

THE EDGE

THIS ISSUE Navigating a College Journey in a Virtual World

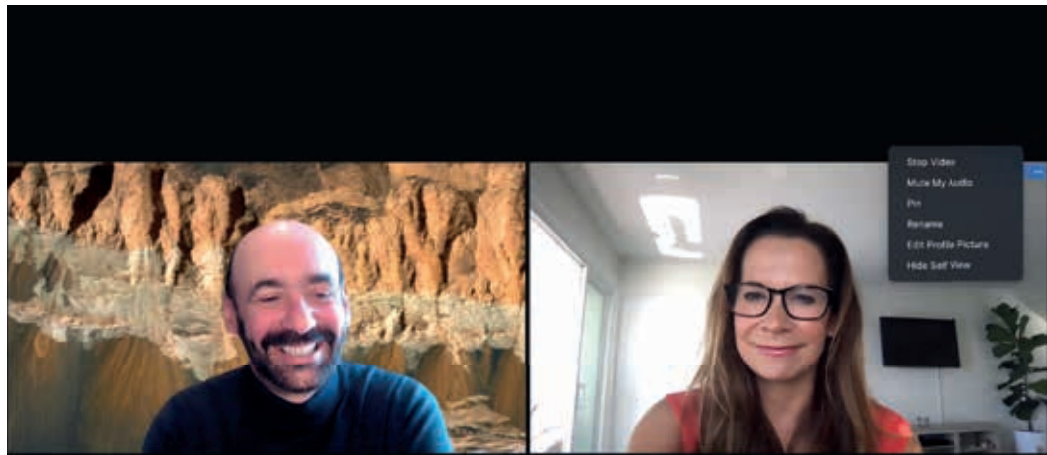
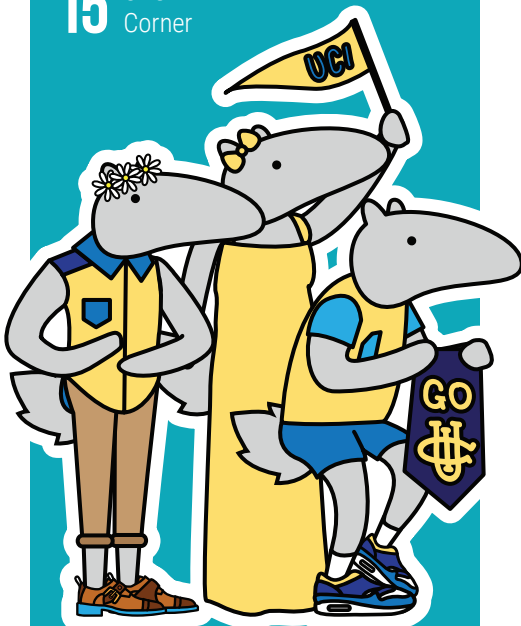


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WELCOME

Dear student,

As this remarkable and challenging year has come to an end, we hope you see your bright future and your college dreams about to become a reality.

What a year 2020 was! You have no doubt learned much more than what could be tested in your courses. You have learned how to adapt and cope and find creative solutions to problems we didn't consider before 2020. These skills will serve you well in the future, in college, and in life, as we have all been tested in ways big and small. You successfully navigated the new and changing terrain of the college admissions process, and now all of us at UCI's Center for Educational Partnerships and the Edge Magazine are ready to help you on the next step of this journey.

The application process was step one, and now it is time to weigh your options and select the lucky college or university that gets to have you as their student. The tables have turned! This new post-application issue is designed to help you make the best decision for your educational future and ensure that you can thrive and succeed once you get there. Read on, and we look forward to seeing you all on campus in 2021!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Reyes-Tuccio, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice Chancellor Educational Partnerships, University of California, Irvine

Richard Arum, Ph.D.
Dean, School of Education,
University of California, Irvine

GETTING ACCEPTED IS JUST THE BEGINNING: SUCCESSFULLY GETTING TO YOUR FIRST YEAR

by Taariq Elmahadi, Program Coordinator, EAOP, UC Irvine

Congratulations on your conditional acceptance to college!

Now that you've received your acceptance letter let's focus on key deadlines to ensure your summer transition to college is a success.

First off, it's important to note that you must accept your college offer of admission and deny all others that you do not intend to commit to by submitting your Statement of Intent to Register (SIR). Submitting your SIR, along with payment, by May 1st lets the university know you are serious about attending their institution. However, it does not guarantee official enrollment. Students are conditionally admitted and required to take a few additional steps to secure official admission. Check your student portal regularly to make sure you maintain your admission status.

