



COLLEGE COUNSELING **HANDBOOK** 2020–2021



UNIVERSITY
PREP

DISCOVER TOGETHER

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

How do you choose the right college? Is there really a college for everyone? How does one start and complete the tasks of applying to, and selecting, a college? UPrep's College Counseling Office has compiled the following handbook for juniors, seniors, and their parents to answer your questions. Written with the intent to minimize the college application process, this how-to manual strives to guide you through this educational milestone.

We want to note that the college search process looks different this year due to COVID-19. When applicable, we have noted changes in the following guide. The College Counseling Office is in constant contact with colleges and universities in order to assist our community in navigating any and all changes in the college selection process due to COVID-19. We remain steadfast in our commitment to all of you.

The college counseling program at UPrep is an extension of our educational program. We strongly believe that students should carry the responsibility for much of the college selection process, as the student is the candidate. Collecting information, soliciting recommendations, and organizing components of the application are all good learning experiences for college-bound students.

From the UPrep College Counseling Office, you can expect a well-developed college counseling program that will not only assess a student's college options, but also has methods in place for:

- addressing a student's search for identity;
- dealing with the many facets of separation anxiety;
- coping with the expectations that students and families bring to the table; and
- confronting the feelings of vulnerability and apprehension with which students and families wrestle.

The College Counseling Office is a department that:

- helps create a college list for each student;
- hosts admissions representatives from more than 200 colleges and universities;
- provides pertinent information regarding application responsibilities;
- holds individual meetings with students from the second semester of their junior year through their senior year;
- presents college informational evenings throughout the year; and
- offers ongoing support and advocacy.

The exciting task of the College Counseling Office is to remain alert to the issues and trends facing our students, provide clarity about the pressures of the college process, and support each student in his or her college search. We are confident that all students will come through the process feeling that they have succeeded and have a range of options. We feel most fortunate to work with you.

Warm regards,



Kelly Herrington
Director of College Counseling

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ANATOMY OF A CANDIDATE



COLLEGE SEARCH

The first and most important task to complete when starting your college search is to decide what is important to you in a school. Search for a school that fits you well academically, socially, and culturally. Don't eliminate a school solely because it's outside of your comfort zone. The challenge of dealing with the unfamiliar can help you grow as a person.

The University Prep Website

This is a gateway to information about the college counseling program at UPrep. The site also has additional information on gap year programs, summer opportunities, and test prep information, <https://www.universityprep.org/academics/college-counseling>.

School-Specific Websites

Individual college and university websites have a plethora of information for students and parents. These sites provide you with detailed information on a variety of topics, ranging from planning a campus visit to departmental information. If COVID-19 prevents on campus visits, all meetings with college representatives will take place via Zoom or another online platform.

College Representative Visits to University Prep

UPrep hosts more than 200 college representatives throughout the fall, and juniors and seniors are encouraged to attend. All college visits will take place online. A list of college visits can be found in SCOIR and the weekly All School Email.

SCOIR—A Dynamic New Online College Counseling Tool

The college counseling office is excited to introduce SCOIR, a new online college counseling platform, to students and parents beginning with the class of 2021. SCOIR is a dynamic and visual college search, selection, and application tool for students, parents, and college counselors. Each stakeholder in the college process will have their own individual accounts in SCOIR, as there are features in the program that are uniquely tailored to the student and parent role in the college process. Students and parents will receive an email to "invite" them to initiate their SCOIR account, giving them access to this powerful and fun resource. Members of the class of 2021 received their SCOIR login information in the fall of 2019. Students and parents can log on to SCOIR at www.scoir.com.

SCOIR Student

The student page consists of three areas related to the college search: **My Profile**, **College Search**, and **My Colleges**.

My Profile

After you have logged into SCOIR, you will arrive at the My Profile page. This is also known as the Landing page. This is where you will find all of the personal information linked to you. In addition to academic stats, standardized test scores, and parent information found in the My Profile section, SCOIR gives students the ability to upload web links, social media posts (that are college relevant), and important documents (transcripts, resumes, a graded assignment that you might need for a college application) into a "My drive" portal. Students can also share activities they are involved in and achievements they are proud of in this section.

College Search

SCOIR's college search engine empowers students to find colleges that best meet their individual needs and preferences. Students can search for schools using the drop down menus. There are more than ten choices for search criteria: *Name, Personal Interest & Activities, Academic, Undergraduate Degrees, Location, Number of Undergrads, Acceptance Rate, School Type, Campus Setting, ROTC Programs, and Application type*.

My Colleges

Once a list of colleges is created, students will choose to "Follow" a school so that it remains on their prospective college list. Students can save and/ or share the schools they're following with other stakeholders (parents or counselors) in the college process. SCOIR provides comprehensive information and analysis about each college on a college list. The in-depth information is found in three areas: **Overview** includes many of the nuts and bolts (Academic, Admission, Student Life) information about a school, **the Wall** is a visual representation of the school through photos, social media posts, and school websites, and **Analysis** is where students can compare their academic background to students who have previously applied.

SCOIR Parent

Parents are an integral part of the college search process. SCOIR provides each parent with their own login information to access SCOIR's interactive college search tools. Parents can assist their student in discovering schools that may be of interest to them by suggesting schools to Follow; students decide whether or not to "Accept" this suggestion. SCOIR also provides a comprehensive Net Price Calculator to assist families in seeing the cost of attendance at each school a student is Following. The parent page consists of three areas: **College**, **College Search**, and **Profile**.

College

Here you will find the Net Price Calculator (NPC) tool. The more detailed financial information a family can provide, the more accurate information about the cost of attendance at each school is found. Families only need to fill out the NPC once; the information is stored and applied to each school in the student's *Following*, *Applying*, and *Applied* list.

College Search

Parents will have full access to college search criteria. Parents can complete their own college search, independent of their student. If a student has saved their last college search, parents will have the ability to see the schools on this list.

Profile

This is where you will find all of the personal, academic, and extracurricular activities your student has listed in their SCOIR account. Parents can also view any documents that their student has uploaded into MyDrive.

Book Recommendations: The College Search Process

Antonoff, Steven R. and Friedemann, Marie. *College Match: A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School for You*. Alexandria, VA: Octameron Associates, 2014.

Barker, Theresa and Thompson, Michael. *The Pressured Child: Help Your Child Find Success in School and Life*. New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2004.

Barnard, Brennan and Clark, Rich. *The Truth About College Admission: A Family Guide to Getting In and Staying Together*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019.

Bruni, Frank. *Where You Go is Not Who You'll Be*. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2015.

Delahunty, Jennifer. *I'm Going to College – Not You: Surviving the College Search With Your Child*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2010.

Fiske, Edward. *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2018.

Lythcott-Haims, Julie. *How to Raise an Adult*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2016.

Mathews, Jay. *Harvard Schmarvard: Getting Beyond the Ivy League to the College That Is Best for You*. New York: Prima Publishing, 2003.

Robbins, Alexandria. *The Overachievers: The Secret Lives of Driven Kids*. New York: Hyperion, 2006.

Steinberg, Jacques. *The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admission Process of a Premier College*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2008.

College Visit

One of the most important parts of your college search is the campus visit. Visiting colleges on your list will give you a firsthand impression of the students, faculty, staff, facilities, and programs. On a visit, you can learn what the admissions office is looking for in its applicants, gain a feeling for the academic and social atmosphere, see the study/living/recreation facilities, talk with students, and get a sense of the surrounding community. We encourage college visits starting in the spring of junior year.

Why Visit?

A college website, catalog, or view book can only show you so much. To get a feel for the school, you need to walk around the campus, sit in a class, and visit the dorms. It's also an opportunity to see and experience everyday life on campus.

When to Visit?

Admissions offices are open all year, but visiting when classes are in session is best. Check a school's website for visit information; many ask you to sign up online for tours and information sessions.

- One of the best times to visit is spring break of your junior year. At UPrep we suggest you visit one large, one medium, and one small school to get a feeling for each. If possible, include a large state and a small private school on your tour for comparison.
- Some schools offer special visit days. These are usually day-long programs that will introduce you to many areas of the school.

Planning Your Visit

Things to do or consider in your plan:

- **A good campus visit** takes two to four hours, including time to get a sense of the surrounding town or area. Don't try to visit more than two schools in one day.
- **Contact the admissions office** or visit the school's website for tour information.
- **In addition to a campus tour** and information session, you may want to include an admissions interview, a meeting with a faculty member in your area of interest, a meeting with a coach, and attending a class (allow extra time to schedule these).
- **Take lots of pictures.** You'll be amazed by how

much information you'll collect from photos. Having a camera and jotting down a few notes and impressions will help you distinguish schools from one another. Remember, a picture is worth a thousand words!

- **Contact former UPrep students** you might know at the school before you plan to visit. They'll give you an insider's look at the campus.
- **Before you go**, make a list of items that are important to you so you know what to evaluate: Start thinking about location, size, diversity, academic programs, social atmosphere.

What to Do When You Visit

Keep these things in mind:

1. Focus on the people, place, and programs. Engage as many people as possible in conversation about the school.
2. Look at campus publications to get more information about the community at large. A college newspaper will give you a sense of what the students are concerned about—something a tour guide is not likely to share.
3. Wander through the student center, cafés, and bookstore and observe how students interact with each other.
4. Go on an admissions tour and attend an information session. Think about questions that you may want to ask. Listen to the tour guide, but don't jump to conclusions about a school based solely on your experience with the tour guide.

Sit In a Class:

1. Do the professors seem knowledgeable? Are they accessible for questions or concerns?
2. What is the role of a Teaching Assistant (TA) in the classroom? Do they replace the professor or assist the professor?
3. Are the students participating in classroom discussion? Are they engaged? Disengaged?
4. What kinds of work are the students doing? Are they conducting advanced research? Doing group projects?
5. What size are the classes? Is this representative of all classes on campus (or do intro courses tend to be bigger than advanced)?

aid award?

Speak With Current Students:

1. What is their opinion of the professors? Do they find that they can approach their professors?
2. Do the professors spend time with students to be sure they understand the material?
3. How much time is expected for studying and other work outside of class?
4. What do they like most/least about the school?
5. How do they spend their free time? Ask a student what he or she did the previous weekend: Was it balanced between social activities and academics? Did they remain on campus?

Speak With an Admission Counselor:

1. Does the school offer Early Action (EA) or Early Decision (ED) options to students?
2. Do I need to declare a major on my application?
3. What unique programs does the school offer? Is there an honors program?
4. Are internships available? In the community? For credit during the school year? During the summer?
5. Based on my academic information, do I fit within the range of your profiled students?
6. Are there any unique admissions requirements? Is the Common Application accepted? Is there a supplement?

Speak With a Financial Aid Counselor:

1. Are there any school-specific scholarships available? How do I apply?
2. What is the total cost of attendance, including tuition, room and board, books, supplies, incidentals, parking, travel, and health insurance?
3. When is tuition due? Is there a payment plan?
4. What types of financial aid do you offer? Is financial aid need-based, merit-based, or both? What percentage of aid is in the form of loans? Grants? Scholarships? Work-Study awards?
5. What financial aid forms and/or scholarship applications do you require?
6. What is the average financial aid award?
7. When do you notify families about their financial

After the Visit

- Fill out the college comparison worksheet on the following page to help you remember the school.
- Write a thank you note to any admissions persons you met during your visit. This makes a valuable impression.

Student and Parent Roles and Responsibilities

During the college process we encourage students and parents to abide by the following precepts.

Student Roles and Responsibilities

- Know thyself
- You are in the driver's seat
- Be an informed consumer
- Do your research
- Don't let this process affect your self-esteem
- Focus on your needs
- Avoid the "rumor mill"
- Be mindful of deadlines
- You represent more than yourself in this process
- Communicate

Parent Roles and Responsibilities

- Be realistic
- You are in the passenger seat
- Focus on the right fit
- Use many sources to research colleges
- Help your student think about who he/she is
- Avoid the "rumor mill"
- Avoid pronoun confusion ("We are applying")
- Value and celebrate these last two years
- If you went through the college process, recognize that both schools and the process are different
- Where your student is admitted to college is not a reflection of your parenting
- Communicate

COLLEGE VISIT CHECKLIST

COLLEGE: _____ DATE: _____

TO DO CHECKLIST:

- ☐ talk to professors
- ☐ visit the library
- ☐ tour campus
- ☐ sit in a class
- ☐ eat at the cafeteria
- ☐ talk to admissions
- ☐ read the college newspaper
- ☐ talk to students
- ☐ visit student housing
- ☐ read bulletin boards
- ☐ check out rec facilities
- ☐ check out student activities
- ☐ tour area around campus
- ☐ eat at an off-campus hang out
- ☐ picture yourself living here

CITY/STATE:

Size: Rural ☐ Small City ☐ Big City ☐

ADMISSION CRITERIA:

ACT: eng: read: math: sci: comp:

SAT: ebrw: math: comp:

SAT Subject Tests Required?

Acceptance Percentage?

Admissions Rep:

Email/Phone:

EXPERIENCE: Rated: 1 = Low / 5 = High

People: 1 2 3 4 5 Social Life: 1 2 3 4 5

Classrooms: 1 2 3 4 5 Dorms: 1 2 3 4 5

Campus Food: 1 2 3 4 5 Town: 1 2 3 4 5

ASK A STUDENT:

What is the best part of this college?

