

The College Application Process: *Setting yourself up for a Successful Senior Year Starts NOW!*

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A few things to keep in mind:

Rule of Thumb #1: All Schools do it a little bit differently--if you asked a question at one school, NEVER assume it is done that way at another school!

To assist with that in mind: keep a notebook or excel/google sheet of top schools and their specifics (deadlines, application types, FA requirements, program/major info, scholarships, etc.)

Make connections (demonstrated interest may count & means more if it is from YOU):

- read emails/mail that a school sends & unsubscribe from any you are no longer interested in
- email or call your admission counselor (& send a thank-you notecard after an interview!)
- set up a Zoom or attend an online presentation, take a virtual tour, visit for a campus tour

This needs to be YOUR process, possibly your first adult decision to make--your parents are now to be the cheerleaders, not the primary advocates

Do the work in advance--you should not apply to 20+ schools waiting to see where you get in before truly researching the places (especially if cost is a factor in your decision!)--the key is that you would be happy at ANY of the schools you apply to in the end!

Some first steps (if you haven't already)

TO DO:

- ❑ Set up a college application only email address (shared access?)
- ❑ Set up voicemail on the phone # being used on applications
- ❑ Set up family chat time (starter & on-going)
- ❑ Set up a physical college mail/storage spot

Family Factors:

How close or far from home?

Are there family ties to a school/legacy?

What can we afford (range), is my family able/willing to help pay or am I on my own, what about taking/qualifying for loans?

Student Reflection:

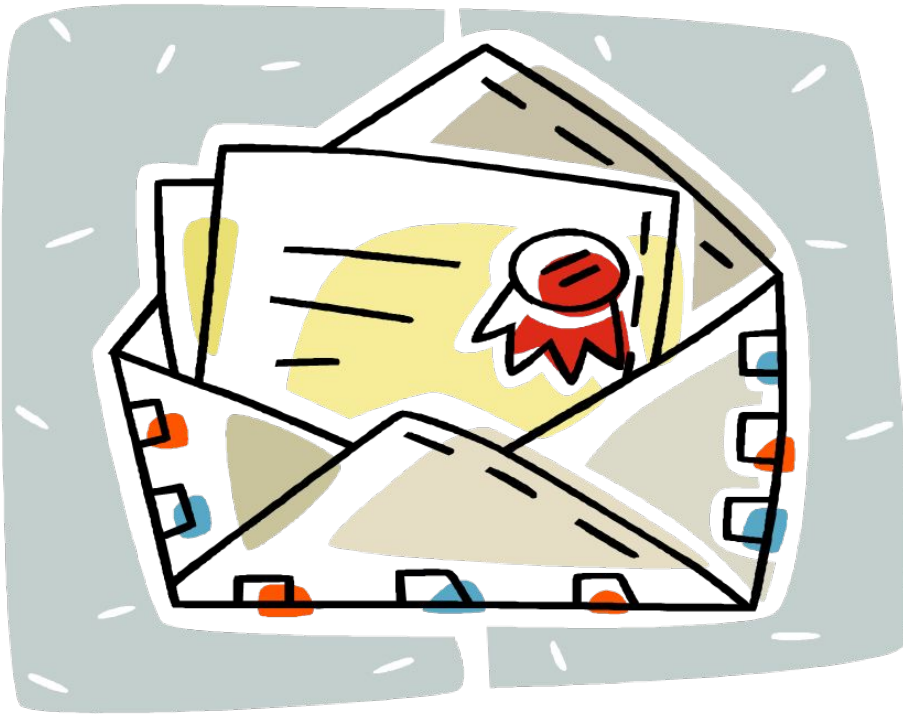
What do I want to be when I grow up?
What has been my best or favorite subject thus far?
What activity(s) do I want to keep doing?

Student's view of campus:

- Do I have a campus image in my head already?
- How close to a city or transportation hub do I want/need to be?

What have I heard, from a credible source (not a "I heard that...")--good or bad, about a place?

- Do they have my major?
- Are there students like me, will I find "my people"?
- Do I want to be a big fish or a small fish?



Do the RESEARCH
Look beyond the marketing & the chatter around school
(aka don't follow the crowd)

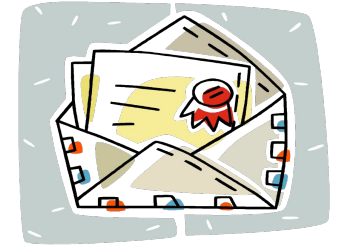
Your goal is to hit a “Grand SLAM” but your list should ALL be contenders:

- **Size**
 - Overall size
 - Avg class size & Faculty:Student ratio
- **Location**
 - Urban/Suburban/Rural
 - Internship & research availability
 - Too far/too close to home
 - Campus layout (walk-able, city streets, shuttle to class or res halls)?
 - Getting around off-campus
- **Academics & Atmosphere**
 - Do they offer my major?
 - Do I have to apply by major or extra steps for my major (i.e. audition, portfolio)?
 - Is there support if I am undecided?
 - What other support is available (i.e. tutoring, services for students with differences, counseling)?
 - Is it easy to change majors/schools?
 - What is the graduate success rate?
 - Activity/Service/Athletic opportunities
 - What is housing like? Campus social life?
- **Money**
 - Sticker price v Bottom line (after aid)
 - Will cost go up in future years?
 - Are you able to pay? Are you willing to pay?
 - How much is too much in loans?

