Top Five Differences Between High School and College

January is the month of new beginnings, weight loss plans, and year-in-review countdowns, so what better way to ring in the new year than a good old-fashioned top five list. Considering we are on the home stretch for this year’s senior class, below are the Top 5 academic differences between high school and college.

5. Limited daily contact with teachers. Many students struggle with the transition of not having constant access to their teachers. Successful college students will get in the habit of scheduling meetings with their professors outside of classroom time, and will also communicate via email. While this may be kind of a scary thing at first, most professors hold regular office hours and are more than happy to take time outside of the classroom to help their students. Paying attention to these hours and using them to answer questions is an important step in students becoming self-sufficient adults.

4. Less class time, more studying. In high school, students will attend classes for 6 to 7 hours per day and might do an hour of homework per night. In college, a student will attend class 2 to 3 hours per day, and spend 4 to 6 hours per day outside of the classroom studying and working on assignments. This change in ratio of class time to studying requires the students to have discipline as well as strong organizational and time-management skills.

3. Final grades. If a student fails a test or project in high school, they typically have numerous chances to redeem themselves by doing well on daily homework, quizzes, extra credit projects, and other assignments. Many college classes will only give the student two opportunities to prove their knowledge – a mid-term and a final exam. If a student fails one of these, it will be very difficult to receive a passing grade. In order to be successful in college, a student will need to attend class every day (even though attendance is not required) as well as learn how to effectively take lecture notes and study those notes.

2. Resources One of the great things about college is there are numerous resources to help students be successful in their classes. There are math centers, writing centers, free tutoring, time management workshops, etc., in place for students to utilize. However, no one will require the students to utilize these resources. If a student is having trouble with a math class and the professor suggests they make an appointment at the math center, it will be up to the student to take the initiative to set up the appointment and make sure they arrive prepared and on time.

1. Late work is not permitted In high school, many times teachers are lenient about accepting late work. This is not the case in college. Professors expect students to be adults and be able to meet deadlines unless a student is sick or in the middle of some kind of emergency; professors generally do not accept late assignments. One late and/or missing assignment can be extremely damaging to the GPA, as many times there only two or three required assignments for the entire semester. Hopefully these tips will help parents and teachers prepare their students to be successful once enrolled in college. If you would like a more comprehensive list of the differences between high school and college, visit www.gearup.mus.edu/toolkit_goal1.html.

Upcoming Conference Calls Cover Changes in Scholarship Applications

The Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program (MGSLP) has scheduled three upcoming conference calls for high school counselors and GEAR UP liaisons to answer questions about the scholarship application process for the Governor’s Best and Brightest Scholarship Program and the MUS Honor Scholarship. Calls are designed to cover changes in the application process, new deadlines, and to answer any questions that counselors and liaisons may have now that they have their application packets in hand. For further information regarding these scholarships visit: www.scholarship.mt.gov.

The upcoming calls are scheduled for:

- Wednesday, January 12th at 11:00 a.m
- Friday, February 18th at 2:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 8th at 3:30 p.m.

To participate in the conference calls dial 1-866-200-5786 and enter the conference I.D. number of 8831378 when prompted.
Survey Says...

GEAR UP Spotlight: Charlo Students Celebrate Local Heroes

By Sharon Hertz, Charlo 7th-12th Grade Art Teacher

On November 9, 2010, the eighteen eighth graders in Charlo began the process of making ornaments for the Christmas tree display at the Capital in Helena as an art project. The letter from Governor Schweitzer suggested a theme of “Montana Heroes”. The students struggled a bit with the idea and brainstormed some notable Montanans from history class. Then it came to us the day before Veteran’s Day: we needed to make ornaments honoring our local veterans. The class opted to make homemade paper ornaments using pulp and a cookie cutter in the shape of a bison (our ornaments would hang on the Lake County tree, and we decided since the National Bison Range is in our school district, the bison shape was an appropriate choice). We quickly made a list of twenty Charlo Alumni that had served or are serving in the military. I started making some phone calls to our local American Legion Post, to help complete our list with other local military names and we were able to compile a list of close to 120 names dating as far back as 1932.

