



# Insider's Guide to the College Search Process

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Guaranteed research  
for *every* student

New majors and  
microcredentials:  
Software Engineering  
Data Science  
Healthcare Mgt  
Public Humanities  
AI Content Creation

*U.S. News*

#9 Senior Capstone

#11 First-year Experience

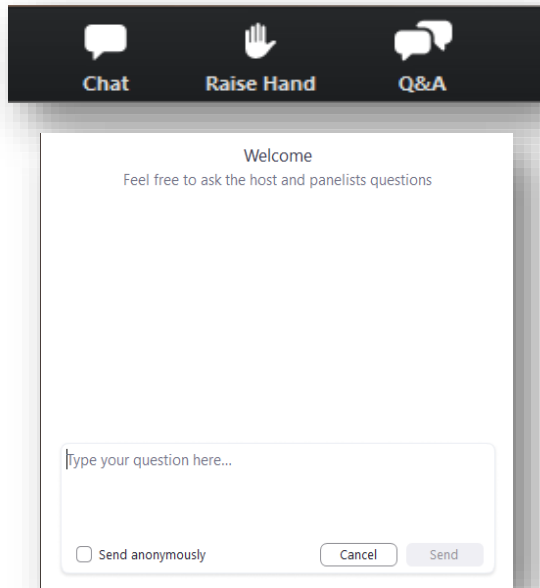
#16 Best Teaching

#23 Undergrad Research



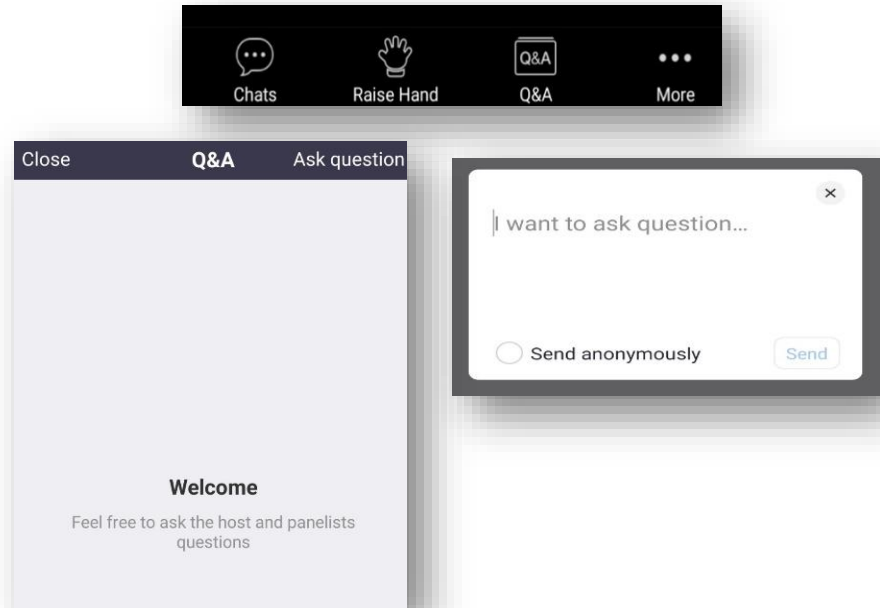
# Submit Questions through Q&A

## Desktop / Laptop



The desktop interface features a dark navigation bar at the top with three icons: a speech bubble for 'Chat', a hand for 'Raise Hand', and two speech bubbles for 'Q&A'. Below this is a white modal window with a 'Welcome' heading and the text 'Feel free to ask the host and panelists questions'. At the bottom of the modal is a text input field with the placeholder 'Type your question here...', an 'Send anonymously' checkbox, and 'Cancel' and 'Send' buttons.

## Mobile Device



The mobile interface has a dark navigation bar with four icons: 'Chats', 'Raise Hand', 'Q&A', and 'More'. A modal window is open with a dark header containing 'Close', 'Q&A', and 'Ask question'. The main content area is light gray with a 'Welcome' heading and the text 'Feel free to ask the host and panelists questions'. A separate white input form is overlaid on the right, containing a text field with the placeholder 'I want to ask question...', an 'x' close button, an 'Send anonymously' checkbox, and a 'Send' button.