We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic makes learning in a virtual environment challenging. Regardless, you must dedicate the rest of your high school days to passing your coursework. This means completing all remaining A-G course requirements with a C or better. Some students are experiencing connectivity issues,

while others are learning how to navigate their digital classroom to keep on top of their assignments and deadlines. No matter your circumstance, stay proactive and work closely with your teachers

and counselors to get the tools and resources needed to complete your high school education. If you receive a D or F in any A-G course, be sure to notify the university's Admissions Office of those grades.

Here is a helpful checklist to help you maintain your admission status:

- Submit your official transcripts by July 1st.
(Keep in mind that many universities have temporarily loosened their transcript deadlines to accommodate for COVID-19 related delays.)
- Submit your AP scores by July 15th.
- Check university-issued emails and student portals regularly for any to do lists that can affect your admission status
- Follow up with your financial aid office and inquire about additional enrollment expectations
- Sign up for an orientation date to register for classes (found in your email or student portal)
- Go back to your Financial Aid Application (FAFSA/Dream App) to confirm your chosen institution by deleting all other applied to institutions.
- Go to your chosen institution Financial Aid portal to review and Accept or Decline your Financial Aid awards.
- Create a Webgrants account
- Complete Financial Counseling

College is a time for exploration and discovery. You will make connections that will have lifetime impacts. Making it to day one is the first step to realizing your potential.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR FINANCIAL AID AWARD AND COVERING THE COST

by Jamal Collins, *Financial Aid Outreach & Communications Liaison, UC Office of the President*

So you have applied for admission to several schools and completed the financial aid application listing those schools. What happens next?

Well, shortly after receiving an offer of admission, you should also receive a financial aid award letter. Each school presents their financial aid award letter differently. However, they should all have the following key elements that will help you determine if the school is a financial fit for you and your family:

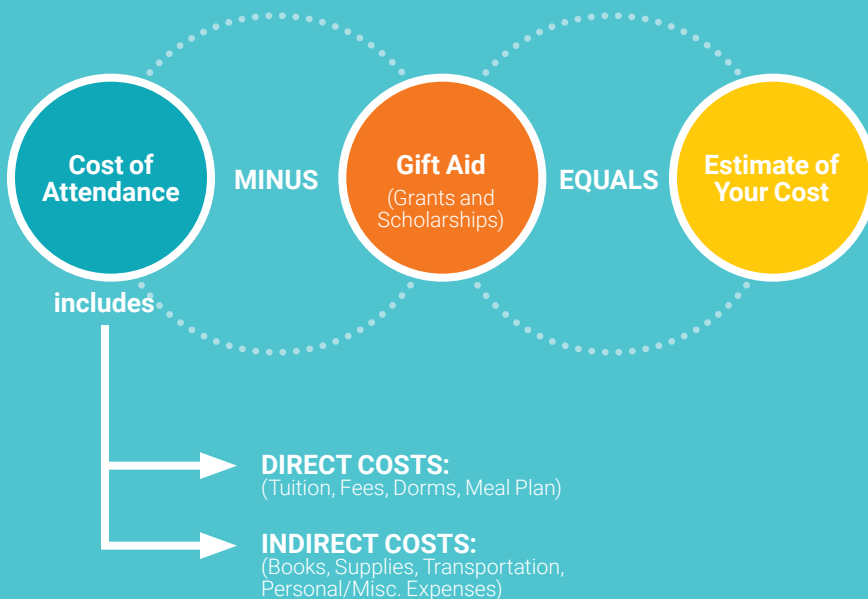
Cost of Attendance – This is the estimated average annual cost to attend a college. It includes tuition and fees, room and board, books, supplies, and other educational expenses.

Gift Aid – These are the grants and scholarships that have been offered. Think of this as a discount on your cost.

Loans – This is money that you can borrow to help pay the remaining costs after gift aid has reduced your cost.

Work – You may also be offered work-study in your financial aid award letter. You can access this award by securing a qualified job. Students with work-study jobs get paid by the hour, and their earnings are limited to the amount offered in their work-study award.

So how do you use these elements to determine how much this year of college will cost for you? You can use a simple formula to get your answer:



HOW TO PAY YOUR ESTIMATED COSTS

Coming up with a plan to cover your estimated costs is essential to your financial success in college, and you may have several options to do this:

Utilize Student Loans

Student loans will be a part of your financial aid award offer. We encourage students to borrow only the amounts that they need. Coming up with a plan will allow you to determine how much you will need to borrow. There are two types of federal loans that are typically offered to students.

Subsidized Loans – Payments for these loans are not required until six months after graduating or dropping below half-time enrollment in college. These are the most beneficial loans for students because they do not accrue interest while enrolled at least half time in college and during the grace period before the loan enters repayment.

