

# Applying to College in 2020: What's Changed?

Presented by:



**the College Application Specialist**  
ESSAY IDEAS ■ INTERVIEW PREP ■ RESUMÉ REVIEW

and



# Agenda

- College Application Process (Pre-Corona)
- What's Changed?
  - Grading and GPAs
  - Standardized Testing (ACT, SAT, SAT II)
  - Coronavirus Experience Essay
  - Summer Experiences
  - College Touring
  - Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Perspective from a mom of a rising college Sophomore

# About me...

Tamara Baptiste-Wallace, M.Eng, PMP



# What we do...

Reducing the stress of the college admissions process  
by coaching students and families

- One-on-one coach to guide you and your family through the process (from beginning to end)
- Building a college list that reflects your student's interests and abilities (and your finances)
- Identifying a strategy for success – classes, testing, EA/RD, major selection, summer activities, etc.
- Setting (and keeping) a schedule to ensure those applications get sent in ON TIME!

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# Our Students do Great Things!

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Alexis A. –  
U Maryland '20

As I applied to college, Ms. Tamara was an indispensable asset to the application process. She helped me develop a manageable timeline, construct thoughtful essays to showcase my talents and abilities, and research scholarship opportunities. She was with me at every step of the way. With her help, I was admitted to the University of Maryland, College Park, St. John's University, University of Pennsylvania, and Cornell University!



Amber A –  
Virginia Tech '21

I often struggle with figuring out how to put what I want to say into words. Ms. Tamara helped me configure all of my thoughts, stories, ideas, and experiences into a compelling essay. I truly believe that each essay I submitted reflected who I was and played a significant role in my admission my top choice school.



Miles L. -  
Morehouse '23

Ms. Tamara, you are amazing! You have helped me tremendously and I owe it to you for helping get here. It is a blessing to be surrounded by this black excellence daily and I wouldn't trade it for the world! The brotherhood is impeccable and strong here and my support system is there for me.



Rod B. – MIT '20

Working with Ms. Tamara was a great experience. She made me do the work to find my voice and made sure I managed my time well.








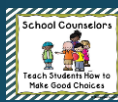




*I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your help and guidance. I was at maximum capacity, so your work truly was a life saver. And it saved our mom and son relationship too, limiting the amount of stress between us during a very stressful time.*




Lynnea L. - Mom

# College Journey Timeline<sup>©</sup>









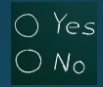



## Sophomore

Jul/ Aug	Do Something!	 
Sep	Meet with your Guidance Counselor	
Oct	Take the PSAT	
Nov	Start with TCAS	
Dec	Identify your top 10 characteristics	
Jan	Research Colleges / Majors	
Feb	Check in with your Guidance Counselor	
Mar	College Tours	
Apr	Update your list	
May	Research Scholarships	
June	Finalize Junior Year Schedule	

## Junior

Jul/ Aug	Do Something!	 
Jul/ Aug	College Tours	
Sep	Meet with your Guidance Counselor	
Oct	Start with TCAS	
Nov	Identify your top 10 schools	
Dec	SAT / ACT Prep	
Jan		 
Feb	Finalize your list, Get organized	
Mar	College Tours	
Apr	Ask for Recommendations	
May	Finalize Senior Year Schedule	
June		 

## Senior

Jul/ Aug	Do Something!	 
Jul/ Aug	College Tours	
Sep	Last time to take the SAT / ACT	
Sep	Meet with your Guidance Counselor	
Sep	Confirm your Recommendations	
Oct	FAFSA Form Opens	
Nov	EA / ED Applications Due	
Dec	EA / ED Decisions Announced	
Jan	Regular Decision Applications Due	
Feb	Get Scholarship Applications Completed	
Mar	Regular Decisions Announced	
Mar	FAFSA Deadline	 
Apr	Regular Decisions Announced	
May	Visit Schools & Talk with your Family	
May	Make a Decision, Pay Your Deposit	
June	Graduation	



