

## COURSE SELECTION ISSUES FOR COLLEGE-BOUND SOPHOMORES

*from the NHS College & Career Center*

The changes resulting from the alignment of UC and CSU subject requirements have finally been fully phased in, although there are some subtle differences in how these requirements are interpreted by the two systems, and a few ongoing areas of confusion. The California State University system and the University of California both require a full-year course in the visual or performing arts (VPA). Please do not confuse the Mt. Diablo Unified School District graduation requirement of one year of **foreign language or fine art** with college admission requirements. Qualifying VPA courses at NHS include full year courses in studio art, ceramics, photo, drama, film, dance or music. The ROP Video Production and Art & Animation courses are also approved. NHS courses that **do not** satisfy the UC/CSU VPA requirement include aerobics, commercial art, speech, or foreign language (which is a separate requirement for admission). A 3 or 4 unit Community College course will meet the VPA requirement. Two years each of social studies and laboratory science are required for both UC and CSU admission. Northgate offers Earth Science II to provide CSU-bound students\* with an alternative to chemistry or physics to meet the physical science requirement for Cal State admission. UC specifically requires chemistry or physics. Consult page 21 of *Northgate's Guide to Program Planning* for detailed information about subject requirements for UC and CSU admission ("a - g" requirements).

Remember that semester grades of D or F in college preparatory courses must be replaced in order to maintain eligibility for *both* the University of California and the California State University systems. First semester D grades do not need to be replaced if the course is highly sequential, and a C or better is earned the second semester: mathematics or foreign language classes. However, a first semester grade of D earned in math or foreign language during the Sophomore or Junior year that has not been replaced will be included in the GPA calculated by college admissions offices, and in the GPA calculated to qualify students for the state financial aid program (Cal Grants). Grades can be replaced at high school summer sessions, or by re-enrolling in the class as a Junior, space permitting. Most CSU campuses - but not UC campuses - will accept grades replaced in adult education classes, as long as the adult ed course covers the same material as the high school course.

**SAT Subject Tests** are included in the formula used by the University of California to determine eligibility for admission. Sophomores who plan to apply to UC may want to register to take **SAT Subject Tests** in World History, Chemistry, or Biology in June, 2009. Sample questions are available in the **SAT Subject Tests Preparation Booklet**, available in the *College & Career Center*, and on-line at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). SAT Subject Tests submitted for UC admission must represent at least two different academic categories: Literature, History, Science, Foreign Language, or Math (Level 2 only; UC will not accept the Math Level 1 test). In other words, an applicant can meet the UC Subject Test requirement by submitting a Biology score and a World History score, but not World History and US History scores. Some students take three or more Subject Tests.

The next **PSAT** is scheduled on October 17, 2009. Please note that the **Junior** year PSAT is the qualifying examination for the National Merit Scholarship Program and scholarship/recognition programs for Hispanic and African-American students. **All college-bound juniors should take the PSAT**, even those who tested as Sophomores. I encourage students to take as many practice tests as possible before testing "on the record." I have scheduled a Practice ACT/SAT combination test for tenth graders on Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, from 8:15 AM until about noon. This is an opportunity for students to figure out which test to prepare for early in high school. Purchase an admission ticket (\$15) in the College & Career Center at lunch, or at the door (\$20).

College-bound Sophomores are invited to attend the East Bay College Fair on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, at Saint Mary's College in Moraga, 1:00 - 4:30 PM. More than 150 colleges from across the country will send representatives, and a dozen workshops for parents will be offered throughout the afternoon, starting at 1:15 PM. The East Bay College Fair Guide will be available at [www.stmarys-ca.edu/ebcc](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/ebcc).

Please feel free to call (ext. 3525) or e-mail me ([brandsp@mdusd.k12.ca.us](mailto:brandsp@mdusd.k12.ca.us)) with your individual questions. I can often provide a more thoughtful and comprehensive answer via e-mail.

Patricia Brands, College Counselor

\*Cal State is considering requiring Chemistry or Physics for the class entering in 2011. Stay tuned!