



WCA COUNSELOR CHATS

Topic: Finding a Good Fit

"For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope." - *Jeremiah 29:11*

The selection of a college to attend is one of the most important decisions made by a high school student. This choice must be made wisely and prayerfully. Students and parents are encouraged to work together on this process. Relationships will grow as parents model Christian decision-making skills and as parents and students seek God's will together. Parents must NOT abdicate this responsibility and leave students to follow the crowd to whatever the current "popular" institution might be. A student who selects a college because that is where his/her friends are going is likely not mature enough for college.

There are approximately 3600 colleges and universities in the United States. Attending the "designer-label" college or the one with the "best" athletic teams or even the one with the highest ranking in US News & World Report will not guarantee success. Many students experience great success and satisfaction at small liberal arts colleges where learning tends to be collaborative rather than competitive or impersonal. Small classes that are taught by professors, who get to know their students, tend to foster student success. In larger universities, many professors are involved in research and graduate school programs thus leaving many undergraduate classes to be taught by teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are sometimes great teachers but not necessarily.

Students should select colleges in which they can be challenged but not be overwhelmed academically. The ability to be admitted later on to graduate and professional programs depends to a great extent on having a wonderful undergraduate record. That is much more likely to be achieved at an institution that is an appropriate fit academically as opposed to one where the student is in the lower end of the scale of those students who were admitted.