



THE COLLEGE CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS

November 2023

Volume 31 Issue 3

How to Answer the UC Personal Insight Questions

Ingeniusprep.com

Students often have November 1st on their minds as their earliest deadline. However, there is one November deadline they must not overlook. Even once you've hit send on your early Common App schools, it's not over if you're applying to one or more of the Universities of California.

The UC school application filing period is open from October 1st - November 30th. To make sure you've got everything in place by the deadline, you need to keep working thoroughly on your application components, especially the UC personal insight questions!

All nine UC schools use the same application and essays.

For the UC personal insight questions, you must write four answers to the possible eight questions. Each response is limited to 350 words—not quite a full page single-spaced!

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The SAT goes digital with a shorter testing time for 2024

CBSnews.com

The SAT will soon make a complete shift from a paper-based exam to a digital one, and the format of the college admissions exam is also changing dramatically.

"Those changes – if students and schools are not careful – will catch them off guard," said Phillip Bates, director of college readiness and college prep content for UWorld, a test prep company headquartered in Coppell.

The nearly century-old test will be taken on a computer or tablet starting in March 2024, and UWorld has been re-working its SAT course to adapt to the shorter, digital version.

The exam will go from three hours to just two. Students will be able to use a calculator, built directly into the interface, on all the math problems, and gone are the long, multi-paragraph reading prompts.

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Beyond Simplification: Preparing for a new FAFSA Landscape

Allaccess.collegeboard.org

For the past few years, a simplified Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) has been the talk of higher ed—and now major changes are just around the corner.

"FAFSA simplification" has become shorthand for significant updates planned to federal student aid policy and the FAFSA. These changes are driven by the FAFSA Simplification Act passed by Congress in 2020, which endeavors to make applying for federal financial aid easier for students and families. Although changes have been phased in over the past few years, some of the most critical application updates and institutional impacts arrive December 2023 with the 2024-25 application cycle.

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SCHOLARSHIPS

RISE ABOVE SCHOLARSHIP

As a workers' compensation firm, we hope this scholarship will create helpful discussions between students to instill confidence as an employee. We ask people to share a time when they felt like they were being taken advantage of as an employee, intern, or group member. Deadline Dec. 1st 2023



NICHE \$50,000 SCHOLARSHIP

We are giving one student \$50,000 (our biggest scholarship yet) to help pay for tuition, living expenses, books, and other educational expenses. Deadline Dec. 14th 2023



ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION MOST VALUABLE STUDENT AWARD

Applicant must be a high school senior who is a citizen of the United States. Selection is based upon scholarship, leadership, and financial need. \$15,000 scholarship. Applicants do not need to be related to a member of the Elks. Applications opens August 1st

LAWNSTARTER LAWNTREPRENEUR SCHOLARSHIP

Either way, if you've got the entrepreneurial bug in you, then we want to help fund your dream. We're fixing the large and disorganized lawn care industry, and we're willing to grant \$1000 to any student we believe has the potential to change the world through entrepreneurship. Deadline Dec. 31st 2023



BIG SUN SCHOLARSHIP

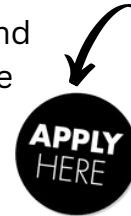
The BigSun Organization is proud to be able to help young athletes succeed in their academic pursuits. Deadline June 19, 2024



SENIOR CHECKLIST

- Attend virtual college meetings
- Keep your grades up.
- Complete the CSS Profile
- FAFSA opens December 2023
- Research scholarships.
- Watch those application deadlines
- UC Application deadline Nov. 30th

YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND SCHOLARSHIP AWARD



Our program is one of the nation's only national scholarship programs specifically serving youth that have experienced homelessness. Deadline to apply November 24th

HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION

Manages 70 of the largest need based scholarship opportunities in the country for high school juniors who have faced or overcome obstacles. Scholarships by state and by career.



FUN FACT:

The UC application portal usually crashes on November 30th, plan to submit your application by November 25th

I'm A School Counselor. Here's What Many Parents Get Wrong About College

Huffpost.com

It can be an unimaginably stressful time for young people facing big decisions. And, unfortunately, how the adults talk to them about this decision can be making it much more difficult.

Brian Coleman, the counseling department chair at Jones College Prep in Chicago and the 2019 School Counselor of the Year by the American School Counselor Association, said that a lot of his role is “around helping folks cope with their anxiety — not avoid it, or ignore it — but cope with the reality that there’s so many factors that they don’t control.”

HuffPost talked to several school counselors across the country to hear their big “don’ts” when it comes to the language we could be using with students, particularly when it comes to college. Here’s what they shared about what kind of invalidating, discouraging things they would never say to young adults:

1. **“You won’t be able to afford it so don’t bother applying”** - Keep in mind the opportunity cost such as networking, study abroad programs and more. Better option is to create a diverse list of college choices.
2. **Any predictions like, “You will or won’t get in if you apply here.”** - The school counselors all advised against giving predictions about which schools a student will or will not get into.
3. **“You need to go to this school because it’s the best.”** - Check your biases about the type of education the student in your life should pursue and focus on listening to what they are telling you about their career goals.
4. **“I don’t want you to apply there because it’s too far from family.”** - Distance from home is a fair consideration when applying to colleges, but one better way for families to frame this conversation would be for them to have them earlier in the application process and visiting the campus.

