

GETTING STARTED

There are more than 3,500 colleges and universities in the United States. If you choose to go to college you will be one among more than 2 million young people who start college each fall. This fact opens enormous opportunities, but it also places a great responsibility on you to choose wisely. An inventory of your values, preferences and self-concepts is the beginning of the search. Armed with this awareness an individual can make use of certain skills to assess his opportunities. These self-assessment and decision-making skills are those upon which an individual should feel confident to rely on when making decisions.

Learning about colleges is an arduous task, one to which many students simply do not allocate sufficient time and thought. The beginning of the college selection process is also fraught with many myths and misconceptions. The most **common myths** are:

THERE IS A PERFECT COLLEGE FOR ME

Understanding that there is no perfect college for you but several good alternatives will also make the application process more exciting. If you narrow your sights to only one college, you may spend too much time worrying about getting into that particular school. This will prevent you from making a systematic search for alternative institutions.

I NEED TO DECIDE ON MY CAREER BEFORE I CAN CHOOSE A COLLEGE

The average college student changes majors two or three times in the course of four years of college and most college graduates change careers three to five times in their lifetime.

WE CAN ONLY AFFORD A LOW-PRICED COLLEGE

Do not let initial costs alone determine your future. Too often students rule out some colleges because the total cost appears to be more than their parents can afford. This may not be the case when all sources of financial aid are explored. In order to attract students from all income levels, private colleges offer significant amounts of financial aid and in the long run may be as affordable as a less expensive public institution.

THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS IS THE STANDARDIZED TEST SCORE

The quality of your high school program and your achievement are more important than standardized tests. Colleges usually look for a healthy balance between the high school record, test scores and other personal achievements.

BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE IS ONLY AN EXTENSION OF HIGH SCHOOL

Bryn Athyn College of the New Church offers degrees in Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science in the areas of: Biology, Business, English, History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Religion and Education. An Associate in Arts degree may also be earned and has three tracks or emphases in: Humanities, Mathematics/Science and History/Social Science. College credit earned at the Bryn Athyn College can also be transferred to another college.

INVESTIGATING COLLEGES IS AN UNPLEASANT CHORE

Looking at colleges should be part of an exciting search for your future. It is wise to approach the admissions process with optimism and excitement for two reasons. First, it will make the process more interesting and second, your enthusiasm and optimism will show up in your application essays. Some components of the research process can be fun as well, such as the campus visit. The selection and application process is also a time of self-discovery that may prove to be more beneficial than the selection of a particular college.

I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THIS COLLEGE, SO IT CAN'T BE ANY GOOD

Most people know very little about colleges. The average well-educated individual can probably name only 50 of the roughly 3,500 colleges and these tend to be the older eastern colleges, the large state universities, those with outstanding athletic teams and those that happen to be near their home. It is important to remember that a college that may be right for you may be one that is now unknown to you. And some of the schools you have heard the most about may not be right for you. Try to keep an open mind throughout the entire process.

As well as the myths that exist about the college selection process, there are also several common mistakes made:

BEING PASSIVE

Letting the choice just happen instead of taking charge of your planning. Following the lead of your friends. Taking any suggestion that comes to you. Letting someone else decide for you. Applying to many colleges indiscriminately so you can postpone thinking about which one to attend.

PLEASING OTHERS

Applying to colleges you aren't really interested in just to make your parents, teachers and classmates proud of you or to impress them.

LOSING SIGHT OF YOUR MAIN REASON FOR GOING TO COLLEGE

Always keep in mind WHY you are spending four years of your life and \$60,000 - \$ 200,000 in this endeavor. Before you can choose a college that is right for you, you should think about who you are, what you like and don't like, what you are good at and why. It may be easier to determine what a given college has to offer than it is to determine WHY it is that you want to go to college. And yet it would seem clear that the degree to which you can effectively evaluate and compare the programs and resources of various colleges will depend greatly upon just how much thought you have given to what it is you seek from a college education.

You can organize your college planning by following these seven steps:

- I. Know Yourself
- II. Identify College Characteristics Important to you
- III. List Colleges You Are Considering & Collect Information
- IV. Investigate & Compare Colleges
- V. Apply for Admission
- VI. Determine Your Financial Plan
- VII. Make Some Decisions

STEP 1. KNOW YOURSELF

WHY ARE YOU GOING TO COLLEGE?

The following statements reflect reasons that students have given for going to college. Reading and reflecting upon these statements may assist you in identifying why you are considering a college education.

1. To live in a different part of the country
2. To be exposed to new ideas
3. To have a more interesting social life
4. To explore cultural activities off campus (art museums, symphonies, ballet, etc.)
5. To get practical experience in my field outside the classroom (internships, co-op)
6. To prepare for graduate school
7. To participate in athletic activities
8. To be challenged academically
9. To prepare for a specific career
10. To meet people different from myself
11. To study and live in a foreign country
12. To participate in research in my area of study
13. To develop my talents and interests
14. To be out on my own
15. To help me get a good job

STEP II. IDENTIFY COLLEGE CHARACTERISTICS

Please respond to the following characteristics and indicate with a Y (yes), N (no), or U (unimportant) which characteristics are important to you.

