find it pretty easy to connect to one or two of them later. On *August 1*, the CA rolls over and you can jump in and start completing all the remaining details, and review the final and official prompts. If you have been working hard on your self-reflection, free writing, and outlines, you will find it much easier to create solid drafts and complete your final version before the end of August. Aim to have your CA essay completed by *September 1*. Share your polished essay with a few friends and family and ask them to give you a few words that summarize what they have learned about you. Is it what you want to say? If not, rework your essay. Show it to someone who doesn't know your writing and see how they respond. But don't allow others to rewrite your essay – admission officers are acutely aware of how the tone of an essay can change when a parent has been allowed to work on a rewrite!

As with all good writing, never forget your reader. In this case, it's probably a tired, overworked, young admission officer who may well be a recent graduate of that institution – make him or her sit up and take notice when your essay appears on their monitor. As you brainstorm ideas, find

ways of incorporating your personal growth, your readiness for a bigger future, and make a connection between your past, present and future. You want your reader to see you as a mature and valuable asset to their campus community. Don't waste words by repeating the question or prompt in your piece and don't make the mistake of telling a college why you are such a great fit by sharing detailed information about the college – they know their own institution! Remember that you are writing a personal story, not a fairy tale – no moral or happy ending necessary.

Remember that your best essay will be a polished and authentic story that demonstrates who you are. Avoid clichés, be careful about the "I scored the winning goal and it changed my life" stories, and be extra careful about using humor – it can often fall flat. Admission officers are not looking for Pulitzer Prize winning essays; they just want to learn as much as possible about you, and how you might strengthen their institution. Finally, if you can be vulnerable, take some risks and share your unique truth, you will also get to know yourself better, and that is always a great thing.