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Helpful Links

For info about SAT I, II, and AP Tests go to:

www.collegeboard.com

For info about ACT test go to:

www.act.org

For info about test optional schools go to:

www.fairtest.org/university/optional

For info about financial aid go to:

www.FAFSA.ed.gov

www.fastweb.com

www.finaid.org

For college search info go to:

www.collegenavigator.gov

www.collegeprowler.com

To take a virtual tour of college campuses go to:

www.youniversitytv.com

To learn about Colleges That Change Lives go to:

www.ctcl.org

Tips for Midterm Success

So, you had a terrific time over break...you caught up on some much-needed sleep; you hung out with friends –either virtually or in person; and you survived that quality family time you thought would never end.

It's your first week back to school –don't fret guys, it's not a full week of school this week- and your teachers and peers are already starting to whisper the dreaded "M" word and you stop to wonder, "Where is the justice in any of this?!"

Never fear, AcademicAlly, LLC is here to provide you with some solid strategies to prepare for your midterm exams and projects. Start now. Start small and then build your momentum. You can do this!

- **Start) by taking three minutes to be mindful. Here are some suggestions for what this might look like:**

Sit quietly and place your hands on your belly and breathe, feeling the rise and fall of your stomach muscles.

Practice yoga.

Go outside-even in this frigidly cold weather- and walk in your front or backyard. Listen to the snow rubbing against the bottoms of your shoes. Listen to any stray birds or squirrels chattering around you. Notice what you see around you.

Place an ice cube in your hand and observe it using all of your senses-what does it look like, smell like, feel like, sound like (yes, hold it to your ear!). How does its appearance change in your hand? What is your body's response to the cold in your hand? Place it in your mouth

Stay on top of it:

Seniors: Even though those applications are in, you must continue to keep those grades up. Colleges will be asking for mid-year reports as well as end-of-the-year transcripts. Note that your acceptances to college are contingent upon your continued performance in school.

Juniors: Now that you have your PSAT scores, think about what schools you want to visit this spring. Start to buckle down for midterms (See this month's article about avoiding midterm madness for helpful pointers.) Typically, the Common Application releases its essay topics in March. We like to help our students complete these essays prior to the summer vacation.

Registration Deadlines for ACT and SAT:

ACT: www.act.org

SAT: www.collegeboard.org

Gift Yourself the Gift of Peace: Let It Go

One of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves is the gift of letting the past go. All of us have said or done things we regret. Using them as punitive measures does nothing but break our spirit and discourage us from trying again. Mistakes are not a waste as long as we look at them and determine the following:

- 1) What went wrong?
- 2) What caused it to go wrong?
- 3) Knowing what I know now, what would I do differently?
- 4) How can I take this information and use it to move forward with confidence?

Yes, making a mistake can be humiliating and sometimes painful. However, our shortcomings don't have to be a shameful or tragic experience. Make it valuable by learning from the situation and doing things differently.

and observe the changes in shape, consistency, taste, etc. How does your mouth respond to it?

****These exercises can help to ground you and stave off stress and anxiety.**

- **Now let's start to get organized:**

Round up old tests and quizzes and start to review

Utilize on-line resources to review key concepts

Use OneNote, Quizlet, or another app to create study guides (ask your teachers if they will be creating Quizlets in preparation for exams.)

Organize reading and lecture notes and create an outline of key points

Ask your teachers when they plan (or IF) they plan to hand out study guides

Terms: in addition to being able to define the term, know why it was significant, how it impacted the times and others, why it was important

People and events: why is this event or person important? What key role did (s)he or it play during these times? What changed as a result?

Create a study group: pick people with whom you know you will work well AND be productive. If it makes sense, divide up the material and have each person be responsible for a section of information, creating an outline that highlights critical information. Meet as a group to review.

All along, please pay attention to your self-care:

In the days leading up to your exams get plenty of rest and eat balanced meals, decreasing the amount of caffeine and sugar as these can compromise your energy and ability to concentrate.

Believe it or not, it's also important to add some fun and take some time off from studying too. Spend time with friends (they're in this same situation too); play video games

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(yes, I did just say that.); go work out; play music; bake/cook. Don't forget to return to your tasks at hand.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

If all else fails, call, text, or email your AcademicAlly coach. We're here to help. You don't have to go it alone.

Deferred or Waitlisted: Plan for the Best, But Have a Plan B

In the game of college applications, many high school seniors are currently in a holding pattern, awaiting word from the last of the colleges about their admissions status. In many ways this phase of the process is the most challenging because it leaves its players seemingly powerless. Only one outcome can prolong the agony of uncertainty and it is not a letter of rejection. At least with a denial of admission comes closure and the opportunity to accurately assess one's options.

Being waitlisted is a source of frustration and torment for high school seniors and their families as there is no certainty that accompanies this status. The applicant has no guarantee of acceptance even if an opening avails itself. It is indeed a most untenable position.

High school seniors and their families need to know that they have several courses of action they can pursue. First, contacting the Admissions office can be helpful. Talk with them and find out how your application compared to those students who were accepted. This information will help you to determine what you need to do to strengthen your application and whether you have a strong chance of being accepted from the wait list. Let the Admissions folks know of any changes that have occurred since you submitted your application. They will want to hear about your personal and academic growth. Did your grades improve? Did you receive any recognition for a recent accomplishment? Staying in touch with the decision makers shows them that you are serious about attending their school. If you live close enough to the school, go and visit it again. If possible, schedule a time to meet with the college admissions counselor you have been working with or, failing that, meet with another Admissions counselor. The more you are present, the less they can ignore you and the more seriously they will take your interest in their school. Finally, if you are absolutely certain, let them know that if they were to extend you and opportunity to attend their institution, you are committed to learning there.

Common sense dictates that you continue to work hard in school and in your extra-curricular activities while you await word from your college of choice. If you have straight A's, maintain your efforts. If you could stand to improve in any given class, do so. Ask for extra help; study with a group of friends; stay organized; and keep track of your long-term assignments. Within the activities you are involved seek out leadership opportunities. Organize an event or an aspect of an event. Head up a committee. Stay active.

In spite of a student's best efforts, sometimes it still does not work out. It's no secret that the competition to be accepted into some colleges is fierce.

While you wait to hear about your admissions status it would behoove you to establish an insurance policy for yourself. Re-examine the list of colleges you applied to and were accepted and take a closer look. What appeals to you about these schools? What repels you? What once interested you or turned you off to a school might have changed and you should examine these aspects closely. Considering the continued financial uncertainty of our times, scholarship offers cannot be overlooked. Perhaps a generous financial aid package can compensate for some of the less appealing aspects of the school. If time and distance allow, go and visit these schools again and, this time, really try to imagine yourself there. During your visit talk with



professors and students and ask questions you did not address the last time you toured the campus. After this research, decide which school you would feel satisfied and happy attending. Therein lies your Plan B.

There is no such thing as one perfect college that meets your needs. There are many options to choose from in which you will thrive and grow. John Lennon once said, "Life is what happens while you are planning other things." Sometimes the best laid plans fail to come to fruition. Often the road we did not plan to travel is the one that will lead us to a journey that far surpasses our expectations. So hold onto your hopes and strategize to the best of your ability. While you await word from your first choice, don't be afraid to consider alternative routes. In the end, your final destination might exceed your wildest dreams.
