

## COLLEGE ADMISSIONS INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES

Attributed to: James Nondorf, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Advancement, University of Chicago, 3/2020

Dear Student,

I hope you are all weathering the current storm and staying healthy and safe!

The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting so many aspects of life and forcing changes, cancellations, and new policies at all levels of education. Many students and families have written to me and expressed their worries and frustrations, especially those just beginning the college search process. As Dean of Admissions, I want to assure all students and their families that we (and most of my peers at other highly selective institutions) will be understanding and accommodating of these changes. The current crisis will NOT negatively impact how we review your application, and there will still be time once this crisis is over for you to find your future college home. At UChicago, our goal is to assist students with as much flexibility as possible. Given the changing landscape in the admissions area, I hope this additional information about the admissions process will help ease some worry during this difficult time:

- **We recognize that school transcripts will look different for many students this year, and we will work with that!** Academic progress as usual is currently being disrupted for students across the globe. We encourage students to continue to engage with whatever method of learning your school is able to offer, and to do so to the best of your ability. If your school moves to an alternative grading system or method of credit notation (pass/fail, credit/no credit, etc.), we will fully understand why the change has been made and it will not, in any way, be an issue for an admissions office. If a high school closes and does not provide any online or structured replacement educational opportunities, rest assured that we will understand that as well (this is a good opportunity to read something new that piques your interest!).
- **You do not need to visit campus to be admitted to a selective school.** UChicago does not consider demonstrated interest as part of our admissions process. While universities are currently restricted in our ability to offer information sessions on campus or in local communities, many universities will offer virtual information sessions. UChicago will be posting many new online opportunities in the weeks ahead. The goal for our online programming (and any sessions we offer on or off campus in the future) is simply to help students learn more about the highly selective admissions process, the financial aid process at most schools, and the impactful nature of a UChicago education. Visiting or attending an online session is NOT a requirement of admission to UChicago.
- **Many final national exams or international certificate programs (such as Advanced Placement tests, the International Baccalaureate program, Cambridge Programme/A-Levels, etc.) have been (or will be) moved online, postponed, or cancelled.** Most highly selective admissions offices do not require AP scores and are aware of the changes (and will also understand that students will have few opportunities to take any required tests more than once – which is a good thing!). At UChicago, we do not require any students to complete exams in these or other national programs as a condition of enrollment. UChicago does not require AP or SAT Subject Test results for any applicant. We understand that many students' preparation for or ability to take these exams will be impacted by current events. Supplemental testing is not required in our admission process, even for test-optional candidates, and it will not impact a student's application if they are unable to share these test results with us next year.
- **Many schools are closed temporarily or indefinitely, and some students may worry how they can showcase their accomplishments for the spring. Do not worry.** This will be the case for most students, and an application is always read in context.

- **Your school counselors will give you excellent and well-informed advice!** Universities communicate updates and changes in the admissions process with your school counselors (and school counselors call us when they have questions or need clarifications). If you do not have a school counselor, UChicago provides information that will help you with this process at most universities, not just ours. We will be sharing more general college admissions resources and other information with students who may need extra assistance or resources in the weeks ahead. Continue to check our website, [collegeadmissions.uchicago.edu](https://collegeadmissions.uchicago.edu), for more details in the coming weeks.

We hope that this information was helpful to you and alleviates some of your college admissions stress (the current crisis creates more than enough stress – you do not need more). If you have any additional questions, please reply to this email to reach the UChicago admissions counselor for your area.

Stay safe, stay healthy, wash your hands, and we will hope to see you on our campus sometime in the future (Not now, though. Stay home now!).

Best,  
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