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Since the UC essays act both as your personal statement and your supplemental responses, you need to make sure you choose topics that will highlight what makes you a must-have candidate, and elaborate on aspects that don’t come through in the rest of your application. Since the UC system is not considering test prompts at all, it’s all the more important that these essays highlight your strengths.

Choose the questions that you feel are most relevant to you and your experiences. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The UC schools want to know who you are as a person, what you care about, and how you pursue your interests and goals. To help guide you through the writing process, we’ve outlined the prompts, as well as dos and don’ts for your responses.

Question #1 - The UC schools look for aspiring leaders who don’t just express their interests on paper, but those that have actively taken initiatives in their chosen fields. So, if you haven’t gotten a chance to really describe a project or your leadership of a meaningful group in the rest of your application, this prompt is right for you. When answering this question, keep in mind that a leadership experience can be more than just a position in a club, or on a team.

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COLLEGE NEWS

The **California State University** system is contesting five proposed baccalaureate programs at community colleges. It is working with California Community Colleges to improve the program-review process.

Billboard Magazine Names **Occidental College** a 2023 'Top Music Business School'

A **Fresno City College** instructor and former basketball coach was arrested after allegedly threatening to shoot staff members and students this summer

CA Governor Gavin Newsom signed a bill into law that will allow low-income Mexicans living near the border to enroll at certain **community colleges in Southern California** at in-state tuition rates. The pilot program will start in 2024.

CA Gov. Gavin Newsom signed AB 656 into law so **California State Universities** can now offer doctoral degrees without having to partner with private universities or UC schools.

University of Oregon launched a one-year online master's degree program in immersive media communication that teaches students how to use virtual reality in the kinds of applications increasingly sought by companies ranging from Disney to Nike to Ikea.

JUNIOR CHECKLIST

- **ACT** - Next test date is **December 9th**. You must register by November 3rd. It takes 30 minutes to complete registration and you will need a photo.
- **SAT** - Next test date is **December 2nd**. You must register by November 17th.
- **Attend College Fairs**
- **Meet with admission reps**
- **Tour college campuses**

University of Alaska students are using NASA technology in a hand held gadget named STELLA (Science and Technology Education for Land / Life Assessment) to study features of the environment such as plant health.

Miramar College proposed bachelor's degree in public safety management received conditional approval from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

SCHOLARSHIP FOR DREAMERS

\$4,500 per year for four years for undocumented students with goals to attend college.



If you are interested in attending an **HBCU**, **apply in the Common Black College App.** Pay a one time fee of \$20 to apply to 65 HBCUs.

University of Rochester Alan and Jane Handler Scholarship

Nominations are now open.

Deadline November 30th



HSF SCHOLARSHIPS

More than 150 scholarships for Latino students with or without US citizenship.

UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP FOR VETERANS

Annual \$1,500 scholarship to the child of a veteran of the U.S. armed forces.

Deadline to apply December 31st 2023

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5. “I’m your guardian. You should go where I want you to.” - How you are raised shapes who you are, and that can carry over into how students and their families approach college decisions.

As a result, Coleman said he would never tell a student either to do what their parents say or to never listen to them.

6. “You’ll have a great time just like I did if you go here.” - Sometimes, adults can project assumptions that a student’s experience will mirror the experience they once had. But there’s a way to share your story without making it all about you. One big piece of general advice that could prevent future conflicts? Don’t assume that you know what a student wants if you haven’t asked them.

7. “Follow your heart.” - more specific questions for reflection such as:

- “Is this a good academic match for you? How do you know? Based on what evidence is this a good fit for you? How do you know it’s going to be a good fit for who you are who you want to be?”
- “Is this affordable for you and your family? How do you know?”
- “How excited are you? And why? What about this institution excites you? How do you know that’s exciting for you? What makes you passionate about this experience?”

8. “There’s only one right decision, and you have to stick with it.” - Choosing where you go to college is a major decision, but it will not make or break your career. You may need to take a break from school or transfer to a different institution after you make your first choice and that’s perfectly OK.

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"There is a section where a student has to look at a bulleted set of notes and answer a question from that," Bates said. "So I think it's more interesting. Maybe that's just because it's new, but it's certainly different and I think it does go along with education today."

The adaptive format means not every student will be taking the same exam.

"So students take a first section and either go to an easier path or a more difficult path," said Jamie Reed, the product marketing manager for college readiness at UWorld. "If they go down the easier path, they're capped out at a certain level [for scoring]."

These changes come at a time when the relevance of the SAT and ACT to the college admissions process is being called into question. According to the National Center for Fair and Open Testing, more than 1,800 colleges and universities in the U.S. are now test-optional for applicants.

"They know what's going on with students, and they understand public opinion, and they're going to constantly look at ways they can improve their tests and improve their experience, to make it more relevant," Reed said. "And I think they're doing a lot to make it more accessible for students."