What is the worst part of this college?

What is a typical day like?

What do students do on weekends?

How are classes structured?

Why did you choose this college?

MY IMPRESSIONS:

Best features of this school?

Best part of my visit?

Worst part of my visit?

JUNIOR AND SENIOR YEARS

Junior Year

The goal of the junior year is to begin to develop a relationship between the student and the college counseling staff. By learning more about each student, we help them define areas of interest and figure out subject areas that they would like to pursue. It's a starting point for the conversations we're going to have about college. It's a time of tremendous growth and self-discovery when the students begin to see themselves as emerging adults.

Responsibilities for the Junior Year

- Complete junior questionnaire in SCOIR.
- Meet with your college counselor during spring semester. Parent meetings are scheduled after your initial student meeting.
- Determine criteria for colleges.
- Participate in college admission testing programs: PSAT, SAT reasoning test, SAT subject tests, ACT, AP exams. We encourage all students to take the SAT and the ACT with writing during the second semester junior year.
- Attend college representative meetings at school.
- Sign (you and your parents) and return your Release of Records form.
- Attend college fair programs in Seattle (National College Fair and the Seattle Area Independent School Fair).

Senior Year

It's not where a student goes to college; it's the journey that should be memorable. The goal of the senior year is to help students on their journey. We guide students and parents in the college process and assist them every step of the way; we communicate with and advocate for each student during our conversations with college admissions colleagues; and we celebrate each student's accomplishments. We wish them success and happiness in their college choice as they complete the journey.

Reminder:

You are responsible for checking your college deadlines!

Responsibilities for the Senior Year

- **Complete in SCOIR** (by July 1, prior to the start of your senior year) your senior inventory and parent questionnaire.
- **Narrow your choices.**
- **Meet with your college counselor.** Visit often; we like to know how the college process is progressing.
- **Complete your applications on time.**
- **Complete financial aid information** by November 1.
- **Present yourself in the most positive fashion** to the colleges of your choice. At UPrep, virtually all applications and supplemental application materials (transcripts, letters of recommendation, etc.) are submitted electronically. Although there are some schools that maintain their own individual application, they still offer students the ability to complete the application online.
- **Plan to attend college representative visits** held at UPrep as well as college fairs in Seattle, especially if you can't meet with representatives at UPrep. Remember that the representatives who come to the Northwest are the ones most likely to read your application and to be your advocate on their admission committee. Therefore, it is to your advantage to get to know these representatives.
- **Avoid senioritis.** Colleges always predicate acceptance upon satisfactory completion of the senior year. Students are urged to consult with the director of the College Counseling Office about any substantial changes in senior year courses or grades. If a student's academic situation changes at any time during the senior year, colleges will be notified. Self-disclosure by the student of any academic inconsistencies is the preferred way for colleges to learn of these changes.

Communication with Colleges

We know many parents will help with certain aspects of the admissions process. Parents are encouraged to support students, but to refrain from contacting admission offices except under unusual circumstances. It is the students' responsibility to communicate directly with admission offices to make their own tour and interview appointments, to request information, and to check on the status of their files. It is incumbent upon each student to complete his or her senior year with the same (or better) commitment to studies and re-

sponsibilities as in past years. Each student's academic transcript will be reported to colleges at the following times during senior year: first quarter for EA/ED candidates, mid-year, and end-of-senior year.

Many college applications now ask the student and/or counselor whether the applicant has ever been suspended or taken a leave of absence from school. To avoid integrity issues during the college admission process, students should self-disclose disciplinary records when asked by colleges. The College Counseling Office is obligated to report disciplinary actions when:

- asked specifically to report a student's discipline record;
- any pattern of violations of UPrep's Community Expectations occurred during a student's Upper School career;
- any suspension from school lasting one week or more occurred during the freshman and sophomore year; and

- any suspension from school longer than three days occurred during the junior or senior year.

Myth:

Grades are the most important factor in college admissions.

Reality:

The quality of the curriculum, not grades, is the most important factor in admission decisions. Most colleges like to see four years of all five academic majors on an applicant's transcript: math, science, English, history, and a foreign language.

THE COMMON APPLICATION FOR UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

Filling out a College Application?

Here are answers to some frequently asked questions:

- UPrep School Code: 48-1169. UPrep Address: 8000 25th Avenue NE, Seattle, WA 98115
- You enrolled in high school in August 2017. You anticipate graduating June 14, 2021.
- There are 85 students in your class. Your grades are on a 4.0 unweighted scale, and there is no class rank.
- Kelly Herrington, Director of College Counseling, kherrington@universityprep.org, 206-832-1226
- Britten Nelson, Associate Director of College Counseling, bnelson@universityprep.org, 206-832-1111
- There are 52 weeks/calendar year, roughly 9 weeks/quarter, 19 weeks/semester, 38 weeks/school year.
- Each sports season lasts approximately 11-12 weeks.

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION

The College Counseling Office stands ready to assist you with advice and answers to questions to make this a positive experience. You can contact us at any time:

Kelly Herrington:

kherrington@universityprep.org 206.832.1226

<https://calendly.com/kherrington>

Britten Nelson:

bnelson@universityprep.org 206.832.1111

<https://calendly.com/bnelson-3>

Wendy Robbins:

wrobbins@universityprep.org 206.832.1127

Here are some practical suggestions to ensure that you have a successful college application process.

Register early for SATs and ACTs. If you do not adhere to this suggestion, it is possible you could be assigned as far away as Tacoma, Bremerton, or Centralia on popular test dates.

Fill out your test applications for SATs and ACTs the same way every time. For example, inserting a middle initial in the second application for a test can confuse the computers and make it difficult to recover your scores.

Make copies of everything you send colleges, financial aid offices, ETS (the testing arm of the College Board), and ACT.

Read and act on school announcements about college visits, deadlines, and meetings.

Check your email! This is how colleges communicate with you about upcoming deadlines, programs, events, scholarships, and interviews. We recommend that you create a separate email account that is used for only your college communications, and that you check that email frequently through the college application process.

Be visible in the College Counseling Office; the better we get to know you, the better we can represent you to colleges.

Make appointments for college interviews and tours early. This is especially true if you are visiting in the Northeast. A two-to-three-month lead time is not unusual.

Missing school for college visits and interviews is not advised, but sometimes cannot be avoided. Be sure that you complete all assignments and meet all school deadlines despite any interruptions caused by the college admission process.

Write down all your user name and passwords.

You will be asked to use them frequently. Most schools communicate admission decisions via web portals, so you will need these to check your application status.

Application Options

Early Action (EA): A process whereby a student can submit an application by a designated date (typically in November or December) and receive a decision one month later. The EA student, if accepted, is not bound to enroll. Students are not required to notify the college of their enrollment decision until May 1. They can also apply to other colleges early action or early decision as well.

Restrictive Early Action (REA), sometimes referred to as Single Choice Early Action (SCEA): An early application process used by a few Ivy League universities and Stanford where students typically apply by mid-November and receive a decision by mid-December. Students are not required to notify the college of their enrollment decision until May 1. Under the SCEA policy, students are not allowed to apply to other colleges under ED or EA programs. They can, however, apply to other colleges through regular decision programs.

Early Decision (ED): A process whereby a student can submit an application by a designated date (typically in November or December) and receive a decision one month later that carries a binding commitment to enroll, if accepted, to the college. Student and parent must sign a statement of intent that, if admitted, the student will attend the college/university regardless of financial aid award. Colleges will share ED lists, so all other applications must be withdrawn. Students not admitted under ED are either denied or deferred. Deferred applicants are reconsidered with the regular decision applicant candidates. Students and parents will not be informed of financial aid prior to admission. A small number of colleges have a second round of this process called Early Decision II. This deadline is usually around January 15, with notification one month later.

Regular Decision (RD): The most common application process in this country. Most colleges offer some form of RD among their application choices. Students usually

apply to colleges between January 1 and January 15, are notified of the decision by April 1, and then must let the college know whether they will matriculate by May 1.

Candidate Reply Date: May 1 is the date by which all colleges require an admitted student to commit to attending their school. This commitment usually requires an enrollment deposit. Students can only commit to one school.

Fast Applications/Priority Applications/

Pre-Applications*: In an effort to increase the number of applications received (which helps colleges

reduce their admission rate, which makes them appear more selective), many colleges are offering “Fast Apps.” These alternative applications often waive the application fee and/or an essay requirement.

** These applications often create more of a logistical headache for you. We encourage you to avoid these “fast track” offers—an EA (or RD) application submitted through the Common Application will actually be easier for you in the long run.*

Thinking about applying to one of the schools in the University of California System?

Nine Campuses: One Application. University of California system includes more than 200,000 students attending one of nine undergraduate campuses at:

- | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| • Berkeley | • Irvine | • Merced | • San Diego | • Santa Cruz |
| • Davis | • Los Angeles | • Riverside | • Santa Barbara | |

While each campus is unique, students submit one application to the UC system as a whole, indicating which specific campus(es) he or she is applying to. Applications for the fall term are due between November 1 and November 30.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Before a student applies for admission to any of the campuses within the University of California system, he or she must first determine if the minimum eligibility requirements for admission in three areas have been met:

- 1. Scholarship Requirement:** Non-California residents **MUST HAVE A 3.4 CUMULATIVE GPA** in classes taken in 10th and 11th grade, and no grade lower than a C in the courses listed below in section 2.
- 2. Subject Requirement:** Students must complete a minimum of 15 college preparatory courses, with at least 11 finished prior to the beginning of the senior year. These courses are the traditional courses required for graduation from University Prep, including our history, English, math, lab science, and foreign language requirements. HOWEVER, it is also a requirement of one full year of visual and performing arts, which is different than UPrep’s graduation requirement. Some UPrep students aren’t eligible to apply to the UC system because they have two semesters of visual or performing arts from different disciplines (for example, Photography I in one semester, and Stagecraft in another), instead of two consecutive semesters in one discipline (Photography I in the fall, Photography II in the spring). Please talk to your college counselor if you suspect that you have not satisfied the visual and performing arts requirement.
- 3. Examination Requirement:** For the class of 2021, standardized testing will not be required for applicants, due to COVID-19. However, for many of our students we believe that having standardized testing will help their applications. We encourage students to speak with their counselor about their plan to apply until a test-optional policy.

NON-RESIDENTS

Because non-residents pay more for tuition, the UC System has seen an increase in admission for out-of-state and international applicants, even as the overall admit rate has decreased. However, the California state legislature recently capped out-of-state enrollment at 18%, which means that UPrep students will be at a disadvantage at a few of the more competitive UC schools (Berkeley, UCLA, San Diego, and Irvine, which all had out-of-state enrollment above 18% previously). Furthermore, four-year graduation rates on UC campuses range from 40% to 70% and six-year graduation rates range from 65% to 90%. If admitted, you may want to anticipate paying out-of-state tuition (which is significantly higher than in-state tuition), for more than four years; it is very difficult to gain residency. For more information on applying to the UC System, visit: <http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu>.

Glossary of College-Related Terms

Admissions Index: A system of ranking applicants for automatic admission to a university. SAT/ACT scores are often the only factors in an index. This practice for admitting students is not common; it is used primarily by large public universities.

Block Plan: A curriculum based on one course at a time for periods of three to seven weeks each. Example: Cornell College, IA; Colorado College, CO; Quest University, Canada.

Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success: A group of 130 colleges and universities across the U.S. that offers college planning tools and an online application for admission. The University of Washington is an exclusive user of the coalition application. For information, visit www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/.

College Board: The umbrella organization that produces high school, college, and graduate assessment tests, proposes educational policy, and works on curriculum reform. Visit www.collegeboard.com for more information.

Common Application: More than 750 colleges and universities participate in the Common Application program whereby a student fills out one application and can use it for more than one college. The Common Application is available in the College Counseling Office or online at www.commonapp.org.

CO-OP Program: A study and work system that allows students to gain practical experience related to their course work. Example: Northeastern University, Massachusetts.

Educational Testing Service: The Educational Testing Service is responsible for the creation and administration of the SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Tests, TOEFL, and APs.

Liberal Arts: College studies comprising the arts, natural sciences, mathematics, social studies, and humanities, as distinguished from applied studies in such specialized areas as pharmacy, engineering, agriculture, home economics, etc.

NCAA Clearinghouse: The National Collegiate Athletic Association's agency that processes academic qualification forms for all Division I and II athletes. Visit <https://www.athleticscholarships.net> for more information.

Quarter System: The organization of the college year into four periods of approximately twelve weeks each.

A regular academic year includes the fall, winter, and spring quarters. Example: University of Washington. The fourth or summer quarter is usually optional. If only three terms are offered, the system is usually referred to as a trimester schedule. These three terms are usually twelve weeks each. Example: Carleton College, Minnesota.

Semester System: The organization of the college year into two periods of approximately eighteen weeks each. A regular academic year includes the fall and spring semesters. Example: Colby College, Maine.

SSD: Services for Students with Disabilities is a branch of the College Board that oversees extended time and special accommodations for students with learning differences or physical disabilities.

3/2 Programs: An opportunity for students who wish to combine a professional program with a liberal arts education. Students attend a liberal arts college for three years and a professional program, such as engineering or architecture, for two. Example: Whitman's 3/2 program with Duke University for forestry.

