

**Dear Bridge2College Students,**

This year seems to be moving by quickly, and I hope you're taking time to slow down and care for yourselves. Remember to spend a little quiet time doing something you enjoy — read your favorite book, get some rest, talk to a friend about your goals and dreams, and most importantly, give your parents or guardians a hug and say, "I love you."

As we move into the coming months, we know things can feel a bit stressful — especially for our seniors awaiting college acceptance letters and working through financial aid questions. For our juniors, sophomores, and freshmen, this is a great time to start exploring your college and career options.

We're excited to plan two college tours this year and to close out the year with our 7th Annual Senior Scholarship Awards Dinner. We are deeply grateful for each of our wonderful students and for the parents and guardians who allow us to be part of your college journey. Thank you for trusting Bridge2College to provide guidance, support, and opportunities as you plan for your future.

Johnny Baltierra, Susan Baltierra, and the Advisory Board of Bridge2College

### Students: What are test-optional colleges?

There are four pathways of the test score submission policies:

1. Test-optional: Students decide to submit SAT/ACT scores with their college application
2. Test-required: The students college application will be incomplete without a test score.
3. Test-flexible: Students are required to submit standardized test scores.
4. Test Blind/Test Free: Admissions offices will not consider SAT/ACT scores in the admissions process.



### Students: The 6 steps to making the right decision for your college application

1. Know the school's testing policy.
2. Compare your SAT/ACT score with the two relevant contexts. The college's published middle 50% range which is available on its website.
3. Consider whether your test scores enhance or strengthen your application. Are there any weak spots in your transcript?
4. Consider whether testing can affect scholarships. Certain schools are test-optional but use test scores to allocate merit-based scholarships.
5. Submit your score if it is competitive. If you did not receive a score that will enhance your admissions chances, be sure to build an application that shows your strength in other ways such as an impactful essay.
6. Remember to treat every college application differently. You may receive a test score that will help you at some colleges and yet be neutral at others and hurt your chances at others. You must be strategic with your test score.

### Parents: The Future Belongs to Learners Who Can Adapt to AI

Encourage your child to try new things and stick with activities that stretch them. Ask them reflective questions such as "What did you learn?" or "What would you do differently next time?" Every activity becomes a chance to build resilience and self-awareness. The i4 framework -Interest, Involvement, Initiative and Impact -helps students approach activities as ongoing growth experiences rather than one-time commitments. Activity planning is the bridge which connects today's high school experiences to tomorrow's opportunities. When guided with intention, it helps your child grow into a lifelong learner who is not afraid of change but ready to shape it.

### Updates:

- **March 7:** Leadership workshop: 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grade students 10:00am-11:00am Dr. George Alvarado, Dean of Instruction, Library & Student Learning Support Services at FCC
- March 7: FUSD 10<sup>th</sup> College Tour 11:00am-12:00 pm
- March 7: 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> "New York College Tour & Dinner" 12:30-1:30 pm
- April - NO leadership workshops
- May 30<sup>th</sup>: "Senior Scholarship Awards" Dinner at the Clovis Senior Activity Center at 6:00pm. Tickets are \$40 each. All seniors MUST attend.



You can Venmo me at Johnny Baltierra@bridge2college or PayPal me at Johnny Baltierra@bridge2College. If you wish to make a check to Bridge2College, please mail it to Bridge2College, P.O. Box 3785, Pinedale, CA. 93650-3785, Attn: Johnny Baltierra



While our seniors await their college acceptance letters, this season is a valuable time for our freshmen, sophomores, and juniors to plan ahead—set new goals, explore opportunities, and begin shaping a strong path toward their senior year.

As we celebrate the joys of Thanksgiving and Christmas in the coming weeks, we also recognize that summer planning is right around the corner. Many colleges have application deadlines in December or early January, making now the perfect time to start exploring your options and preparing for what's ahead.

As we gather for Thanksgiving on the 27th, we want to express our heartfelt appreciation. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your students' college journey and for trusting us with their college and career planning. Your support makes our work meaningful, and it is truly an honor to serve you and your students.

Warmly,

**Johnny Baltierra, Susan Baltierra, and the Advisory Board of Bridge2College**

### Parents: Your students' PSAT scores arrived: What to do next.

It's that time of year when students log into their College Board accounts, see a list of numbers, and wonder what it all means. When PSAT results arrive, they often bring a mix of excitement and confusion—especially as sophomores and juniors get their first real experience with a national standardized test.

The College Board releases PSAT scores on three dates—October 23, November 6, and November 13—so be on the lookout for your student's results.

You may be wondering, "Does the PSAT really matter?" While it isn't used for college admissions, the PSAT is an incredibly useful tool. It provides insight into your student's strengths, areas for growth, and helps guide future testing goals as they prepare for the SAT during their junior and senior years.

Once your student receives their PSAT scores, the most important next step is turning those numbers into a plan—one that supports improvement, builds confidence, and aligns with their college journey.



### Miniguide to Engineering Majors: Matching your Interest with the right major

Selecting an Engineering major is a huge decision, and finding the right fit is more than just selecting a popular program. Engineering offers many specialties, each with unique focus areas and career paths. There are top programs such as MIT, Caltech, and Cal Poly SLO, and there are many colleges with excellent engineering programs.