Y	N	U	Characteristic	Definition
			Academic atmosphere	
			Academic reputation	
			Background of other students	
			Campus security	
			Co-op program/internship	
			Cost/Financial Aid	
			Course offerings/Major	
			Curriculum design:structured/flexible	
			Dormitory facilities	
			Extracurricular offerings	
			Faculty: research/teaching	
			Facilities (research, fine arts, library, etc.)	
			Foreign study	
			Graduation rate/ % going to graduate school	
			Intercollegiate athletics/intramurals	
			Level of competition	
			Location: urban/rural setting	
			Location: NE, SE, NW, SW	
			Off campus activities	
			Placement services offered	
			Religious affiliation and facilities	
			Retention rate	
			Size of school	
			Student/faculty ratio	
			Student/faculty relationships	
			Type of school: career/liberal arts	

NEEDS ASSESSMENT INVENTORY

Directions: for each statement mark Y- (yes), N(no), or U(unimportant)

Description of Possible Personal Needs

1. I need to be close to home.
2. Social environment is important to me.
3. I need to be in an environment where I can explore my interests off campus.
4. I prefer a particular climate.
5. I want to know most of the people I go to school with.
6. I want these people to be like me - same religious backgrounds, part of the country, - values.
7. I want to know my professors and be able to meet with them as needed.
8. I will need - laboratories, studio space, equipment, etc.
9. I want anonymity and little active involvement.
10. I would like to get actively involved in the life of the campus.
11. I want the majority of students to live on campus.
12. I would like to belong to a fraternity/sorority.
11. I want a "rah-rah" atmosphere on campus where most students go to athletic events.
14. I would like to participate in intercollegiate athletics.
15. I want to try a variety of courses and change majors if I choose.
16. I know what I want to major in.
17. I prefer professors who are primarily teachers not researchers.
18. I need a structured curriculum that clearly defines requirements in my major and electives.
19. I need a challenging academic environment.

STEP III.

COLLECT INFORMATION AND LIST COLLEGES THAT YOU ARE CONSIDERING

GATHER INFORMATION

Begin your research by using literature. The first resource you will want to use are the guidebooks; then the literature printed by the college - catalogs- viewbooks. This information can be supplemented by a campus visit.

GUIDEBOOKS

What do they contain? Brief, factual information, such as size, location, admissions policy, tests required, majors, activities, cost and financial aid, etc. The guidebooks are excellent first resources. They are especially helpful in dealing with unsolicited mail to determine if the school meets your profile. Peterson's provides a searchable version of their guidebook on-line through StudentEdge, a program in which ANC participates.

The College Handbook (The College Board) - the most current and inclusive information
Peterson's Guide to Two and Four Year Colleges

Baron's Guide

American Colleges (Cass & Birnbuam)

Lovejoys Guide

Where can they be found?

All these books are available in the College and Career Center (Benade Rm. 228). Most of them can be purchased at any local bookstore or viewed at a public library.

SPECIALIZED LITERATURE

What are they? These publications rate or rank schools by selectivity, majors, cost, etc.

Fiske's Guide to Selective Colleges

Rates 250 colleges in three categories - academics, social life, quality of life

The Insider's Guide to the Colleges

Sketches of life at 290 colleges as seen from the perspective of students and the editors of the book

Ruggs Recommendations on the Colleges

Ranks colleges by majors

The 100 Best Colleges

Rating of 100 colleges selected to be academically superior

The Public Ivies

State schools selected by the author to be academically equal to highly selective private schools

Peterson's Guide to Colleges with Programs for Learning Disabled Students

The most complete and accurate guide to the more than 900 four-year and two-year colleges with programs and services for learning disabled students.

COLLEGE CATALOGS

Where can they be found? On-line. The vast majority of colleges no longer mass mail their catalogs, instead they provide digital versions on their websites.

What are they? Excellent resources for information pertaining to course descriptions and majors - required courses, courses within the major, structure of the major, list of faculty, their degrees and where they received them, etc.

If a student is seriously interested in a college, it would be wise to either download or request the catalogue, even if it means paying a few dollars. A close reading of it can be instructive.

COLLEGE LITERATURE

What is it? Usually referred to as brochures or viewbooks; summary information about the school - general description of course offerings, majors, student life, profile of student body, costs, pictures of the campus, etc.

How do I receive this material? This type of material is sent to students when they request information or as unsolicited mail. It can also be found as parts of their websites.

