

MORNING STAR





► The Full Picture

When there is only a year left before college application deadlines, students want to know what they can still do to increase their admissions competitiveness. Morningstar takes the guesswork out of the admissions process, and helps students increase their competitiveness by focusing on their summer plans, intellectual development, testing strategy, and the application process itself. Through expert guidance, the Morningstar Program ensures that students are doing all the right things with their remaining time to become the strongest possible applicants.

Morningstar is a strategically targeted program that takes students through the college preparation and application process.

► How Does it Work?

Morningstar is effective because it ensures students make the most of the very important time between the middle of 11th grade until applications are due. This is the last chance for students to improve their admissions stories, and Morningstar focuses on the things colleges care most about: summer plans, intellectual engagement, and reflection. Morningstar guides students through a process of self-improvement and reflection, making them more interesting students, and therefore more desirable to admissions officers. In the second half, the students are guided through all parts of the application process, so they benefit from an insider's perspective as they learn what to do and what mistakes to avoid when applying to college. It helps students take a strategic approach to admissions, removing the guesswork from the process while also making sure students create the best application possible.



What are the details?

Morningstar is open to 11th grade students between December and July.



Students also have free access to Due West's application courses, workshops, and presentations. There are no minimum requirements to be part of Morningstar, but students and families must recognize that the student will be required to complete a significant amount of work over the course of the program. Due West helps students work best when students themselves take ownership of this process.

Case Study

Student at Local School in Shanghai

A solid student who lacked direction. We helped the student with her intellectual profile so she could better articulate her academic goals. She became much more prepared to describe her unique college application story in competitive admissions.

Before working with Due West

- Student was not sure which academic area she wanted to pursue
- Student was vaguely interested in majoring in math or business, two of the most competitive programs for students to apply to in the United States
- Student needed to add definition to her application in order to stand out
- SAT : 800 Math / 660 CR / 710 W
- SAT II : 800 Math II / 740 Physics / 740 Chemistry
- TOEFL : 109
- Activities
 - o Founder & CEO of Student-run soil company)
 - o Vice President, Student Union Clubs Department
 - o Core Member, Model United Nations
 - o Cornell University: The Business World

Due West Difference

- Due West helped develop the student's areas of interest. Because one of her main activities was starting an organic soil company, we encouraged her to apply to a summer business program with an environmental emphasis
- Due West guided the student toward schools with interdisciplinary social science programs that integrated math, econ and statistics with qualitative knowledge, and schools that offered public health majors
- Due West helped student articulate these interests to give her a strategic advantage. When she applied and interviewed at these schools, she was able to speak in depth about her fit with these special programs

Our Results

Accepted by Tufts University

- Student set her application apart in a way that expressing an interest in business school or majoring in math would not have
- She explored her interests and identified programs and schools that really fit her academic needs and her personality
- Student learned about these programs in depth early on. In the end, she was delighted by her ED II acceptance to Tufts University

Student at International School in Beijing

A strong student interested in art, but needed help to bring further definition to his passion. We helped develop his artistic voice, so he was much more prepared in articulating his creative vision in college applications.

Before working with Due West

- Student was interested in art, but unsure of how to pursue his interests further, especially during breaks
- Student was unsure about how to develop the art portfolio or target appropriate colleges
- GPA : 3.86
- SAT : 700 Math / 600 CR / 760 W
- SAT II : 800 Math / 630 Physics
- Activities
 - o Designer, Student Charity Organization
 - o Marie Walsh Summer Art Program
 - o Columbia Summer Art Program
 - o Tennis athlete
 - o Figure drawing class participant
 - o Summer program in oil painting and writing

Due West Difference


- Due West rigorously developed the student's intellectual engagement with art
- We helped the student with his application to Marie Sharpe Summer Program, one of the most selective visual arts summer programs in the United States
- We ensured the student read the right books, so he was able to speak from an academic angle about his creative work in essays and interviews
- Due West counseled the student on how to use SlideRoom, the art portfolio platform for the Common Application

Our Results

Accepted by Columbia University

- Student was able to articulate his intellectual approach to art through his university applications, especially through a rigorous five-essay application to Columbia University
- Student received an Early Decision offer to Columbia University, where he now studies art





Breaking down the program

1. Parent and Student Orientation

An introduction to the Aurora Program and working with Due West.

2. SD: Due West Strategy Assessment

You will benefit from Due West's team approach when you meet with your counselor and a former admissions officer to evaluate different areas relevant to the admissions process.

