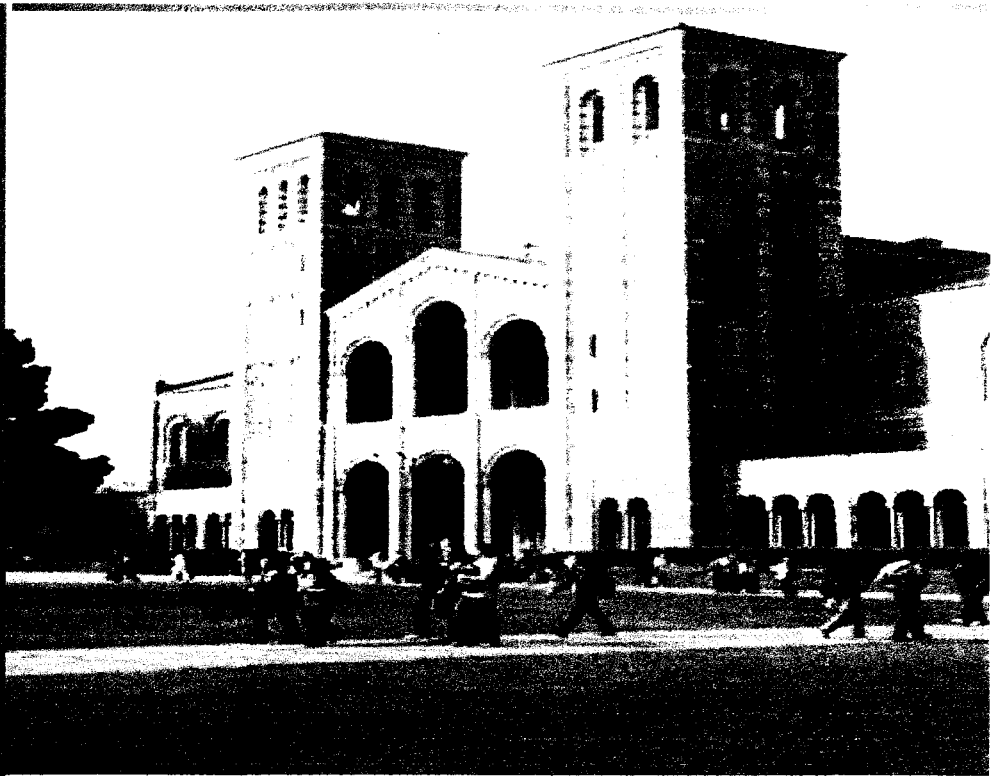


Senior College Guide



Start to prepare for college applications NOW.
Have a great senior year!

A special guide for Lincoln High School seniors who are applying to 4-year colleges and universities.

The Lincoln High School counselors, along with the Educational Planning Center, hope that your college application period is exciting and satisfying. We have prepared this packet of information to help guide you through the process.

Be Organized.

Get a large wall calendar and keep track of deadlines. Plan the next few months. Keep all of your college application materials in one place and check to see that deadlines are met. Many private colleges request letters of recommendation. Ask people a minimum of two weeks before you need the recommendation letters.

Decide where you will apply.

It is unnecessary and very costly to apply to a dozen schools because friends and family members suggest them. Which schools are best for **YOU**? If you decide to apply to highly selective schools, be sure to also apply to schools you are pretty sure will accept you. Do research online and make college visits. Come up with a list of 4 - 7 schools that fit your interests and background.

Allow enough time.

Preparing thoughtful and accurate college applications takes time. UC's and most private colleges require essays - allow enough time to write dynamic essays that will impress admission evaluators. The essay is your primary opportunity to convey who you are as a person.

Applying to Colleges and Universities

Create a time line; avoid waiting until deadlines to start preparing your college applications.

SEPTEMBER: If you have not already done so, decide to which colleges/universities you will apply. **For private colleges**, go online to get information. Use the “Common Application” if your schools will permit this (accepted by most private colleges). If you use the Common Application, you only need to fill out one form and request that it be submitted to a number of private colleges and universities.

If you are applying to private universities, recommendation letters and “School Reports” are typically required. Fill out a Student Background Sheet and make multiple copies so you can give them to the people who will be writing letters for you. You may prepare a personal resume instead.