WRITING FOR INFORMATION:

After you have identified the schools, it will be necessary for you to write or email these schools to request information. Use the sample letter below:

Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
Date

Office of Admissions
Name of College
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a junior at The Academy of the New Church Secondary Schools and will graduate in June 2010. I am interested in learning more about (name of school) and I am considering a major in _____. I would appreciate it if you would send me the following:

1. An application form and a general bulletin explaining the entrance requirements, course offerings and college costs
2. Financial aid and scholarship information
3. Special information related to (your special interest)

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Your signature
(Your name – typed in full)

COLLEGE FAIRS & COLLEGE DAYS

College fairs are held throughout the region, see the College & Career Board next to 228 Benade for specific information. (Colleges will be represented at these fairs; opportunities for students to talk with representatives of the schools, obtain printed literature and ask questions about information that may not be found in books.) Juniors are given the opportunity to visit Bryn Athyn College for a day during the school year. They are able to meet with faculty and visit classes that are in session. In addition, the high school permits juniors and seniors to take three college days, in which they can visit a college on a school day. It is beneficial to find out if you need an appointment for a tour at the campus that you are visiting. You must obtain permission from the Principal, your teachers and counselor to go on a college visit. Dr. Feerrar can give you information on “what to do” at a college fair, questions to ask and a specific approach to take when attending one.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Many colleges have summer programs available to students between their junior and senior year in high school. Programs vary from classroom experiences to more experiential formats - they vary in length from 2 to 8 weeks.

Where can I get more information about these programs? See Dr. Feerrar or write to schools you are interested in to see if they have such programs.

CAMPUS VISIT

An excellent way to learn about a college, the faculty, facilities, spirit, atmosphere, academic climate and student values is to visit the school when college is in session. It is better to see with your own eyes rather than rely upon the view of someone else. The campus visit will be a valuable piece of information that you can use in evaluating a college. You will have an opportunity to evaluate what students wear, how they live, your reactions to them, etc. You will be able to observe where you will eat, sleep, study, worship, attend classes and take part in campus activities. You are likely to do better work if you are in an environment which is congenial to your value system and needs. Parents are encouraged to accompany their son or daughter.

PREPARING FOR A COLLEGE VISIT:

1. Arrange for your visit in advance by calling the Admissions Office to find out the schedule for tours and informational sessions. Some colleges may require ample notice.
2. Allow sufficient time for the visit - preferably a full day with an overnight stay but not less than a half day.
3. Familiarize yourself with the college catalogue or other literature before visiting so that you can ask intelligent questions.
4. Give careful attention to your appearance, grooming and conduct. Certain colleges will keep notes and place them in your file. Remember to put your best foot forward.
5. Take good notes. Don't trust anything to memory, especially if you're planning on visiting a number of colleges. Even if you don't take notes during the visit, write your thoughts down while the experience is still fresh in your mind. Better yet, take photographs of the campus while visiting to also help you remember.
6. Do an interview. Even if it's optional, set one up. It's an opportunity for you to interview the school. Interviews are rarely available to walk-ins, so schedule this in advance.

TRY TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Visit several classes.
2. Talk to as many students as possible. Ask them about the academic and social life on campus.
3. Observe students as you walk around and ask yourself if you want to spend four years of your life with them.
4. Stay overnight in a dorm.
5. Eat in the dining hall.
6. Read the college newspaper. This is an excellent way to find out about campus life, sports, clubs, etc.

WHAT TO LEARN AND ASK ON THE VISIT - CLASSES:

1. What can I expect my first year?
2. What is the average class size for freshmen? Upper-class students?
3. What percentage of freshman return for sophomore year?
4. What is the faculty advisor system?
5. What are the college's top three programs?

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE:

1. What percentage of the students graduate in four years? Medical, Law, Veterinarian, Dental Schools?
2. What are the strong departments? Strong does not necessarily imply the largest major but could mean a small department where students will receive the richest experience because of few majors and more attention.
3. Ask what the class sizes are for specific years, required courses, courses in your major.
4. How accessible are faculty?

DIVERSITY OF STUDENT BODY:

1. What is the social composition of the school population?
2. What is the ethnic and cultural diversity, the ratio of women to men, the number of foreign students, the geographical distribution?
3. Diversity in enrollment says two things: the institution is attractive enough to draw students from beyond its own region and its students have the opportunity of learning from each other.

CAMPUS:

1. Does the campus appeal to you?
2. How far is it from the local community? Will the community be a positive or negative factor?
3. Is pride shown in maintaining a clean and well-ordered campus?
4. Is campus security adequate?

HOUSING:

1. Are freshmen required to live in a dorm?
2. How is housing assigned? What are the most appealing dorms? Is there a "quiet hours" dorm? Are there other dorms designed for special needs?
3. What percentage of students live on campus?
4. Where are the dorms located in relation to other parts of the campus?
5. What are the other dining facilities like around campus? Does your meal plan allow you to eat in them?

RELIGIOUS:

1. Are there opportunities to join religious organizations?
2. Is there a place of worship on campus or nearby?
3. Are philosophy or theology courses required?

SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL:

1. What do students do on weekends? What percentage of the students remain on campus on the weekends? (Is it a suitcase school – meaning do many students go home on weekends?)
2. Are there fraternities or sororities? What percentage of the students belong?
3. Does the school have a student union or other recreational facilities?
4. What varsity and intramural sports are played ... at which Division level? Are the students active supporters of athletic events? Are the facilities adequate?
5. What is there to do off campus? How expensive is it?
6. Is a car necessary? If not, what are the transportation options? Are freshman allowed to have cars?

FINANCIAL AID OPPORTUNITIES:

1. What percentage of last year's freshmen received some kind of financial aid?
2. What percentage received direct grant aid from the college?
3. Are merit scholarships available? If so, what are the eligibility requirements?

