

The Current Covid-19 Pandemic

Advice for Students and Families from College Athletic Advisor

April 17th update

We are into a second month of social distancing, June SAT testing has been cancelled and some things have become clearer, while others have become more difficult to predict.

Our advice fits somewhat neatly into two, the first is narrowly focused on recruiting and your college search, the second is necessarily broader to address larger forces impacting higher education and your college choices.

1. At this point, the NCAA has pro-actively approved any existing school's shift to online instruction. They have also substantially altered their policies regarding how pass/fail or pass/no pass grading is incorporated in their GPA calculations as well and created a "test optional" pathway to initial eligibility in response to students being unable to attempt an SAT/ACT due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If disruptions prevent credible SAT testing, we expect the NCAA to continue to offer blanket waivers for students without a qualifying test score to become eligible immediately.
 - a. Remember that coaches ARE actively recruiting. You can not meet them in person, but you CAN reach them through email, their cell phones, and increasingly via zoom, meet, skype and other (all other?) virtual meeting apps. These will only become more common going forward! **We can help you create a resume and communication plan that will maximize your opportunities to be successful!**
 - b. In person recruiting (officially by D1/D2 coaches, by the reality of pandemic for everyone else) is still banned. However, you CAN sign a National Letter of Intent and Grant-in-Aid letters, these legally obligate both you AND the signing institution.
 - c. Nearly every university is test optional *at least for 2020-21*: the most comprehensive list and explanation is housed at <http://fairtest.org/>
 - d. Colleges are contingency planning for continued COVID-19 related disruptions extending into fall 2020 and beyond. At the moment, I do not believe it is possible to predict with any certainty what our August 2020 reality will look like. The fall season for college (and professional) sports is clearly under threat of significant alteration or outright cancellation.

2. What our post-COVID-19 reality will look like is going to be shaped in large measure by the choices we make now, individually and as a society.
 - a. Better social distancing adherence means shorter periods of "shelter-in-place" directives, lower mortality, and less strain on critical healthcare services.
 - b. The 2020 elections will significantly impact what parts of our society government targets for assistance in this pandemic. National programs to sustain critical state and local government as well as help businesses and average Americans in general recover will be significantly impacted by the which party's control congress and the White House. More specifically in higher education, the impacts and goals of supplemental educational

funding will surely be related to how the Department of Education is lead and staffed after the election.

- c. Until a vaccine is discovered, tested, and distributed to most of the world's population, the implications of returning to any sort of normal activity are staggering in terms of risk. That risk can be managed, but it will entail massive testing and a level of state surveillance that is unprecedented and difficult to administer in American society.
- d. Colleges are very concerned about retention and recruiting students in an environment where their first semester or year could be primarily delivered online. How this influences college recruiting and discount strategies, including athletic scholarships is difficult to predict. In the short term, the NCAA has shown a willingness to allow schools to provide MORE scholarship money. That is an indication of where most university administrators feel they are headed in terms of discount rates and price.
- e. College Board is racing to deploy a "take home" online SAT, it is not a given that colleges will see this as directly equivalent to the current standardized testing model, and it will provide an opening, SHOULD EDUCATIONAL LEADERS WANT TO TAKE IT, to a college application system that no longer requires these types of tests. The NCAA and initial eligibility will be part of this conversation, but it is much larger than simply athletics and impacts diversity, equity, privilege, and long-standing traditions in higher ed.

For more information, contact Dave Morris, College Counselor & CEO, College Athletic Advisor

email: dave@collegethleticadvisor.com or phone: (719) 248-7994

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