If you need to take or retake the ACT or SAT, or complete the SAT Subject Tests, go online and sign up now. Colleges and universities require an SAT Reasoning Test or ACT. UC's also require two SAT Subject Tests. All testing should be completed by November, although some schools will accept December results.

OCTOBER: *By early-mid October, you should have a list of the colleges/universities to which you will apply. If you are applying to private colleges that request letters of recommendation, make an appointment with your recommenders. They will briefly discuss the information on your Student Background Sheet to help them write a more complete letter.*

Go online and complete CSU applications (www.csumentor.edu). When you apply early, you usually find out about acceptances early.

Attend LHS's annual College Night in October.

NOVEMBER: The application deadline for both UC and CSU is November 30. Both university systems use online applications. Leave plenty of time to finish the UC application because the essay (called the “Personal Statement”) is very important. Avoid procrastinating and submitting applications on November 29 or 30! If you are applying only to UC and CSU institutions, you do not need letters of recommendation and you do not need School Reports.

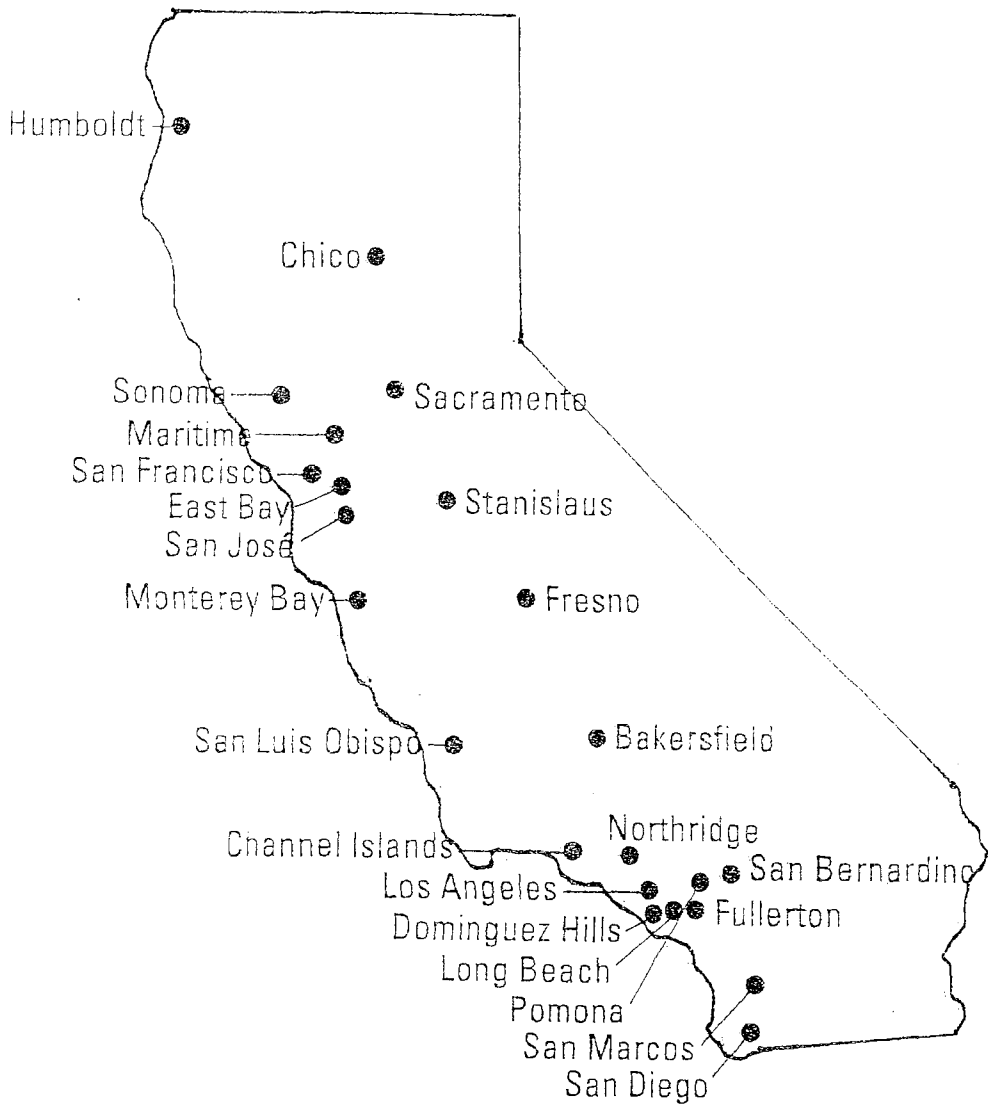
If you apply Early Decision or Early Action to any college, the application is due in November (usually by November 10). Typically you apply ED or EA if there is one college you are ecstatic about... it's your first choice. If accepted you will most likely choose that school and you will find out in December. A very small percentage of students are accepted via the ED and EA process.

