

How to Make a College List: A Guide for Prospective Students





Key Factors to Consider



Academics

Major options, class sizes,
research opportunities



Finances

Costs, financial aid,
scholarships



Campus Life

Housing, activities, culture,
location



Career Outcomes

Graduation rates, job
placement



Types of Schools to Include

Public vs. Private

Consider both for different experiences and costs

Urban, Suburban, Rural

Explore various settings to find your ideal environment

Size and Selectivity

Mix large and small, highly selective and less competitive options



Finding the Right Number of Schools

1 Reach Schools

Not likely to admit you, but it's possible. Schools with low acceptance (<25%) are reach for everyone.

Aim for 2-3 reach schools.

2 Target Schools

Match your academic credentials and where you have a competitive chance of getting in. Acceptance Rate is between 25% and 75%,

Include 2-3 target schools on your list.

3 Likely Schools

Your academic qualifications exceed the average requirements. Acceptance rate is > 75%.

Add 2-3 likely schools to ensure admission.

Tools for College Research



[BigFuture](#)

Free tool from College Board
for exploring options



[Schoollinks](#)

Application management
system



[ChatGPT](#)

Prompt it to create your list
with your researched
parameters



[Campus Visits](#)

Experience colleges
firsthand through guided
tours

Connect with Colleges

1

College Representative Visits at Leyden

Meet admissions counselors right here at Leyden during Fall visits (September/October)

2

College Fairs

Attend fairs including [NACAC](#) in Fall, Leyden's 4-year College Fair, and Triton Program Fair

3

Campus Visits

[Visit campuses](#) in person, take virtual tours, or watch student life videos on [Campus Reel](#)

4

Direct Communication

Connect with your assigned admissions counselor (found on college websites) - remember, they want to hear from you!



Staying Organized

1

Create a Spreadsheet

Track important details for each school

2

Make Pros and Cons Lists

Compare schools based on your priorities

3

Weight Your Factors

Decide which criteria matter most to you

COLLEGE BOOTCAMP

CLASS OF 2026

WORKSHOPS
& CAMPUS
VISITS



EAST LEYDEN,
MEZZANINE
9:00 - 2:00



REGISTRATION
OPEN APRIL 28-
MAY 16

WORKSHOPS JUNE 3-5,
CAMPUS VISITS JUNE 9-13

QUESTIONS? [JVASQUEZ@LEYDEN212.ORG](mailto:jvasquez@leyden212.org) [ATUCKER@LEYDEN212.ORG](mailto:atucker@leyden212.org)



START COLLEGE APPLICATIONS, GET ORGANIZED, WRITE YOUR
PERSONAL STATEMENT, GET INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT,
FINANCIAL AID KNOW-HOW, ON CAMPUS EXPERIENCE AND
EXPERT TIPS THROUGHOUT THIS EXPERIENCE!



Sign up for College Bootcamp!

Junior College Planning Night for Parents and Students

 **Tuesday, April 22nd**

 **6-7:30pm**

 **West Leyden**

 **Topics:**

- Application Process
- Components of the application
- Timeline
- Research Tools
- Campus Visits



Action Items

College Research & Application Action Plan

📌 End of Spring (Junior Year, March–May)

- ☐ **Research Schools** (major, size, location, cost)
- ☐ **Create a Preliminary College List** (at least 6–10 schools: reach, match, likely)
- ☐ **Check Admissions Stats** (GPA, test scores, acceptance rates)
- ☐ **Attend the Junior College Night - 4/22 at West**
- ☐ **Add your schools to your Schoolinks account** [Instructions](#) [Video](#)

📌 Summer (June–August, Before Senior Year)

- ☐ **Attend Leyden's College Bootcamp and Tour Campuses**
- ☐ **Create a Common Application Account** [Instructions](#) [Video](#)
- ☐ **Finalize College List** (narrow down to ~8–12 schools)
- ☐ **Confirm Application Deadlines** (Early Decision, Early Action, Regular)
- ☐ **Start the Common App Essay** (brainstorm ideas, first draft by mid-July)
- ☐ **Complete Extracurricular & Honors Sections** on Common App
- ☐ **Determine Standardized Test Submission Plan** (if applicable)

