

VOLUME 2 - NOVEMBER 2021

# SAC EXCLUSIVE

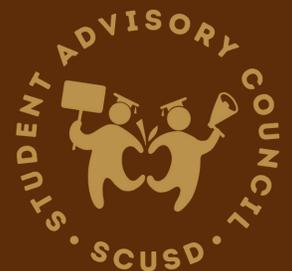
The Official SCUSD Student Advisory Council Newsletter

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# LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Sandy Ahuja (John F. Kennedy HS) + Sky Tusé (West Campus HS)

The dreadful college application season has approached every high school senior's desk this fall. Managing classes, fighting deadlines, writing college essays, figuring out what to major in, and asking for a Letter of Recommendation (LOR) can all be quite intimidating. It does not have to be that way though. In this article, we have created a guide with a set of tips to make the process of asking for a Letter of Recommendation easier—or at least slightly less distressing!

Although some colleges/universities do not require Letters of Recommendation, it is strongly advised to include them anyway. They are a crucial part of your application; college admissions counselors use them as an agency to learn more about a student's character, personality, and academic skills advocated from a professional's point of view. It also makes a student seem more credible as someone with status can vouch for their abilities.

One of the main components of asking for a letter of recommendation is figuring out who to ask. It is best to ask at least 2-3 teachers--especially those who know you on a personal level, saw your growth, and whose class you performed well in. If you plan to submit multiple letters for your application, consider asking teachers who may highlight different strengths. A letter from a STEM and a humanities teacher can make you look more dynamic and versatile. If you have a specific desired major, ask a teacher whose class most closely aligns with the major. For example, someone wanting to major in Mechanical Engineering may ask their AP Physics teacher for one of the letters. Asking your English teacher can also be a great option. They are excellent writers and usually have templates that can be adhered to and formatted with your qualities as a student. Make sure to let them know in advance and give them enough time to complete them. Guidance counselors can also advocate for your abilities as a student; appointments with them can ensure that they get a sense of what you are like as a student.

When asking for the LOR, it is more sincere to talk to your teachers in person first. If they agree to your request, you should follow up with an email that includes all of the information that they will need. Sending a formal email request first works as well, but make sure to check in with the teacher in person after to see if they received the email and are willing to write it. Write your email in a professional manner: double-check your grammar, spelling, and provide all of the details necessary. Bouncing back from distance learning, it is unlikely that all of your teachers will remember what you were like in their class. Suggest a 1-on-1 meeting with them during lunch or office hours and tell them about how you demonstrated your academic

skills and growth in their class, took initiative, and what you have done throughout high school to achieve your future goals and aspirations.

Now, to the actual contents of what you need to provide. Some high schools conveniently offer LOR request packets, which are set up with questions and information for you to fill out. These packets can be intended for teachers and/or counselors; regardless, it is best to ask the person you're requesting a LOR from to see if they prefer the LOR request packet or if they prefer that you set up your own document (commonly called a "Brag Doc," (short for "Brag Document") because it lists your most valued activities and greatest achievements.) In either case, you should consider the following information and decide on what you'd like to include in the paperwork you submit to them since this is what they will base your Letter of Recommendation on.