All of the students participated in some way. We had paper to shred, molds to fill, water to squeeze out, and pressing and drying of the ornaments. Once made, we punched a hole in the top, strung ribbon and put the names on them. We traced the bison mold and photocopied it on white paper. A group of students carefully cut those out and another wrote “Charlo Veteran Alumni”, a graduation year and a veteran’s name on each ornament. For some of the veterans, we knew which branch of the military they served in so we included that as well. We strung them all with red, white and blue striped ribbon. As our list had become so large, and time was a factor, the students decided to make green paper pulp trees from cookie cutters. We had two molds that were smaller, so the process went much more quickly. On these ornaments, we listed our veteran alumni by graduation year and included up to six names on each tree.

We mailed off a box of twenty-five bison ornaments and 30 trees to honor our Charlo, Montana Heroes. The project hasn’t officially ended, as we have decided there needs to be a permanent home and record at our school honoring our alumni veterans. Our list will become more than a work in progress, and we can start on a memorial display in honor of these brave men and women.
ACT and SAT Test Prep Tips
BY JESSIE SALISBURY, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The spring of the junior year in high school is when it is recommended for students to take one or both of the nationally recognized college entrance exams. While the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) and ACT ((American College Testing Assessment) are very different tests, they both fulfill the same role in the admissions process. The SAT and ACT are designed to provide college admissions officers with two things: a predictor of first-year academic achievement in college, and a common way to compare students from a wide range of educational backgrounds.

Educators and admissions officers have often described the difference between SAT and ACT in these terms: the ACT is a content-based test (it measures what students are learning in school), whereas the SAT tests critical thinking and problem solving skills. Here are some of the main differences between the SAT and ACT tests:

- The ACT math section includes questions involving trigonometry; the SAT does not.
- The SAT tests vocabulary much more than the ACT.
- The ACT is entirely multiple choice; the SAT includes an area in the math section where students must produce an answer.
- The SAT has a penalty for guessing; the ACT does not.
- The ACT tests English punctuation and grammar; the SAT does not.
- SAT Critical Reading relies on inference; ACT Reading asks questions that rely on retrieving information from the text.
- The ACT includes a science reasoning test; the SAT does not.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Section</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>SAT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>75 questions, 45 minutes</td>
<td>Combined into Reading section</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>60 questions, 60 minutes</td>
<td>54 questions, 70 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>40 questions, 35 minutes</td>
<td>67 questions, 70 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>40 questions, 35 minutes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Test</td>
<td>1 prompt, 30 minutes (optional)</td>
<td>49 questions, 60 minutes</td>
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</tbody>
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Whether students choose to take the SAT, the ACT, or both, there are some basic test preparation tips that apply to them:

Practice & Familiarize - Make sure you are familiar with the format of the tests, how much time you have to complete each section, and what to expect on test day. FREE ACT and SAT practice tests are available through the following websites:
- Student Assistance Foundation at www.smartaboutcollege.org (both ACT and SAT practice tests)
- College Board at sat.collegeboard.com/practice (SAT practice tests)
- ACT at www.actstudent.org/testprep/index.html (ACT practice tests)

Pace yourself - Each section of the test has a time limit. Pay close attention to the number of questions in each section and the time allowed for that section. This will give an idea of how much time should be spent on each question.

Answer easy questions first - On the SAT, except for the Critical Reading problems, the questions are designed to get more difficult the further along you go. Don't spend too much time on certain questions that the time to find an answer to other ones is lost. Develop the habit of occasionally checking your progress through the test. On the ACT the questions in every subject test vary widely in difficulty. Remember that the questions are not arranged in order of difficulty. Mark skipped questions in the test booklet and return to them at the end if time permits.

Use logic in more difficult questions - When going back to attempt the more difficult questions, always try and use logic to eliminate at least one answer you know is incorrect. Make an educated guess from there. On the ACT, scores on the multiple-choice tests are based on the number of questions you answer correctly; there is no penalty for guessing. On the SAT one point is added to your score for each correct answer, and one-quarter of a point is lost for each wrong answer. If you leave a question blank, you neither gain nor lose points. This is where strategy comes into play.

Don't lose points to carelessness - Check the number of the question and the number on the answer sheet every few questions, especially if a question is skipped. Make sure that the answers are filled in at the correct places. One skipped answer can result in a complete section of answers not matching up to the correct question.