Unsubsidized Loans – Like the Subsidized Loans, payments for these loans are not required until six months after you graduate or drop below half-time enrollment in college. The difference is these loans begin accruing interest as the loan is disbursed (“disbursed” is the term used by colleges for funding loans). When it is time for you to begin making payment to your unsubsidized loan, if there is any unpaid interest, that interest will be added to the balance of the loan in a process called Capitalization.

Work-study/Student Employment

Another opportunity you may see in your financial aid award offer is Work-study. If you do not see a work-study offer, but you are interested in work-study, contact your college financial aid office to inquire about being considered. There are student employment opportunities available in various departments at a college. Typically departments prefer a work-study awardee for student employment opportunities, but it's not always a requirement. Even if you

do not have a work-study award and you would like to work in a particular department, it's recommended that you apply for the position you are interested in. Work-study and Student employees are paid an hourly wage.

Savings/Income

If you or your parents have saved money for your education, determine how these savings will factor into paying for your college costs. Also, if your parents can offer you money from their current income, factor that into your plan as well.

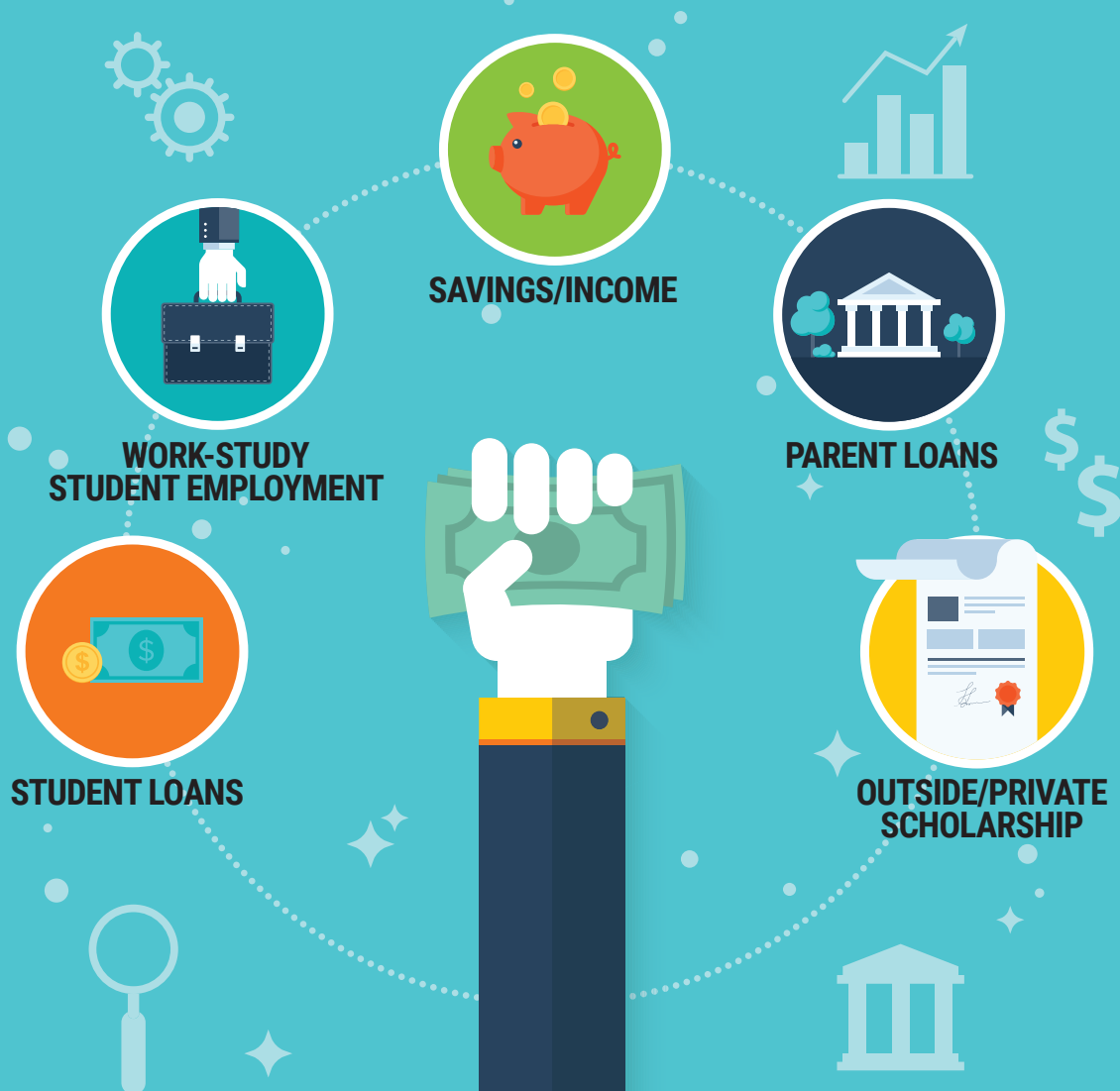
Parent Loans

The federal government offers loans for parents. This loan will show up as a Parent PLUS Loan on a financial aid award