# Where to Begin?

1. Stay focused on academic growth & success.
2. Explore your interests (it's about quality, not quantity).
3. Connect with your college counselor.
4. Complete a self-inventory.

# Take a Self-inventory

What are my educational & career goals?

What academic areas interest me most?

When am I at my best in the classroom?

What activities mean the most to me?

# Take a Self-inventory

What are my superpowers? What do I still need to develop?

What talents or perspectives can I contribute to a campus community?

What life experiences and/or individuals have shaped my learning style, personality and interests?

# Exercise: Wants and Needs

“You can’t always get what you want...”

## Wants

warm weather  
starter on the team  
great food  
“car decal”/reputation

## Needs

small classes  
advising/accountability  
financial aid  
strong outcomes

# Get Organized

- Create an email account dedicated to college communication (check it at least once a week, opt-in or unsubscribe).
- Develop a calendar for test dates, visit or virtual events, application, scholarship and financial aid deadlines.
- Start a spreadsheet or journal to compare stats and pros/cons of visit experience or other research.
- Have conversations about college financing & savings.
- Establish ground rules as a family.



# Online Resources

- Naviance
- Bigfuture.collegeboard.com
- Appily.com
- Princetonreview.com
- Collegexpress.com
- CTCL.com (Colleges That Change Lives)
- Opinion/review-based: niche.com
- Common Data Set on individual college websites

# Develop Your *Initial* List

- **Challenge (Reach):** Your GPA, rigor, and testing (if submitted) are below average based on the college's admitted student profile and/or your high school's application history
- **Possible (Target):** Your GPA, rigor, and testing (if submitted) are around average based on the college's admitted student profile and/or your high school's application history
- **Likely (Safety):** Your GPA, rigor, and testing (if submitted) are above average based on the college's admitted student profile and/or your high school's application history

# Avoid Being a “Stealth Applicant”

## What is “demonstrated interest?”

Not all colleges consider demonstrated interest important. The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) reports every year on the state of college admissions, and the most recent report cites that 13.7% of colleges consider demonstrated interest of considerable importance. Another 25.5% said that it has moderate importance.

## Purposeful & Authentic Engagement Is Key.

# Enriched Virtual Content

- Online tours: YouVisit.com
- Student-generated content: ZeeMee.com, CampusReel.com
- Info sessions, panel discussions, master classes
- Coach & team info sessions
- Individual interviews & informal chats
- YouTube, Instagram, online student newspapers

YOU | VISIT

 **CampusReel**

 **ZEEMEE**

# Campus Visits

- Schedule in advance
- Review options and select the experience that fits you best
- Info session vs. interview
- Attend classes or meetings
- Ask to have lunch on campus
- Make sure you build in time to explore off the grid (and other schools that may be nearby)
- Parents can help to schedule the visit; but try to be more of a “shadow” *during* the visit.

# Ask the “Tougher” Questions

- What is your freshman-to-sophomore retention rate?
- How many students graduate within four years of study (not 5 or 6)?
- Share more about the academic advising program. How often do students meet with advisors? What about counseling/wellness services?
- Explain more about the career advising & internship options.
- What tuition increases do you anticipate for the next four years?
- What makes your school distinctive among the other schools we are considering?

# Trends/Hot Topics

- **Testing**
  - test-optional, test-flexible, test-blind, etc.
  - [fairtest.org](http://fairtest.org)
- **FAFSA Aid Estimator or individual college Net Price Calculators**
- **Direct Admissions**
  - Niche, Common App, Appily Match, SAGE Scholars



# Questions?

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# DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST SUITS YOU?

### Regular Decision

**DEFINITION:**

Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.

**COMMITMENT:**

NON-BINDING

### Rolling Admission

**DEFINITION:**

Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.

**COMMITMENT:**

NON-BINDING

### Early Action (EA)

**DEFINITION:**

Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.

**COMMITMENT:**

NON-BINDING

### Early Decision (ED)

**DEFINITION:**

Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll and withdraw all other applications. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.

**COMMITMENT:**

BINDING

### Restrictive Early Action (REA)

**DEFINITION:**

Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.

**COMMITMENT:**

NON-BINDING

Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.

Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions.