

**February
2020**

Save the Date

March 5
Cup of College
WCCR
8 a.m.-9 a.m.

March 10
College Counseling
Meeting with
Sophomore Students
12:45 p.m.- 1:15 p.m.
PAC

March 16
Sophomore College
Trip to Richmond, VA
All Day

March 17
College Counseling Meeting
with Junior Students
12:45 p.m.- 1:15 p.m.
PAC

March 24
ACT for Participating
Sophomores and
Juniors

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St. David's School

Collegebeat...

An Update from the College Counseling Office

College Admission Fake News

by Brennan Barnard | Forbes.com | February 12, 2020

It is impossible to get into college. At least this was the impression of the high school junior sitting in my school counseling office talking about admission. He had heard about declining acceptance rates and increased application numbers and was ready to give up before he even began. This is when I asked him what percent of the around [3,000 four-year colleges and universities](#) in this nation accepted less than a quarter of their applicants. Before he could respond, I blurted out the answer. "Just over 3%, so about 100 schools." I then explained that over half of colleges and universities admit more than two-thirds of their applicants, and some have open enrollment, meaning they pretty much take anyone.

Impossible to get into college? "Fake News." The truth is, the majority of colleges and universities in this country accept many more students than they deny. One can easily find a slew of news stories and college press releases that tout soaring application numbers and admit rates under 10%, leading one to believe that competition to get into college is fierce. That is simply not true if taken in context.

We are living in an era of misinformation and data manipulation. One need not look any further than the presidential primary to see the ways that candidates massage polling data to make their case. Any two polls likely yield different results and responses to the Iowa caucuses have been creative and telling. When it comes to college admission, the informed consumer is best served by careful research and a critical eye to what's real, what's thorough, and what's subjective. Here is a quick way for students and families to cut through the noise, access accurate information and determine how it applies to them and their college hopes. The acronym is easy to remember: **S.C.A.M.**

Source: Consider where the information is coming from. Is it a reputable news outlet or data gathering organization? Is the source trying to sell you a product or do they have another ulterior motive? An alarming number of students and parents get their information about college admission from websites like College Confidential or anecdotal posts on social media. There are ample subjective "authorities" on admission, so consider what biases or agendas might exist. Then find a better resource—a school counselor, perhaps?

Context: Even when a source is proven to be reputable and the data is deemed accurate and comprehensive, one must still consider the circumstances or background within which it is offered. Taken out of context, any number can be used inappropriately or in an exaggerated manner. It is important to understand how the [continued on page 2](#)

**SAT Test
Schedule****Saturday, March 14**

Register by 2/14/20

Saturday, May 2

Register by 4/3/20

Saturday, June 6

Register by 5/8/20

**ACT Test
Schedule****Saturday, Feb. 8**

Register by 1/10/20

Tuesday, March 24**St. David's will
administer ACT to
juniors and
sophomores****details forthcoming****Saturday, April 4**

Register by 2/28/20

Saturday, June 13

Register by 5/8/20

Saturday, July 18

Register by 6/19/20

**SAT Subject Test
Schedule****Literature**

May 2, June 6

Biology,**Chemistry, Physics**

May 2, June 6

Math I and II

May 2, June 6

US History

May 2, June 6

World History

June 6

French, Spanish -**Reading Only**

May 2, June 6

Latin - Reading Only

June 6

College Admission Fake News, *continued*

information you are getting applies to *you* and your unique situation. For example, the acceptance rate published by a college means very different things to any two applicants. A 10% admit rate does not mean a first-generation, low-income college student from rural Nebraska and a well-resourced applicant from suburban Philadelphia each have a 1 in 10 chance of being admitted, even if their grades and test score are identical.

Alternatives: It is easy to read a headline or hear a statistic and jump to conclusions. To really understand the nature of the information one is provided, however, it is best to consider alternative approaches, explanations, or ways of interpreting the data. You might read a story about the college essay that "got a student into all eight Ivy League schools." What you might not realize is that she was also a recruited athlete, or the valedictorian at her high school, or had perfect scores on the SAT (maybe all three). In other words, it is prudent to consider cause and effect when faced with statistics or news about college admission.

Meaning: How does this all apply to you? Will the news you are hearing impact you differently than others who are hearing the same news? For example, one might read an article about how unaffordable college is and how average student debt climbs higher every year. This might be true but it does not mean that a college degree is unobtainable. It could be that your family will qualify for significant financial aid and that you will be a competitive applicant at a school that guarantees to meet full need. In this case, grants and scholarships could make college extremely affordable.

Let's apply this investigative approach to three areas of college admission. Keep in mind that though a SCAM audit might determine something to be fake news, the intent of the misinformation is not necessarily nefarious or malicious.

College SCAMs

The goal of college and university admission offices is to attract and admit qualified students. As such, they provide a range of information in their marketing materials. The well-informed college applicant looks beyond the surface, acknowledging that the source is inherently biased. It is prudent to ask what is missing, what aren't they telling you, and what are the numbers underneath the numbers you are provided?