Applying to International Schools

The United Kingdom and Europe have become popular destinations for college-bound Americans. You will probably find that most colleges require a high school diploma, a minimum of 600 on each of the two sections of the SAT, and two or three SAT Subject Tests with a minimum of 600 on each.

- Oxford, Cambridge, and the London School of Economics are not very realistic choices for American students, as their programs are not chronologically in synchrony with ours. Better choices are the Scottish universities. The University of St. Andrews has the longest history of recruiting Americans and has by far the highest proportion of them in its undergraduate population. The Universities of Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Stirling are other prominent names, as well as Trinity in Dublin. Fortunately, many schools in the UK, including the Universities of St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Stirling, and Strathclyde, now accept the Common Application, which makes it easier for students from the US to apply for admission. Prices are about \$36,000 per year, including tuition, room, and board, with little financial aid available
- On the continent, the primary option is the network of American-style institutions such as the American Universities in Paris and Rome. There is

a newer one in Bremen, Germany, with ties to Rice University in the U.S., and several places in Switzerland. Webster University in St. Louis has a number of campuses abroad. Most of these institutions are small, with about 1,000 students.

Applying to The University of Washington

The University of Washington has a unique application process in which students self-report classes and grades, and UW doesn't want to see transcripts or letters of recommendation. The University of Washington application is a part of the Coalition Application (<http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org>), an application platform comprised of nearly 130 schools. Visit www.washington.edu/admissions/ to apply.

Applying to Canadian Schools

More University Prep students are singing "O Canada." A recent newspaper article noted: "Today, our quiet neighbor to the north shines as a sanctuary from sky-high college bills." And so the parents of our alumni attending college in Canada are singing "O Canada" even louder than their children. Most importantly, many Canadian universities are referred to as "ivy among the maple." The educational quality of Canadian universities is strong.

Teacher Recommendations

Recommendations from teachers help the admission committee learn information about you that test scores and grades do not reflect. Give careful thought to which teachers you would like to write your teacher recommendations, as they provide insight and perspective about your classroom learning style and experience.

- **Ask two teachers for a recommendation.** You should select teachers from two different disciplines (i.e., one from English, foreign language or history, and one from math or science). Ask late in your junior year if they would be interested in writing a recommendation for you.
- **Always ask the teacher in person,** never in passing or via email, to write your recommendation. Teachers are asked by numerous students for recommendations and many limit the number of recommendations they agree to write. By doing so, they do not over commit themselves. They want to give your recommendation the same effort and consideration as others.

- **Once a teacher has agreed** to write your recommendation, please add their name to SCOIR. This allows them to see your application deadlines and your college list. Some teachers may request additional information from you prior to completing a recommendation letter for you; please provide this information or schedule a meeting in a timely manner.
- **Some teachers have forms** they will ask you to fill out before they write your recommendation. It provides them with data regarding why you liked their class. A copy of your resume or a list detailing your outside activities is also encouraged. This information is essential to teachers. It will help them evaluate you in the context of their class and your other pursuits.
- **At the end of the process,** write thank you notes to all the teachers who wrote recommendations for you.

COVID-19 AND COLLEGE COUNSELING STATEMENT

We are sharing the following statement with all college about UPrep's response to COVID-19:

UPrep was able to maintain its high quality educational program during COVID-19. Despite a quick pivot to online learning, our academic enterprise continued with the same high standard for which we are known. We did shorten our class periods to 30 minutes of live synchronous learning followed by fifteen minutes of asynchronous learning. Grading on a 100-point scale continued; however, students could request to take one or more classes pass/fail. We feel very fortunate to have the financial resources to continue our robust educational program. And we are very proud of our students for being fully engaged in online learning. The 2020–2021 school year will start online with live synchronous classes that will run for 45 minutes, with an option to extend to 60 minutes. In early October, if the regional data and the guidance of state and local health officials indicate it is prudent, UPrep will switch to a hybrid schedule, which has students coming to campus on alternating days.

In the Standardized Testing section of the handbook (see page 28), we address the impact of COVID-19 on college-related standardized testing.

THE COLLEGE ESSAY

Writing Your Essay

Most college applications require at least one main essay, and many also include additional shorter questions as well. The purpose of this is twofold: colleges want to assess your writing skills, but they also want to learn more about you.

- **Be as honest and introspective as possible.** Take this opportunity to tell the admissions counselor things about yourself that cannot be learned from any other part of the application you submit. If there are any inconsistencies in your academic, athletic, or creative record, you can use this space to explain them.
- **Application essay topics.** Try to discover what makes you unique, and show what you care about and the kind of person you are. Essay topics to consider: family history, events, or people that have been important to you and why; a challenging or interesting experience and what you learned from it; an obstacle you've faced and how you dealt with or overcame it; your goals, ambitions, or dreams; what you hope to learn or gain in college; or what other college students can learn or gain from you; issues of personal, local, or national concern.
- **Creating a theme** for your essay such as risk taking, intellectual independence, or love of the outdoors often brings up interesting examples of your life to support your chosen theme. Specific incidents to illustrate general observations are considered essential.
- **The typical length** of an essay is about 500 words, or no more than two double-spaced pages, which means that you will have to choose your words very carefully. The essay process should encourage good writing, and good writing, by definition, is brief.

Practical Considerations

Write more than one draft, edit, and revise—this process takes time and you should not expect to finish it in one sitting.

- Do not try to be too unique or too creative. Make sure to use your own voice!
- Check for misspellings and have it proofread by actual human beings (do not rely on spell check).

Grammar and mechanics do matter.

- Keep it to one or two pages. Concise is nice.

- It's economical to send the same essay to more than one school (as long as you answer the question asked).

Potential Topics

- Avoid overused, trendy, or hot topics, such as politics, privilege, sex, and religion.
- Write about what you know. Be yourself!
- Keep the topic simple—choose one idea or situation (this is one page in your life, not the entire book).
- Your choice of topic does not matter nearly as much as your approach.
- Make sure it reflects who you are and what you know.
- Write about what you have learned, what you have observed, and how you have changed.
- Highlight an accomplishment.

Other Words of Advice

- Focus small, think big. Don't try to tackle too much in the essay. Stick to one experience, event, or activity. You'll be surprised at how much you can reveal.
- Have fun! Sit down and start writing; your opening sentence doesn't have to be perfect yet (that's why we call it a rough draft).
- Have a good opening line that will capture the reader's (bleary-eyed admission counselor's) attention.
- Ask for advice from the people who know you the best, but write it yourself.
- You are different from anyone else. Make admission counselors see that!
- Humor can help, but don't force it.
- Show, don't tell (i.e., use the senses—smell, touch, taste, hear, see). Add details, details, details.
- Enliven your language with descriptive verbs.

Actual Questions from Colleges and Universities

- Describe an event in your life that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it.
- Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?

- Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
- Describe a place or environment where you are perfectly content. What do you do or experience there, and why is it meaningful to you?
- Discuss an accomplishment or event that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

Sample Essay #1

Speaking on Behalf of a Simple Hope

The search bar waits, expectant. I only hesitate for a moment.

"D-E-F-I-N-E," my fingers tap out. Shift, colon.

"D-E-P-R-E-S-S-I-O-N." Click. In 0.21 seconds: de·pres·sion/di`preSHen/

Noun: severe despondency and dejection, feelings of hopelessness and inadequacy.

Zero. The medicine cabinet swung open with a sickeningly quiet squeal, and she was in. Red, yellow, blue, white, they spilled into her hands and she looked at them, slowly, inspecting the integrity of her army. Xanax, Ritalin, Prozac. Her fingers close over a fistful, scattering the rest in a ripple of menacing color. Beautiful.

One. It's 6:54 AM and I'm already late for the Metro. Halfway down the stairs I realize only one of my socks is on, something that usually wouldn't send me back but does this time. It's not a wasted trip—I grab my badge, along with the phone I forgot. My best friend left a voice-mail last night, but there's just no time. Twenty minutes later I'm slumped, barely lucid, against Plexiglas coolness. Vibrations swallow me whole, and I barely feel my pocket buzz before slipping into oblivion.

In the conference room, my mind keeps wandering back to the phone. I imagine the orange notification light pulsing, blinking slowly in the

darkness.

Two. Each action has an equal and opposite reaction. That's when the distance starts, a widening chasm of missed calls and canceled plans. Our presence in someone's life shrinks and shrinks, until inevitably, it's not there at all. The girl you rescued earthworms with, the nexus of pinky swears and friendship bracelets, an elementary promise of forever—gone.

In a way, I was lucky. I was falling apart but in a closed room, the walls of my research and assumptions boxing me into an uncomfortable safety. But I had been her safety, and without me she splintered apart. What was left of her whirled around the atmosphere, finding comfort in the dark places my shadow didn't inhabit, settling into corners I hadn't claimed as my own during that golden time when we were one.

Three. I'm at my desk, trying to tease useful output from strings of code. The numbers start to swim as I pull up graph after graph, lost in monotony. Scan for red. Delete, new input, compile. Scan for green.

Find the p-values, the correlation coefficients, the last shreds of my sanity. How much more of me can be lost to Excel?

Each number represents some characteristic of a living, breathing life, an anonymous connection I'll never be able to fulfill. I picture 174b as a troubled

ballerina; she dances four times a week but has a scarily skewed perception of Ecstasy risk. 1352y is an introverted Sunday school attendee; a history of good grades and measured social awkwardness. 721_Z is the perfect child; popular, smart, happy home. But she never answered the self-harm questions.

My mission is to model adolescent depression, to determine what risk factors drive five- and eighteen-year-olds alike to suicide. The initial research puzzled me, intrigued me, scared me. Now, it consumes me.

The last command key stops the program. Finally, I hit "CALL."

Four. BECAUSE I could not stop for Death—

He kindly stopped for me – Emily Dickinson,
"Because I Could Not Stop for Death"

It was her first failure. The stomach pump's undignified brutality had cheated death, had delivered her bruised and shaken, but back. "The medicine cabinet, I saw—I left you a voice-mail, did—I love y—I'm sorry. Friends?"

I want to fight her demons for her. Instead, I bring more soup.

Five. I'm onstage now, heart going one eighty, mouth going faster. Energy rockets out of me as I invoke tables, graphs, and most importantly, an explanation. I am fighting for her. I am fighting to acknowledge that yes, death sits in the back row and that yes, desperation answers calculus questions during fifth period and that yes, in a homeroom of ninety-seven, five have attempted suicide. Statistical anomaly? No. Under-representing.

"We can do better. For our friends and your children, our neighbors and bus-riders, the daughter who is cutting herself!" They will stare at the audacity of what I am saying, and accusing they will scoff at what they think is a manufactured disorder, the byproduct of a spoiled generation. But what happened to her can't happen again. She is what NextGEN means. She is my reminder that policies must change, that perceptions are changing. So for now, I speak on behalf of a simple hope: that something in someone there someday will listen.

Sample Essay #2

Korean Soup for the Soul

"North or South?" That's the first question I always get after telling people I've recently been to Korea. I always respond simply: "Just Korea." As their minds race across the world map, they quizzically ask: "Well, what was the best part of your trip?" I always respond, "Jambong."

The reaction is universally the same. Expressions quickly fade from curiosity and intrigue to bewilderment and confusion, so I promptly follow up with, "A Korean soup."

Maybe there's some awkward silence afterwards. Still looking to hear about the sights and sounds of my trip, they ask "And what else was there?" No one's interested in drinking soup. So, finally I delve into the stories about the blinding neon lights of Seoul and the quiet rice paddies of Andong province. The conversation begins to flow with periodic "oohs and aahs" at all the wonders that Korea has to offer.

Of course Korea has lots of exciting attractions. I enjoyed all of them while I was representing the United States at the first International Earth Science Olympiad. But the shared experience I had with the other delegates to the Olympiad will always be infinitely more valuable.

Living vicariously through food, each meal itself embodied an exploration into Korean culture. The traditional feast, Hanjeongsik, complete with its 30 side dishes, stood in front of us. In the center was a big bowl of their trademark soup, known as Jambong. The aroma of fresh cilantro mixing with the scent of fermented vegetables was unmistakable. Sitting down cross-legged and barefoot at a table only two feet high, I was about to take my first spoonful.

Discovering some oddities, I asked a Korean, "What are these?" He slyly said, "Eat them first and then I'll tell you." With great anticipation I took a large bite. Soon my head was covered in sweat and my face was as red as the soup itself. Korean hot

peppers. I didn't have to communicate my thoughts to my friends. They could see the reaction plainly on my face. But my example didn't deter anyone; instead everyone lifted their spoons and took a bite simultaneously. Pretty soon, we were all sweating and laughing and calling for glass after glass of water. The soup was as varied as the people around it; students from India, Mongolia, and the Philippines all delighted in its medley of freshly cut squid tentacles, textured cabbages, thick wheat noodles, and, of course, hot peppers.

Though each person spoke only a varying degree of English, often defaulting to simple hand gestures and grunts, the warm red glow emanating from the soup could only encourage friendly dialogue. I was immersed in cultures from across the world, intersecting at this single point in space and time.