PLACEMENT AND GRADUATE STATISTICS:

1. What percentage of graduates (who apply) are accepted into graduate school?
2. What are some of the placement statistics of graduates entering the job market?
3. How many companies recruit on campus during senior year?
4. What kinds of programs does the office of Career Development and Placement offer?

GENERAL ATMOSPHERE AND QUALITY OF STUDENTS:

1. What is the average drop-out rate? Why do students leave?
2. What is the composition of the student body? Where do students come from? Why did they choose this school?
3. What is the academic profile of the typical freshman class: class rank, standardized test scores and type of high schools attended?
4. How is the attitude of the student body as a whole - happy, friendly, independent, anxious, competitive, etc.
5. Do students appear serious about their work?
6. Am I competitive with the student body?
7. Will this school be a challenge for me?

WHAT IS THERE TO DO FOR FUN?

This is not a frivolous question. Whatever college you choose, it's going to be your home for most of four years during which only part of your time will be spent in the classroom.

AFTER THE VISIT:

Write a thank-you note to the Director of Admissions and to any other staff who interviewed you. This should be done promptly upon returning home. It shows the interviewer you have taken the time and interest to think about your interview. Try to trigger the interviewer's memory of you in a personal way.

STEP IV. ANALYZE THE DATA

COMPARE COLLEGES

Ratings, tuition, faculty/student ratios - the job of choosing a college can seem like a numbers game. But it isn't really. Your choice of college will be an extension of yourself, what you are, what you want to become, your lifestyle and your learning style. The College Rating Worksheet on the next page can help you focus your decision making on what is important to you. It can help you turn what seems like a numbers game into a careful, thoughtful process.

Down the left side of the worksheet are characteristics and areas of concern that you have already identified as important to you.

The first column is titled RANK - you were asked on page 4 to rank order these characteristics. If you have not done so, please do so now.

Across the top, put in the names of the colleges you are investigating. You may be analyzing more than three colleges. If so, make copies of the chart.

One by one rate each college using your own system. You might wish to assign a value to each characteristic, perhaps from 1 - 10. Or you might simply wish to make a check mark in the column if the school has the quality. You may also wish to make comments of your own in the appropriate column. If you are using a numerical rating, at the end add up each college's score on all points. The results can be revealing and helpful.

COLLEGE RATING WORK SHEET

Description of Feature of the College being Considered

RANK

Name of College 1:

Name of College 2:

Name of College 3:

Intended Majors

Academic Atmosphere

Diversity of Students

Internships/Co-op

Dormitory Facilities

Extracurricular

Intercollegiate Athletics

Facilities

Graduation Rate

% Going to Graduate School

Location

Placement Services

Religious Affiliation

Size of School

Accessibility of Faculty

Active Classroom Participation

Foreign Study

Undergraduate Research

Off Campus Activities

Type: Career/Liberal Arts

Academic Reputation

Special Programs: ROTC

Curriculum Design

Faculty: Research/Teaching

THIRD -PERSONAL QUALITIES

The majority of colleges will make an admissions decision based on course selection, grades, test scores and personal qualities. These schools will ask for additional information in the application - essays, recommendations, lists of activities and possibly an interview. These personal qualities may very well be the deciding factor between a positive and negative decision. The essays are many times a critical factor - a great deal of attention should be given to writing them.

In a recent study sponsored by the College Board, the following were listed as the personal qualities that were weighted in the admissions decision:

1. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

College admissions officers are interested in how students use their time outside the school day. This extra dimension added by artists, musicians, athletes, student leaders, volunteer and part time workers or others with unique talents may receive special consideration in the admissions process.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The secondary school report or counselor's recommendation describe not only achievements and skills but also character, integrity, and patterns of growth. Teachers' reports also play an important role in the selection process, particularly when the teachers know the student well and are willing to detail potential and achievement in their academic area. Colleges generally require no more than two or three recommendations.

3. ESSAYS

This is the part of the application where the student 'comes to life.' At selective schools where applicants tend to have similar grade point averages, class rank and test scores, the essays help to distinguish one student from the next. The essay can identify special talent, can describe significant involvement in activities, amplify special programs the student was involved in, discuss growth experiences, etc. Be specific in your essays using examples to support your points.

4. GEOGRAPHY

If a college is looking to diversify its student body, they will give special consideration to students from geographic areas that are underrepresented in their student population.

5. INTERVIEW

An interview may be helpful to the student and the college. I strongly recommend taking the time to have an interview. This allows the admissions office to connect a face and personality with your application.

THE TRANSCRIPT IS THE PRIMARY DETERMINATE – including course depth and strength, grades and patterns over time.

KINDS OF SCHOOLS

LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

A four-year institution which emphasizes a program of broad undergraduate education.

UNIVERSITY

An academic institution which grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields. It is composed of a number of “schools” or “colleges” each of whom encompasses a general field of study.

JUNIOR COLLEGE

A two-year institution of higher learning which provides career and vocational training and academic curriculum. Community colleges are generally two-year colleges.