For example, a college might publish a student-to-faculty ratio of 19-to-1. Sounds pretty good, right? If taken at face value, the uninformed student might be surprised when they arrive at their first introductory psychology class to find 150 other students with them in a lecture hall. The source might be accurate in terms of aggregate data from the college's enrollment statistics, but the lived experience could be vastly different given the context. An alternative approach would be to ask the school what percent of all their courses have 19 students per section. Or perhaps one might explore class sizes for higher-level classes that might be taken during the last two years of college.

The same need to dig beyond the surface numbers applies to retention rates, four-year graduation rates, test or GPA averages, and other data published by schools. Figuring out what the numbers mean for you will turn potentially misleading information into news you can use.

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College Admission Fake News, *continued*

Industry SCAMs

Commercial college rankings are perhaps the greatest SCAM of all. These flawed ratings produced by companies like *US News and World Report* purport to tell consumers which colleges are better than others. One must consider the source and the reality that they are not attempting to provide a resource for the common good but, instead, create anxiety to sell a product. The context and criteria by which they construct the rankings have rightfully garnered great [criticism](#) and consternation. Does the fact that a college was ranked 6th one year and 11th the next mean that the quality of education or experience at that school has diminished in the past twelve months? Unlikely. Consider [alternatives](#) to commercial rankings, like developing your own system for assessing or rating colleges and determining whether or not they are an appropriate match for your interests and the experience you want to have.

One should also be wary of research and reports that are funded and released by testing agencies, test prep companies and other players in the “admission industrial complex” who have an agenda. A perfect example is the [Federal Trade Commission's complaint against the personal finance website LendEDU.com](#). This company, that provides information about student loans (among other finance resources), has come under fire for failing to disclose the influence of advertisers on their supposedly unbiased reviews and ratings. Fake news? Give it the SCAM test and decide for yourself.

Know Your Resources

The college search and application experience can sometimes feel overwhelming with information coming from all angles—somewhat like drinking from a firehose. Rather than letting yourself get drenched, take control of the situation. It is your job as an applicant to identify the best sources of information and to constantly fact check to make sure you understand the implications of what you are learning and how it applies to your future. The admission experience done right is actually preparation for college. Do your homework. Check your sources. Consider a variety of perspectives. Take the time you need to employ the SCAM test and remember two things: don't believe everything you read on the internet and college is possible.



The 2020 Martha Guy Summer Institute is July 19-August 1, 2020

The Martha Guy Summer Institute was created as a premier summer experience for high achieving high school students who are interested in pursuing a college degree in business. The program explores different disciplines within the business world, exposing students to regional business leaders and developing the leadership and professional behavior skills necessary to be successful in the business realm.

Since 2004, the institute has provided a select group of students an unparalleled opportunity to study business and develop leadership skills in a fun and friendly environment on the Appalachian State campus.

The online application is now available at <https://marthaguy.appstate.edu>

Application deadline is Friday, February 28, 2020.

Scholarship Spotlight

Abbott and Fenner Scholarship

Abbott and Fenner are committed to continuing efforts at helping those who have the desire and ambition to succeed.

The A&F Scholarships are available to all high school juniors and seniors.

To apply for this scholarship you will need to write a 500-1000 word essay on the topic below:

*Describe your educational career and life goals.
Explain your plan for achieving these goals.
Include your degree/major, why you selected it, and how this degree/major will help you achieve your goals.*

Submissions must be sent via email to scholarships@abbottandfenner.com

Deadline: June 12, 2020

Summer Internship Opportunities

Applications are underway for student internships and shadow days for the summer of 2020. Twenty organizations and businesses, many of them from our parent community, are offering a variety of opportunities ranging from 1-2 days shadowing, to a longer term internship, as well as 8-10 week summer jobs. Students can experience 'a day in the life' in the fields of engineering, business, marketing, finance, real estate, medical, non-profit etc. The application process is designed to give students practice in writing resumes, cover letters, interviewing and meeting deadlines. For more information, the list of internships and application form, students may contact [Mrs. Keegan](#) in the College Counseling office. Note: some applications are due by **February 21**. The remaining applications are due by **March 31**.

College Decisions

Emily Alcock	Loyola University Maryland	McKenzie Nobrega	University of Central Florida
Ella Alford	Virginia Tech	Nicholas Priester	Elon University
Jessica Du	Vanderbilt University	Buzzy Russell	NC State
Clay Duckworth	Auburn University	Bryce Seemann	Colorado State University
Christy Korniychuk	New York University	Cole Whitford	UNC Chapel Hill
Chad Lilly	Southern Methodist University		
Susanna Martin	University of Virginia		
Madison Nobrega	Hampton University		



ST. DAVID'S SCHOOL
FAITH • VIRTUE • KNOWLEDGE

3400 White Oak Road
Raleigh, NC 27609

Phone: 919-782-3331
Fax: 919-232-5053

www.stdavidraleigh.org

Danna Markoff Director of College Counseling	dmarkoff@sdsd.org
Jamie Martin Assistant Director of College Counseling	jmartin@sdsd.org
Helen Keegan Academic Counselor	hkeegan@sdsd.org
Emily Roten Testing Coordinator	eroten@sdsd.org