As a curious history student and active debater, I turned to my Korean counterparts and broached the topic of reunification. I wondered if they thought the North and South could be reconciled within their lifetime. The resounding answer from all four Korean students: "Yes." I was taken aback by the lack of hesitation. Still, I countered that the two countries had become isolated politically and polarized economically. Even if they were to hypothetically decide to reunite tomorrow, the flood of refugees from the North would burden the economy of the South. My friend Kim eloquently responded, "But we are still the same culturally. Our shared traditions and experiences remain. We are still one nation." I disagreed: "Don't forget about the world's most heavily fortified border." He told me to be more optimistic; I told him to be more pragmatic. The impromptu debate became a match of wits and rhetoric. The debate went on, as rich as the spices in the Jambong.

Reaching the end of meal, I was disappointed that the debate would have to end. In a single, memorable moment I had discovered the unifying power of a single bowl of soup. That first bite of hot peppers opened the way for conversation. Whether it's a simple argument with students in my US history

class or an intense discussion on US foreign policy at my congressional internship, the lessons learned remain the same. Different cultural backgrounds warrant different perspectives; each opinion is equally valid. "North or South?" From my new perspective, it's always "Just Korea."

Sample Essay #3

Standoffs

The bullet whistles through the air, slicing a clean arc straight into the "T" of TROPICANA, INC. It drills through a solid inch of wood before stopping, reluctantly yielding to the laws of physics. The orange crate, my target, has barely moved. "Beautiful shot," dad tells me. Taking the airsoft back, he switches the safety on and begins putting the rifle into its casing. I stare at my hands. A moment ago, I pulled the trigger. I created that perfectly round hole, that pile of sawdust underneath the stool. I can now trust these hands, the same ones that have scribbled midnight poetry, teased out DNA sequences, and pulled through laps of breaststroke, to no longer recoil from the recoil.

My father is an eclectic composition; secret numrophile, ideological transplant, rescuer of strays. His past is a hodgepodge of Hong Kong and Cambodia, tennis and flooring, mischievous Cantonese and hard-hitting Mandarin. As a United States citizen, he has since become a devout Catholic and talk radio enthusiast. My bà, whose naturalization process took over nine years, has fostered a deep appreciation for American freedoms. So perhaps I could have tried a little harder to understand the day he came home with two guns.

That afternoon, he told the family that we were going to learn how to "exercise our rights as Americans!" Shocked and disbelieving, I immediately fought back. How could he take Rush Limbaugh's ranting at face value? There were so many statistics on gun use and gun control; the security he was after wasn't going to be found in firearms. My dad

could re-interpret the Bible as many times as he wanted, but I wasn't going to budge unless he could argue me down with solid evidence or philosophical theory. After all, we were Catholic! Weren't we supposed to be pacifists? Guns were for the CIA, policemen, and poachers—not for my gentle-hearted father, and definitely not for his idealistic and somewhat accident-prone family.

The “shooting standoff” caused me to seriously question *bà* for the first time. My admiration for his studied familiarity with religious texts turned into confusion. He had lived in so many places and worked so many jobs—how could he ignore the rest of literature, simply brushing off philosophies that opposed theology? I didn't resent his belief in “God's plan”—I resented that the phrase stifled my questions about evolution and effectively ended debates. I felt like my eyes had been opened, only to find that his were closed.

Unsatisfied, I dug deeper. Instead of dismissing my father's line of thought, however insulated I believed it to be, I tried developing my own arguments around it. When conservative shows came on, I didn't change the station—I listened, hard. One afternoon, I sat down with a mound of aged photographs and walked myself through his life. Finding out what drove him—how he framed his world—was half the solution; my flat dismissal of opinions not peppered with references to Hobbes or Kant was as guilty of the bias I accused him of. Eventually, I came around to the guns. In the right hands, they represented peace of mind, not violence.

My father started a slow burn. Working through his puzzle of life experiences forced me to rethink assumptions I had once held, to open the mind I thought had already been opened. In college, I hope to have many more standoffs.

SUPPLEMENTS

Many colleges and universities require a supplement in addition to the Common Application. Supplements usually contain institution-specific questions. Most supplements are available for download on the institution's website or from www.commonapp.org.

Supplements vary, but the following items are likely to appear on a supplement:

- Biographical information
- Areas of academic, extracurricular, and/or athletic interest
- Contact with and continued interest in the school through visits, interviews, etc.
- Legacy or other connections to the institution
- Additional essay questions, the most common of which is, "Why do you want to attend college X?" (more on that below)
- Request for a graded paper or assignment with teacher comments
- Invitation to submit supporting materials in the arts or documentation of other special talents
- Early Decision (ED) or Early Action (EA) Intent Form
- Financial Aid Supplement
- Disciplinary inquiry
- Parent or Peer Recommendation
- Residency Form
- Honor Code Commitment

When completing a college's supplement, please take the time to answer every question. Supplements provide a wonderful opportunity for you to showcase both your individuality and creativity, and are reviewed just as carefully as the main essay; please be honest and genuine in your responses.

Sample Supplement Questions

Question #1: What word best describes you?

(The following example is from a recent college applicant's supplement.)

I sat down at my desk and plopped the Webster's Unabridged Dictionary on my lap. I was eager to discover the perfect word that I could use to describe myself. I flipped open the dictionary and landed on page 456, the "D" section. I saw the word dachshund, but I didn't think my favorite dog was very descriptive of

me as a person. Next, I turned to dangerous, but I had already talked about my trip to Israel this past summer. Demented was the next word on the list, which would perfectly describe my kitten, Lofa, but I hoped it wasn't an accurate representation of me. My eyes landed on the word dermatologist, but that's my mom. Ducks was the next word that caught my eye, and while it is the name of the soccer team I have played on, I wanted a word that described me and not the team. As my eyes scanned the pages from left to right like a seesaw, I eagerly searched for the perfect word. I didn't want to talk about my favorite dog, my trip to Israel, my annoying little kitten, my mom, or my soccer team. I wanted to talk about myself. I wanted to find a word that would encompass my personality. Just as I was beginning to despair and doubted I would find the right word, I discovered the word dynamic on page 567: the perfect word to describe and define me.

Question #2: Would you please tell us about a few of your favorite books, poems, authors, films, plays, pieces of music, musicians, performers, paintings, artists, magazines, or newspapers? Feel free to touch on one, some, or all of the categories listed, or add a category of your own.

Excerpts of one response to that question: I'm surprised you left out food. I'm going to have to add the "fruit" sub-category: I'm a pretty adventurous eater, a guilty gourmand, and I'm willing to bet that I've eaten more exotic fruit than any other applicant in this wide, wide pool (if that counts for anything). Mangosteen is a personal favorite.

Look at the clutter on, underneath, and around my bedstand, and you'll find a somewhat eclectic potpourri: Kafka and *Popular Science*, ESPN and e.e. cummings, Thomas Hobbes and Calvin & Hobbes, Faulkner and FoxTrot. I eat a lot of words, some online, some in print, but it's always a nice balance of gravity and levity.

I'm a sucker for lyricism, for verbal ingenuity. That's what draws me to the prose of writers like Thomas Pynchon (furious fits of wordplay) and the late David Foster Wallace (footnoter extraordinaire). There's so much to marvel at, so much rich textual texture. Both of these guys also happen to creatively weave concepts of math and science into their literature, which really appeals to me as someone who always loved working both sides of the brain. Recent pleasant surprise—learning that *Cat's Cradle*, a personal fave of mine, qualified as Vonnegut's anthropology thesis at Chicago. Ridiculously cool.

Question #3: Name your favorite books, authors, films, and/or musical artists.

Kafka (*The Metamorphosis*, “The Judgment”), Yann Martel (*Life of Pi*, *Self*), and Patrick Suskind (*Perfume*, *Mr. Summer’s Story*) have left indelible impressions on me. Fresh readings reveal new messages as these authors artfully layer their novels in construction and theme, challenging me to look deeper.

Question #4: What is the most significant challenge that society faces today?

I recently dealt with the passing of my 81-year-old friend, Charlie Chong. Born in Hawaii, he inspired people to practice a tradition of Ha’opono (to do what is right and just). He inspired me to rebuild grassroots politics, and to combat political apathy.

Question #5: How did you spend your last two summers?

I worked as a youth tennis instructor. I also volunteered with the American Cancer Society where my senior citizen co-workers imparted their hard-earned lessons. Summer allowed me to compare the splendors of my youth with the wisdom of age, allowing a simultaneous window into my past and future.

Question #6: What were your favorite events (e.g., performances, exhibits, sporting events, etc.) this past year?

My clarinet teacher gave his first recital in over 25 years. He is my musical mentor and friend. I’d never heard him perform. He played a melancholy melody, representing regret and loss. I realized he sacrificed his musical career to teach the next generation.

Question #7: What qualities do you admire in people?

I admire those who have the strength and honesty to stay true to themselves, but the integrity and humility to stay open to change. I especially admire those who foster a strong work ethic and drive to remain curious, active, and live life in constant interaction, rather than in quiet anticipation.

Question #8: What historical moment or event do you wish you could have witnessed or participated in?

In 1873, Susan B. Anthony declared, “I stand before

you tonight under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last presidential election.” The birth of female equality gives me the right to pursue my dreams. Without Ms. Anthony’s courage, my aspirations could never materialize.

THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

Why an Interview?

Many schools use interviews as part of the application process. Rarely are interviews required for admission, but often times they are recommended. The interview is a terrific opportunity for an admission office to get to know you better, and it is also a great chance for you to get to know the school better, too.

Interviews often take place on a college campus, as part of the campus visit by either an admissions counselor or a current student (usually a senior). Many times, they take place in Seattle by either an admission counselor or an alumna or alumnus of the college (either here at UPrep, in a hotel lobby, or a coffee shop). Some interviews are “informative,” meaning that they are simply a chance to exchange information about you and the college; other times, they are “evaluative,” which means your responses and the information you provide will be used, along with your application, in the admission process.

Preparing for the Interview

1. Review materials on the college—read through any brochures and websites, and talk to your friends/family/college counselor about the school.
2. Schedule your visit in advance. Not all schools offer interviews, but those who do tend to fill quickly.
3. Ask if the interview is informative or evaluative.
4. Tour before you interview, if possible. This helps generate more specific questions, but also helps you avoid basic questions that are covered during the tour.
5. Plan your clothes. Be you, but dress appropriately for the weather, the region, and the fact that you might be taking a 60–90 minute tour outside right before your interview (so comfortable shoes are a must).
6. If you are a senior, then you have already completed the “Senior Inventory” in SCOIR, where we have

asked you a number of questions that an interviewer might be asking you. Review your Senior Inventory.

7. To further prepare for a personal interview, we suggest you consider the questions in the next section ahead of time around the family dinner table or with your friends. Not all these questions may be asked, but thinking about them will help you feel more confident and comfortable during an interview.

Questions to Consider Before the Interview

- What are your best academic and personal qualities?
- What do you want in a college and why?
- What area in your life would you like to improve and why?
- What was your proudest moment?
- Do you like to read? What is your favorite book?
- If I gave you a ticket to anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- What three people, living or dead, would you like to invite to dinner?
- What courses are you in, and what is your favorite subject?
- Describe your ideal college.
- What do you find most meaningful in your life?
- Tell me about the strengths and weaknesses of your high school.
- What might you be doing ten years from now?
- If you found \$100, how would you use it?
- What do you plan to study in college?
- What is your extracurricular passion?

The Interview Sheet

As you prepare for a college interview, use the sheet on page 24 to think about how you want to present yourself to the person conducting the interview. Obviously, it's important that your interview flow like a conversation, but it's also a good idea to gather your thoughts beforehand so you are prepared to highlight your accomplishments.

The Interview

- Arrive on time or early to be sure you are in the right location and have time to park. You don't want to be out of breath!

- Greet the interviewer with a warm hello.
- Introduce your parents and siblings (if they are with you).
- Always deliver your lines with confidence, maintain good posture, and look the interviewer in the eye.
- Be prepared to speak about yourself. This is about you, after all.
- Remember that this should feel more like a dialogue than a monologue, though: have questions ready for the interviewer (you can bring your notes).
- Use correct grammar and avoid "like," "you know" and "um."
- Think before you speak.

Parents

It is unlikely that your parents will join you for the interview, but your interviewer may ask them to join you for the last few minutes of your time together. Decide in advance what role you want your parents to play—will they be asking about financial aid, or will you?

After the Interview

- Write a short note or email to your interviewer thanking him or her.
- Include in the note a reference to something specific from the interview and ask any additional questions.

RESUME

Why a Resume?

Resumes are not a required part of the college admission process, but the information listed in a resume is frequently comparable to what you should list on a college application and/or talk about during a college interview. Plus, it is always a good idea to have an updated resume on hand for applying for jobs or internships. As a junior or senior in high school, you may not have ever had a traditional job, but you certainly have other skills, honors, awards, accomplishments, and activities that you can list.

Resume examples follow on pages 25–27.

College Interviews

An interview is part of the college process. It may be conducted by an admissions representative or an alumni representative. As you prepare for a college interview, use this sheet to think about how you want to present yourself to the person conducting the interview. It is important that your interview flow like a conversation, but it's also a good idea to gather your thoughts beforehand so you are prepared to highlight your academic interests and accomplishments.

Here are four areas that your interviewer may ask about:

Academics

You should be prepared to share and discuss information about your academic record throughout high school.

- Senior Year Course Schedule
- GPA
- Standardized Test Results
- Academic Highlights
- Academic Weaknesses

Extracurricular Involvement

You should be prepared to discuss what you like to do outside of school. Take some time to think about why these activities are important to you and whether or not you would plan to participate in these activities in college.

