

# COLLEGE ADMISSIONS INSIDER



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## NYU ELIMINATES SAT REQUIREMENT. IS HARVARD NEXT?

BY STAFF WRITER

NYU has eliminated the SAT as a requirement for undergraduate admission effective for the incoming class of 2010. Per NYU's admissions requirements, "All freshman applicants will continue to submit standardized test scores. However, whereas in the past applicants were required to submit scores for the SAT Reasoning Test or the American College Test (ACT) and two Subject Tests (SAT II), applicants will now have several additional choices to consider as they determine the standardized test scores they choose to provide."

NYU is the highest profile member in an ever-growing list of colleges who are eliminating the SAT as a requirement for admission. Per NYU admissions officials, the

decision was made to "provide applicants with more flexibility to demonstrate their talents and mastery of subject matter." Wake Forest University (2009 U.S. News & World Report Ranked #28) - which ranks above the likes of NYU (#32), Boston College (#34) and UC San Diego (#35) - is the highest ranking college which no longer requires the SAT.

The news of NYU's decision reignited a long-standing debate over the merits and failures of the most popular standardized test for undergraduate college admissions. In the late-1990's, the University of California (UC) system considered a major change of its requirements for admission, which included elimi-

nating the SAT as a requirement because critics of the SAT claimed that it is a culturally and/or socio-economically biased exam. Critics also stressed that there is no direct correlation between success on the SAT and success in college. Though the UC system decided not to eliminate the SAT as a requirement, it led CollegeBoard, maker of the SAT, SAT Subject Tests and AP exams, to overhaul the SAT

mons, the dean of undergraduate admissions at Harvard University, led a team of college admissions officials in a review and evaluation of standardized tests, particularly the SAT and ACT, and the value they add in evaluating students for admission at their respective colleges. Strong arguments were made for and against the tests. At the end of the conference, many admissions officials left with the idea of making

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into its current form. But the biggest news about colleges and the SAT may have yet to come.

At a recent National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) conference hosted in Seattle, WA, Mr. William R. Fitzsim-

them optional for admissions. The impact of these policy changes will be unnerving for many students in the Bay Area because they will wonder whether or not to take these exams. According to Mr. Augustus Hsu of FLEX College Prep, the Bay Area's leading

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\* The SAT I Competition will be on Saturday, March 6th from 9AM to 1PM at DeAnza College, Room 119 \*

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Developed by a team of former admissions committee members, FLEX's College Counseling Program is designed to support families through the daunting college admissions process. Contrary to popular belief, there is no "cookie-cutter" model of the ideal college applicant; to that end, our counselors help each student develop the application profile that best highlights his or her strengths.

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  - Summer activity planning •
  - Financial aid consulting •
  - College essay writing •
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# INSIDER TIPS FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS INTRODUCTION



By: Augustus Hsu

In 2009, 29,000+ students applied to Harvard, 30,000+ students applied to Stanford, and nearly 50,000 students applied to UC&B; record highs for applications received! And this group of applicants was as strong, if not stronger, than ever before. To make things even more competitive, a failing economy and resulting budget cuts have forced many colleges and universities to accept fewer students than before. No wonder many parents and students are finding the college admissions process so daunting.

The series "Insider Tips for College Admissions" is designed to guide students and families through the many difficult decisions related to college admissions. Looking at case studies through the perspective of seasoned industry insiders, we demystify the college admissions process. Our panel of experts includes a former senior admissions advisor at Stanford University, a senior assistant director of admissions at the University of Southern California (USC), a senior admissions

representative at The University of Chicago, and a senior admissions fellow at Davidson College (a top ten liberal arts college). It is our hope that by providing accurate information about the admissions process, students can prepare effectively, avoid making classic mistakes, and position themselves favorably in this competitive academic environment. Now there are six key factors to the college admissions process. (Please note that in this article, we will be focusing on private school admissions unless otherwise noted; public schools, particularly the University of California, have their own criteria for admissions.) The six factors, in order of importance are as follows:

1. GPA and strength of curriculum
2. Standardized test scores (SAT/ACT, SAT 2s, APs)
3. Personal statement (college essay)
4. Extracurricular activities
5. Recommendations
6. Interview (if offered)

During this series, we will examine each of these factors in turn, helping families to develop a better understanding of how each plays a role in the college admissions process.