ENGINEERING OR TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Independent professional school that provide four-year training programs in the fields of engineering and the physical sciences. They are often known as Institutes of Technology or Polytechnic Institutes.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL

A two-year institution which offers occupational programs intended to prepare students for immediate employment in fields related to engineering and the physical sciences. These schools may also offer one-year certificate programs in certain craft, technical fields and clerical skills.

NURSING SCHOOL

There are three kinds of nursing school. At schools affiliated with hospitals, students receive an R.N. diploma upon successful completion of training and a state examination. At schools affiliated with four-year colleges, students receive both BS degree and an R.N. diploma. Junior colleges and community colleges may offer two-year nursing programs resulting in an AS degree in nursing.

MILITARY SCHOOLS

Federal military academies prepare officers for the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Merchant Marines. These institutions (West Point, Annapolis, The Air Force Academy, U.S. Coast Guard Academy and Kings Point) require recommendations and nominations by U.S. Representatives, private and state-supported military institutions, however, they operate on a college application basis. They all offer degree programs in engineering and technology with concentration in various aspects of military science.

TRADE SCHOOL

Trade schools offer specialized training in specific work fields such as cosmetology, computer science, medical or dental technology, culinary arts or drafting.

PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

Professional schools offer specialized study in areas such as art, music, drama, dance and photography.

PREP SCHOOL OR POST-GRADUATE PROGRAM

A number of private secondary schools offer a 5th year program for additional preparation before college entrance.

STEP V. APPLY FOR ADMISSION

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR IN STUDENTS

College admissions officers attempt to guide high school students toward a successful college experience. In addition, admissions officers wish to fill their college's freshman class with interesting, creative and sensitive young people because students determine the tone and atmosphere of the college.

Merging these two objectives can often be difficult yet the majority of college representatives are eager to match you with their college only if you will enjoy and succeed at their institution. A mismatch between a college and a student, while sometimes unavoidable, can be costly to both.

To better measure whether you and a college will fit well together, college admissions staffs look at a variety of traits, experiences and information. In order of importance they are:

FIRST - COURSES TAKEN IN HIGH SCHOOL AND FINAL GRADES

Colleges consider first the breadth and diversity of courses you have taken as well as the difficulty of these courses and the grades you have received in them. While success in the tougher courses (honors programs and AP courses) suggests you will succeed in a college curriculum, virtually all colleges accept a large number of students who perform well in a more traditional program. The more selective the school is for admission, the more demanding the high school program should be.

Reasonably good grades throughout high school and in all subjects suggest a willingness to work and an interest in a variety of topics. Yet a poor grade or two in high school does not necessarily mean you will not be admitted to a selective college.

Although most colleges review your record for all four years in high school, significant improvement in your record, no matter how late in your high school career, will not go unnoticed by the majority of colleges. Colleges prefer a steadily improving record over the first three and a half years. And yes - senior year grades are important!

SECOND - STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES

Scores on standardized tests - SAT and ACT - may be the most misunderstood of all factors determining whether or not a particular college will admit you. Various college guides and admissions materials list the average scores attained by students at a particular college on standardized tests. Yet scores at a given college tend to range within plus or minus 100 points from that stated average on the SAT.

Admissions officers are fully aware, too, that some students do not test well. Slow reading speed, unfamiliarity with the test format or simple fear may cause a student to perform poorly on standardized tests.

Two examples:

1. Mediocre high school performance, high test scores - obviously a student who is not working to full potential. The admissions committee has to ask the questions - when will the student become motivated? Do we take the chance that it will happen at our institution? Probably not.
2. Strong high school performance, average SAT or ACT test scores - a motivated student who is achieving at a high level. A good college prospect.

FOURTH - THE INTERVIEW

The prospect of an interview is sometimes nerve-racking, but the event is often pleasant and always informative. Here is what a candidate faces:

As you are researching prospective colleges, you will discover that some colleges require an interview, others strongly recommend it and others leave the matter up to you. In some cases, an interview might be helpful. Though your SAT/ACT scores, high school grades and letters of recommendation are more important, in instances where the decision hangs in the balance, a good interview may give an applicant an 'edge'. It is sometimes possible to arrange the interview with a college alumnus/alumnae who lives in your area.

Prepare for the interview by reading the material the college sent you. Dress neatly, but not so out of character that you feel awkward. Take along your transcript.

The interview has two purposes - for you to get to know the college and for the college to learn about you. When you ask a question, its form can reveal things about you. Do not, for example, ask questions such as "How large is the freshman class?" or "Does the college offer Chinese?" Since the answers are available with a glance at the catalogue, the implication is that you were too uninterested to discover the facts for yourself. Remember that the interview is a dialogue, not a variant of "Twenty Questions." The answers that you give are less likely to be judged as simply right or wrong than as preludes to intelligent conversation. If your response to a question about your hobbies is that you like to read, be prepared to mention titles and authors and to say something about the book's content.

The interview is your opportunity to speak your piece. If there are circumstances that have affected your performance in school, the interview may be the place to state them. If, for example, an illness in your family affected your studies, mention this. But in all cases avoid a self-pitying tone. The facts will speak for themselves.