offer. Like the Unsubsidized Loans, interest begins to accrue as the loan disburses, and any unpaid interest is capitalized when the loan goes into repayment. Repayment begins for these loans 60 days after the loan has fully disbursed, but parents can opt to defer payments until after a student graduates or ends their program.

Outside/Private Scholarship

For students attending UC, a great way to reduce your need to work and borrow is to get outside scholarships. These do require some work on your part to find and apply to. Remember, you should NEVER pay to apply for or search for scholarships. Any services that require payment are typically a scam. Searching and applying for scholarships is something you should continue throughout your time in college.



REACH FOR THE UC SYSTEM

by Kimberly Balderrama, Director, Upward Bound, UC Irvine

There are quite a few things high school students should consider if they apply and are admitted into the University of California (UC).

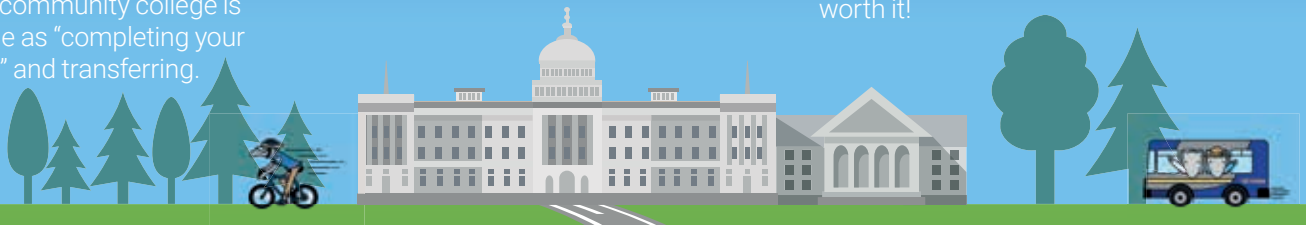
Students are focused on the idea of free tuition their first, and possibly second, year at a California Community College with the California Promise, but may miss out on the advantages of attending a UC straight out of high school. If you are considering the UC, here are a few things to note:

- 1) There is no guarantee the UC you applied to in high school, or the UC you want to transfer to, will accept you. So give the UC a shot! You never know where you will end up or how you will get there. What's important is that you try!
- 2) Attending a community college is not as simple as "completing your General Eds" and transferring.

- a. To transfer into any four-year college, you must transfer into a specific major. To transfer into a specific major, you must take undergraduate classes for that major and maintain a high GPA.
- b. Remember, as a transfer student, colleges look at your entire GPA and all of your classes. In addition, those pre-major classes may be different for every college. If your community college doesn't offer the class(es) needed to transfer, you may need to find alternatives to meeting that prerequisite for your four-year college.
- c. When transferring, you may find your major is impacted and not accepting students.

- 3) You may lose financial aid opportunities. Many students are choosing to attend a Community College to utilize the California Promise. However, by opting for Community College first, you may lose out on CalGrant aid or work-study that may only be available during your first few years of college. If you do not use it, you may become ineligible for it later.

Regardless of the concerns you may have, it's important you consider your options when deciding whether to attend the UC at first admission. Checking out campus resources and talking to students about their experiences in-person and virtually might help in your own process. But... if the University of California is your dream destination, grab the opportunity as soon as you are accepted. It will be worth it!



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COMMUNITY COLLEGE SUCCESS IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

by Nancy Arteaga, Assistant Director, Community College Programs, UC Irvine

The California Community College system is a large, accessible, and convenient option for higher education composed of 115 campuses and over 2.1 million students.

With such unique and diverse populations, community colleges are known to offer a wide selection of courses for the traditional, night, weekend, and distant learners.

In response to COVID-19, some community college campuses have extended their variety of online course offerings (Campus options may vary).

A silver-lining of navigating college during a global pandemic is the increased access to resources geared towards student success readily available on virtual platforms. It is important to keep in mind your responsibility in maintaining good academic standing and an awareness of the resources available to support you.