For students applying to private colleges: by mid/late November, give your recommenders all of the college forms (School Reports) at once and provide addressed and stamped envelopes. Fill out your part of the forms before giving them to your recommenders. For counselors, you must affix two stamps on each envelope because counselors include a transcript, ACT/SAT scores, and a Lincoln High School Profile in addition to the recommendation letter and completed form. You should get college forms to your recommenders in November even if the application deadline is in January. PLEASE DO NOT give forms to your recommenders right before Winter Break or in January right before the deadline. Recommenders need a minimum of a three-week notice. Therefore, recommenders should have all of your college forms at least three weeks before Winter Break. If your recommenders are required to submit their recommendations online, the above deadlines still apply.

DECEMBER: Work on applications for private colleges and be sure to mail them before the deadline. You can always mail an application before a deadline! Take time to write solid essays. Often it is the essay that makes the difference in whether a student is accepted or not accepted.

JANUARY: Usually all applications for private colleges are due by January. Phew! Colleges typically mail letters of acceptance (or non-acceptance) in early March. Now it's time for more forms... go online and fill out the FAFSA for federal grants (www.fafsa.ed.gov) and the GPA Verification Form for state grants (www.csac.ca.gov). These forms are due no later than March 2, but it is wise to get them submitted by early-mid February. In addition, visit the Educational Planning Center for scholarship information.

California State University System



The CSU comprises the largest system of higher education in the country - 23 campuses. They include very small to very large campuses, from the redwood forests in Northern California to the Southern tip in San Diego.

About half of the bachelor's degrees and a third of the master's degrees awarded annually in California are from the CSU. Some majors (such as engineering, computer science, and biological sciences) are "impacted" and require a high GPA for admission. The CSU is especially known for Business Administration and Education. Although many campuses have strong graduate programs, the focus is on undergraduates (students coming from high school and community colleges).

The application period is October 1 - November 30. Apply online at www.csumentor.edu.

University of California System



UC's 9 campuses provide exciting educational and research opportunities. Enrollment ranges from Merced with 3,000 students to Berkeley's 38,000 students. A 10th campus, San Francisco, is for graduate students only.

The UC system offers numerous academic resources such as museums, art galleries, concert halls, botanical gardens, observatories, and marine centers. UC is especially known for research and sciences and supports five medical centers. More departments are ranked in the top 10 nationally than at any other public or private university.

Many of the UC campuses are highly selective, often requiring a very high GPA and other attributes. You may begin working on your application in October, but must wait until November to submit it. The official application period is November 1 - November 30. Two short essays called the *Personal Statement* are part of the application. Apply online at www.universityofcalifornia.edu.

Write Great College Essays!



The UC's and most private universities require one or more essays. The college essay distinguishes you from other applicants. The more selective the college, the more important the essay. Your transcript conveys the academic side of high school; your essay conveys your personal side. Tips for writing great essays:

1. Write to the prompt. Read the prompts carefully and be sure each essay addresses the question or statement to which you need to respond. You might not be able to use the same essay for every application. Read instructions carefully and be sure the font and margins meet the requirements. In addition, stay within the word count requirements.

2. Write your own essay. Admissions officers can usually tell when parents or other people write a student's essay. And they know that sample essays are published online. Do not be tempted to take the easy way out. YOUR voice needs to be heard.

3. Be honest, authentic, and insightful. Do not try to be wildly creative or funny. Do not try to predict what university readers want to hear. Do not repeat information that is already included elsewhere on your application (like your many outside activities).



4. Concentrate on two or three key points or a connecting theme. Do not try to include every possible aspect of your life. Admissions people look for thoughtful reflection – look back at your life and experiences. What shaped you? How did you get to be the person you are today?