YOU MIGHT BE ASKED DURING AN INTERVIEW:

- What courses have you had?
- What books did you read this past summer and why did you like them?
- What is your intended program of study?
- What magazines do you regularly read?
- What are your career plans?
- Why are you interested in "our school"?
- How do you spend your free time?
- What is your major extracurricular interest?
- Do you know anyone at "our school"?
- What personalities in the news today do you admire?
- What do you think you will contribute to this college environment?

How does the admissions process work at a college?

EARLY DECISION:

Early Decision is a plan under which a student applies to his/her first-choice college early in the fall (usually by November) of the senior year, and if accepted, the student agrees by contract to enter the college if offered admission. It is expected by the college that students will withdraw all other pending applications. Decisions are rendered to applicants in mid December. If not accepted under the Early Decision Plan, a student is usually reconsidered for admission later in the senior year. Be aware that exercising this option takes away the opportunity to compare financial aid packages during the spring prior to the May 1st deposit date.

EARLY ACTION:

Early Action follows the same application/notification timetable as Early Decision but does not obligate the candidate to accept the offer of admission, nor to withdraw all other pending applications. Early Action application deadlines usually fall in November, December and January with notification occurring a month to two months after the application deadline.

SPRING NOTIFICATION:

Colleges who use spring notification have application deadlines from January 1 to February 15. Decisions are mailed to applicants from early to mid – April, and the accepted applicants are required to notify the college which they choose to attend no later than May 1. There are several variations to this process with some schools using a variety of deadline dates and reply deadlines.

ROLLING ADMISSIONS:

A college using Rolling Admissions reviews applications as the "folders" are completed and return decisions within a few weeks after review. Candidates usually have until May 1 to reply to the college but some colleges request earlier response dates - **CHECK CAREFULLY FOR THIS FACTOR.**

WAIT LIST:

This “non-decision” means that the committee regards you as qualified for admission to its college, but owing to the number of appealing applicants, the college does not wish to give you a place right away. Action on wait-listed students rarely begins before May 10 and it may occur as late as July 31. The use of wait lists has become very difficult to predict from year to year.

REMEMBER THAT MAY 1 IS THE NATIONAL CANDIDATE REPLY DATE. You must make your decision by this deadline and have a deposit sent to the college to hold your place.

TESTING

Many colleges require students to submit scores from a Scholastic Aptitude Test or an American College Test. Some also require one, two or three SAT II Subject Tests.

APTITUDE TESTS:

PSAT/NMSQT

A Preliminary (or practice) Scholastic Aptitude Test is a two hour and 10 minute test (plus approximately 35 minutes for administrative duties) scored on a scale of 20 to 80, that measures critical reading, writing and mathematical reasoning skills. It is one predictor of a student's performance on the SAT. These scores are not released to the colleges unless requested.

The PSAT is used by the National Merit Corporation to determine finalists in their scholarship competition.

SAT I

A three hour and 45 minute test administered seven times a year. Registration forms for the test are in the College and Career Center and are also available online at www.collegeboard.com. Students must complete the form and mail it before the postmarked deadline. All multiple choice questions are scored the same: one point for each correct answer and one quarter point subtracted for a wrong answer. Student produced responses on the math section are not deducted points for incorrect answers. It is possible to only answer half of the questions correctly and omit the remaining questions to get an average score.

ACT

A three and a half hour curriculum based test (including optional Writing section) offered six times a year which measures academic achievement in four areas (English, math, reading and science). Registration forms for the test, which include an interest survey are in the College and Career Center and online at www.actstudent.org. Students must complete the forms and mail it before the postmarked deadline. Test strategies for the ACT include answering EVERY question, unlike the SAT, because there is no penalty on the ACT for guessing. Your score on the tests will be based on the number of questions that you answer correctly. If not signing up for the Writing section, make sure you double check that it is not required by your colleges.

SAT SUBJECT TESTS:

SAT II:

One hour SAT II Tests given concurrently with the SAT. These tests measure the level of achievement in specific subject areas. Usually the more selective colleges require SAT II's for admission.

Check the college's literature to see if a particular school requires them. These tests should be taken upon completion of coursework in that area as material will be fresh in mind.

SAT II Tests are offered in the following areas:

Literature	French (reading only)	Chinese (reading & listening)
United States History	German (reading only)	Japanese (reading & listening)
World History	Modern Hebrew (reading only)	Korean (reading & listening)
Math Level IC	Italian (reading only)	
Math Level IIC	Latin (reading only)	
Biology	Spanish (reading only)	
Chemistry	French (reading & listening)	
Physics	German (reading & listening)	
	Spanish (reading & listening)	

FRESHMAN YEAR TIMETABLE

Achieve at your highest level in academic courses.

Get involved in activities that interest you. Be willing to make a serious commitment to at least one or two major activities as the year progresses

Participate in actively planning your schedule for sophomore year and choose courses that will challenge you.

SOPHOMORE YEAR TIMETABLE

Continue to achieve at highest level.

Consider taking the PSAT. Take SAT II Subject tests after completing course.

Go on “unofficial” college visits.

Plan to take challenging courses junior year.

Continue to learn about yourself, what you like, with some thought about how this will help you plan steps after high school.