Column writers Gus Hsu (MBA, USC) and Tiffany Lu (BA, Stanford University) worked in collaboration with FLEX Director of College Counseling, Lauren Baird (former senior admissions advisor, Stanford University and instructor of English, Stanford University). For more information, go to [www.flexcollegeprep.com](http://www.flexcollegeprep.com) or contact Mr. Hsu and Ms. Lu at (408) 252-7742 or [counselor@flexcollegeprep.com](mailto:counselor@flexcollegeprep.com).

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# FLEX TIMELINE

**January 23, 2010**

Winter/Ski Break

**SAT I/II**

Deadline for March SAT: Thursday, February 4th  
 Deadline for January ACT: Tuesday, January 5th  
 February ACT: Saturday, February 6th

Deadline for many summer programs and internship opportunities

**January**

Winter/Ski Break Workshops

SAT I CR/W & M Classes

SAT II Subject Tutorials

**February**

College Counseling Program

Spring Break

**March 13, 2010**

**SAT I/II**

Deadline for May SAT: Thursday, March 25th  
 Deadline for June SAT: Tuesday, April 29th  
 Deadline for April ACT: Friday, March 5th

**March**

SAT I CR/W & M Classes

SAT II Subject Test Cram Sessions

**April 10, 2010**

**ACT**

**April**

Spring Break SAT Workshops

Internship Deadlines

AP Exams coming up

College Counseling Program

Begin researching colleges

College Visits (juniors)

AP Cram Sessions

**May 1, 2010**

**SAT I/II**

Deadline for June ACT: Friday, May 7th

**May**

SAT I CR/W & M classes

**June 5, 2010**

**SAT I/II**

**June**

SAT II Subject Test Cram Sessions

**June 12, 2010**

**ACT**

AP Exams

Homework Tutorials

Finals

Finalize summer plans

Early bird registration for SAT I CR/W & M summer classes

Continued from front page.

educational service provider for college-bound students, "The changes that we see in the college admissions landscape are designed to eliminate advantages of the privileged. For instance, when the UC's eliminated the SAT Subject Test requirements, it was not to make it easier on students as a whole; rather,

**"Bay Area students who attend top high schools like Leland, Lynbrook, Mission San Jose, Gunn, Saratoga, Monta Vista, and others, should plan to continue taking these various exams"**

it was to provide more access to groups that are underrepresented on college campuses."

So, what are students to do? In the words of Mr. Hsu, "Bay Area students who attend top high schools like Leland, Lynbrook, Mission San Jose, Gunn, Saratoga, Monta Vista, and others, should plan to continue taking these various exams. That is FLEX's position and also the strong recommendation of Mr. Miguel Hernandez, Assistant Deputy Director of Admissions at UC Berkeley. Doing the minimum will not improve a student's profile for college admissions. However, students must look at their scores in the context of their application profile as a whole, and not focus exclusively on a number or a score. For instance, when families ask me 'What SAT Subject Test scores do I need to get into UCLA?' they demonstrate a lack of understanding of the holistic nature of the college admissions process."

At the conclusion of the NACAC conference, Mr. Fitzsimmons asked the colleges in attendance to seriously consider the benefit of the SAT and other standardized tests in the admissions process. He concluded by saying of Harvard's position on the subject, "[Harvard] might eventually make such tests optional too", leaving us to wonder "Is Harvard next?"

# ABOUT FLEX

## Meet the Team



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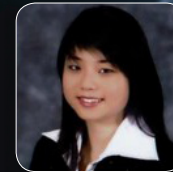
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