Hello SAS community,

The College Counseling Offices, Pudong and Puxi, hope this message finds our families safe, healthy, and in a place they can recharge and work productively to continue the semester.

The SAS College Counselors are working closely together and with our students in grades 10-12 to ensure their continued support. We are on track to complete the same work we started before we left school in January.

As always, all members of the college counseling teams are available to their students. We expect to counsel G12 students through their final college choices, G11 students and families through their first meetings and a series of workshops, and G10 through their final course selections.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 17: Junior Family College Night Screencast for the Class of 2021

This presentation will be recorded and published for families to watch at their convenience.

FEBRUARY 21: Community Q&A Screencast

We will continue to publish recorded presentations that answer community questions as the need arises.

Pudong families can send your questions or concerns to: collegecounseling.pd@saschina.org

Puxi families can send your questions or concerns to: collegecounseling.px@saschina.org

We encourage any SAS community member to send us general questions. In coming weeks our team will continue to answer questions sent to us, and we will share our responses widely via Schoology.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Many of you have already asked questions about distance learning, and any impact it may have on our students’ current or future applications to universities. Questions sent to us include:

• Will online learning have a negative impact on college applications?
• Will time spent on learning be insufficient to meet college requirements?
• Will colleges "trust" the level and rigor of learning online or learning happening outside of a shared schedule?
• Will students be significantly disadvantaged by cancelled SAT and ACT dates?

Building off our connections and travel, we have reached out directly to some admission Deans and officers who read large numbers of SAS applications, and also through our professional networks for college admission professionals. Their responses all share the same sentiment and perspective: *the foremost concern of these admission professionals is the safety, health and well-being of our school communities.*

Further, admission offices all emphasized their support for our students and our school leadership to adjust the schedule the way we see fit to meet the educational needs and wellbeing of our community, just as they would do for theirs if they were in our shoes. The effectiveness of distance learning is well studied, and our students’ applications will be evaluated with their transition into this period of learning in mind. Additionally, college officials offered their support and flexible approaches for students still applying, and assurance that they are understanding and will note for future applications the limitations of changing standardized test schedules and time away this spring.

We have shared a few excerpts below that represent the similar responses of many universities that responded to us.

**Admission Officer Statements for SAS:**

**Cal Tech:** *Please feel free to let your community know that in situations like these, we would never disadvantage a student in our admissions process for something completely out of their control. Furthermore, we trust and support the decisions of the school leadership, and will continue to thoughtfully review such candidates given those circumstantial changes to their curriculum. Each applicant, as always, will be given full consideration taking into consideration all factors both academic and personal.*

**Claremont McKenna:** *We are aware that many schools overseas are modifying their educational models out of precaution and in response to government requests. Claremont McKenna College will work with your school to understand the modifications put in place and will not allow these changes to negatively impact your application in our review process.*

**Gloucestershire, UK:** *Our university will not penalise students in admissions or enrolment terms because of issues beyond their control. My message is to keep applying for a place as normal for 2020/2021 entry and we will communicate in the normal way. We will also endeavour to keep in contact with applicants and high schools via zoom, Skype etc if we are prevented from visiting China.*
Indiana U: We understand that schools and testing services have been closed in consideration of greater public health. We also understand that many affected high schools may be delaying the start of classes, or resuming classes through online means, rather than in-person.

IU remains committed to providing a thorough, holistic review of your students’ applications. We will work with you to ensure completion of those applications, regardless of cancelled standardized tests, or changes to other curriculum and examination timelines.

McGill University: McGill does not have a problem with the virtual/ distance learning while school is out! We are keeping informed with the events and will certainly take all this into account when reviewing applications this year and in future years.

New York University: Given the extraordinary circumstances, we understand that schools need to be flexible with their teaching and we will certainly not disadvantage any students who need to participate in online learning until schools are able to reopen. Context is key, so it would be ideal if you send us an update to let us know when everything has been solidified, but students will still be given full consideration for admission.

While I understand the concern about the February ACT, students should still have enough opportunities to retake the test by the time they apply - don’t forget that NYU is text flexible so your students can possibly apply with AP scores or predicted IB, depending on their curriculum.

Pomona: In the event you get any questions from students or families, please assure them that our admission decisions will not be impacted by the school closure in any way.

USC: All universities, including USC, are aware of the difficult challenges schools throughout China must deal with in the wake of the coronavirus. It will have absolutely no bearing on a student’s ability to apply and matriculate to universities throughout the United States. Especially at a school like SAS, we are confident that students are getting equivalent instructions through distance learning models. We also think there is a lot a student can learn from adapting to challenges. Although it is difficult now, looking back, a student will be able to reflect on how they coped with such a major disruption to their lives and learning. That type of reflection can be helpful as students transition to college – something we think about when we weigh whether a student might be successful at our institution.

Yale University: Of course, it’s only natural that SAS families are wondering how the public health concerns and resulting distance learning may impact their students’ college admissions processes. While adjusting to distance learning is certainly a challenge, the bottom line is that there will be no negative impact on their college applications.
Our whole-person, contextual review process always includes the consideration of extenuating circumstances, whether individual or wide-spread. Although distance-learning is new for SAS, our admissions committee considers and admits students from all types of curricular backgrounds, and no curriculum is ever advantaged or disadvantaged. Of course, we understand that international testing cancellations will be a challenge, and we will certainly be mindful of this reality in application review.

**University of British Columbia:** evaluations occur based on interim documents and are confirmed based on final scores. This is all based on the documents we receive, which presumably don’t list the method of instruction or breaks in studies. UBC uses a holistic admissions process that requires applicants to submit personal profiles (essays and extra-curricular information). Breaks in extra-curriculars, work, volunteering are to be expected due to the Novel Coronavirus outbreak and will not affect applications to us.

In sum, when the student shows up for school and demonstrates engagement in the learning process, distance learning is as suitable as any other mode for meeting college requirements. As always, students should look for creative opportunities that fuel them in these unexpected circumstances to enhance their learning. We look forward to hearing about it!

**LOOKING AHEAD: Testing, TheEleven, University Visits**

- There are understandably concerns about how testing agencies will handle AP and IB examinations this spring in China and across Asia, and whether ACT will allow April and June examinations. Decisions about standardized testing are largely outside of our control, but we are working closely with the testing organizations to be sure they have a clear sense of our students' situation so they can make informed decisions. Our staff has been in contact with the leadership of the International Baccalaureate Organization and College Board, and we know there's a lot of work being done by both organizations to monitor the situation in China and Asia. We will update you as soon as there is more to share from these organizations about changes to test schedules or protocol.
- We have received several inquiries about the status of TheEleven. As a reminder, at TheEleven, we aim to assess and improve the thinking, research, and reflection at the heart of the college process. This helps students avoid the most common pitfalls that impact attaining the best options. Two areas of focus this year are on building adult decision making skills and strengthening the personal profile for applications. At this point, we are not reporting a change in schedule, but we are monitoring the situation carefully. Whatever decision is made, we know it will be in the best interest of the students.
- As we know universities have cancelled travel in Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and China, and limited travel in Korea, Japan, and perhaps other regions, we will be working
with colleges to provide digital visit opportunities for our students to talk with admission officers. We will share details of these opportunities as they develop.

We are excited to continue our work with families! We look forward to receiving your general “index card” questions for the College Office teams at collegecounseling.pd@sascchina.org or collegecounseling.px@sascchina.org, and hearing from you directly. Until then, stay safe and sound, wherever you are. We will be in touch!

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