- Sports
- Arts/Theatre
- Clubs/Leadership Roles
- Student Government
- Music

College Majors

Your interviewer might ask you about potential college majors. Even if you are undecided, it's important that you can list a few different subject areas that interest you, even if they are very different from each other. It's okay to love both biology and theatre!

Questions

It is important that you ask at least two or three thoughtful questions that go beyond what you have learned through a view book, online, or during a campus tour. Questions can range from academic (How easy is it for students to double major? What if I'm undecided? Are there general education requirements?) to extracurricular (I love Ultimate Frisbee and would like to start a league—how would I do that? Is there good Thai food nearby?)

Tips:

- Have confidence in yourself; you're a great college applicant.
- Introduce your parents, if they come with you.
- Take a few minutes to collect your thoughts before you answer a question. Think about what you're about to say.
- Use correct grammar; try and avoid "like," "you know," and "um" in the conversation.
- Write a thank you note to your interviewer.

Penelope P. Patch
123 Wedgwood Place
Seattle, WA
206-525-9659
pppatch@email.com

Education

- University Prep, Seattle, Washington September 2016 – present
Anticipated Graduation, June 2019
Cumulative GPA 3.42 (3.89 in senior year)

Community Service and Volunteer Experiences

- Cherry Street Foodbank, Volunteer Grades 9 and 10
Stocked, organized, and cleaned warehouse area and cooked and served food; received
“Volunteer of the Month award” for a total of 100 hours of service over two years.
- Club Soccer Fundraiser, Coordinator Grades 9 and 10
Served as publicity liaison between the City of Seattle and league club soccer team for donations
and entertainment during annual fundraiser.
- YMCA Summer Camp, Seattle, WA Summers 2015 to 2018
Counselor for of summer day camp for children ages 8-12, also spent one day a week assisting
in YMCA camp office.

Employment/Summer Activities

- Ravenna Soccer Academy, Assistant Manager/Coach Summers 2017 and 2018
- Glassybaby, University Village, Seattle, WA Summer 2018
Worked in sales, inventory, and customer service for local glass retail shop
- Soccer Referee, Club Youth Soccer, Seattle, WA Grades 10 and 11

Soccer Information

- University Prep Varsity Soccer Team, Defense Grades 9 – 12
 - Captain, Grade 12
 - Third Place, State Finals, Grade 11
 - 1st Team, All-League, Grade 11
 - Most inspirational, Grade 10
- Club Youth Soccer, Club Team, Defense Grade 9 - 12
 - King County championship team, Grades 10-11
 - King County 2nd team, Grade 9

Additional Sports Activities

- University Prep, Varsity Track Grade 9
 - Qualified for district finals, Grade 9
- Club Lacrosse Grade 10
 - 4th in state, Grade 10

4000 25TH AVE NE SEATTLE, WA 98115 PHONE
(CELL) 206.987.9526 E-MAIL ABA@EMAIL.COM

ANNA BETH AM

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Puma Press (University Prep Newspaper), Editor (Junior, Senior)
Puma Press, Photographer and Writer (Freshman, Sophomore)
Puma Press, Features Editor (Junior)
University Prep Jazz Band Tenor Saxophone (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior)
National Honor Society (Junior, Senior)
Puma Radio (Junior, Senior)
SOS (Students of Service club) co-president – (Junior, Senior)
National Jewish Youth Council (leadership counselor) (Junior, Senior)
Filmmaking (short films, animation) (Freshman-Senior)
Dance – weekly classes since the age of 4
Assistant Dance Teacher for 3 beginner classes (Freshman)

AWARDS RECEIVED

National Merit Commended Scholar (Senior)
National Scholastic Press Association Finalist (Senior)
1st Place Features Story [Washington High School Journalism Competition] (Junior)
3rd Place News Story [Washington High School Journalism Competition] (Junior)
3rd Place [Washington State Solo and Ensemble Competition] (Sophomore)
2nd Place Nature Photograph [Washington State High School Photography Competition] (Freshman)
University Prep Scholars List (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior)

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Dodge Film School, Chapman University, Summer high school program (2018)
Washington State High School Journalism camp, Central Washington University
(2017) University of North Carolina Journalism Program (2017)

Danny Dahl
2222 Ravenna Way
Bellevue, WA 98004
503-555-1111 (home)
503-555-2222 (cell)
E-mail: ddahl@email.com

Academic Background

University Prep, Seattle WA
Anticipated Graduation: Spring 2019
3.97 Student
SAT EBRW – 690/ M – 670
ACT Eng – 29/ Read – 28/ Math – 30/ Sci – 28/ Composite – 29
AP Calc AB – 5
AP US History – 4
Current Classes: Calculus II, English, Art, French V, Biotechnology, Civics

Awards

Member of National Honor Society
Member of French Honor Society
First Tech Credit Union Student All-Star

Art

University Prep Creative Arts Society – Co-President during Senior Year
Best in Show at King County Juried High School Art Exhibition – fall 2018
Art on display at Javasti Café, Seattle – spring 2018
Art on display at Kaladi Bros Coffee, Seattle – fall 2017
Painted Mural through City of Seattle – summer 2016
Metro Billboard Art Contest Finalist – winter 2016

Extracurricular Activities

Actor in High School Plays and musicals – 4 years
Organizer at University Prep Coffeehouse and Music Day events – 4 years
University Prep Gay-Straight Alliance – 4 years
Dharma Rain Zen Center Youth Program participant – 4 years
Rent, the musical, enthusiast (Rent Head)

Employment/Volunteer

PCC Grocery Store Courtesy Clerk/Bakery Attendant – May 2017 to present
Volunteer at Folklife Music Festival – 2 years
Volunteer at Bumbershoot Festival – 3 years

STANDARDIZED TESTING

At UPrep, students are encouraged to take both the SAT and the ACT (with writing) in order to present one or both sets of scores for admission. A suggested testing sequence is: ACT in April; SAT in May; AP exams in May (optional); and SAT Subject Tests in June. Many colleges will examine these scores in conjunction with a student's cumulative grade-point average to help determine admission. The most competitive colleges require or highly recommend the SAT subject tests in specific subject areas.

Due to COVID-19, many colleges have eliminated their standardized testing requirements and are becoming test optional—some temporarily, and some permanently. COVID-19 has had a huge impact on students' abilities to take standardized tests, and colleges have had to respond accordingly. Students should check with each college to find out more about their individual standardized testing policies, and work directly with their college counselor to determine an appropriate standardized testing plan. A great website that lists test optional policies for most colleges and universities due to COVID-19 is:

<https://www.compassprep.com/college-profiles/>.

The PSAT

The Preliminary SAT is a standardized test that offers practice for the SAT. It also gives you a chance to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Corporation's scholarship programs. The test measures verbal reasoning skills, critical reading skills, mathematical problem-solving skills, and writing skills. It is designed to be taken during the junior year.

The SAT

The College Entrance Examination Board offers the SAT reasoning test as a measurement of the verbal, mathematical, and writing abilities a student has acquired through his or her education. Most students take the SAT for the first time in May of their junior year. The SAT may be taken as many times as it is offered, although many colleges recommend limiting the number to three. Students have score choice; they can decide which scores they would like sent to colleges.

The SAT Subject Tests

These tests are one-hour, primarily multiple choice tests that measure knowledge of particular subjects and the

ability to apply that knowledge. Most highly competitive colleges require three subject tests, in addition to the writing portion of the SAT, or the ACT with essay. It is to the student's advantage to take an SAT subject test in as many areas of strength as possible. Students who are taking a one-year course (i.e., biology, chemistry, and physics) should take the test immediately following completion of the course. Students thinking of attending an engineering program should take Math II and a science test.

The ACT

The ACT is a test of educational development that measures how much the student has already learned. The test focuses on four subject areas: English, Math, Reading, and Natural Sciences. A writing test is offered as an option, and we advise students to take the writing test. Students are encouraged to take the ACT in the spring of their junior year or in the fall of their senior year. Students select which scores they would like to send to colleges.

The Advanced Placement Tests (AP)

These tests are for self-selected juniors and seniors. Administered by the College Board, the AP exams give highly motivated students the opportunity to demonstrate college-level achievement while still in high school. If students achieve the requisite scores, they may obtain advanced placement or credit from most colleges and universities of their choice. University decisions on credit are frequently made department by department. The AP exams are administered at UPrep. Students may take any number of AP exams as long as dates and times do not conflict.

UPrep offers the following exams: Biology, Calculus AB, Calculus BC, Chemistry, Chinese Language and Culture, Computer Science A, English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, French Language and Culture, Physics C: Mechanics, Spanish Language and Culture, Statistics, US Government and Politics, U.S. History, and World History.

Registration takes place in the fall for exams that take place in May. UPrep's registration window is between September 1 and November 1, and requires a \$150 non-refundable deposit. To register, visit

www.aptestservice.com/uprep.

An Important Note Regarding Standardized Testing

Please take standardized testing in stride. Choices of classes and grades are far more important in the college application process. Always remember that there are alternatives to the testing requirements for colleges. Students who are concerned about testing results should explore those colleges that do not require standardized testing, such as: Lewis and Clark (OR), Bowdoin and Bates Colleges (ME), Dickinson College (PA), Smith and Mount Holyoke Colleges (MA), Lawrence University (WI), Bard College, and Wake Forest University (NC). There are more than 900 colleges and universities in the United States that do not require tests. Many Canadian universities do not require test scores from stateside applicants. Other colleges will rely on portfolios of students' work, auditions, and interviews instead of tests. Remember that when you are thirty, no one cares what your SAT scores were. Do your best, but keep these scores in perspective. Most importantly, a student's humanity or future contributions to society are not measured by his or her test scores.

Test-Optional Colleges

There are more than 900 colleges and universities across the United States that are either test-optional or do not require standardized testing as part of the admissions process. At www.fairtest.org, a nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to preventing the misuse of standardized tests, you will find a comprehensive list of all test-optional schools.

ATHLETICS

Athletics and College Admission

There is no doubt that athletics is a big part of many college communities and that a student who will bring significant athletic talent to the college admission process will be of interest to college coaches. It is important for you to talk with your current coach to determine what kind of an impact you might make on a college team (NCAA Division I, II, or III) and whether you are interested in making the commitment to college athletics. If you plan to play an intercollegiate sport in college and want to communicate that to the college athletic department, we encourage you to do the following:

1. Check out the college website to see if there is an online athletic recruitment form and complete this to make an initial contact with the athletic department. This form may ask for athletic statistics or academic information comparable to an athletic resume (for example, see resume #1 on page 25).
2. Speak with your University Prep coach about the different colleges' programs by the spring of your junior year.
3. Prepare and send an athletic resume and cover letter including athletic background, honor/awards received, out-of-season participation, and times/stats that support your athletic achievements. This may include academic information such as GPA, SAT scores, honors, and awards.
4. When you make plans to visit colleges, try to arrange a meeting with the coach or attend a practice.
5. Give your current coach and your college counselor a copy of your athletic resume and keep them informed of additional communication and correspondence.
6. Request a written recommendation from your University Prep coach, addressed to the college coach.

It is often hard to determine whether or not you may be eligible to compete on the college level and which division is the best match for your athletic abilities. The www.ncaa.org website has useful information about each division.

Any student who expects to be recruited for Division I or II college sports must register with the Eligibility Center by going to

<https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>. You can do this at the beginning of your junior year. Once you have registered, you must follow the directions carefully, and bring the appropriate forms to the registrar, so that your transcript can be sent to targeted colleges. You can do this as early as the end of your junior year (after the completion of at least six semesters of high school work). We recommend registering no later than December of your senior year.

SAT and ACT test scores must be reported to the NCAA Eligibility Center directly from the testing agency. When registering for the SAT or ACT, designate the Eligibility Center code of 9999 to make sure the score is reported directly to the Eligibility Center. Students interested in the possibility of playing at a Division III school do not have to register formally, but must adhere to the guidelines for student athletes.

A word of caution: College coaches sometimes apply a bit of pressure. An “early” application can make their jobs easier. We urge you to resist coaching pressure.

Talk with your family, with your University Prep coach, and with your college counselor before making any commitments. Remember that you, not the coach, are in charge of your future.

Remember: Meeting the NCAA academic rules does not guarantee your admission into a college. You must apply for admissions.

Myth:

Athletics gets a student into college.

Reality:

Two percent of college students are in college on athletic scholarships. Athletics may be a plus factor, like being a legacy or a leader, but it never trumps a student’s transcript in terms of importance.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Learning Services

Colleges and universities have improved substantially their services for, and evaluation of, students with learning needs. The college search for a student at UPrep who uses our learning services or has an individualized learning plan should follow the same path as all prospective college students; however, there are a few special considerations. First, these students need to ask additional questions. Second, students who need extended time testing for college entrance examinations have additional paperwork to complete.

Questions to Ask Colleges if You Have Learning Needs or an Individualized Learning Plan

- What kind of support services does the school have for students with learning needs or preferences for learning?
- Does the school have requirements (i.e., language, math) that may be difficult for a student to fulfill?
- Is there an active learning services program on campus? Special facilities? Can you make an appoint-

ment to speak with the director of the program?