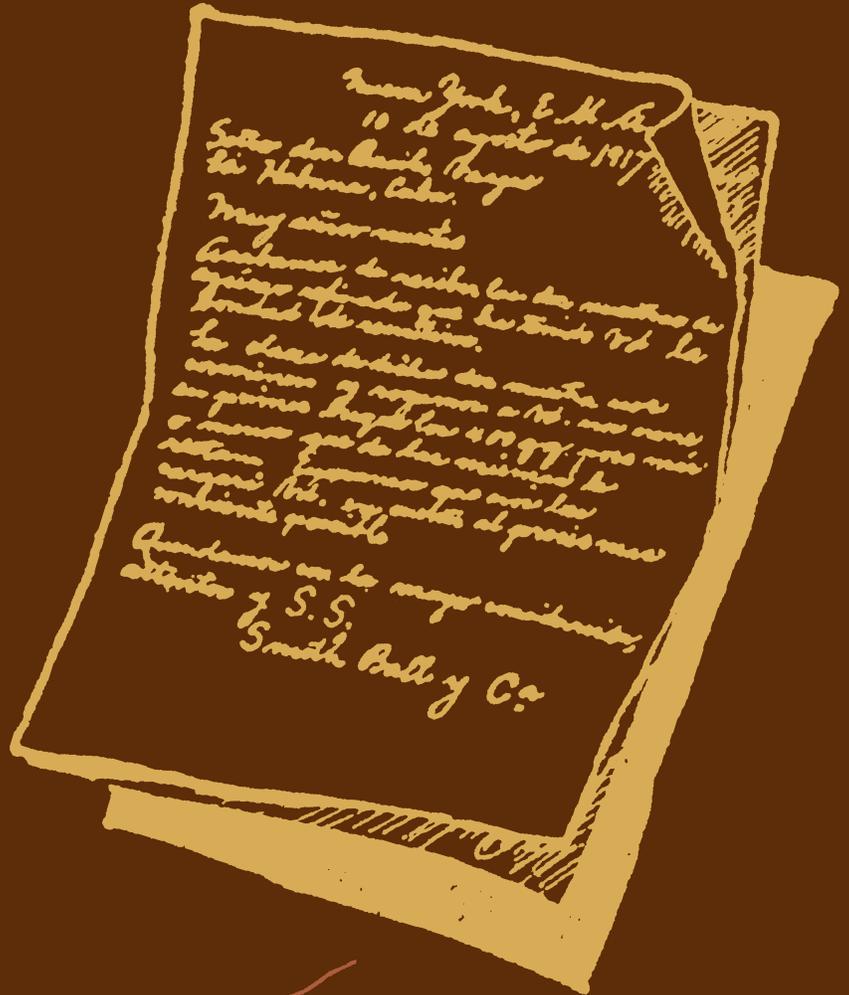
For a good starting place, brainstorm a list of the following (especially ones that hold significance to you or changed you in some way): clubs, hobbies, awards (earned during high school), athletics, volunteer work, paid work, internships, extracurriculars (particularly those related to your future career), academics outside of school, and college courses taken (completed or in progress.)

Also feel free to mention future plans, such as what degree(s) you plan to pursue, whether or not you plan to go to graduate/medical/pharmacy/etc. school, and what career you currently aspire to. The person writing your LOR (as well as colleges themselves) understands that you can't be wholly certain of what career you wind up in. The plans and goals that you mention are just what you feel you want now, so don't worry if you aren't certain about what you want to do in certain areas.

As far as less personal information, you should absolutely include the type of application(s) you will be needing LOR for (currently, the Common Application requires it, while the UC and CSU Applications do not) along with the earliest due date. If one LOR-requiring college you're applying to has an application due date of January 15th, while another has a due date of November 30th, mention the November 30th deadline (that way, your teacher/counselor can get the Letter to you on time for it.) Keep in mind if you want to apply early decision (binding), early action (non-binding), or regular decision, as each option tends to have different due dates. Lastly, while your school counselors will have access to it, if you are requesting a LOR from a teacher, you may want to ask if they'd like a copy of your high school transcript.

For those who are not seniors yet: get to know your teachers! Do not wait till the last minute to talk to your teachers. It may seem awkward at first but even a simple "Good Morning" or "How are you?" goes a long way and can be meaningful towards building rapport. Attend office hours, ask questions about the subject, and make friendly conversation. Be mindful of these relationships from the start, you want teachers to say great things about you but that is not possible if you do not make the conscious effort to get to know your teachers in a classroom and out of classroom setting (whether that is clubs or sports.)

Be sure to show your gratitude! Reach out to your teacher with a thank you card/ handwritten note/ or email. It is polite to do so and it lets them know that their time and efforts are valued. Update your teachers about your future academic endeavors and how your college applications turned out too. They have made a significant contribution to those college applications and it is courteous to follow up with them so they know how your things worked out for you.





# VACCINE MANDATE

Colson Nguyen (Sacramento New Tech)

## Vaccination Requirement FAQ



## Report Vaccination Status



## SCUSD



Hello everyone as many of you may know the state recently issued a vaccine mandate. Our district has already decided upon the date vaccination records must be submitted. All exemptions and records must be submitted by Nov 30, 2021. Records can be submitted at the district website under the portal on the website. Age-wise all students eligible for the vaccine (12 and older) must submit records by November 30th. In the event that an eligible student has not submitted at least first dose records or filed an exemption, they will be put into independent study. All newly eligible students after January 31 will have 30 days after their twelfth birthday to receive their first dose. So in the event that someone turns twelve after the start of next semester, they have 30 days to get the first dose or submit a valid exemption. Presumably, you will have to turn in the record of that dose. While records must be submitted by November 30th if you don't have your record in as said before January 30th you will go into independent study. Frequent outreach and reminders will be sent out after November 30.