Accountability & Initiative

- ▶ Keep up with readings, assignments, and lectures. It is too easy to fall behind.
- ▶ Make a note of important assignments and exam dates.
- ▶ Commit to attending all live classes. Some instructors consider attendance.
- ▶ Consider forming study groups within your classes to hold yourself accountable.
- ▶ Take advantage of instructors' offering virtual office hours. Ask questions and engage with the material.
- ▶ Do not wait to start on assignments, readings, or to get instructions directly from an instructor. As a college student, you should take the initiative to reach out when you need clarification on material or assignments.

Academic Support Centers

- ▶ These centers are designed to offer academic support and provide workshops to enhance time management skills, learning techniques, and tools to navigate course content.

- ▶ Services may include virtual tutoring, writing centers, and supplemental instructors.

Counseling & Transfer Centers

- ▶ Counseling Centers can assist in developing an academic plan and referrals for support beyond academics.
- ▶ Transfer Centers can establish a personalized transfer success plan and provide a community platform for transfer-focused students.

Social Media

- ▶ Many community college resources have stepped up their virtual presence to ensure students stay informed.
- ▶ Follow programs and centers at your campus for updates on resources that will help you succeed.

In the chart below, here are some key terms to understand course types when registering. It is important to know what the different terms mean and what is expected of you.

	COURSE TYPE			
	Online	Online Live	Online Blended	Hybrid
Scheduled live virtual meeting dates & times?	No	Weekly	Occasionally	Some
Scheduled in-person meeting dates & times?	No	No	No	Some
Scheduled windows for assignment submission, quizzes, & exams?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Uses an online student portal and other technology for communication, assignment, quiz, and exam submission?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

HOW TO NAVIGATE TRANSFERRING FROM A COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO YOUR DREAM SCHOOL

by Daisy James, Program Coordinator, Community College Programs, UC Irvine

Starting Community College

Students often don't realize that preparing to transfer begins as soon as you decide to start at a community college. In my personal experience as a first-generation and low-income student, navigating community college was overwhelming. At times I felt alone and lost. However, I was fortunate to have been part of a bridge program called the First-Year Experience (FYE) Program. FYE Programs are among the many learning communities established across California Community Colleges to help students transition from high school to community college and beyond by providing assigned counselors and a sense of community amongst program participants. It is easy to fall behind without adequate support and guidance, so learning communities can be crucial for student success.

Pathways to Transfer

Through the FYE Program, I became aware of the transfer center at my community college, a place dedicated

to assisting students who wanted to transfer to 4-year institutions. At the Transit Center, I attended workshops and met with transfer counselors to ensure I was ready to apply for transfer. The transfer center made me aware of programs that guaranteed admission to 4-year institutions. Programs such as the Associates Degree for Transfer (ADT) provides a direct pathway to California State Universities (CSUs). Similarly, the UC Transfer Admission Guarantee (UC TAG) does the same for students interested in transferring to a UC campus. While both have their own set of requirements and exceptions, they are great programs that students should take advantage of.

Students at community college who want to transfer to a 4-year institution should seek support centers and learning communities. They are an important first step in making that goal a reality.

Many community colleges offer the following for first-generation or low-income students:

MESA

A UC-wide initiative, MESA provides students who are majoring in STEM with academic support to ensure they transfer successfully to 4-year institutions.

PUENTE

A UC-wide initiative, Puente offers academic support in counseling, mentorship, and community building to ensure students successfully transfer to 4-year institutions.

UMOJA

Aims to provide students who identify as Black/African-American with a sense of community to increase academic success.

EOPS

Offers academic counseling, textbook assistance, and other support services to ensure students successfully transfer to 4-year institutions.

UCI TRANSFER PREP

An outreach program geared towards increasing UC awareness, cultivating a positive UC-going culture, and empowering students to create a plan for transfer success.

While many campuses have transitioned to an online format due to COVID-19, many of these programs continue to support their students virtually.



TIPS TO SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATE ONLINE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS

by Rodolfo Acosta, Director, GEAR Up, UC Irvine

In a matter of hours, the COVID-19 pandemic changed education across the country, causing educators to shift their instruction from traditional live classrooms to online distance learning. Intended as only a short term solution, distance learning will persist for the 2020-2021 academic year. As high school seniors, you have completed the college application process remotely. This was likely a daunting task that required you to be self-motivated and responsible for your success—skills that will prove essential in your first year of college.

The following list is meant to provide you with tips for navigating online classes with the same independence and efficacy you'll need when you attend college.



- ▶ **Get Organized:** Online classes place more responsibility on you in terms of independent learning. Make sure that you organize class assignments by month. You can buy a planner or use google “Excel monthly planner” as they have various useful templates.
- ▶ **Leverage Headphones:** Some of us live with extended family, and our homes may be a little noisy. Your teachers understand this, but any tool that will help you concentrate is helpful and recommended.
- ▶ **Participate:** In traditional classrooms, your teacher may observe your participation and try to involve you actively. This is more difficult in online classes. Ask questions, type them in

the chat box function, or attend your teacher’s office hours. Active participation helps keep you engaged during class and increases learning.