- Are students encouraged to submit a recent educational testing evaluation as part of the admission process? If so, how is it used?
- Is peer tutoring available? Writing or math labs? A study skills center? What instructional strategies are available?
- If you have an individualized learning plan at UPrep, and are accustomed to certain instructional strategies or accommodations, please note that not all colleges and universities offer similar levels of support.

Learning Support Students and Standardized Testing

Students with diagnoses for learning or health may be eligible to take the SAT and ACT with extended time or with other accommodations. Current documentation (within the last three years) will be required in the form of a current IEP, 504 Accommodation Plan, and/or verification of a diagnosis which demonstrates the need for accommodations. Students who believe they may qualify for extended time should meet with UPrep’s learning and testing specialist by spring of sophomore year or fall of junior year to complete the necessary paperwork, which will be in addition to the regular registration materials.

To be eligible for extended time on standardized tests, a student must:

- have learning needs that necessitate testing accommodations;
- have current documentation on file (within three years); and
- complete an eligibility form for SAT/ACT (see UPrep’s learning and testing specialist).

Professional Evaluation:

The evaluation from a qualified professional must:

- state the specific disability as diagnosed;
- provide complete educational, developmental, and medical history;
- describe tests/techniques used to arrive at diagnosis;
- establish professional credentials of evaluator; and
- describe specific accommodations being requested;

Students with Learning Needs and Additional Factors to Consider

We encourage students with learning needs to become comfortable telling their story. Specifically, colleges appreciate when students are able to do the following:

- Articulate details about their specific learning diagnosis and preferences for learning
 - Explain how their learning needs and preferences have affected their academic performance
 - Address what accommodations and instructional strategies they use
 - Discuss what they have gained as a result of their learning style
-

African American Students

Books

Emmert, J. *HBCU Today: Your Comprehensive Guide to Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. Irving, TX: Black Educational Events, LLC: 2009.

Garrod, Andrew, Kilkenny, Robert, and Gomez, Christina. *Mixed: Multiracial College Students Tell Their Life Stories 1st Edition*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014.

Knight, Sr., Alphonso. *Historically Black Colleges and Universities: What you Should Know*. Xlibris, LLC: 2014.

Peterson, Brian. *The African American's Guide to Excellence in College*. Chance 22 Publishing, 2005.

Walker, Sheryl. *The Black Girl's Guide to College Success: What No One Really Tells You About College That You Must Know*. Authorhouse, 2007.

Websites

www.BlackExcel.org

Black Excel: The College Help Network

www.edonline.com/cq/hbcu

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

www.jbhe.com

Journal of Blacks in Higher Education

www.naACP.org

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

<http://www.qem.org/>

Quality Education for Minorities

www.unCF.org

United Negro College Fund

Colleges and Universities with Strong Learning Support

The following list of colleges are known for providing exceptional support for students with learning needs. The colleges with an * next to their names also have special fee-based centers, which provide even more support.

American University (DC)	Earlham College (IN)	Skidmore College (NY)
Augsburg College (MN)	Hofstra University (NY)	Southern Oregon University*
Baylor University (TX)	Iona College (NY)	University of Arizona*
Beacon College (FL)*	Landmark College (VT)*	University of Connecticut
Brown University (RI)	Lynn University (FL)*	University of Denver*
Clark University (MA)	Manhattanville College (NY)	University of Michigan
College of Charleston	Marshall University (WV)	University of Puget Sound
College of Wooster (OH)	Marymount Manhattan University	University of Southern California
Curry College (MA)*	Mitchell College (MA)*	University of Southern Oregon
DePaul University (IL)	McDaniel College (MD)	Wheaton College (MA)
Drew University (NJ)	Muhlenberg College (PA)	Xavier University (OH)
	Northeastern University (MA)*	

Artistic Students

Books

Everett, Carole J. *Peterson's College Guide for Performing Arts Majors 2009*. Albany, NY: Peterson's, 2009.

Loveland, Elaina. *Creative Colleges: A Guide for Student Actors, Artists, Dancers, Musicians and Writers*. Los Altos, CA: Supercollege, LLC., 2017.

Oram, Fran. *College Guide for Performing Arts Majors 2009: Real-World Admission Guide for all Dance, Music, and Theatre Majors*. Albany, NY: Peterson's, 2009.

Hispanic/Latinx Students

Books

Dabbah, Mariela. *Latinos in College: Your Guide to Success*. Consultare, 2009.

Valverde, Leonard, ed. *The Latino Student's Guide to College Success, 2nd Edition*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2012.

Websites

www.hacu.net

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

www.hsf.net

Hispanic Scholarship Fund

www.qem.org

Quality Education for Minorities

Artistic Students

(Adapted from Jennifer Gross's *Tips for the Art Focused Student*, National Association for College Admission Counseling)

If you are interested in pursuing the visual, musical, or performing arts in college, your college application process might involve some additional pieces. Specifically, if you are applying to an art or music school, you will need to furnish a portfolio of your work. There is no standard protocol used at each institution. Therefore, students are advised to check each college's website for directions.

Even if you are not intending to major in the arts, but you have demonstrated talent in this area, sending in slides or your art work or a CD with your music is warranted. This adds depth to your application.

Prospective arts majors have two degree options: a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree with a major in the arts and a bachelor of fine arts (BFA) for artists/performers or bachelor of music (BM) for musicians. The BA degree is the typical liberal arts degree—students who major in English, history, and other humanities majors also earn BA degrees. The BFA or BM degree is more focused and intense.

Which degree you choose depends on your college and career goals. If you have a high degree of commitment to your art and desire an intense, often competitive college experience, a BFA or BM might be right for you. If you would rather study a variety of subjects along with your arts major, a BA may be the way to go.

Visual and performing arts students have several types of colleges to consider. Conservatories and stand-alone arts schools offer an immersion-type experience for students earning BM or BFA degrees. All of the students you meet at this type of school will be artists, and the atmosphere is often highly competitive.

Some larger universities offer BFA/BM degrees as well as BA degrees in the arts. You may find somewhat self-contained music or arts schools within the larger university. In this atmosphere, you could pursue the more specialized degree while still keeping the door open to taking a few liberal arts courses (which would be unavailable at specialized music or arts schools). In addition, a university-based arts program might give

you the option of pursuing a double degree, such as a BM in music and a BA in history. (A double degree would require more than four years, however.)

The Application Process

In addition to completing a typical college application, students in the visual or performing arts should prepare a portfolio or audition. Each arts program has different requirements, so you should contact the schools as early as possible to obtain their portfolio or audition requirements. While your portfolio or audition is an important part of the application, arts programs do consider your academic record and test scores.

National Portfolio Day

National Portfolio Day is an event specifically for visual artists and designers. It is an opportunity for those who wish to pursue an education in the visual and related arts to meet with representatives from accredited art and design colleges. Representatives will be available to review your artwork, discuss their programs, and answer questions about professional careers in art. High school students and their parents are encouraged to attend.

National Portfolio Day serves a variety of purposes. Most importantly, it is designed to help further the development of young artists by bringing together experienced college representatives to review artwork and offer feedback. The experience is a small taste of what a professional art program can be like.

Your portfolio should include your best and most recent work, but it can also include works in progress and sketchbooks. You'll hear many different opinions of your work. Explain how you develop your ideas and where you want to go with them. No admissions decisions or scholarship awards will be offered to you at National Portfolio Day. Some colleges represented may accept your portfolio as the visual portion of your application. Other colleges have restrictions that prohibit them from making a definite portfolio decision at the time of your review. Discuss your work with as many representatives as possible.

Cornish College of the Arts usually hosts Seattle's National Portfolio Day. For information, visit <https://nationalportfolioday.org>.

Jewish Students

Books

Aaron, Scott. *Jewish U: A Contemporary Guide for the Jewish College Student (Revised Edition)*. New York: UAHC Press, 2010.

Schoem, David. *College Knowledge for the Jewish Student: 101 Tips*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2010.

Websites

www.hillel.org

Hillel Organization—The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life

LGBTQIA+ Students

Books

Hinrichs, Donald. *A LesiBiGay Guide to Selecting the Best-Fit College or University and Enjoying the College Years*. iUniverse, Inc., 2007.

Nicolazzo, Z. *Trans* in College: Transgender Students' Strategies for Navigating Campus Life and the Institutional Politics of Inclusion*. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing, 2017.

Windmeyer, Shane, L. *The Advocate: College Guide for LGBT Students*. New York: Alyson Books, 2006.

Websites

<https://finaid.org/otheraid/lgbt/>

A comprehensive listing of over 50 scholarships

www.pointfoundation.org

The Point Foundation

Muslim Students

Books

Garrod, Andrew, Kilkenny, Robert, and Gomez, Christina. *Growing Up Muslim: Muslim College Students in America Tell Their Life Stories: 1st Edition*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014.

Zahoor, Idris. *The Muslim Student's Guide to University and Beyond*. Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd: London, 2014.

Websites

<http://islamic scholarshipfund.org>

Islamic Scholarship Fund

Native American Students

Books

Garrod, Andrew and Kilkenny, Robert. *I Am Where I Come From: Native American College Students and Graduates Tell Their Life Stories*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017.

Inglebret, Ella and Pavel, D. Michael. *The American Indian and Alaska Native Student's Guide to College Success*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2007.

Websites

www.collegefund.org

American Indian College Fund

www.nativeculturelinks.com/education.html

Tribal colleges, Native Studies programs, and Indian education

<https://tribalcollegejournal.org/map-of-tribal-colleges/>

Journal of American Indian Higher Education

Students with Learning Needs

Books

The Princeton Review's K&W Guide for Students with Learning Differences, 13th Edition: 353 Schools with Programs or Services for Students with ADHD, ASD, or Learning Disabilities. Princeton NJ: Princeton Review, 2016.

Reiff, Henry B., PhD. *Self-Advocacy Skills for Students with Learning Disabilities: Making It Happen in College and Beyond*. Port Chester, NY: Dude Publishing, 2007.

Roffman, Amy. *Guiding Teens with Learning Disabilities: Navigating the Transition from High School to Adulthood*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Review, 2007

Websites

<https://accommodations.collegeboard.org/>

Useful information about the kinds of documentation needed to consider an application for testing accommodations

www.actstudent.org/regist/disab/

Testing accommodations for ACT

www.ldonline.org

LD online: a guide to learning disabilities and ADHD

www.understood.org

An excellent website for parents about learning and attention issues

www.ldworldwide.org/

Learning Disabilities Worldwide

www.ncld.org/

National Center for Learning Disabilities

Service Academies

The United States Service Academies, also known as the United States Military Academies, are federal academies for the undergraduate education and training of commissioned officers for the United States armed forces. Tuition, room and board are all paid for by the U.S. Government, but students incur a commitment to serve a number of years of military service after graduation.

There are five U.S. Service Academies:

- United States Merchant Marine Academy, known as “Kings Point,” Kings Point, NY
- United States Military Academy, also known as “Army,” West Point, NY
- United States Naval Academy, also known as “Navy,” Annapolis, MD
- United States Coast Guard Academy, New London, CT
- United States Air Force Academy, also known as “U.S.A.F.A.,” Colorado Springs, CO

In general, candidates for admission are judged on their academic achievement, demonstrated leadership, athletics, and character. To gain admission, candidates must also pass a physical fitness test and undergo a thorough medical examination.

Applicants to all service academies (except the United States Coast Guard Academy) are required to obtain an official nomination. Nominations may be made by Senators, Congressmen, the President, and the Vice President (The United States Merchant Marine Academy only accepts nominations from Senators and Congressmen); students are encouraged to contact their senator or congressperson in FALL of their junior year.

The nomination process is extremely competitive. For example, each year, Washington’s Senators receive 350 requests for academy nominations and nominate 10 applicants for each vacancy at each academy. Each year, around 40 applicants are nominated. The applicants all had a 3.85 GPA or better and a combined SAT score of 1200 or higher. Students interested in the service academies should plan on taking the SAT in the fall of their junior year, so that their scores can be included in their nomination form.

The academies offer one-week summer programs for high school juniors; the programs are scheduled during June each year and selection is highly competitive. We strongly encourage students to attend one of the summer programs, since it provides a taste of the culture of each academy. Online applications open in January and close mid-March. You must have taken either the SAT or the ACT prior to applying. The academies’ websites will provide more information. In recent years, University Prep students have applied to and been accepted at the Naval Academy.

Websites

Washington State Senator Patty Murray
<https://www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/mobile/militaryserviceacademynominations>

Washington State Senator Maria Cantwell
<https://www.cantwell.senate.gov/services/academy-nominations/instructions>

United States Air Force Academy
www.academyadmissions.com

United States Coast Guard Academy
www.cga.edu

United States Merchant Marine Academy
www.usmma.edu/admissions

United States Military Academy (West Point)
<https://westpoint.edu/admissions>

United States Naval Academy (Annapolis)
www.usna.edu/Admissions

FINANCIAL AID

For many students and their families, cost can be the most determining factor in selecting a college. This section should be used as a general reference as you navigate the financial aid process. We have also included a few tips and resources for families who know that the cost of a college education will be a hardship, yet due to income and assets, will not qualify for financial aid. Because each college or university has its own specific requirements for financial aid, you are advised to read all applicable material, and carefully follow the procedures. It is imperative that you pay close attention to the details and deadlines of each school. Finally, please pay attention to the following three points:

FICTION: The financial aid process is a hunt for dollars hidden in secret places.

FACT: Ninety-five percent of aid comes from colleges, the federal government, and states.