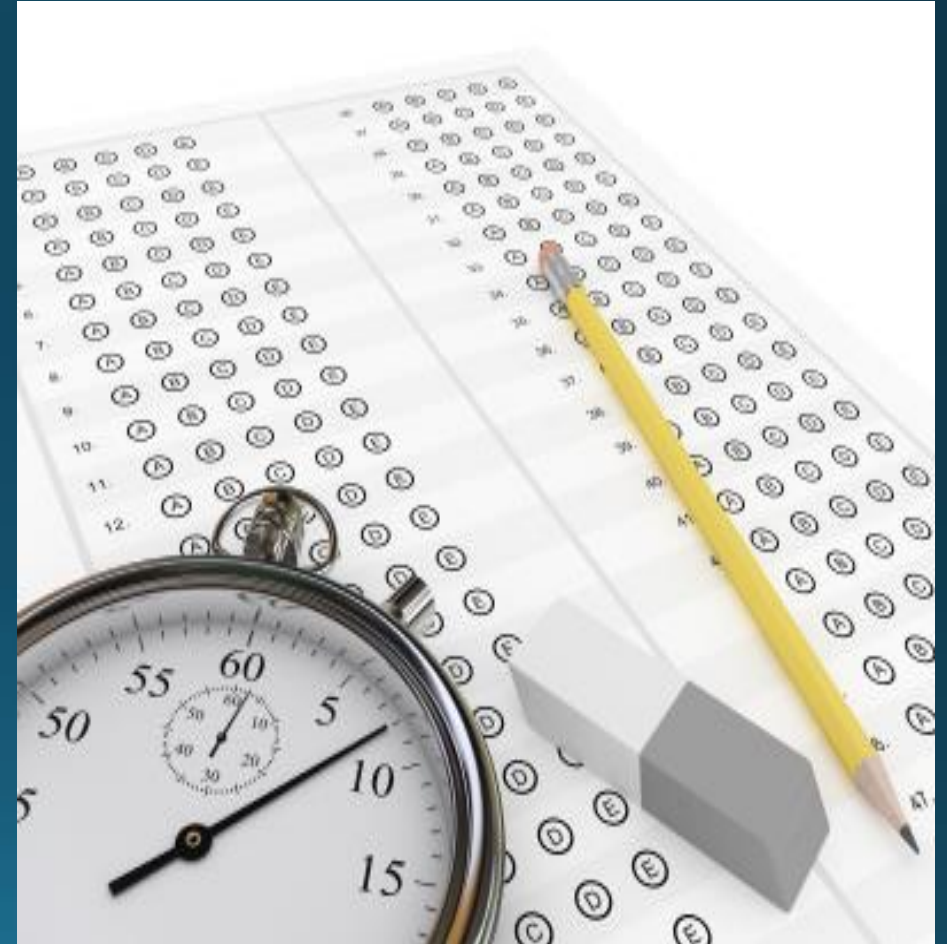
# Changes: Grading & GPAs

A	B	C	D	F				
✓ +	✓	✓	-	X				
Satisfactory / Not Satisfactory								
A +	A -	B +	B -	C +	C -	D +	D -	F
100, 99, 98, 97, 96, 95, 94, 93, 92, 91, 90, 89,								
88, 87, 86, 85, 84, 83, 82 . . .								
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
Keep trying!								

- Colleges have said that as long as the school provides the policy they've used to
  - Calculate grades in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters
  - Assist students in deciding to opt for P/F v. Letter Grades
  - Calculate GPA
  - Determine class rankings
- ...that students will not be penalized for their choices or the policies
- Colleges are also thinking about using 1<sup>st</sup> Q Senior year grades in their evaluations

# Changes: Standardized Testing

- The College Board (SAT, SAT Subject Tests)
  - Conducted AP Tests remotely → sued due to issues, unequal access
  - Has been canceling in person dates due to testing sites being closed
  - Announced in June 2020 that they will be unable to provide remote SAT/SAT Subject Test sittings due to equity issues
- ACT
  - Same challenges as the SAT
  - Has canceled plans (this year) to offer re-testing of specific areas
- In response, hundreds of schools have gone 'test optional' or have stopped requiring the test for admission
  - Some state school systems require the test per law
  - Some schools still require test scores for merit scholarships
  - Top 50 schools have been slower to declare themselves "test optional"
- Good news and bad news



# Changes: Coronavirus Experience Essay



- Common Application
  - Providing an optional essay prompt inviting students to talk about their experiences and challenges during the pandemic
- Coalition Application
  - Providing a series of questions (checkboxes) that students can answer that describe their experience during the pandemic
- Both applications are providing space for counselors to identify the challenges their schools and student have undergone during the pandemic



# Changes: Summer Experiences

- Coronavirus has fundamentally altered the summer experience
  - Summer Jobs
    - Available in some areas
      - High risk areas (grocery, restaurants, etc.)
  - Volunteering
    - Remote opportunities are available, but may not lend the same experience
    - No longer able to volunteer in high risk areas (hospitals, nursing homes, hospice care, etc.)
    - New opportunities as a result of COVID-19 have become available
  - Summer Classes / Enrichment Programs
    - Have moved online
    - While the knowledge gained might be similar, the experience is decidedly different



# Changes: College Touring



- College Tours have moved online
  - Check admissions websites for
    - Virtual admissions sessions (live and recorded)
    - Virtual tours
    - Admissions blogs – insights into admissions officer's thinking and institutional priorities
    - Sign up for information
  - Some are coming back in person – but very socially distance
- Print and Social Media
  - YouTube channels have more content
  - FB, Instagram, Twitter
  - Campus Newspapers
- Books
  - Fiske's Guide to Colleges
  - Princeton Guide

# Changes: Financial Aid

- The FAFSA relies on the 'prior prior' year for calculating your estimated family contribution (EFC)
- Families that have experienced a material change in circumstances THIS year and that have NOT recovered should contact each school's financial aid office prior to completing the FAFSA / CSS Profile for guidance
- Always ask the admissions or financial aid office how outside scholarships impact financial aid





# Special Guest

Mrs. Shay Cook, MS

Accredited Financial Counselor®

Financial Fitness Coach®

CEO & Founder, Crusaders for Change, LLC