- ▶ **Ergonomics:** You will be sitting for long periods, so make sure your study area provides you with the proper back support. Avoid attending class on a couch or in bed, as it’s not great on your back.
- ▶ **Be Intentional About Rest:** Make sure that you move and stretch between classes. Go to sleep at a reasonable time, even if your classes start later.

- ▶ **Advocate for Yourself:** Reach out to counselors, find your own resources, and involve your parents if you can. Online or social distancing after school or extra-curricular activities can help connect you with your peers, learn new skills, and look great on your college application or resume.

Taking responsibility for your own education is an essential part of college success. While the online learning environment created by the COVID-19 pandemic is far from ideal, a virtual college education is more valuable than no college education.

2021 SENIOR TIMELINE

by Erick Espino, Program Coordinator, EAOP, UC Irvine



FEBRUARY

- Visit college admission pages for the schools you applied to, and participate in virtual college tours, so you are ready to make a decision when admission letters start coming in next month!

APRIL

- Compare all of your Financial Aid Award letters. Be sure to contact the Financial Aid office if you have any questions.
- Visit Campus Open Houses, whether it be in person or virtually, and begin finalizing your decision about which campus you will attend in the fall.
- Maintain academic GPA; Remember, you must pass all courses with a "C" or better to keep your admissions to all universities.

JUNE

- Request and send official transcripts from your high school registrar and make sure they are sent to the university you plan to enroll in.
- Be sure to complete any items on your college portal to-do list!
- Continue searching and applying for available scholarships as it is not too late to apply! Look at School/Major specific scholarships.

JAN



FEB



MAR



APR



MAY



JUNE



JANUARY

- Ask your counselor about your Cal Grant GPA Verification Form and make sure it gets submitted.



MARCH

- ✔ **March 1:** You are almost there! Notification of Fall 2021 admissions decisions begins. Keep an eye on your email and postal mail for acceptance letters; be patient, it may take time for them to get to you!
- ✔ **March 2:** California Dream Act and FAFSA Application DUE for priority consideration of financial aid!
- ✔ **March 2:** Deadline to submit Cal Grant GPA Verification Form to be eligible for Cal Grants.
- ✔ **March 31:** Notification of Fall 2021 admissions decisions for freshman applicants is complete.

MAY

- ✔ **May 1:** Deadline for admitted freshman to submit Statement of Intent to Register (SIR) to UC/CSU campuses.
Notify all colleges of acceptance or rejection of admission or financial aid offers.
- Be sure to apply for housing by the deadline if planning to live on campus.
- All incoming UC freshman who have not met the Entry Level Writing Requirements by April 1st must Take Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) test. For more info visit: <https://www.ucop.edu/elwr/>
- Prepare for your AP Exams: Make sure to take the AP exams listed on your college applications.
- Look into Summer Bridge/Summer Start opportunities offered at the school you commit to.

SAGE CORNER

What should high school students look forward to during their first year of college?

The freedom to choose classes that align with your interests. While there are still some restrictions on what classes you can take (due to things such as prerequisites, schedule conflicts, or major restrictions, etc.), college is a place to really explore a discipline in depth and test whether or not you are a good fit for whatever field you are studying. The best part about being a first-year is the freedom to make mistakes-- even if you realize you chose the wrong major or get bad grades, there is still plenty of time for you to switch majors or pull your GPA back up, so use that to your advantage and try new things!

— Kelly Chen, Education Sciences, Chinese Studies

I think students should look forward to the possibilities and opportunities that lie ahead in college. College is really the time in your life where you learn a lot more about your interests and establish your identity. There's so much to explore and a lot of opportunities available to you, so take advantage of your first year and make every moment count!

— Emily Ha, Business Economics and Public Health Policy

#UCISAGECorner

AUGUST Class of 2021

- ✓ **August 1st:** UC Application open at <https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply-now.html>
- If planning to submit the UC application, now is a good time to start preparing responses for the Personal Insight Questions (PIQs). See page 12 for help.
- Search and apply for available scholarships.



SEP

SEPTEMBER Class of 2021

- Create a list of universities you plan to apply to and participate in any online college fairs your school may be hosting.
- Identify two or three people to help review your college application materials, specifically your PIQ if applying to the UC.
- Ask for any letters of recommendation for colleges that require them for admissions, be sure to give your recommenders an ample amount of time.