JUNIOR YEAR TIMETABLE

PSAT required in Oct. Take SAT I and/ACT in spring of junior year, SAT II if appropriate.

Student appointments with Dr. Feerrar in winter/spring to begin college exploration.

Begin research using resources listed on pages 6 and 7; compile initial list of colleges.

Write to colleges requesting information (see page 7).

Attend College Fairs.

Carefully select courses for senior year - see Academic Handbook for the upcoming year.

Visit colleges during vacations and summer. Begin working on college essays.

SENIOR YEAR TIMETABLE

Schedule a conference with Dr. Feerrar during the summer/first term to discuss final college plans.

Check your GPA and Activity Sheet - continue to strive for a high level of performance.

Register for SAT I, ACT, SAT II, if necessary.

Obtain admissions applications - note application deadlines. Allow ample time to receive application materials. Review applications as soon as you receive them noting essay questions and recommendations needed. The common application is available in the College and Career Center and online at www.nassp.org.

Ask teachers to write recommendations if requested by college. Teachers will send their recommendations directly to the college. Supply them with addressed and stamped envelopes to each college. Some teachers may be willing to allow Dr. Feerrar to coordinate the mailing of recommendations.

Review application procedure on page 20.

BE AWARE OF APPLICATION DEADLINES!

APPLICATION PROCEDURE AT ANC:

1. **You must fill out a written Transcript Request Form available in the secretaries. Requests must be made at least 2 weeks before your application deadline! We are not in our offices during Christmas vacation so plan ahead.**
2. Update Activity Sheet with school secretary. This is the student's responsibility.
3. Meet with Dr. Feerrar to review final list of colleges.
4. Request applications directly from colleges or download them online. Applying online waives the application fee at some colleges.
5. READ EACH APPLICATION for specific directions. Most applications come in two parts - the student application and the Secondary School/Counselor Report. The Secondary School/Counselor Report is filled out by Dr. Feerrar. Some colleges may require you to download supplements – **READ DIRECTIONS!**
6. Submit secondary school report form(s) for each application to Dr. Feerrar as soon as possible and **no later than two weeks prior to application deadline date**. Know deadline dates and names and addresses of colleges.
7. If a college requests additional recommendations from teachers, distribute the form(s) and provide addressed stamped envelopes to teachers. Ask your teachers as early as possible if they would be willing/able to write a recommendation for you. Keep in mind teachers are also under deadlines; therefore, they need a reasonable amount of time to honor your request. Teachers will send recommendations directly to the colleges you are applying to – do not ask them to give to you.
8. Complete **Senior Interview Checklist** with Dr. Feerrar.

VI. DETERMINE YOUR FINANCIAL PLAN FOR COLLEGE

WHAT IS FINANCIAL AID?

Financial aid provides help for meeting college costs which include tuition, fees, books, personal living expenses and travel. Most financial aid is based on need. In order to qualify for need-based aid, parents need to file specific forms including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov and possibly the College Scholarship Service Financial Aid Profile (C. S. S. Profile) at www.collegeboard.com.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID?

Three kinds of financial aid comprise the typical financial aid package:

GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Grants are funds that do not have to be repaid. They are usually awarded on the basis of need alone and can come from a variety of sources - Pell Grant (federal money), state grants (usually available only to students attending college in their home state), and grant money from the colleges' own resources.

Scholarships are outright awards given to honor or reward a student who has exceptional talent or abilities -academic, athletic, music, art, debate, leadership, etc.

LOANS

Loans are funds that must be repaid, generally after the student has graduated or left school. They usually have lower interest rates than commercial loans. Several types of loans are available - the Federal Perkins Loans, the Federal Stafford Loans and various loans to parents. Specific details of these loan programs are available in related financial aid brochures. The FAFSA must be filed for the Federal Stafford Loan.

COLLEGE WORK STUDY PROGRAM

Involves earning money as payment for a job on campus. Students work approximately ten hours a week in a job on the campus. The money is given to the student in the form of a paycheck and can be used for college expenses.

LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS

A scholarship bulletin board is posted outside the College and Career Center. Many scholarships can be found online (see page 23 for some addresses). NEVER pay a company to do a scholarship search for you.

INTERNET SITES FOR COLLEGE INFORMATION

Peterson's On-Line

www.mystudentedge.com

An online college and career planning tool that includes a college search service, career explorations, scholarship search, and free test preparation. A very powerful resource for the self motivated. Students should see Dr. Feerrar for the access code. Using this resource could save students hundred of dollars in test prep/tutoring fees.

MyRoad.com

www.myroad.com

An online college and career planning resource that allows students to develop and navigate a personal path to achieve education and career goals. It also helps make direct connections between college majors and career paths. The site includes mentoring communities that offer first person accounts from students currently pursuing each major and from professionals working in each career.

College Board online

www.collegeboard.com

This site has college planning tools including a list of test dates, online SAT registration and a financial need analysis calculator. Searchable topics include colleges, scholarships, SAT codes and careers. The site also includes SAT and PSAT study guides with sample test questions and a sample writing service to help prepare students for the essay section.