3. SD: Strategy Assessment Discussion

After Due West produces your official Strategy Assessment, you will meet with your counselor to go through the document and agree on your priorities over the next several months.

4. MF: Recommendation Roadmap

You and your counselor will discuss how to build relationships with teachers and mentors, setting the stage for strong letters of recommendation.

5. SD: Testing Strategy

Testing is of course an important component of US admissions, and in this session you and your counselor will agree to a plan to complete all your college testing requirements.

6. ID: Intellectual Development Strategy and Research Project

You and your counselor will decide on a research project to expand your intellectual profile, examine a subject from multiple angles, and participate in a Due West presentation competition.

7. SL: School List Research

The first college list discussion; Due West will teach you how to think about schools by starting broadly and eventually narrowing your list.

8. IC: Interview Preparation

The interview is one of the most important – and most authentic – parts of the college application process. In this first session, you'll learn about the different kinds of admissions interviews and how to prepare for them.

9. ID: Research Project Check-in

You and your counselor will discuss your process on your research project.

10. MF: Resume Builder

Summer programs and internships often require students to submit resumes. In this session, learn how to communicate about your academic and extra-curricular achievements on paper effectively.

11. SB: Summer Break Strategy

In this session, you and your counselor will discuss the possibilities for how to spend your summer and settle on a strategy.

12. SB: Summer Application Brainstorming

You and your counselor will discuss how to complete the applications for your target summer program(s).

13. SB: Summer Application Submission

You and your counselor will review your summer application(s), making sure there aren't any errors before submitting.

14. ID: Research Project Presentation

The conclusion of your research project. You will give a presentation to your counselor – either in person or online – about your project, the format of which will depend on your subject. The top presenters will be nominated to present at a Due West competition.

15. AE: Application Angle Advisor

A Due West Council (DWC) member, one of Due West's former admissions officer, will meet with you and your counselor to help determine what your admissions angle should be.

16. SL: Early School Selection and School List

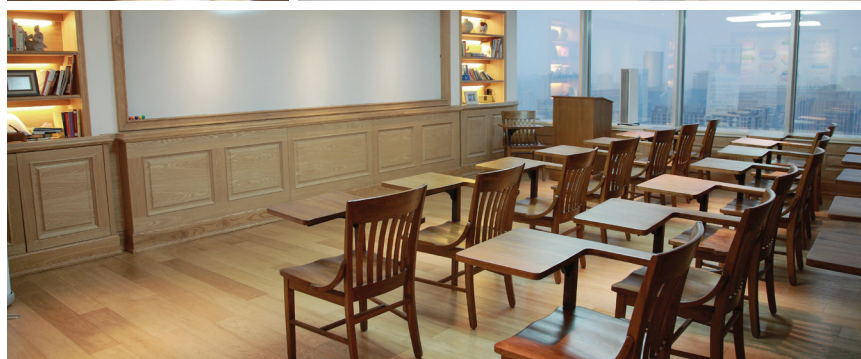
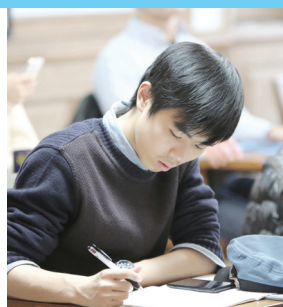
The second college list discussion: You'll begin to narrow your list and select a school or schools for Early Action/Early Decision.

17. AE: Common Application Introduction and Personal Statement Brainstorm

Your counselor will introduce the Common Application and brainstorm your Personal Statement with you.

18. AE: Essay Feedback Review

After one of our DWC members edits your personal statement and offers suggestions for improvement, you and your counselor will meet to go over the DWC's notes together and discuss how to improve your essay.



19. AE: Early School Essay Brainstorm

You and your counselor will brainstorm essay topics for your early school(s)' supplement(s).

20. IC: Interview Guru 1 and Common Application Review

The first session on preparing for the college interview. Additionally, your counselor will point out areas to make improvements on your Common Application forms.

21. MF: Early School Submission Review and Financial Certification

You and your counselor will review your entire application before submitting, while a Due West parent coordinator discusses financial certification requirements with your parents.

22. SL: Finalize School List and Parent Update Discussion

You and your counselor will agree on your final list of schools, and Due West will discuss your progress with your parents.

23. AE: Regular Decision Calendar Review and Brainstorm Group 2 Essays

Your counselor will review the calendar for the rest of your application work, and you will brainstorm your supplemental essays for your second group of schools.