Application Factors: What is in your control?

Green = your control Orange = variable

- Where you apply!
 - do they meet your criteria?
 - do you meet their criteria?
- Transcript
 - rigor, strength of schedule
 - grades trends (no senioritis!)
 - coursework/grades for specific programs
- Test Scores (*if required, if submitted*)
- Essay(s), writing sample, supplement questions
- Letters of recommendation
 - counselor
 - teacher(s)/academic
 - additional sources if asked for
- Resume/Activities List
- Interview or Audition (*if recommended/required*)
- Demonstrated Interest (*if factored*)



THE BIG ENVELOPE



College selectivity is a measure of how difficult it is for students to get admitted. Much of the anxiety about "getting in" comes from students who are applying to a few colleges that admit few students.

A SELECTIVE COLLEGE IS SIMPLY A COLLEGE THAT DOES NOT ADMIT EVERYONE

Selectivity is measured by the percentage of students who are admitted. The lower the percentage, the more selective the school is. Essentially, most colleges are selective to some degree. A small group of highly selective schools admits less than a third of applicants.

MOST COLLEGES ADMIT MOST OF THEIR APPLICANTS

Your chances at the vast majority of colleges may actually be quite promising. Most colleges accept more than half of their applicants. The average acceptance rate for all four-year colleges in the U.S. is about 66 percent (or two thirds of applicants), according to a 2017 report from the National Association for College Admissions Counseling.

THE HEADLINES ARE ABOUT A SMALL NUMBER OF HIGHLY SELECTIVE COLLEGES

Out of the some 2,000 accredited four-year colleges featured on CollegeData, only about 50 of them routinely admit fewer than 30 percent of applicants. If your heart is set on one of these colleges, it is a good idea to include some well-researched backup schools on your college list. You may very well be attending one of them.

COLLEGES CAN BE SELECTIVE IN OTHER WAYS

Selectivity isn't always based on the admission rate. It sometimes depends on other factors.

- If your grades and test scores fall below the average qualifications of admitted students, that school will be more difficult for you to get into.
- Applying to a public college out of state may lower your chances. Such colleges give preference to state residents and sometimes to applicants from neighboring states.

APPLYING TO SELECTIVE COLLEGES DOESN'T HAVE TO LEAD TO TRAGEDY

You may want to try your luck with some highly selective colleges. But you should be fully prepared to receive letters that begin: "We are sorry to inform you..." If you also apply to selective colleges for which you are a good fit, however, you are likely to get more than a few letters that begin: "Congratulations!"

collegedata.com

Finding your academic fit



- What kind of academic experience do you want?
- Don't ask "What's your minimum GPA?"
- Think about scholarship possibilities!
- What the heck is "holistic review" anyway?

The average acceptance rate for four year institutions across the US is

66.7 percent.

Highly Selective



- 17 schools admitted fewer than 10% of their applicants.
- Multiple readers for each app
- Academics, yes, but fit too
- Less of a way to predict who is admitted and who is not.

This Summer: Start your application!

- The application is your chance to brag, pitch you as the product
- **Common Application—used by more than 1000 universities world-wide—Start your account TODAY if you haven't already**
- Essay prompts are available for the general essay now, but don't start supplemental ones until Aug 1 (when new cycle year launches)
- **Preference: if a school accepts both the Common App & another source, they agree that there is no preference of what application is used by the student**
- Almost all schools utilize online applications & some only offer an online option (*& some don't have a fee if you apply online!*)
- Activity list isn't just what you do at school—what do you do all summer, do you have a job, hobbies, internship, travel, family responsibilities?



ESSAYS

ADVICE: BE AUTHENTIC!

Helpful hints:

- Avoid COVID-19 if possible in general essay, there is a question specifically for experiences/details (& they should be unique or extraordinary)
- Xavier tips & tricks:
<https://www.xavier.edu/x-guides/2020-essay-tips/guides>
- Online tutorials & gurus like “The College Essay Guy”
<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/>
- Some colleges (i.e. Johns Hopkins) have their own pages for successful or memorable essays, see if the schools you are considering keeps one

It's a human process

There are no right or wrong topics

Follow directions

Read the prompts closely and answer the question asked

Use your own voice

Be careful you don't over-edit or have too many people review it

Don't wait until the last minute

Leave time to write supplements!