### Business Colleges for B Students:

Nearly 1 in 5 undergraduates are earning a business degree, yet not every future business leader will fit at schools like Penn, Michigan, and Cornell. For students with strong GPA's and above average SAT/ACT scores, we suggest you consider the University of San Diego. USD offers nine undergraduate business programs. USD's international partnerships allow students to earn double degrees with universities abroad, while its real estate program gives students a taste of this career path.

### UPDATES

- ▷ Leadership workshop on January 10<sup>th</sup> Aubrey Wright of FPU will present "Career Assessments"
- ▷ Leadership workshop on February 7<sup>th</sup> Noemi Valenzuela of EECU will present "Financial Literacy"
- ▷ Leadership workshop on March 7<sup>th</sup> Maria Abad-Guillen of B2C will present "Resume Building"
- ▷ East Coast College Tour to Harvard, Columbia and NYU on March 30<sup>th</sup>-April 2, 2026
- ▷ Fresno Unified College Tour to Stanford, UC Berkeley and San Francisco State on April 6-7, 2026

### BRIDGE2COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT

Our spotlight on this newsletter is on Fresno Unified School District and Kerman Unified School District for their partnership in supporting our college readiness program for their students.

As we close this year, we hope you will consider giving a year-end donation to our college readiness program for our underrepresented exemplary students.

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Hello and happy September! We hope your summer has been a time to relax, grow and have a little adventure. Now that school is back in session with a special kind of energy for new classes, new routines, and a new opportunity to grow, we trust you will continue to thrive!

To every student preparing to dive into a new school year, and to every parent supporting you along the way, we are cheering you on. As we dive into this awesome year of high school together, we can't thank you enough for letting us be a part of your student's story.

Johnny Baltierra, the Advisory Board and the Jr. Advisory Board of Bridge2College.

### The Early Decision Dilemma: Using Data as a Guide for Making the Final Choice

When high school students are considering which prestigious colleges to apply to, you probably think about applying early to your top choice. Early Decision (ED) is a binding decision that means if you are accepted, you are obligated to withdraw your other applications and enroll at the college. One of the frustrating problems for high school students and parents during the college planning process is the lack of quality data about admissions. We encourage you to focus on three data points:

1. What percentage of the freshman class was admitted via Early Decision?
2. What is the Early Decision multiplier, the ratio of Early Decision rate to Regular Decision rate?
3. Does the college offer an option for Early Decision II? ED II is a new application option offered by about 100 colleges and universities. The ED to RD multiplier is much lower for ED II, but if you are committed to a college, ED II is an option to consider raising the chances of admission.



### Parent Guide:

So, your 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> Grader Dreams of attending Stanford

Is your student dreaming of Stanford as their future university? Most students applying to Stanford will have a challenging curriculum and a strong academic foundation. For a student to set themselves apart in this competitive pool, they will need more than good grades and test scores.

### UPDATES

- ▷ Saturday, September 6<sup>th</sup> is our Fresno cohort leadership workshop at Fresno City College in room OAB 188 from 10:00am-3:00pm.
- ▷ Wednesday, September 10<sup>th</sup> is "College Night" at the Fresno Convention Center Exhibit Hall from 6:00pm-8:00pm. (Come by and visit us at our Bridge2College table)
- ▷ Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup> is our Kerman cohort leadership workshop at Kerman HS from 11:00am-1:30pm. Baltierra: "Orientation" Cyndy: "College Essay & Common App"
- ▷ Sunday, September 21<sup>st</sup> is our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual "Scholarship Fundraiser Golf Tournament" at Riverside Golf Course in Fresno at 8:00am. Fee is \$125 per player which includes lunch!
- ▷ Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup> is our Fresno cohort leadership workshop at Fresno City College in room OAB 188 from 10:00am-3:00pm.
- ▷ Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup> is our "Etiquette" workshop (Kerman cohort) at Flemings Restaurant at Fresno Fashion Fair at 639 E. Shaw Ave from 9:30am-10:30am.
- ▷ Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup> is our Kerman cohort leadership workshop at Kerman HS from 11:00am-1:30pm. Bernardo Reyes-UC Merced: "UC PIQ's & UC Application"
- ▷ Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> is our "Native American College" tour at Sacramento State from 7:00am-4:00pm. Meeting at Minarets HS at 7:00am and returning at 4:00pm.
- ▷ Saturday, November 1<sup>st</sup> is our Fresno cohort leadership workshop at Fresno City College in room OAB 188 from 10:00am-3:00pm.
- ▷ Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup> is our Kerman cohort leadership workshop at Kerman HS from 11:00am-1:30pm. Phong: "CSU Application & Noemi: "Financial Literacy"
- ▷ Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> is our Fresno cohort leadership workshop at Fresno City College in room OAB 188 from 10:00am-3:00pm.
- ▷ Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> is our Kerman cohort leadership workshop at Kerman HS from 11:00am-1:30pm. Cyndy: "Financial Aid" & Victor: "Healthy Mind & Body" & Cornell"

### BRIDGE2COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT

The spotlight on this newsletter is on our gold partner Golden 1 Credit Union and especially Rosie Dauz, Community Outreach Program Manager for her passion and commitment to the success of our students!

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