If a student needs to receive a vaccine they can do so at one of the SCUSD clinics or by signing up at MyTurn.ca.gov. Students under the age of 18 require parental consent to be vaccinated. Although if the student presents a vaccination form signed by the student's guardians and have a responsible adult with them they can get vaccinated. If a student has a reaction to the vaccine they are permitted to stay home with an excused absence with the ability to make up their schoolwork for full credit. That's about all for this month's COVID update if you have more questions please refer to the Vaccination Requirement FAQ on the district website.

<https://www.scusd.edu/covid-19-vaccination-requirement-faq>



# GRACE APP

Luz Vazquez - Rosemont HS

Paying attention and taking care of your well-being is really important especially now that we are still dealing with the effects of the pandemic. Which is why it excites me to inform you about the Grace App! This app focuses on the well-being of all SCUSD students and families by providing resources for mental health, food, clothing, housing, LGBTQ+ support and much more. Here is how to find and use the app:



Firstly go to your app store and search up

Grace: Giving Resources & Care

or plug in the link below to a web browser to download the app

<https://www.preparedapp.com/grace>

Once you have downloaded the app,

select your school and explore the vast resources available!

When you are on the home screen, you will see 3 main categories that you can explore: Calming Room, Wellness Resources, and Urgent Help.

Calming room is my personal favorite place to go on the app. Here you are able to find what is called a Breathing Room, Sounds and Music, and Live Animal Cameras. The breathing room allows for you to inhale and exhale with relaxing ambiance for 1 minute up to an hour. I've used this room a lot during this week due to the stress of college applications and I am safe to say that this has really helped me calm down. Then we have Sounds

and Music, a place where you are able to play the sounds of nature. Being able to zone out to the sounds of water flowing, rain falling, and birds chirping really allows for a sort of zen moment to happen. Finally there is the Live Animal Cameras, which is one of the coolest features on this app. You are able to watch a live broadcast of an ape, baboon, hippo, and many more animals. Having this on feels like you have a companion near you and it is amazing that you can have this companion 24/7.

  
**Calming Room**  
Help for anxiety or stress.



### Wellness Resources

Find support from your community.

Wellness Resources is the place where you can find support for your needs from your community. The list of resources available for you are:

1. Food & Clothing
2. Health Services
3. Housing Assistance

4. LGBTQ+ Support
5. Mental Health Services
6. Safety
7. Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence
8. Student Support Centers

All of these resources lead you to websites and numbers that you can contact if in need to. Please if you need help take the time to utilize these resources, they are here for you.



### Urgent Help

Talk to someone right away.

Urgent Help is a 24/7 aid for you to utilize in serious situations. The list of the 24 hour helplines that you can call are:

1. **A community for Peace** (Support for Domestic Violence)
2. **Crisis Text/ Talk Line** (Speak with someone about your situation and how to get to a safe calm place)

3. **Sacramento FUEL Network** (50 local non-profit coalitions ready to help the legal, information, and health needs of Sacramento's immigrant and refugee population)
- 4 **Suicide Prevention Lifeline** (If you or a loved one is thinking about suicide or would like emotional support, the Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the US)
5. **The Source** (Provides support to youth up to 26 yrs old and caregivers during times of crisis and struggle)
6. **The Trevor Project** (24/7 crisis and suicide prevention helpline for LGBTQ+ youth)
7. **United Way of San Antonio** (Helps people find information about local resources in their community anonymously)
8. **WEAVE** (Supports survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and sex trafficking)

Use and call any of the resources listed above if needed, they are they for you 24/7.



**I would like to refer a friend.**

Get help for a friend in need.



**I would like to refer myself.**

Get help for yourself.

Moving away from the home screen you will find the Refer screen right next to it. This is a place that allows for you to refer someone who is struggling to find the right resource for their situation.