Go prepared - The basic necessities are your admission ticket, proper identification, number 2 pencil with eraser, and a permitted calculator. Fill your bag the night before so you do not forget an important item. For a full list of permitted and non-permitted items for test day visit sat.collegeboard.com/register/sat-test-day-checklist for the SAT and www.actstudent.org/testprep/tips/testday.html for the ACT.

Whether students take the ACT, the SAT or both, if they are armed with a few basic tips and have time to take at least one practice test, they will have the confidence needed to be calm and focused during the test.

ACT Upcoming Tests & Deadlines

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Date</th>
<th>Registration Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 12, 2011</td>
<td>January 7, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 9, 2011</td>
<td>March 4, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 11, 2011</td>
<td>May 6, 2011</td>
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SAT Upcoming Tests & Deadlines

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 12, 2011</td>
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Sources:
Montana GEAR UP Reminders & Upcoming Events

January 14: Educator survey ready online.
January 25: Student survey closes.
January 25-26: Winter Liaisons Meeting, Red Lion Colonial, Helena. Please call 1-800-422-1002 to reserve your room in the Montana GEAR UP block at a rate of $81.00/night + tax by Friday, January 7th.
January 28: Mid-year fiscal and program reports due.
February 9: College Goal Montana, various locations. To find a College Goal Montana site near you, or a Webinar location, visit www.SmartAboutCollege.org or call 877-COLG4ME.
February 12: ACT Test date.
February 13: College Goal Montana, various locations.
February 13-16: NCCEP Capacity Building Workshop, Orlando, Florida.
February 28: Educator survey closes.
March 4: Pathways Scholarship Applications due to Montana GEAR UP. Contact Cory Chenoweth at cchenoweth@montana.edu or 406-444-0350 with questions.
March 4: Local summer program proposals due. Please contact your school grant manager with questions.

Montana GEAR UP Pathways Scholarship Deadline Fast Approaching
Montana GEAR UP is excited to announce the commencement of the Pathways Scholarship. This scholarship will have a value of approximately $22,000 over a five-year period, but no more than $5,500 per year may be applied towards tuition at an accredited public or private institution in the United States. In order to considered for the award, a student must have received the $1,500 Montana GEAR UP Achievement Grant as a junior, graduate from a Montana GEAR UP high school with at least a 2.5 GPA, be eligible for a Pell Grant, and complete all of the required components of the application. Applications have been mailed out to school liaisons and all students who received the Achievement Grant as juniors. The deadline for completion is March 4th, 2011. Please contact Montana GEAR UP Financial Aid Manager, Cory Chenoweth, at cchenoweth@montana.edu or 406-444-0350 with any questions.

College Goal Montana Locations
Free help for students and parents tasked with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) — an essential stepping stone to attaining federal, state and institutional aid — is available at College Goal Montana events in communities across the state. Employees of nonprofit Student Assistance Foundation (SAF), financial aid officers and volunteers will gather at 18 locations on February 9th and/or February 13th to offer one-on-one instruction in completing this important form. (See map or visit www.SmartAboutCollege.org for locations).

In addition, 34 communities will host virtual College Goal Montana sites on various dates during which students and their parents can listen to a 30-minute presentation about the FAFSA, log on to www.fafsa.ed.gov, and complete the form. Help from site hosts and subject matter experts via the Webinar chat function will be available.

Don’t forget to bring:
- FAFSA PIN Number (to get your pin, log on to www.pin.ed.gov)
- Social Security Numbers (students and parents)
- 2010 Federal Tax Returns (or 2009 tax returns if 2010 returns are not complete)
- W-2s, tribal income, other aid information (TANF, child support, other benefits)
- Additional asset information (money market funds, stocks, other investments)

To find a College Goal Montana site near you, or a webinar location, visit www.SmartAboutCollege.org or call 877-COLG4ME.

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Our mission: Montana GEAR UP believes that postsecondary education is possible for all Montana students, regardless of economic background, and strives to empower them to realize that ambition. Montana GEAR UP brings this message to middle and high schools, students, their parents, and the community through early college and career awareness activities, scholarships, financial aid information, and improved academic support to raise the expectations and achievement of all.