SAT Test Date*	Registration Deadline*	Deadline for Changes, Regular Cancellation, and Late Registration**
Mar 9, 2024	Feb 23, 2024 Register	February 27, 2024
May 4, 2024	Apr 19, 2024 Register	April 23, 2024
June 1, 2024	May 16, 2024 Register	May 21, 2024

[LEARN MORE](#)

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Question #2 - The second question makes it clear that being creative doesn't mean you have to be an artist! Think about what creativity means to you. If you're a mathematician, you might love the expression of quadratic equations, and get excited to solve problems in a unique way. If you're interested in theater, creativity could come to you in the form of building sets or playing a role. No matter how you express creativity, the main focus of your essay should remain on how being creative has shaped your thoughts and ideas. Using anecdotes can effectively help you illustrate your points.



**University of California
9-Campuses**

- UC Berkeley
- UC Davis
- UC Los Angeles
- UC Irvine
- UC Merced
- UC Riverside
- UC San Diego
- UC Santa Barbara
- UC Santa Cruz

Question #3 - If you are really proud of one of your abilities, now is the time to show it. The UC schools want students who bring a variety of backgrounds and interests, and choosing to write this essay is a good opportunity to show a new side of yourself. Your talent doesn't have to be an external ability such as playing the piano or writing sonnets. Neither is it required that you have received an award for this talent! The main point of your essay should emphasize why this talent or skill is meaningful to you. Why are you particularly proud of this talent?

Question #4 - If you don't have many academic opportunities on your high school transcript, here is your chance to show how you've pushed yourself in light of your limiting curriculum. Maybe you took online classes or did outside research. Anything where you went beyond regular curriculum to find ways to expand your knowledge on a topic of interest counts for this prompt.

Question #5 - This is an adversity question, so be careful here. Before you choose this topic, it is important to think about how your situation compares to your peers. Although everyone has challenges of their own, writing about not getting an allowance will not be seen as a "real" challenge to an admissions office. Other students in your applicant pool will have experienced homelessness, life-threatening illnesses, and abuse. No matter what, watch yourself so that you do not sound privileged.

Question #6 - This question is asking you to showcase your intellectual curiosity by elaborating on how you've pursued the field that calls out to you the most. Admissions officers want to know that you're not just interested in a program on paper. Show them that you have intellectual vitality!

Question #7 - When first brainstorming this essay, think about what "community" means to you. Your community doesn't need to be your neighborhood. It can be your team, your church, a school club, you name it! But make it clear how you personally find significance in the word. The UC schools will be looking for students who can make meaningful contributions to their campuses. The key to writing this essay is ensuring that you highlight your impact in your answer.

Question #8 - if you have a strong essay that you've already written for another school that would be relevant here, you could consider including it here. If you're at a loss, look around the UC website and see what they value.

COLLEGE NEWS

Most college and university presidents disagree with the decision on race-conscious admissions and think it will reduce diversity in higher education—just not at their institutions, a new survey finds.

Donors pull funds at **Harvard, Penn** administrators under fire, incidents at **Drexel** and conflicting petitions over a **Columbia** professor amid the Middle East turmoil.

Police investigate an altercation with a queer **Arizona State University** educator as possible aggravated assault by an operative of the right-wing group.

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Once fully implemented, FAFSA simplification will represent the most consequential overhaul of the federal aid application and federal need-analysis system since 1992. Changes include amending the indicator for federal student aid eligibility from Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to Student Aid Index (SAI). Additionally, an increased number of FAFSA questions will be able to be completed using the IRS federal tax return direct data exchange process. The Federal Pell Grant Program will be expanded to more students and will link eligibility to family size and the federal poverty level, making eligibility more understandable and predictable for families.

2024–25 FAFSA® Form Coming in December

Apply for aid for 7/1/24–6/30/25 on the 2024–25 form in December.

[Start 2023–24 Form](#)



The FAFSA testing and demonstration website will be available for counselors and financial aid administrators to show staff, students, and families how to access and navigate the 2024–25 FAFSA form.

Stay Informed

Stay informed about the changes and receive up-to-date notifications and information:

- Did you fill out a FAFSA form for 2023–24? [Log in to your StudentAid.gov account](#) and be sure we've got your current email address. Once the exact FAFSA launch date is announced, we expect to send out an email to students (and parents of dependent students) who applied on the 2023–24 form, reminding them to apply for 2024–25.
- Didn't submit a 2023–24 FAFSA form? Make sure to [create your StudentAid.gov account](#)—and remember your username and password so you can access and submit the 2024–25 FAFSA form when it is available.

CSS Profile®, a common application for institutional financial aid, will be ready and available to families applying for aid during the 2024–25 academic year on October 1, 2023.

CSS Profile will help institutions deliver equitable financial aid decisions by providing critical data beyond what the FAFSA furnishes. With a few key pieces of additional data, colleges can make more informed decisions about a family's ability to pay for the cost of education.

Many private colleges require families to file the CSS Profile every year.