FOCUS: Ask colleges directly. Call—they're good at this.

Steps in the Financial Aid Process

1. Caveats for Early Decision and International Financial Aid Applicants

Early Decision Candidate: It is critical that you communicate directly with the financial aid office of your ED/EA college. In most cases, you will be required to complete the College Board's CSS Profile in November, and you may also need to complete other institutional forms. The college will give you an estimate of your financial aid package at the time of acceptance. Your aid award will not become official until after you have filed a FAFSA.

International Applicants: Financial assistance programs for international students are highly competitive, with academic credentials and geographic diversity as primary considerations in the process. At most schools, to receive consideration for institutional aid, international students must complete the International Financial Aid Application and Declaration of Finances as soon as possible after January. This form is generally mailed to all international applicants as part of the admissions packet, and it should be returned directly to the college admissions office. Some schools follow a different process for awarding aid to international students, so

be sure to pay close attention to the requirements and procedures at each of the schools to which you are applying.

2. Filling Out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Every financial aid applicant must complete this form to apply for U.S. government grants and loans, federal work-study, many state grants, and, for some schools, institutional financial aid.

- The FAFSA can be filed online at <https://www.studentaid.gov/> starting on October 1. Complete the FAFSA as soon as you can; certain funds run out if the FAFSA isn't completed on time. We recommend completing it no later than November 1.
- You will need to re-apply for financial aid every year while you're in college to continue to receive financial aid.
- The FAFSA asks a series of questions that determine whether you are a dependent or independent student; it is only under rare circumstances that a UPrep student is not a dependent student. Dependents must report custodial parent information, as well as your own information, on your FAFSA.
- To complete the FAFSA, you will need parent and student federal income tax forms, social security numbers (or alien numbers), driver's license numbers, information on any untaxed income (like child support or income from interest), information on cash, savings, and checking account balances, investments (including stocks and bonds and real estate, but not including the home in which you live), and information on business and farm assets. If you have all this information at hand, the FAFSA should take less than 25 minutes for you to complete!
- You can list up to 10 schools on the online FAFSA, and you can add more schools later. Schools you list on your FAFSA will automatically receive your results electronically.

After submitting the FAFSA

- You can check the status of your FAFSA immediately after submitting it online.
- You will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR), which is a summary of the FAFSA data you submitted, within three days to three weeks after you submit your FAFSA. Be sure to look over your SAR to make sure you didn't make a mistake on your FAFSA, and keep

copies of your SAR.

- No more than 10 schools may be listed on your FAFSA at one time. If you want to add additional schools beyond the original ten, select “Add or Delete a School Code” to add up to four more schools as a correction to your FAFSA information. If you make further corrections after adding the new schools, the schools you removed from this original list will not receive these corrections—you will need to contact FAFSA customer service by calling 1.800.433.3243.
- The SAR won’t tell you how much financial aid you’ll get. Once you have been admitted to a specific school, they will calculate your aid and will send an award letter. The timing of the award offer varies from school to school, but usually it’s within a few weeks of being admitted.
- Some SARs include a request for verification, which is the process to confirm that the data reported on your FAFSA is accurate. If you’re selected for verification, don’t assume you’re being accused of doing anything wrong. Some people are selected at random, and some schools verify all students’ FAFSAs. Simply provide the documentation the school asks for by the deadline. To avoid being selected for verification, we recommend using the IRS DRT (see below).
- The IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT) takes you to the IRS website, where you’ll need to log in by providing your name and other information exactly as you provided it on your tax return. At the IRS site, you can preview the information before transferring it to your FAFSA. When you return to the FAFSA website, you’ll see that questions that are populated with IRS DRT will be marked with “Transferred from the IRS.”
- If you haven’t done your taxes by the time you fill out your FAFSA, it’s okay to estimate the amounts. After you file your taxes, you’ll need to log back in to the FAFSA and make necessary corrections.

3. Completing the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Financial Aid Profile

This form is used to apply for institutional aid, and should be completed only for schools that require it.

- Register online at www.collegeboard.com.
- At least one week before your earliest deadline, complete the customized application online (there is a fee). Note: You may use estimated income/expense/asset data; do not wait to submit the form

until you have exact figures.

- Schools will receive your information electronically in about one week. You will receive a CSS Acknowledgement showing the information entered on your application, as well as the schools to which your data has been sent. Use the Data Confirmation section of the Acknowledgment if you need to make corrections/changes. Send the new information directly to the schools.
- After you register and receive your packet, you may still add other schools to the Profile on the website. You should contact each of those schools to find out if they require any information not included in your customized application.

4. Determining Eligibility for Need-Based Financial Aid

Need-based financial aid is used to make up the difference between what a family can pay and the total cost of education. In determining what a family can afford, need-analysis systems work under the principle that students and their parents bear the primary responsibility for financing education costs to the full extent they are able; families are expected to make sacrifices in order to pay for college. Need-analysis formulas evaluate families’ financial situations in an effort to establish horizontal equity—families with similar financial situations should contribute similar amounts of money to educational expenses—and vertical equity—families with differing situations should contribute differing amounts.

There are two primary systems used to determine a student’s eligibility for need-based financial aid. Utilizing the FAFSA, the federal methodology determines eligibility for all federal grants and loans, most state aid, and some institutional aid. Other colleges and universities use some version of the institutional methodology to award their financial aid funds.

5. Learning About the Expected Family Contribution

This amount is made up of the parent contribution and the student contribution. The parent contribution considers such factors as:

- **Parental income:** The single most important factor in determining aid eligibility for most families, it includes all taxable and nontaxable income.

Minus

- **Nondiscretionary expenses** which include such items as taxes, medical expenses, basic living expenses, and an employment expense allowance for sin-

gle-parent households and dual-income households.

The parent contribution also considers:

- Available parental assets: real estate equity (excluding the primary residence); savings and other net worth investments, but not retirement funds except for education IRAs; a portion of business profits.

Minus

- Asset protection allowance which protects a portion of your assets for retirement (this increases as parents get closer to retirement age).

Once the total parent contribution is determined, it is divided among all dependent children who are enrolled in similarly priced colleges. The student contribution considers a portion of a student's income and assets.

6. Calculating the Expected Family Contribution

To determine the student's financial eligibility, the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is subtracted from the total cost of education (tuition, room and board, and in most cases books, supplies, transportation, and living expenses) to determine the student's financial eligibility. The calculated financial eligibility and, therefore, the financial aid package will vary at colleges with varying costs. It may also vary due to colleges' differing calculations of the EFC. (Although the federal methodology uses well-defined formulas, there is some room for college financial aid administrators to exercise "professional judgment" and alter the calculations in response to unusual family circumstances.)

The institutional methodology, used by many colleges and universities to award their financial aid funds, varies from the federal methodology in several key aspects:

- The institutional calculation takes into consideration a family's equity in their primary residence while the federal calculation does not. In other words, a family with home equity has a greater ability to afford the cost of a private education over time.
- When the applicant's parents are divorced or have never been married, the federal methodology requires financial information from, and bases its calculations on, only the custodial parent and his or her current spouse (the student's stepparent). In most cases, the institutional methodology requires

information from the noncustodial parent as well, and, in some cases, his or her spouse.

- Because retirement funds are not included in the calculation of assets, the institutional methodology does not use the Asset Protection Allowance for retirement used in the federal methodology.
- The institutional methodology has added two new incentives for families to save for college: the Annual Education Savings Allowance and the Cumulative Education Savings Allowance, enabling parents to protect income and assets to be used for current and future education expenses.
- To reduce the contribution expected from middle income families, the institutional methodology uses modified income assessment rates.

7. Figuring Out Student Need

Once the admissions office has decided to admit a student and the financial aid office has determined that the student qualifies for financial aid, the financial aid

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Cost of Attendance (COA)} \\ - \text{Expected Family Contribution (EFC)} \\ \hline = \text{Student Need} \end{array}$$

office will put together a financial aid package, a combination of several types of financial assistance.

8. The Financial Aid Award

Financial aid awards are made up from a combination of the following:

Grants: federal, state, and institutional (college/university) grants are financial aid awards that do not have to be repaid.

Loans: often interest-free during enrollment, student loans must be repaid, with interest, over a predetermined loan life post-graduation.

Work-Study: the vast majority of financial aid recipients will be expected to hold part-time (usually around ten hours per week) campus or community jobs. There is a federally subsidized work-study program as well as college-sponsored programs.

SPECIFIC COMPONENTS OF THE AWARD

Pell Grant: A grant that provides up to \$6,345 for the 2020–2021 school year based on a student's need.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunities Grant (FSEOG): A grant for students with the highest levels of eligibility, FSEOG provides up to \$4,000 per year. To qualify, the student must also be a Pell Grant recipient.

Federal Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans: Available to full-time undergraduates, these programs allow first-year students to borrow a maximum of \$3,500, up to \$4,500 during the second year, and up to \$5,500 each subsequent year. The borrowing maximum for all undergraduate study is \$23,000. Repayment of the Federal Loan begins six months after the completion of schooling. Subsidized Loans are need-based loans on which the federal government pays the interest while the student is in college, for six months after graduation, and during any deferments. Unsubsidized Loans are available to students who do not meet financial eligibility and to those who qualify for only a portion of the maximum subsidized loan. Without the subsidy, the student is responsible for the interest while in school. Typically, the student will pay interest only while in school, deferring the principal repayment until after graduation. It is possible, however, to defer the interest and add it to the principal as it accumulates.

Perkins Loan: A need-based federal student loan designated for the students with the highest levels of demonstrated financial eligibility, the Perkins Loan Program provides up to \$5,500 per year at a 5 percent interest rate. The student must have applied for a \$3,000 Pell Grant to be eligible.

Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS): Credit-worthy parents of dependent undergraduate students may borrow through the PLUS Loan Program to help finance educational costs. The maximum loan per year is limited to the cost of education minus other aid that the student has received. Repayment begins within sixty days of the loan funds being advanced, and the maximum repayment period is ten years. Note: The figures for grant and loan amounts and interest rates are subject to change.

State Grants: Many states offer grants to residents who demonstrate a specific level of financial eligibility. Often, these grants are available only if the student attends an in-state college. In some states, there are different programs for students attending public

colleges, private colleges, in-state schools, and out-of-state schools. Determination of and application to state grant programs are usually done through the FAFSA.

9. Understanding Your Financial Aid Award

In comparing financial aid awards from different schools, it is important to look not only at the total family contribution, but also at the types of aid offered; the ratio of grants to self-help (loans and work) may vary significantly. Note: Many financial aid packages combine loans and work-study under the heading "Self-Help" and some schools allow students some discretion to determine the ratio of loan to work.

10. Unmet Financial Need

Schools that cannot meet the full financial need of every admitted applicant may employ one or more of the following practices:

Gapping: The practice of meeting less than the applicant's full need.

Financial aid waiting list: Some admitted applicants are not offered aid unless/until more funds become available.

Admit-Deny: The practice of offering admission to students, but denying them financial aid despite their eligibility.

Deny-Deny: The practice of denying admission to applicants who qualify for aid, but whose need the school is unable to meet.

11. The Appeals Process

The recent changes to federal guidelines regarding financial aid have produced larger variations in schools' determinations of financial eligibility and in their ability to meet that need. As a result, students may receive very different aid packages from different schools.

If the school you prefer to attend offers less money or a less attractive package (more in loans, less in grants) than another, bring the discrepancy to the attention of the financial aid office at your preferred school. If the school has an appeals process, follow the steps carefully. Otherwise, call the financial aid office and ask for an explanation. Even if your offers are similar, if the packages aren't large enough to enable you to attend, further investigation is worth the effort. Some schools will not negotiate, but many will increase awards when the change is warranted and the school has funds available. A family's financial situation cannot always be adequately explained on forms. A change in the fami-

ly's financial situation (the loss of a job, an illness, secondary school tuition for younger siblings) will increase a family's eligibility. Many schools will take the new or clarified information into account and increase the award. Some schools set aside funds that they expect to offer during the appeals process. Please remember that most financial aid officers are more amenable to working with families who treat them with respect.

12. Renewal of Your Financial Aid Award

You must re-apply for financial aid each year. Most colleges guarantee four years of financial aid to all students who initially enroll with financial aid, as long as they file the required application forms and continue to demonstrate financial need. Some schools may alter the package as the student gets older (for example, reducing grant aid and increasing self-help), and some schools have academic- and discipline-related standards attached to their financial aid awards. If a student's GPA falls below a certain level, for example, his or her financial aid would be reduced or eliminated. Make sure that you understand a college's policies on renewal of aid before accepting an initial award.

Financing College

Scholarships

In addition to need-based financial aid, many students seek scholarships in an effort to offset the cost of a college education. Scholarships are often awarded to students based on strengths in academics, athletics, community service, leadership, artistic talent, or other special interest groups; scholarships can be awarded based on merit and/or financial need. Keep in mind that deadlines for many scholarships vary and aren't necessarily in sync with the deadlines of the college application process—it is your responsibility to stay on top of all deadlines. Also, never, ever, ever pay a fee to an organization claiming to help you find scholarships. If the need-based financial aid package does not meet the full eligibility of the student, the scholarship can be used to fill the "gap." The scholarship may replace self-help (loans and work-study) funds. The scholarship may also be used to reduce the institutional grant.