24. AE: Essay Writing Progress Report 1

The second opportunity to discuss your writing strengths and weaknesses with your counselor.

25. IC: Interview Guru 2

The second session on preparing for the college interview.

26. AE: Brainstorm Group 3 Essays and Adjust School List

Brainstorm your next group of supplements and potentially adjust your school list based on late developments, including changes in GPA, testing, or competitions.

27. AE: Brainstorm Group 4 Essays and Early School Update Letter

Brainstorm your final group of supplemental essays and discuss sending an update letter to your early school(s).

28. AE: Essay Writing Progress Report 2

The final session to discuss your essay writing strengths and weaknesses.

29. SD: North Star Program Review and Parent Update

An opportunity to review your work through the North Star Program and update your parents on your progress.

30. SD: Post-Submission Support

To provide assistance with update letters and other questions after all applications have been submitted.

31. IC: Interview Guru 3

The final session on preparing for the college interview.

32. SD: Post-Decision Support

To help you evaluate your college options and address any concerns after decisions have been released.

Sample Morningstar Calendar

Junior Year

December – March

Introduction to Due West. Establish your priorities for the program.

January – February

Decide on testing strategy and begin to build relationships with teachers and mentors. Prepare for summer: set a summer break strategy. Begin intellectual development project.

February – April

Apply to summer programs. Begin to prepare for college interviews. Execute EI strategy.

April – May

Culminating EI experiences: EI plan execution.

May – June

Evaluate summer plan and execute testing strategy. Begin work on college applications, including the Personal Statement. Start to construct school list.

Senior Year

July

Execute summer programs. Continue work on college applications. Finish Personal Statement and begin supplemental essays. Settle on Early Decision school(s).

August

Complete first round of applications, including all supplemental essays for Early Decision school(s). Continue interview preparation.

September

Gather school forms, finalize recommendation providers, and continue work on application essays. Decide on final school list (you may add schools later).

October

Continue interview prep and complete last round of supplemental essays. Consider adding a few reach school based on new testing developments.

November – December

Submit all applications (by early November). Continue work on additional schools, if applicable. You're almost done!

December

Continue interview preparation, and request interviews as appropriate.

January-March

Continue admissions interviews, and prepare update letters to schools as needed.

April-May

Decide which school to attend.

June-August

Prepare to begin college!

Add-Ons

In order to support students with more particular needs, Due West developed Add-Ons that seek to address more specific needs.

Athletics

Interested in DI or DIII sports? Due West will help you navigate the athletic recruitment process

Arts

Do you have a talent in music, arts or an interest in dance or architecture? Have your work reviewed and improved with Due West's arts experts before submitting to colleges


Schools

Are you interested in applying to more than 10 schools? Add schools to your Due West list: price depends on whether or not the school requires additional essays



Morningstar Reach is another option, suitable for some students.

Student Testimonials



"Looking back on the past days of this year I had changed a lot, and one of the most drastic changes took place in the Due West office. I learned how to be hardworking, responsible, and organized. I always thought even though the final result was not that satisfying, I would equally be happy for college, for I had acquired those valuable traits (or at least aware of developing those traits) so essential for college life. Now that my dream school said yes to my proposal, every minute on hour-long subway trip to the office and every chair in classrooms and meeting rooms I sat in speak a wonderful memory over the half year."

——Student at High School attached to Peking University

"What makes Due West different is the resources. Everyone at Due West has personal and business resources to help students in different ways. Due West is very business oriented, and Due West helped me find a summer internship at the Four Seasons hotel. A lot of co-workers couldn't believe I was under 18 and thought I must be the son of an investor!"

——Student at Experimental High School attached to Beijing Normal University

"Due West starts at very different point [for essays]—instead of trying to pinpoint the interests of an admissions officer, we started with what's within me. Due West asked me about stories from my life that I feel most strongly about, picked out some ideas, and gave me advice on how to polish those stories, feelings, opinions and experiences into essays."

——Student at local school in Guangdong

"Before I worked with Due West I felt like college applications would be torture for me, that the pressure would kill me. But it was not, and it did not. I am really thankful for all the efforts and the things I learned and the people that helped me."

——Student at Western Academy of Beijing

"I see Due West as a personal mentor and an close friend, not a solemn college counselor. Due West not only helped me explore my interests to find my preferred majors, but also introduced me to lots of great colleges, allowing me to discover my love for Liberal Arts Colleges. Due West knows more about US colleges than other agencies, and the counselors care more about my interests and preferences rather than my scores"

——Student at Shattuck - St. Mary's school, American boarding school



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