

THE COLLEGE SELECTION PROCESS

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**THERE ARE 4,000 COLLEGES IN THE
COUNTRY....**

Where do I Begin?

WHAT IS “FIT”

- Academic fit
- Social fit
- Financial fit
- Fit happens over time
- Requires effort on the part of the student
- Process of self-exploration and research to find the colleges which “best fit” the needs of the student

THE 5 P'S OF COLLEGE PLANNING

Personality

People

Place

Program

Price

PERSONALITY

- What are your interests?
- What courses really excite you?
- What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
- Learning style?
- Do you need immediate access to professors?
- Values?
- What are your goals and expectations for yourself in college?

PEOPLE

- Student Body: coed, all-male, or all-female
- Diversity: cultural, religious, geographic
- Atmosphere: conservative, liberal, intellectual, spiritual, artsy, preppy, sporty, school spirit
- Student/faculty rapport
- Religious/community service requirements

PLACE

- Living: commute or on-campus
- Location: in-state, out-of-state, Midwest, East, West, etc.
- Distance from home: drive or fly
- Size of campus: small, medium, large, or very large
- Type of school: public, private, and/or religious
- Type of city: urban, suburban, college town, rural
- Weather: hot, cold, seasons, etc.

PROGRAM

- Degree program: two-year college, four-year college/university
- Major: decided or undecided
- Minor (if you have one)
- Is the program accredited?
- Selectivity: level of competitiveness
- Disability Services: level of support
- Activities: Sports (Division I, II, or III), clubs, music, dance, drama, newspaper, etc.
- Greek Affiliations: fraternities or sororities
- Features: study abroad, internships, research, ROTC, honors college, career center, etc.

PRICE

- Is cost a factor?
- Financial Aid: strong need, scholarships (merit, athletic, etc.), work-study, etc.
- In-State vs. Out-Of-State tuition
- State vs. Private institutions
- Sticker price vs. actual cost of attendance
- Average student/parent debt upon graduation
- Tip: Make sure you are meeting financial aid deadlines

CREATING YOUR COLLEGE LIST

- Self-exploration and research
- List 3 important things
 - Why are you going to college?
- List 2 important parent criteria
 - Alma mater, geography, cost?

RESEARCH

- **Guidebooks:**
 - Colleges That Change Lives
 - Fiske Guide to Colleges
 - Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges
- **Web resources:**
 - Naviance
 - Collegeboard.com
 - Specific college websites
- **Human resources:**
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Ms. Sitko
 - School counselors
 - College Admissions Representatives

RESEARCH

- Follow a college blog
 - Georgia Tech Admission Blog <https://pwp.gatech.edu/admission-blog/>
 - The College Essay Guy. <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/>
- Take virtual tours
- Meet with college representatives at your high school
- Attend college fairs

COLLEGE VISITS

- Make or break experience
- Try to visit at least one of each:
 - Public and private
 - Small, medium, and large school

COLLEGE VISIT TIPS

- Set up an official tour and information sessions, which can be scheduled on the college's website
 - Take advantage of days off and spring break
 - If possible, sit in on a class or stay overnight in a residence hall
- Research the college before you visit
- Have questions of your own
- After the visit, write down notes and your impressions
- If the college is a top choice, write a thank you card (or email)

BEST FIT

- Meets your important criteria
- College lists can start large, but as you research, your list will shrink. The average amount of colleges applied to is 5-7.
- How to create your short list:
 - Reach (1-2): Schools that are extremely selective or that have higher admissions criteria than your academic record
 - Target (4-6): The school's admissions criteria match your academic record
 - Likely (1-2): Your academic record is higher than the school's admissions criteria
- Avoid picking just “name brands”

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Don't confuse selectivity with quality or fit
- Listen to your gut/intuition
- Be honest with yourself/parents
- Avoid senioritis
- Be early and organized
- Ask for opinions, but it is your decision as to where to apply
- When communicating with colleges, they want to hear from YOU
- This is your process, so take ownership
- Enjoy this great adventure!