

## COURSE SELECTION ISSUES FOR COLLEGE-BOUND SOPHOMORES

*from the NHS College & Career Center*

The University of California and California State University campuses require the same college-preparatory subjects for admission, but there are some subtle differences in how these requirements are interpreted by the two systems, and some confusion with high school graduation requirements. UC and CSU both require a full-year course in the visual or performing arts (VPA). 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, art history, ceramics, photo, drama, film, dance or music. NHS courses that **do not** satisfy the UC/CSU VPA requirement include aerobics, video production, speech, or foreign language (which is a separate requirement for admission). A 3 or 4 unit Community College course will also meet the VPA requirement. Two years of 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. For details about UC and CSU admission requirements, visit the College & Career Center page at [www.northgatehs-pfc.com](http://www.northgatehs-pfc.com) and locate the College and University Information “button.” The list of UC/CSU approved courses is also posted here.

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, at a community college, 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. Enrollment in community college courses must be approved by the academic department and Northgate administration. *Diablo Valley College has announced that it will not be offering Geometry during the 2010 summer term, and spaces in other courses typically taken by high school students will be in short supply.*

Sophomores who plan to apply to UC may want to take *SAT Subject Tests* in Chemistry or Biology in June, 2010. Although Subject Tests will no longer be required for UC admission, beginning with the Class of 2012, Engineering programs, and perhaps Science departments as well, will continue to strongly recommend the submission of appropriate SAT Subject Tests (Math 2 plus a Science test). Sample questions are available in the *SAT Practice Booklet*, available in the *College & Career Center*, and on-line at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). Sophomores enrolled in AP World History who opt NOT to take the AP World History exam should consider taking the SAT Subject Test in World History. Like Advanced Placement test results, Subject Test results will either help a candidate for admission or be a neutral factor, so any student who believes his or her UC application will be strengthened by demonstrating mastery of a particular subject should take and submit Subject Test scores. Register to take SAT Subject Tests at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

The next **PSAT** is scheduled on October 16, 2010. 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.” *Revolution Prep* says “Take practice exams in a realistic setting – with all the accompanying pressure and distractions.” Registration for the PSAT takes place in late September at NHS.

College-bound Sophomores are invited to attend the East Bay College Fair on Saturday, May 8<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) . I will post the schedule of parent workshops at [www.northgatehs-pfc.com](http://www.northgatehs-pfc.com) as soon as it is available.

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.

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