JUL

AUG

JULY

- ✓ **July 1:** Deadline to submit final, official transcripts to UC campuses.
- ✓ **July 15:** Deadline to submit official AP, IB exam results to UC campus admissions office. Test scores must be postmarked or electronically submitted on or before July 15.

TIME MANAGEMENT: HOW TO STAY PRODUCTIVE AS A COLLEGE STUDENT

by Liliana Vazquez, Program Coordinator, EAOP, UC Irvine

Managing your time is not an easy task.

Not knowing how to manage your time correctly can lead to stress and poor quality work. Not to mention, in the virtual world of education, it becomes your responsibility to manage your time and classwork effectively. It is very easy to fall behind on your academics, especially in an online learning environment, so here are a few tips for managing your time:

Tips for managing college deadlines

- ▶ Write down ALL deadlines! This will help you stay accountable and make sure that you do not miss any assignments. You can use a planner, Google Calendar, or even just a notepad. Just make sure these deadlines are in plain sight so that you can be reminded of due dates.
- ▶ Start working on your assignments early! Try not to procrastinate and leave all of your assignments until the last minute. If you do this, you will create a lot of stress, and it can result in you turning in poor quality work.
- ▶ Figure out the time that you are most productive. Some people are more productive in the mornings, whereas others work better at night. Find a time that you can be most productive and are able to concentrate.
- ▶ Designate specific times for studying and working on assignments. This will allow you to get most of your work done and have free time afterward.
- ▶ Find your place to study and get work done. In this virtual world, it can be hard to get things done with so much going on around you. Try to find a space in your home that you can make your own, one that you look forward to going to, to get your work done.



Managing schoolwork and social life in college

Socializing is an important part of college life. There are many opportunities to join clubs, organizations, and programs to meet people.

- ▶ Connect with friends and peers between your classes. You might have gaps between your classes, so you can use that opportunity to go out for lunch with friends or even just meet up for coffee.
- ▶ Talk to people in your classes. You can form study groups and make new friends who share similar interests. Most classes tend to have group chats through Group Me or Facebook; join the group chats for all of your classes. If your class does not have a group chat, this is a great opportunity for you to create one and share it with your classmates during Zoom.
- ▶ Make plans in advance. This way you can prepare and make sure that you have all of your class assignments done. After you've completed all of your assignments, you can go out and have fun without worrying about any pending deadlines.
- ▶ Join organizations and clubs that will help with your academics. Some clubs will have study hours and offer mentorship for their members.
- ▶ Don't be afraid to say "no." Prioritize your schoolwork and don't feel pressured to go out with friends or classmates if you have a lot of schoolwork to get done.

By managing your time properly and using the pointers above, you will be able to make the most of your college experience, even in an online learning environment!

LIVING AND LEARNING IN COLLEGE

by Jody Cajudo, Program Coordinator, EAOP, UC Irvine

Pursuing a college education is an opportunity to learn more about yourself. However, taking on this new venture may come with some growing pains as you transition. Establishing a routine and setting your personal and academic goals will help you find a balance between living and learning in college. Whether you will be living on-campus, commuting, or attending class online, use this guide to set yourself up for success in your first year of college.

LIVING

Take care of yourself and your environment

Creating a happy and safe environment is vital to your well-being. Teach yourself some basic skills by learning to cook, shop for groceries, and clean regularly. If you have a roommate, consider splitting the tasks. If you need support, reconnect with loved ones or establish new relationships.

Manage your finances

Managing your finances early and often will set you up for success in the long run. Open a bank account and plan your budget for upcoming expenses such as food, rent, and utilities.

For additional income, a part-time job is an option to consider if you have time. Many students who are eligible for financial aid take advantage of their Work-Study Award to work flexible hours on-campus. Other students search for their local area or utilize www.joinhandshake.com to search for jobs.

Utilize your resources

Your college campus has a variety of resources that contribute to your overall wellness. These include Financial Aid & Scholarships, Wellness, Health & Counseling Services, Basic Needs Resources, and Disability Services Center. Look into the resources that are available on your campus so you can receive the support you need.

LEARNING

Prepare to learn

Whether you are learning online or in-person, there are some preparations you need to make to ensure you have a successful school year.

Check your school email daily, look out for important announcements, and review your class syllabus.

Create a motivating work environment by setting up your homework or classroom area with all the necessary materials.

Plan your schedule

Utilize a planner or calendar to track your class sessions, assignment due dates, and important meetings. Make sure you factor in study time and personal responsibilities to maintain a balance in your weekly schedule.

Utilize your resources

Your college campus has a variety of resources that will support your learning experience. These include the Library, Academic Advising, Tutoring, and Faculty office hours. Many of these resources have transitioned to providing these services online. Look into the resources on your campus to see the options that are available to you.