If you fill out the "I would like to refer a friend" you can do so anonymously and it will notify the school district to reach out and help the person you referred.

If you filled out the "I would like to refer myself" you can 100% do so. All you need to input is your name, grade level, school name, email or phone number, and a description of your situation and soon you will receive help from someone at SCUSD.

Last but certainly not least the Grace app has two other features. One of them is a "Saved" screen where you can heart your most favorite or useful resources to easily access them later on. Then there is the "Grace Personal Wellness Advisor" who is a bot that you can chat with to help you find the resources you need for your situation.

Overall this app does a phenomenal job at providing help for SCUSD students and families. So if you haven't yet download the app and rest assured that our community at SCUSD is here to help you.



# COLLEGE APPLICATION INFORMATION

Gabriela Galan Sacramento New Technology HS  
Mayani Bowens George Washington Carver HS

Hello Seniors and parents! It's that time to start applying for colleges. We have some important deadline information just in case you forget. We wish everyone good luck with your applications.

## Common College App Deadlines:

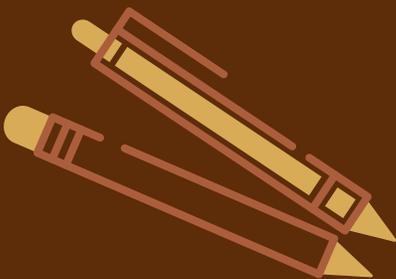
Early Action- November 1st and November 15th  
(National Response date: May 1st)

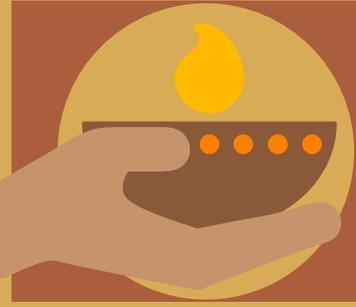
Early Decision- November 1st - January 1st (depending what college you apply)

Regular Decision- January - February

UC Application - November 30th

CSU Application - November 30th -December (depending on the college you apply)





# HAPPY DIWALI!



Sandy Ahuja (John F. Kennedy High School)



With the advent of fall comes cozy holidays. During this month, South Asia celebrates the festival of lights--also known as Diwali.

Diwali or Deepavali quite literally translates to rows of light. It is a common Diwali tradition to light Diyas (clay lamps) and surround the outside of your home with them. It is a significant holiday for those who practice Hinduism, Sikhism, and certain forms of Buddhism. It represents a different meaning for all of those religions. In the Hindu religion, the diyas represent the inner light that protects from spiritual darkness.

Having grown up in India, I got to witness the beauty of this holiday at its core. Every street would sparkle to its fullest. The Diyas would shimmer all night and bring a sense of joy and comfort. I miss how it would unite the community. Everyone would exchange presents, food, and light fireworks together. This was the one day of the year when people would set aside their petty grievances towards one another and just enjoy each other's company.

Although this may not be the case in the United States, it is still remarkable to see that people are able to maintain a sense of their ethnic identity and tradition. It sparks conversation among those who celebrate and gives them a chance to discuss commonalities in the way they honor this day.

This November, be sure to wish those who celebrate Diwali, "Happy Diwali!", or "Diwali Mubarak!"





# THE HISTORY AND FUTURE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY

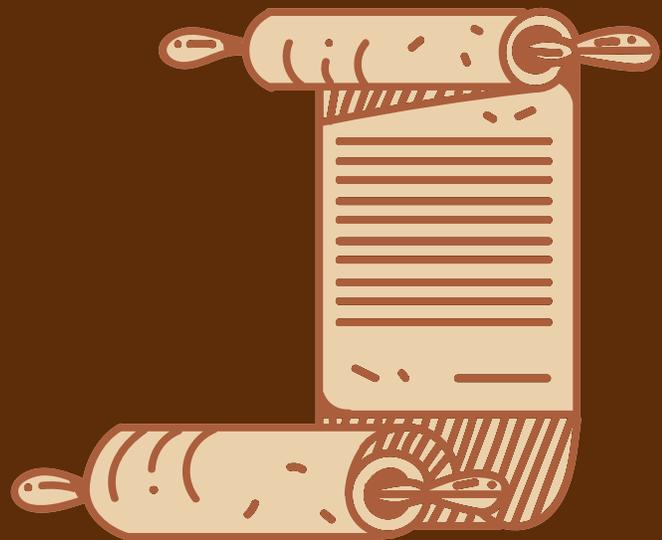
Bella Marroquin, Mayani Bowens. - G. W. Carver HS

