May 2026 Newsletter
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Which Extracurriculars Matter the Most in College Admissions?

It is true that extracurricular activities in high school show that a college bound senior is well-rounded. But which activities matter the most to college admissions committees? Should students focus on athletics? Or is student government more important? What about achieving Eagle Scout status? – some say Eagle Scouts win admission to America's highly selective service academies more so than applicants without that achievement. These and related questions are valid and should certainly be considered, when developing a repertoire of extracurricular activities. However, "Which activities matter the most in college admissions?" is the wrong question to ask. The right question is which activities matter to the specific college bound student? In brief, college admissions committees want high school students to pursue their own particular interests in high school.

A passionate Latin Club president, whose admissions essay orbits around that junior year club trip to Rome, will get more points among admissions recruiters than the all-conference football quarterback, who joined the team to please his father and, in the end, would have preferred membership on the cross country team. An enthusiastic Debate Club officer is superior to any student body president, who serves in the name of adding another achievement to his resume.

Parents do well, when they work with independent educational consultants and/or high school counselors, to help their college bound high school students understand their interests, aptitude, and availability for extracurriculars. Parents should always steer their students toward desire in extracurriculars, not obligation. So at the end of junior year, when a student says she has lost heart for cheerleading, then it is time for mom and dad to encourage her to sit out senior year.

College App 101 stands ready to assist parents and college bound students in determining a slate of extracurriculars that are aligned with student interest and availability. Reach out today at collegeapp101.com.

Career Planning Session

College App 101 is excited to announce a new career aptitude service: Career Planning Session. This service is for students, who do not know what college major to declare or career path to pursue. The Career Planning Session is a meeting to discuss a high school student's prospective career choices and the education that such career prospects require. A pre-meeting assessment is required. Connect with Dr. Riley at collegeapp101.com and request more information today.

College App 101 Podcasts

Designed for college bound high school students and their parents, these podcasts are brief, informational, and entertaining. They are available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and collegeapp101.com/podcasts/. Recent episodes:

- Interviews with Class of 2026 National Merit Students Part 2
- Interviews with Class of 2026 National Merit Students Part 1
- Developing a Love for Learning Part 3
- Interview with a College Student about Major
- Avoiding Common High School Mistakes

Dates to Remember:

- May 2: SAT test day
- May 4-8; 11-15: AP Exams – good luck, testers!
- May 8: regular registration deadline for the June 13 ACT
- May 22: regular registration deadline for the June 6 SAT
- May 26: late registration deadline for the June 6 SAT (fee increase)
- May 29: late registration deadline for the June 13 ACT (fee increase)
- June 5: regular registration deadline for the July 11 ACT
- June 6: SAT test day
- June 13: ACT test day
- June 24: late registration deadline for the July 11 ACT (fee increase)

Click here for SAT registration and here for ACT registration

Past College App 101 Newsletters

Past editions of the College App 101 Newsletter can be found here.