



Junior Newsletter

Grade 11/12 Guidance

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NOVEMBER

How to do a college search...

It is important to realize throughout the entire college selection process, that this is a personal journey. What may be right for one student could be completely different for another. Just because a certain college was “right” for mom, dad, grandparent, any other relative, friend, neighbor, best friend, kid that sat next to you in 9th grade English (I think you get the point) may not be right for you. **THE GOAL OF THE COLLEGE SEARCH PROCESS IS TO FIND COLLEGES THAT WILL BE A GOOD FIT, ONE THAT WILL MEET YOUR NEEDS, PROMOTING ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL SUCCESS.** So what should students consider/not consider when searching for a college:

DO's:

1. Learning environment: Does a college support your interest/style of learning? Are you interested in research? Do you prefer lecture? What is the average class size? Who make up the faculty? What is the academic focus? Do you want study abroad opportunities?
2. Academic “fit”: How do you compare to the student body in regards to your academic preparation? Academic ability? Will you perform better under a highly rigorous or low pressure academic environment?
3. Majors/Minors: Does the college have multiple majors/minors that you would be interested in? Remember, many students change their major 2.5 times in college. It is much easier to transfer majors than colleges if you decide to change. Finding an interest in multiple majors offered by the college is an advantage.
4. Activities: Does the college have activities or organizations you are interested in? What are students doing on weekend?
5. Student Body: What types of students are on campus? Do they share similar interests? Could you see yourself interacting with these students for your tenure at that college? Do you want a similar or diverse campus?
6. Support: What types of support does a college offer if you are having difficulty academically, socially, emotionally?
7. Trust the process: As with students, admissions officers are also trying to find students that will be the right “fit”. Their goal in selecting students is the idea that each student will graduate from their school.

DON'TS:

1. College name or reputation: Just because a college has a reputable name does not mean that you will/should like it. The name/reputation does not guarantee success. If you go to a specific college and either do poorly or do not graduate, then the name of the school really didn't matter. Further, do not discount a college in a search just because you have never heard of it before. Chances are, with over 3000 colleges in the country, you will NOT have heard of many of the colleges. These “hidden gems” could be the best college “fit” for you.
2. Solely on where your relatives have attended or where friends are going. As stated above, your college choices should be about what will work for you. What works for or interests someone else, may not be the same for you.
3. Focus on the “PERFECT” college: Reality is that you have the ability and potential to be successful at many different colleges. Ultimately, if you do your college homework, all colleges that you apply should be ones that you see yourself succeeding at and being the right “fit”. If not, then you shouldn't be applying there anyway. It is not uncommon for a student's #1 choice to change throughout the course of the year, proving that all schools you apply should be a top choice. If you are not accepted, then how “PERFECT” could the college have been? The “PERFECT” college should be the one you are accepted to and decide to attend!

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A FEW DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

HIGH SCHOOL

Mandatory →

FREE →

Many graded assignments and tests →

Teachers, counselors, administrators
may contact you about receiving extra help →

Teachers available throughout day to contact →

Can usually make up all work when absent →

Absences can be followed by excuse notes →

Assignments/tests announced when
they come up →

In school for 7 consecutive hours →

Each class is 1.5 hours per day for one semester →

Parents may be very involved →

Frequent tests on less content →

People remind you to study →

COLLEGE

Voluntary

EXPENSIVE

Only a few papers and tests
make up your entire grade

YOU must ask for help

Professors meet with you during
scheduled office hours

Must hand in assignments on as signed
day (typically NO excuses)

Absences typically result in lowered
grade. 3 or more is usually an automatic
failing grade

A syllabus that you receive the first
day of class has all assignments/tests

May only have a few classes per day
and have time in between

Classes have 15 week semesters, then a
final exam week. Classes may be 50 min
3x/week, 1.5 hrs 2x/wk, or 3 hrs 1x/wk

Teachers/college may not release any
information to parents, even grades!

Usually only 1 or 2 all semester

You must prioritize study time over
all other activities

These are just a few of the differences between high school and college



College Planning Time Line

JUNIOR YEAR



September/October

- ⇒ Communicate with parents about college/career plans
- ⇒ Stay involved in extracurricular activities
- ⇒ Attend College fair at SAHS take the PSAT (October)

November/December

- ⇒ Improve/maintain grades
- ⇒ Use your PSAT results to access the College Board's Quick start (December)
- ⇒ Become aware SAT I/SAT II registration and testing dates in the spring

January/February/March

- ⇒ Register for spring SAT test dates
- ⇒ Begin/expand college search by using online references and publications in guidance
- ⇒ Course registration for next year. Prepare a challenging senior year course schedule with advice from teachers/counselor

April/May

- ⇒ Sign up for College Sneak Preview in guidance office (*Sneak Preview is an in depth college selection meeting that occurs in small groups in the college center*)
- ⇒ Draft "smart" list of colleges
- ⇒ Request information from colleges on your list

April/May (cont'd)

- ⇒ Visit colleges and open house programs
- ⇒ Communicate with your parents about your progress and the cost of college
- ⇒ AP exams for students taking these courses
- ⇒ Draft summer plans, especially internship/educational experiences

June

- ⇒ Take SAT I and II tests, if needed
- ⇒ narrow "smart" college list for summer visits
- ⇒ Ask 2 teachers for college recommendation letters (only if you will definitely be applying to a college requesting a teacher rec)
- ⇒ Review schedule to ensure rigorous senior year courses. **NO CHANGES AFTER THE SCHEDULE CHANGE REQUEST PERIOD!**

July/August

- ⇒ Visit colleges
- ⇒ Communicate with admission officers
- ⇒ Narrow college choices to 5-8 schools
- ⇒ Athletes – register with NCAA
- ⇒ Begin writing "rough" draft for application essays