5. Do not manufacture hardship. If you have not had misfortunes in your life, focus on something else. If you come from an under-represented racial or cultural group (African American, American Indian, or Latino), include this in your essay. Most colleges and universities want diversity. Coming from San Joaquin Valley is a bonus... you are a geographic minority!

6. In addition to content, your writing style, grammar, and spelling are extremely important. Your essay should have an introduction, body, and conclusion or summary. Since admissions evaluators read hundreds or thousands of essays, your opening remarks are very important. How can you catch their attention? Give details or examples to prove your point. Use transition words such as "in addition," "therefore," and "as a result." **Proofread carefully.**

7. Be honest and do not think you will impress readers by using unusual words. Avoid clichés and trite sentiments. Some overused comments include, "I want to leave the world a better place." "Through sports, I've learned the value of hard work." "I've wanted to attend your university since I was a young child." Avoid contractions; do not abbreviate. Because divorce is common in our society, it is not an unusual experience. Try to write about something unique, something that hundreds of other applicants will not write about.



8. Let the essay(s) sit between drafts. Leave plenty of time between drafts so you are not rushed. Have another person edit your writing. **Proofread attentively!** Submit your essay(s) only after you know it is your very best writing.

❖ ❖ ❖ **GOOD LUCK** ❖ ❖ ❖

College, Career, and Scholarship Websites

CAREERS

www.bridges.com

www.bls.gov

www.californiacareers.info

LHS subscribes to this college and career search program. LHS ID is 0011588
Password: *lincoln*
Bureau of Labor Statistics – Occupational Outlook Handbook
Various career searches

COLLEGE INFORMATION

www.californiacolleges.edu

www.universityofcalifornia.edu

www.csumentor.edu

www.aiccu.edu

<http://wue.wiche.edu>

www.usnews.com

Links to all California colleges
University of California - links to all Campuses. Application site.
California State Universities - links to all campuses, comparison charts, and other information. Application site.
Links to many private colleges and universities
Western Undergraduate Exchange.
Information about out-of-state colleges and universities that offer reduced tuition for out-of-state students.
U.S. News and World Report – college rankings, analysis of majors, and other information.

COLLEGE TESTING

www.collegeboard.com

www.act.org

SAT, PSAT, AP testing
ACT

Both the College Board and ACT offer a number of services to students - go to their websites and explore services.

www.kaplan.com

www.princetonreview.com

www.4tests.com

Test prep
Test prep
Test prep

FINANCIAL AID/ SCHOLARSHIPS*

www.finaid.org

www.fafsa/ed/gov

www.pin.ed.gov

www.csac.ca.gov

Federal financial aid information
Free Application for Student Financial Aid
Get your pin# for use with the FAFSA
Cal Grants

<https://profileonline.collegeboard.com>

www.edfund.org

www.fastaid.com

www.fastweb.com

CSS Profile (for private universities)
Financial aid and college planning
Scholarships
Scholarships

**Be aware of "bogus" scholarship offers from companies who promise to give you a list of guaranteed scholarships. Usually there are no fees when applying for scholarships.*

**LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENT BACKGROUND SHEET**

(PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION)

Name:	Today's Date:
Cultural/ Ethnic Background:	Date of Birth:
Student email address:	Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Home Phone:	Student's Cell Phone:

The purpose of this form is to help you to organize a number of personal background attributes. Give as much information about your activities as possible. Attach a resume or additional information if you need more room. Make copies and give it to people who write a letter of recommendation for you, and use it when applying to certain local scholarships . Attach a Transcript.

Parents'/ Guardians' Names:
If you do not live with parents/guardians, with whom do you live?
Father/ Male Guardian's Employer:
Mother/ Female Guardian's Employer:
How many brothers and sisters: # living at home: # of family members currently attending college:
Participated in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - Circle all that apply: 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th

Out-of-Class Activities (include a description of the activity, offices held, etc.)	check all that apply			
	9	10	11	12
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Employment	9	10	11	12
1.				
2.				
3.				

List 3 people who will write you letters of recommendation: _____

Community Involvement (Volunteer work, Scouts, religious activities, etc.)	9	10	11	12
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				

Academic Awards / Recognition	9	10	11	12
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Intended Major: _____ Colleges where you plan to apply: _____

**Other comments - career goals, special interests, unusual financial circumstances, etc.
Attach an additional typed paper if you need more room.**

Remember to attach a transcript!