College Guide

www.mycollegeguide.com

This student-oriented site offers electronic links to colleges, admissions advice, a searchable database and general information about college like. It is part of a larger site targeted at young people's interests.

College Net

www.collegenet.com

This is a searchable database of colleges, scholarship opportunities and academic resources. It offers a comprehensive college/university index with good graphics and some interesting resources for financial aid and scholarships. College Net lets applicants complete, file and pay for their admissions applications entirely through the internet. Over 250 colleges and universities have contracted with College Net to serve their official web-based admissions applications.

College View

www.collegeview.com

By combing a database of 3,300 two and four year colleges with engaging multimedia tours, College View gives students and parents a general overview of college, plus direct email option for requesting additional information.

College Express

www.collegeexpress.com

Search colleges by state, major and other factors. Take a virtual tour of some colleges and ask their experts questions about the college admissions process.

The Princeton Review

www.review.com

Search The Princeton Review's site by the school's name, region, state, size and cost. Princeton Review also provides its ratings of hundreds of colleges.

FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS INFORMATION

Finaid

www.nasfaa.org

The most comprehensive source of financial aid information on the Net. This site is backed by the National Association of Student Financial Aid administrator's and includes an endless number of links to sites that allow you to calculate your financial need, search for scholarships on several database, learn the differences between Stafford Loans, Perkins Loans, PLUS Loans and many other sources of aid.

FastWeb

www.fastweb.monster.com

A database of more than 180,000 scholarships, grants, fellowships and loans representing billions of dollars in private sector funding for college students living in the U.S. Generates an addressed letter to the scholarship source and all the student needs to do is sign up and mail to request information.

The Federal Government

www.ed.gov

The largest provider of financial aid, the federal government has a great deal of information on student financial aid.

Additional websites:

American Student Assistance

www.amsa.com

Arts Recognition and Talent Search

www.artsawards.org

Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education

www.afcpe.org

Chase Manhattan Bank: Education Student Loans

www.chase.com/educationfirst

Citibank Student Loan Corporation

www.studentloan.com

College Answer

www.collegeanswer.com

College Connection Scholarships

www.collegescholarships.com

College Savings Plan Network

www.collegesavings.org

HOW DO I APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID?

1. The student requests all necessary student aid information from a financial aid administrator at each school they are considering. Students will receive instructions for applying and any special forms. WATCH DEADLINES!!!
2. Students/parents should secure the appropriate PIN # online at www.pin.ed.gov in November/December of their senior year. These forms should be completed online and sent as early as possible after January 1
3. The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is filed for federal aid programs.
4. If there is a separate institutional financial aid application, it should be mailed to the college financial aid office.
5. When processing is completed on the FAFSA and/or C.S.S. Profile, the student will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR). Check this document carefully to make sure the information supplied is correct and respond to any requests for additional information promptly. If you want additional colleges or programs to receive your FAFSA, use the guide that comes with your acknowledgement.
6. Generally, at the time of college acceptance or eight weeks after filing the FAFSA and/or C.S.S. Profile, the student receives a letter from the college listing the types and amount of aid that will be available to him/her. If there are any questions about the amount or type of aid, contact the financial aid administrator.
7. If there are any changes in your financial circumstances after financial aid has been awarded, contact the financial aid administrator by letter explaining the new circumstances.
8. Students must reapply for financial aid each year following the above steps. There is no assurance that the same amount of aid will be awarded each year. It is very important to inquire early in the academic year regarding the exact actions required to receive renewal consideration.

UNDERSTANDING THE C.S.S. PROFILE

1. Some private colleges and universities now require the C.S.S. Profile. Please check with the college financial aid office that the C.S.S. Profile is necessary. The C.S.S. Profile registration form is available online at www.collegeboard.com. Once the registration form has been received by C.S.S., parents will be sent an individualized Profile application that must be completed by the deadlines specified by individual colleges and universities. These deadlines are noted in the college applications for admission. It is recommended that the Profile Application be promptly returned. Once the Profile Application is processed, parents receive an acknowledgement. A data confirmation report will also be sent if parents request it. This is the only correspondence parents will receive from C.S.S. When C.S.S. determines the students' financial package, C.S.S. sends the information to the colleges which the student listed on the registration form and or added on later. When a student receives a letter of acceptance from a school, the financial aid information will be included with the letter.

STEP VII. FINALIZE YOUR DECISIONS

- ◆ CONFER WITH YOUR PARENTS/TEACHERS/COUNSELOR.
 - ◆ COMPARE AND EVALUATE YOUR OPTIONS AT EACH COLLEGE. You should hear from each school no later than April 15 and the National Candidate Reply date is May 1 (you must make your decision by then and have deposit sent.)
 - ◆ SELECT THE SCHOOL THAT "FITS" YOU. Visit campuses again.
 - ◆ SHOW INITIATIVE AND BE ASSERTIVE.
-
- ✓ INFORM DR. FEERRAR OF YOUR FINAL DECISION – a final transcript must be sent after you graduate.
 - ✓ INFORM OTHER SCHOOL THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED TO THAT YOU WILL NOT BE ATTENDING – this allows other students an opportunity.

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ACCEPTANCES!!

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