This Summer = get visiting

- **Early visits** (& local visits) might be helpful in setting a bar & eliminating schools from lists
- **Don't overbook** session & tour is great the first time around, you don't need to schedule every possible appointment that first go-round, it is always good to go back after being admitted
- **Usual takeaways** the weather, the campus layout, the appearance of students across campus, the tour guide
- **Pro's & Con's** keep mental lists as you go & don't forget to write it all down at the end
- **Questions** that you didn't get to ask or came up on the ride home--follow up with an email to your counselor after (part of your thank-you email after!)

Can't get there/Want more info = explore virtually

- **Virtual Tour/Visit** what was highlighted--was it was important to your family's search or maybe helps you eliminate if it wasn't
- **Focus on the content** as if you were there, don't just let it go in the background--if it is a recording you can pause, walk away & come back if there is a distraction
- **Follow up** as questions aren't always able to be asked, it is a great reason to connect with the admission staff after or email the presenter
- **Sign Up** odds are you are signing up to view the program/tour, but if not, make sure to get on the list if it was of interest (and be sure to unsubscribe after if it wasn't!)
- **Research** go deeper into the schools site or beyond (but if you do, don't believe everything you read, especially on social media--VERIFY!)

Demonstrated Interest

- ❑ Inquiry card submission (or scan) at college fairs (*even if you've done it before or are already on mailing list*)
- ❑ Online information request
- ❑ Campus visit during junior year or summer after junior year
- ❑ Early application
- ❑ Supplemental Essay(s) - showing your particular interests and how you have researched it specifically (i.e the “why this college” essay-isn’t really optional)
- ❑ Speaking with alumni or students who may share information with students on behalf of admission office-especially if they call/email you!
- ❑ High School Visit or meeting in region
- ❑ Campus information session/tour in fall of senior year
- ❑ Interview with admission representative (staff/student/alum)
- ❑ Attend admitted student event (campus or local)
- ❑ Open/read/click through on emails
- ❑ Meeting with coach or auditioning for program

Not all schools use demonstrated interest, but almost all computer systems track your activity—a great question to ask of your liaison at your list of schools!

Connect with your counselor

- ❖ Email/Text
- ❖ Phone Call (& call back if they call you!)
- ❖ Zoom/virtual meetings
- ❖ Admission Interview (esp if required or REC)
- ❖ “Counselor Chats” (more informational)
- ❖ Visiting your school
- ❖ High School Information Programs (like today 😊)
- ❖ Prospective Student Events in your area
- ❖ Admitted Student Events in your area
- ❖ Ask for them when you are on campus to “just say hello”

MYTH: Admission counselor’s job is to deny students

FACT: Your admission counselor is your advocate on the admission committee, so if they know you...

A few web resources to get you (& keep you) going

Application Based:

www.commonapp.org

www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org

Testing, Financial Aid & Scholarships, Common Transcript:

www.fairtest.org

www.act.org

www.collegeboard.org (SAT & CSS Profile)

www.studentaid.gov

www.fastweb.com

www.srarsupport.zendesk.com/hc/en-us (SRAR & SSAR)

Additional online help along the way:

www.collegeessayguy.com

www.collegecovered.com/resources-for-counselors

& remember going forward:

every school does it a little different, so be sure to “find your Erin” at each of your schools & stay in touch!
There is a lot of unknown throughout this process, it is an art not a science (schools are looking at applicants for fit),
if you have a question, ask: your counselor, your admission liaison, your parent(s)!

Where to go from here?

To do TONIGHT: set up a college application email address with shared access & your Common App account (if you haven't already)

To do over the week ahead: talk as a family about where to go from here (first of many conversations) & schedule a regular check-in (i.e. if you chat every Sunday at dinner, parents not allowed to bug you during the week about it)

To do over the next weeks (before school ends!): student self reflection & check in with the counseling staff at your school as to setting expectations and timelines for the year ahead (you may already have a meeting scheduled!)

To do over the next few months: research schools (*location, size [overall & avg class], majors, internships, post-graduate success, student life/activities, middle 50% profile, costs, scholarship opportunities*), schedule virtual or in-person visits to campuses & students should be reaching out to admission folk at schools on their list (goal: demonstrate interest, build relationship with college contact(s) and/or make yourself known/begin to stand out in the crowd)

There is a lot of unknown throughout this process, it is an art not a science, as always:
if you have a question, ask!

So here is your chance: Questions?

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**Explore XAVIER virtually:
<https://www.xavier.edu/making-a-musketeer/index>**