Occurring on the second Monday of October, Columbus Day is a federal U.S. holiday that commemorates Christopher Columbus' "discovery" of the Americas in 1492. In as early as the 18th century, many states and cities unofficially celebrated Columbus' Day, but it didn't become a federal holiday until 1937. The holiday is supposed to honor Columbus' achievements and celebrate Italian-American heritage, but for many Indigenous peoples, Columbus is viewed as a colonizer rather than the discoverer we were taught to believe in school. His arrival had led to the forceful taking of the land and almost complete erasure of Indigenous ways of life and people. And so, many alternatives to the controversial holiday have been proposed since the 1970s including Indigenous People's Day, now celebrated in many U.S. states and cities.

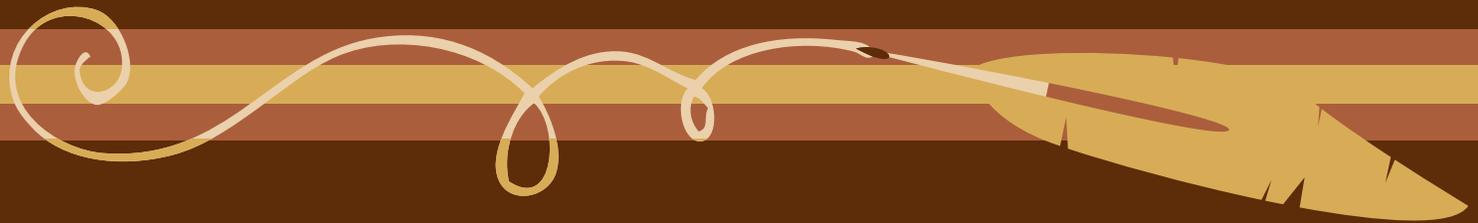
Hello, My name is Bella Marroquin. I was asked to help give insight as a Native American woman, and a student in the Sacramento school district. My uncle is very deeply connected to our culture and so is my mom and grandma, I grew up within it all. I remember growing up learning about Christopher Columbus in school, and it always drew up a lot of conflicted emotions for me. I grew up knowing the truth about Christopher Columbus, and when they tried to erase it in the history books and the history of our country, it felt so invalidating. It felt like the history I know and my ancestors experienced was just erased. People talked as if native Americans were such a rare species now, as if we are extinct. We are still here, our voices are loud and strong and so is our culture. Our ancestors were victims of genocide. Nisenan, the original people of Sacramento, are still here. No one ever talks about the history as well as the erasure they had experienced in just Sacramento alone. How can we be a progressive country, if we try to brush the injustices we've caused under the rug. We must take responsibility for the things our country's ancestors have done, and learn from it to move forward. We're facing a new day and age, that I hope will help ignite the voices of silenced communities such as native communities. We can start the conversation in our schools, and we can help restore the voices of our people and our ancestors as well as help grow innovative minds of our future leaders, who look for the truth, not just what they're told. I know I'm not the only indigenous student in our school district, as well as not the only one who feels this way. We only become bad guys, when we attempt to justify and ignore the true history.

I'm really glad to see the progress our country and people are making to educate themselves on our history. We still have much more progress to make though. Many tribes and indigenous people deserve restorations for our stolen land, and for the attempted genocide many of our population faced. Columbus never touched foot on American soil, but instead touched the Bahamian islands. He then tormented the indigenous people of those lands. He did unjust things to these people, he is not someone to be celebrated. I'm so glad to see that we are hoping to change this holiday. Instead of a holiday where we teach children to look up to a fictional idea of the truth; he wasn't this great guy who discovered America. We are using this day instead, to remember the victims of these cruel crimes that washed over the whole country and continent. It makes me really happy to know so many people are remembering and teaching this holiday in a different light. We are using it as a day to remember and a day to listen and understand our indigenous people. It's all anyone could've asked for.

**As people living on stolen land and benefiting from it, we should be conscious of the role we play in affecting the people who were once here (and still are) and the environment they took care of.**



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