THE VALUE OF HAVING A MENTOR IN COLLEGE

by Samantha Nohemy Lemus, *Sophomore, International Studies; Chicana/Latinx Studies Major, UC Irvine*

Inspired by the late Tupac, I truly am a rose that grew from the concrete. I grew up in the Jordan Downs projects in Watts, California. Being a first-generation, low-income student, I had a difficult time with the college application process.

Initially, I naively attended a private college, which I withdrew from after a year due to unaffordability. I later enrolled at my local community college, hoping to transfer into a 4-year university. Initially, I felt defeated, but I switched mindsets and trusted my choice would lead me down the right path.

While balancing school, I worked at an immigration law firm, where I found my first professional mentor. He reminded me that being a “hood scholar” has

a unique power in and of itself, and he always pushed me to be the best version of myself.

After two years, I transferred to the University of California, Irvine (UCI). At UCI, I applied and was accepted to the Student Achievement Guided by Experience (SAGE) Scholars program. Through SAGE, I’ve learned skills in time-management, resume, and cover letter writing, career planning, but most importantly, I’ve gained confidence in myself as a scholar and a professional.

My newfound confidence helped me land a year-round paid internship, which also came with a scholarship to offset financial burdens. I also served as a mentor to rising high school seniors participating in the Youth Leadership Institute. I am set to graduate with degrees in International Studies and

Chicana/Latinx Studies by June 2022. I plan on doing a year of advocacy work as I prepare my applications for law school.

While I may have felt lost once, today I can say with full confidence that I will be a successful lawyer, and I’m grateful for the mentors in my life who believed in me, even when I didn’t. Remember never to be afraid to ask questions, and be open to the idea that the people who will impact your life most will come from different walks of life. I thank my mentors as they have helped shape me into the person I am today. A takeaway lesson from SAGE is always to keep rising and reaching for your dreams, and remember to keep lifting others around you to make a positive impact... that’s the gift of mentorship!



SAGE (Student Achievement Guided by Experience) provides students who have significant financial need with the tools to invest in their future through mentorship, leadership training, career and graduate school planning, and access to internship and scholarship opportunities. Our SAGE Scholars gain the transferrable skills and experience needed to find success in graduate school and to secure full-time career positions. More information on our students, and program, can be found on our website: <https://www.sagescholars.uci.edu/>

What advice would you give to high school students who are having difficulty finding the motivation to attend live lectures, studying, or completing assignments?

It's okay to struggle right now; we're in the midst of a pandemic. Some strategies that might be useful are asking others to join you for study parties! I know that for myself, just having a friend sit with me online is helpful and motivating in that I know someone else is doing work, and so I should as well. Also, utilizing methods such as the Pomodoro Technique to break your work down into chunks can make things feel more manageable. Keep experimenting to find what works for you and once you find your stride, note it and use it.

—Thao Uyen Pham Vu,
Biological Sciences

This pandemic has taught me the power of willpower and how one's mental state can sway any situation. In the beginning of the pandemic, my motivation was nonexistent, and my educational success was in jeopardy. What kept my motivation going despite wanting to take the easy way out and give up was being with my family during these rough times. Having the support of my

mom during the scare of Covid-19 and the stress of the protests that happened in my hometown helped me cope with distractions around me. Also reminding why I am pursuing my degree kept me attending classes even if my participation was not the best.

—Isabella Angulo,
Chemistry emphasis in Biology

Senioritis is real and with the shift of online learning, it has only increased 10 fold. Education is an investment for you and those around you. You have to remind yourself that it will all be worth it. What helped me and still helps me is to create an accountability system with your peers or family.

—Elizabeth Montoya,
Biological Sciences and Sociology

Provide some strategies on how you maintain your relationship with teachers and other classmates online?

It is still possible! To maintain relationships with teachers/professors, don't be afraid of reaching out to them because, at one point, they were just like you. To maintain relationships with classmates, be open to the idea of being vulnerable, even if it's not in-

person. In fact, it is something about having face-to-face interaction that makes the process of being vulnerable easier. You'd be surprised to find out how strong these relationships can grow to be!

—Maria Rodriguez,
Anthropology B.A./ Public Health
Policy B.A.

What advice would you provide high school students concerned that their college experience won't be the same because of online classes?

They always say that your time and experience in college is what you make of it, and it is still true in an online environment. Even if it is virtual, take the time to attend events offered by clubs and organizations to meet your fellow students.

—Mark Rojas,
Applied Physics

Just remember this is temporary. One year of virtual learning will not define your college experience. It sucks for now, but the resources are still there, and the professors are understanding. It may be a little hard to connect, but not impossible.

—Blessing Omolafe,
Biological Sciences



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