

Beginning the College Search Process:

The first step is to reflect upon **yourself**. Who Am I? What I am looking for in a college? What college is going to match my needs? Identify your priorities. Research the characteristics of a range of schools. Here are some college characteristics to consider:

Size of Student Body

- Look at the opportunities offered
- Academic majors
- Will I receive personal attention
- Academic resources (Library, tutoring, writing center, etc)

Location

- Do I want to come home frequently?
- Do I want to experience a new part of the country?

Academic Programs

If you know what you want to study, then you can research the reputations of academic departments by talking to people in the fields that interest you. If you are undecided as many students are then select a college or university that offers a range of majors and programs that interest you. Students normally do not select a major until their sophomore year in college and many change their minds in college.

Campus Life: What is beyond the Classroom?

- What extracurricular activities, athletics, clubs, and organizations are available?
- Does the community around the college offer interesting outlets for students?
- Is there a religious group on campus? Church location, etc.
- How do fraternities and sororities influence campus life?
- What is the availability of housing?
- Are freshmen required to live on campus?

Cost: Calculate all the costs involved

- Tuition
- Books, Fees, meal plan
- Housing- includes laptop, furniture, clothing, etc.
- Travel Expenses

Diversity

- Explore what your student may gain from a diverse student body.
- Geographic, ethnic and spiritual diversity of the students will help a student learn more about the world.
- Explore student organizations that may interest you.

Retention and Graduation Rates

- Research the percentage of students who return after their first year and the percentage of entering students who go on to graduate.
- Good Retention and graduation rates indicate that responsible academic, social, and financial support exists for most students.

Research: Where do I begin?

- www.collegeboard.org– Browse at colleges and universities, SAT/ACT scores, Athletics, Financial planning for college, etc.
- Read literature online and that is mailed to you.
- Create a list of potential schools. (6 to 8 schools)
- Attend College Fairs
- Talk to Admission Representatives, friends, neighbors
- Visit Campuses. Example: Weekend tours, plan a family vacation, etc.
- Most importantly organize your searches. Create a file for each school and for scholarships, spreadsheets, etc. (Keep all in one area!)
- Write down Admission and Scholarship deadlines.

Source: The College Board