Types of Scholarships

Academic Scholarships

Many colleges award academic scholarships without requiring additional applications; they are simply a part of the admission process and students are notified of scholarship offers with their offers of admission. Some scholarships will require an additional application, essay, audition, portfolio, and letters of support, or interview—check with the colleges directly. Many scholarships are renewable each year for four years as well.

Merit Scholarships

Overwhelmingly, scholarships are offered to students from the colleges and universities offering admission; these merit-based scholarships are often used as a tool by colleges to enroll more of their top applicants. College-sponsored merit scholarships are awarded to students based on academic achievement (in general or in a specific discipline); geographic, ethnic, or racial diversity; a particular talent (artistic, athletic, etc.); extracurricular involvement (community service, for example); scholarship examinations, etc. They are not based on demonstrated financial need, although in some cases financial need is a consideration. Schools differ widely in the number and size of scholarships offered. <https://www.cappex.com/scholarships> is a centralized website dedicated to matching students with merit-based scholarships from more than 3,000 colleges and universities.

If scholarships are important to you, first you need to find out which schools offer merit-based scholarships (many schools reserve all their funding for need-based financial aid, not merit-based scholarships), and then find out the requirements and deadlines for the scholarships. For recipients of need-based financial aid, merit scholarships will be incorporated into the aid package. Each institution will adjust aid packages according to its own policies, but schools are unable to use the scholarship to reduce the federal EFC.

Athletic Scholarships

Many NCAA Division I and Division II schools also offer athletic scholarships. Keep in mind that athletic scholarships amount to a very small percentage of overall scholarships offered. NCAA institutions gave athletic scholarships to about two percent of the 6.4 million athletes playing those sports in high school four years earlier.

Scholarships from Local Organizations

Local organizations offer scholarships to students in their area. Common sources of local scholarships come from religious organizations (if you attend a church, temple, synagogue, etc., find out if they offer scholarships), fraternal organizations (you need not be a member of the Elks Lodge or local Rotary chapter), your parents' employers, national chapters of your school clubs (Key Club, for example), or other organizations. Information on many such scholarships is available in the College Counseling Office. You are also encouraged to explore other scholarship opportunities via the Internet, the public library, etc.

If you receive notification of an outside scholarship after you have received your financial aid award, you must inform the financial aid office of your scholarship. The school will then prepare a revised financial aid award that takes into account the additional scholarship funds.

Western University Exchange (WUE)

WUE is a program of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Through WUE, students in western states may enroll in many two-year and four-year college programs at a reduced tuition level. This program offers full or partial in-state tuition for students from Washington who enroll in certain course work not usually offered in Washington State. Example: Mining Engineering in Montana. Visit <https://www.wiche.edu/tuition-savings/wue/> for more information on this program.

Where to Find Scholarships

College Counseling Office

Many scholarship organizations send applications and information to the College Counseling Office. We maintain a comprehensive list of scholarships on our website at <https://bit.ly/2Ej9OTq>.

At University Prep, we have noticed that students applying for scholarships tend to have the most luck with scholarships awarded by colleges and universities, www.washboard.org, and Edmund F. Maxwell, www.maxwell.org.

Fastweb

This is one of the largest and most complete sources of scholarships available. Search for scholarships based

on your unique profile. Fastweb, www.fastweb.com, requires you register with their site, but it is the best way to search for scholarships that apply to you.

Individual Colleges and Universities

The overwhelming majority of scholarships earned by UPrep students come directly from the college or universities. While not all schools offer scholarships, many schools have academic merit or talent (athletic, musical, art, debate, etc.) scholarships available. Check the schools' websites for specific information on scholarships and financial aid.

Additional Financing Options

College-Sponsored Payment Plans

Many colleges offer individual payment plans allowing monthly payments of the annual fees. Check with individual schools to learn about their plans and policies.

Personal Loans

There are also a variety of loans available to assist in the financing of educational expenses. Individual financial aid offices are the best source of information about these programs. Many families who have equity in their homes find that a home equity loan offers the most favorable terms because of the tax advantages. Be assertive in exploring all possible financing options with your financial aid administrator.

529 College Savings Plan

The most popular way to save for college is through a 529 plan. (Information courtesy of www.get.wa.gov/faqs/). A state 529 plan is a college savings plan named for the section of the federal tax code that authorizes them. You put in after-tax money. Your money grows tax-free and all withdrawals are tax free as long as they are used for education. There are two types of 529 plans: College Savings Plan and the Guaranteed Education Tuition Plan. With a College Savings Plan, you pick your investments and shoulder all of the investment risk. When it is time to pay for college, you have whatever money is left in your account. GET is a prepaid college tuition plan. With GET, families can prepay for a student's college tuition today. The State of Washington guarantees that the value of the "units of tuition" you purchase will keep pace with resident undergraduate tuition at the most expensive

public university in Washington (either the University of Washington or Washington State University). GET is a qualified tuition program under section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code. For more information, please visit www.get.wa.gov/faq.shtml.

Maximizing Financial Aid Eligibility

If your family is on the cusp of qualifying for need-based financial aid, or will qualify for financial aid, here are some additional tips to maximize your aid eligibility:

- Save in parent's name, not in custodial accounts (they're not exempt).
- Spend-down student's assets.
- Shift assets to exempt vehicles: IRA, life insurance, GET plan, home equity.
- Accelerate necessary expenses to be cash poor: computer, car, home repairs, etc.
- Minimize capital gains.
- Maximize contributions to retirement plan. Do not withdraw from retirement fund to finance college (distributions = taxable income). If you must, borrow from yourself (via a home equity loan, for example).
- Ask grandparents to delay gifts until after graduation.
- Prepay mortgage.
- Put a 529 plan in the name of parents or grandparents for minimal/no impact on aid.

Taxpayer Relief Act

Education tax credits and interest deductions are available for some students. Families are advised to consult with a tax professional to determine whether they can benefit. For information, go to the Department of Education website, www.ed.gov.

Glossary of Financial Aid Terms

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): The amount of money the federal government expects a student and his/her family to pay toward college costs in a given year.

Financial Aid: Money that is given, lent, or paid to you so you can pay for college.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid, used to apply for U.S. government grants and loans, federal work-study, many state grants, and institutional financial aid. Every financial aid applicant must complete this form.

Federal Methodology: The need-analysis system used by the U.S. government to determine an applicant's eligibility for federal financial aid. It is also used by some states and schools.

Gapping: The practice of meeting less than a student's full aid eligibility.

Institutional Methodology: The need-analysis system used by many colleges and universities to determine an applicant's eligibility for institutional financial aid.

Merit-Based Aid: Scholarships, grants, or other aid awarded based on academic strength, artistic ability, leadership, or other special talent.

Need-Based Aid: Financial aid that is awarded based on demonstrated financial need.

Need-Blind: An admissions policy that does not use financial need as a factor in selecting applicants.

Admission Need-Conscious (or "Need-Aware"): An admissions policy that takes into account students' financial need before making admissions decisions. Note: A school may be need-blind for one group of applicants and need-conscious for another group.

Preferential Packaging: The practice of awarding more desirable (e.g., higher grants, lower loans) financial aid packages to highly favored students.

Profile (also known as the CSS Profile): The application required by many schools to apply for institutional aid. Complete this form only if the school to which you are applying requires it.

SAR: The Student Aid Report, generated when the FAFSA is processed, includes all of the data entered on the FAFSA and indicates the amount of the EFC.

Work-Study: A federally subsidized or college program in which students hold part-time campus jobs in areas such as the library, academic departments, food services, administrative offices, etc., as part of their financial aid packages.

MAKING A FINAL DECISION

Wait List

The Waiting Game: What if I'm Waitlisted?

(Adapted from Jennifer Gross's "The Waiting Game: What if I'm Wait-Listed?" National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2006)

It's finally arrived—the envelope from your first-choice college. Nervously, you open it. It's not a denial! But it's not an acceptance, either. You've been waitlisted. What do you do now?

- Colleges use waiting lists as insurance. Applicants who are qualified for a college but don't make the "cut" may be waitlisted. If enough accepted students enroll for freshman year, the college won't accept anyone from the waitlist. If the college ends up with open spaces in the freshman class, it may accept a few or many students from its waitlist.
- Unfortunately, colleges often can't predict whether they will go to the waitlist or how many students from the list they will need. And you may not receive a final acceptance or denial until as late as July.

Your Insurance Policy

Because the waitlist is so unpredictable, it's not wise to count on moving from the waitlist to acceptance. If you're waitlisted at your first choice, your first task is to look at the colleges that did accept you. Carefully compare your options and decide on a second-choice college. If you haven't heard anything from the waitlist college by the May 1 deposit deadline, make a deposit at your second-choice college to ensure your spot in its freshman class.

Getting the Scoop

Different colleges use waitlists differently. To assess your chances of acceptance from the waitlist, call the admissions office. Ask what your position is on the list (if the list is ranked) and the likelihood that the college will use their waitlist this year.

Your high school counselor can also help you get a sense of the strength of your application compared to the statistics for accepted students. The goal in gathering this information is to determine your chances of eventually being accepted. At this point, if you'd be just as happy going to your second-choice college, you

may want to forget about the waitlist and focus on preparing for college.

Improving Your Chances

If your waitlist school is clearly your first choice, you should communicate that information. Colleges like a sure thing. If they end up using the waitlist, they'd rather offer acceptance to the students who are most likely to enroll.

If a student has any significant, positive changes since their application was submitted, they should send a letter and include any documentation that demonstrates these changes. Sending additional recommendations is an option, but third-party letters don't carry as much weight as stellar senior grades or a prize-winning performance in the regional spring forensics competition. It's best to keep communications short and sweet; there is no need to send more than one or two emails or letters.

The best strategy, then, is to work with your counselor to:

- choose and make a deposit at a good second choice;
- get as much information from the waitlist college as you can;
- let the admissions office know that the college is your first choice; and
- strengthen your application, if possible.

MAKING A FINAL DECISION WORKSHEET

Congratulations! You have great options, and now you must make a big decision. Because you spent time and effort applying to college, it can be hard to make a final decision; the important thing to remember is that **you should be proud of the fact that you have so many great choices**. The decision-making process should be one of celebration and not agony. Here are some things to think about as you make your final decision.

Is This College Really Me?

You chose to apply to these schools in the first place, and they all have positive attributes. As you narrow your options, try these methods:

- Apply the first adjective that comes to mind to each school that you're considering. Is it safe? Risky? Exciting? Challenging? After assigning some adjectives to each school, which feels best to you?

_____ vs. _____

_____ vs. _____

- Next, ask yourself, "Is this college really for me?" Imagine being in a place with people who positively reinforce who you are.

Is _____ really me?

Is _____ really me?

Money, Money, Money

- Unfortunately, sometimes these tough decisions come down to MONEY. Carefully review all financial aid and scholarship offers to understand total costs.
- Taking out some student loans to help pay for school is a good thing to help you establish credit and take ownership of your college experience.
- The average college graduate has about \$30,000 worth of debt; any more than that is too much.
- In most circumstances, your parents are probably going to be paying for your college expenses, or at least supporting you financially. Even though this is *your* choice to make, your parents know you well and want what is best for you. Listen to them—they are wise!

Pros and Cons Lists

Using the College Comparison Worksheet on the following page, quantify the positive and negative elements for each of the schools you are considering:

- Academics
- Size
- Location
- Cost
- Facilities
- Activities

Assign a maximum point value for each element, depending on how important it is to you.

Other Things to Consider

- Make sure that you are making the right choice for you, not the choice that others expect you to make.
- A name-brand college isn't always best. Choose the college that "fits" you and where you will grow the most.
- Don't go to school because your best friend is going there, too. Try something new and different.
- Scientific research shows that complex decisions are best made by staying informed and then not thinking about it. By distracting yourself with other thoughts, you allow your subconscious mind to get involved. Often, your subconscious mind does a better job making decisions than your conscious mind.

FINAL COLLEGE DECISION WORKSHEET

College Name				
Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> distance from home physical size of campus 				
Size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> student enrollment physical size of campus 				
Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> type of school location and size of nearest city co-ed, male, female 				
Academics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> your major offered special requirements student–faculty ratio typical class size study abroad research opportunities 				
College Cost <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tution, room and board estimated total budget application fee, deposits 				
Financial Aid/Scholarships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> merit money or grants % of financial need met 				
Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> residence hall requirements meal plan residential choices 				
Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> academic recreational other 				
Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clubs, organizations Greek life athletics, intramurals other 				
Personal Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> diversity nearby relatives other 				
Total Points				

Instructions: Create a scale for each of the criteria above; rank each one of your colleges using this scale.

Book Recommendations: Transitioning from High School to College

Bader, John. *Dean's List: 11 Habits of Highly Successful College Students*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.

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Wolfe, Tom. *I Am Charlotte Simmons: A Novel*. New York: Macmillan Press, 2004.



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8000 25th Avenue NE

Seattle, WA 98115

p 206.832.1127

www.universityprep.org

University Prep is committed to developing each student's potential to become an intellectually courageous, socially responsible citizen of the world.

COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE

Kelly Herrington, Director of College Counseling

kherrington@universityprep.org

206.832.1226

Britten Nelson, Associate Director
of College Counseling

bnelson@universityprep.org

206.832.1111

Wendy Robbins, College Counseling Assistant

wrobbins@universityprep.org

206.832.1127