

College Research

Initial Thoughts on College Research

A. How Do I Develop a List of Schools?

- Conduct a search using the college section of Naviance.
- View college websites.
- Discuss the research you have completed with your School Counselor.

B. How Do I Get More Information?

- Request information through Admissions Offices (websites, college fairs, etc.)
- Meet with college admissions representatives during fall visits to WHS (senior year). You can also speak with admissions representatives at an area College Fair.
- Keep up to date by checking college websites often and following schools on (social media, Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, etc.)

C. How Can My School Counselor Help Me?

- Your School Counselor is available to review your progress in researching college options and assist in comparing your academic profile with individual college admissions requirements.
- You are encouraged to make appointments with your School Counselor for assistance throughout the admissions process.

D. When You Finish Your Research, Ask Yourself:

- What sets this school apart from others of its type?
- Does the school fit my academic profile?
- Would I be challenged here?
- Could I be happy here?
- Would I be comfortable?

E. Some Final Thoughts:

Giving careful consideration to all information obtained during your research and campus visits, you should discuss tentative choices with your parent/guardian and your School Counselor as you decide where you will be applying for admission.

It is recommended that students apply to a balanced list of colleges so that you have options at the end of the application process. Most students apply to 5 to 8 colleges that vary in terms of difficulty of getting in but that possess the characteristics you have concluded are important to you. Some students will apply to more; others will apply to fewer.

Types of Colleges (Adapted from the College Board)

Public and private colleges

Public colleges are funded by local and state governments and usually offer lower tuition rates than private colleges, especially for students who are residents of the state where a college is located. Private colleges rely mainly on tuition, fees and private sources of funding. Private donations can sometimes provide generous financial aid packages for students.

For-profit colleges

These are businesses that offer a variety of degree programs which typically prepare students for a specific career. They tend to have higher costs, which could mean graduating with more debt. Credits earned may not transfer to other colleges, so be sure to check with the admission office at each college.

Four-year and two-year colleges

Four-year colleges offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These include universities and liberal arts colleges.

Two-year colleges offer programs that last up to two years that lead to a certificate or an associate degree. These include community colleges, vocational-technical colleges and career colleges.

Liberal arts colleges

These colleges offer a broad base of courses in the liberal arts, which includes areas such as literature, history, languages, mathematics and life sciences. Most are private and offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

Universities

Universities often are larger and offer more majors and degree options—bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees—than colleges. Most universities contain several smaller colleges, such as colleges of liberal arts, engineering or health sciences. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

Community colleges

Community colleges offer two-year associate degrees that prepare you to transfer to a four-year college to earn a bachelor's degree. They also offer other associate degrees and certificates that focus on preparing you for a certain career. Community colleges are often an affordable option with relatively low tuition.

Vocational-technical and career colleges

Vocational-technical and career colleges offer specialized training in a particular industry or career. Possible programs of study include the culinary arts, firefighting, dental hygiene and medical records technology. These colleges usually offer certificates or associate degrees.

Colleges with a special focus

- Arts colleges
- Single-sex colleges
- Religiously affiliated colleges
- Specialized-mission colleges

Arts colleges

Art colleges and conservatories focus on the arts. In addition to regular course work, these colleges provide training in areas such as photography, music, theater or fashion design. Most of these colleges offer associate or bachelor's degrees in the fine arts or a specialized field.

Single-sex colleges

All four-year public colleges, and most private colleges, are coed. But there are some private colleges that are specifically for men or for women. Religiously affiliated colleges Some private colleges are connected to a religious faith. The connection may be historic only, or it may affect day-to-day student life.

Specialized-mission colleges

Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) focus on educating African American students. Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) are colleges where at least 25 percent of the full-time undergraduate students are Hispanic. HBCUs and HSIs may offer programs, services and activities targeted to the underrepresented students they serve.

Finding the College That's Right for You

Different schools have different personalities; your job is to find the right personality match for you. Look at some of the following questions you should consider.

Questions about the College

1. Where the college is located (city, small town, rural)?
2. What is the surrounding community like?
3. Is the college public, private, church affiliated?
4. What is the current enrollment?
5. What special or unique programs are offered?
6. Does the college have general education or course distribution requirements? What are they?
7. Are foreign language classes required while enrolled at the school?
8. What is the academic calendar (semesters, trimesters, and quarters)?

Questions about the Student Population

1. Where do the majority of students come from?
2. Do most of the students commute or live on campus? What percentages of students live on campus?
3. What kinds of activities are offered?
4. Are there sororities and fraternities on campus? What percentages of students participate in frats and sororities?
5. What club teams and/or intramural teams are offered?
6. Is the surrounding community supportive of the college?
7. Does the college have a campus visitation program?
8. Is housing available/guaranteed for freshmen? Is it available all four years?

Questions about Academics

1. What is the average class size? Largest? Smallest?
2. How many students in last year's freshman class returned for sophomore year?
3. What was the GPA for the freshman class last year?
4. What is a college's procedure for student orientation, class placement, and scheduling? Are classes guaranteed?
5. How is a faculty advisor assigned to students?
6. What services does the school offer for the student who is undecided about a major?
7. How many students complete a degree program?
8. Do students graduate in four or five years?
9. What are the most popular majors?
10. Are students taught by full time faculty members, graduate assistants, or a combination of the two?
11. What types of additional services are provided by the school at no additional cost to the student (i.e., tutoring, career and personal counseling, developmental reading and study skills workshops, job placement, etc.)?
12. Is there an honors program? What are the qualifications for entry?

Questions about Social Life

1. What is the average age of your student body?
2. What is the male-to-female ratio?
3. What percent of the students reside on campus?
4. Do you have coed dorms?
5. Is yours a "suitcase college" where most students leave on the weekends?
6. What are the procedures for selecting a roommate? Can you change roommates?
7. What are some of the rules and regulations that govern campus and dormitory life?

Questions about Admissions Policies

1. Which high school courses are required?
2. Are entrance exams required? Which ones? What range of scores is accepted?
3. Does the college require a certain GPA or rank in class?
4. Will my activities and involvement in school be considered?
5. Is there an Early Decision or Early Action option? Does the admissions office give preference to those students applying ED or EA?
6. On what basis are applicants accepted?
7. Are personal interviews or letters of recommendation required?
8. Are there special requirements for certain majors? Does the school require foreign language to be accepted?
9. What percent of applications is accepted?
10. Can admission denials be appealed?
11. What are the application deadlines?

Questions about College Costs

1. What are the costs for tuition? Room & board? Are there other fees?
2. How much did your cost increase from last year to this year?
3. Is there a difference in the costs for in-state and out-of-state students?
4. Are accepted students required to place deposits for tuition and housing? Are these refundable?
5. By when must an accepted student decide whether they will attend?
6. Are deposits required each year for returning students?
7. When do bills have to be paid?

Questions about Financial Aid

1. What percent of students receive financial aid based on financial need? What percentage of financial need does the college meet? 100%? 90%? 80%?
2. What percent of students receive scholarships based on academic ability?
3. What would be a typical financial aid package for a freshman?
4. What percent of those who apply for financial aid receive it?
5. Will my financial aid be adjusted if my need increases?
6. What are the financial aid application procedures and deadlines?
7. When are financial aid applicants notified of their awards? How long do they have to respond?