


# **SIMPLIFYING THE COLLEGE SEARCH & APPLICATION PROCESS**





**YOU HAVE 4,500  
COLLEGE,  
UNIVERSITY AND JR.  
COLLEGE OPTIONS  
IN THE U.S. ALONE**



# Some Initial Questions to Consider

- Do I want an Associates or Bachelor undergraduate degree?
- Am I ready to consider moving several hours away from home?
- Do I see myself at a college with lots of students or in a smaller community?
- Do I want to be at a school where sports are a big deal? Or one that's known for its activism? Or for its hard-working students?
- Am I confident in my course of study or am I still undecided?
- Am I limiting my choices by focusing on whether a college is public or private?

# 11 Factors in Choosing the Right College for You

- Type of School
- Size
- Cost
- Location
- Major/Course of study
- Learning Environment
- Housing
- Distance
- Campus Culture
- Scholarships & Financial Aid
- Extracurricular Activities

# Building Your List

- Go to college fairs
- Attend college visits at your high school
- Talk to family
- Get advice from high school counselors/post-grad coordinators
- Read your mail and email
- Explore online
  - Naviance Family Connection
  - College Confidential
  - College websites
  - College Board
- Visit campuses
- Keep an open mind when building your list!

# Applying to College: FAQs

- When should I start applying?
- How many colleges should I apply to?
- What is the Common App?
- Should I apply to colleges if my grades and test scores are below a school's preferred ranges?
- Should I apply to colleges that may appear out of my family's price range?

# Tips for Preparing Your College Application

- Get organized
- Start early
- Be consistent
- Be careful. Proofread and check for accuracy.
- Keep counselors in the loop.
- Let people who will be writing you letters of recommendation know where to send them.



# Anatomy of a College Application

- Application Forms
- Application Fees
- High School Transcript
- ACT or SAT Test Scores
- Letters of Recommendation
- Essays
- Auditions and Portfolios
- Interviews

# Estimating Your College Costs

- Focus on net price, not published price
  - Net = Full cost of attendance minus scholarships and financial aid package
- Five main categories of expenses
  - Tuition and Fees
  - Room and Board
  - Books and Supplies
  - Personal Expenses
  - Transportation
- Early estimate: Net Price Calculator

# Did You Know?

More than \$185 billion in financial aid is available to help you pay for college.

The average student received a little over \$13,200 last year to help pay for college.

More than 6 out of 10 college students receive financial aid.

# Financial Aid 101

- Financial aid is money loaned or given to you to help you pay for college.
- Sources for financial aid
  - The federal government
  - State governments
  - College and universities
  - Private organizations
  - Banks and lending companies

# Financial Aid 101

- Four main types of financial aid
  - Scholarships
  - Grants
  - Loans
  - Work-Study
- Scholarships and Financial Aid – separate departments
- Each college has its own financial aid and scholarship policies

# Applying for Financial Aid

- Know the deadlines
  - FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid
  - The FAFSA goes online October 1<sup>st</sup> and will use PPY tax info
  - Use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to update your FAFSA with IRS tax return information
- Start your research early
- Read eligibility requirements carefully
- Stay organized

# FAFSA Process

- Step 1: Find deadlines and application requirements at [fafsa.gov/deadlines.htm](https://fafsa.gov/deadlines.htm)
- Step 2: Complete the FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1
- Step 3: Wait! Most financial aid offers will not be mailed until spring
- Step 4: Compare financial aid offers and determine out-of-pocket costs
- Step 5: Accept the aid you want. You do not have to accept the full amount offered.

# Sources for College Scholarships

- Scholarships are generally merit-based and are awarded to students who meet certain requirements.
- May require separate application(s)
- Sources
  - College - or internal - scholarships
    - University-wide
    - Particular college, department, program or major
    - Athletics
    - National Alumni Associations
  - Outside – or external – scholarships
    - Local: church/religious organization, community organizations such as Rotary Club or Kiwanis, employers, etc.
    - State scholarships
    - National scholarships: National Merit Scholarship Corporation, Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, etc.



# Resources for Researching College Scholarships

- University guides or websites
- Scholarship databases
  - Naviance, High school counselors, Post-grad coordinators
- Scholarship search sites
  - Fastweb, Scholarships.com, NerdScholar, CollegeBoard, Finaid.org, Hispanic College Fund, Scholarships for Students with Health Conditions, plus others
- Community Organizations/Employers/Churches

# Senior Year Checklist

- ✓ Make sure you have taken the ACT or SAT by early fall.
- ✓ Continue to emphasize the importance of academic success. Colleges consider coursework and grades throughout your senior year.
- ✓ Make sure you obtain college brochures, application forms, and information on financial aid and scholarships and review them thoroughly. Develop an updated list of important contacts at each college.
- ✓ Check your email regularly for notices, news and updates from colleges.
  - Includes college-assigned email accounts

# Senior Year Checklist

- ✓ Visit your top three schools to get an inside look.
- ✓ Prepare applications, write essays and secure teacher recommendations at least one month before deadlines.
- ✓ Make sure you meet the deadlines for financial aid/FAFSA and scholarships.
- ✓ Watch your mail for acceptance letters. Make sure you return all requested forms promptly.

# Senior Year Checklist

- ✓ Include your parents in making your final decision.
- ✓ Most colleges will honor the “universal candidate reply date,” allowing you to choose without penalty from all offers of scholarship and aid until May 1.
- ✓ Plan to attend orientation.

# And Finally....

- You are not in this alone!
  - College admission representatives, post-grad coordinators, high school counselors, administration and teachers are available to help.
  - Just ask....we're here to help you navigate the college selection and application process and provide you with the information you need to make the right decision for ***your*** future.

# Q&A Session