

PLANNING YOUR COLLEGE SEARCH

WHERE AND HOW TO START

1. Begin by taking your own personal inventory. You can make the best use of your time by knowing what you are looking for in a college search.
2. What college-related considerations are most important to you, and why? Make out a list. Put aside concerns about money for the time being. Here are some (but not all) of the factors that you might want to consider:

location	sports program	facilities
academics	reputation	diversity
job placement	class size	social life
student/faculty ratio	size	family tradition
3. Write down your own list, arranging the items with the most important at the top.
4. Update and review your list every couple of weeks as you find your priorities changing.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

1. Personal sources: school counselor, teachers, family, friends:
2. National publications and magazines:
 - a. The College Board's College Handbook
 - b. Peterson's Competitive Colleges
 - c. Fiske's Selective Guide to Colleges
 - d. Barron's Profiles of American Colleges
 - e. Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges
3. College publications: viewbook, catalog, curriculum guides, financial aid information.
4. Individual college representatives who visit Otsego and that you may see at college fairs.
5. The Internet and college websites.

PREPARING FOR YOUR CAMPUS VISIT

1. Register in advance either by telephone or via their website. A weekday visit is often more informative than a weekend visit as classes are in session.
2. Allow ample drive time. Plan to include at least an interview or group presentation and a campus tour. You may also want to schedule a class visit and a meal in the dining hall. Some colleges have hosting programs where you may spend the night in a residence hall with a student so you can really sample campus life.
3. Request and read, in advance, the college's publications.
4. Prepare a short list of questions you would like answered before you leave campus. Don't ask questions you could easily find the answers to by reading their publications.
5. Be on time (a little early actually). Dress neatly, but keep in mind what you say and how you behave are more important than how you look.

THE ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEW (when required)

1. Institutions vary in their attitudes and policies regarding on-campus interviews. Few colleges require an interview, but most recommend one.
2. The interview can be a valuable information exchange; a chance for you to ask questions and talk about your specific interests or talents.
3. Don't be afraid to brag about yourself a little. Be prepared to discuss your accomplishments and what you can add to the student body.
4. If possible, bring with you a copy of your latest grades and test scores.
5. Most interviews last from 30-45 minutes. Your parents can ask questions after the interview.
6. Relax and enjoy the conversation.

DECIDING WHERE TO APPLY

1. Discuss your final list of colleges with Mrs. Clark and your parents.
2. Apply to colleges with a range of selectivity for admission (Reach, Competitive, Safety). Look for a good personal and academic match.
3. If you have a clear-cut first choice, consider applying Early Decision.

PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

1. Read and follow the instructions carefully. Type or write neatly.
2. Proofread your essay before writing or typing it onto the application (or enclose on a separate sheet).
3. Answer all questions. List all your activities, awards, and accomplishments.
4. Be honest and be yourself.
5. Remember that you are responsible for making sure that the various parts of your application arrive on time.
6. Submit your application well before the posted deadline.
7. Notify Mrs. Clark ASAP so she may send your transcript to each school you apply to. They do not notify her in each case that you have applied, so this is your responsibility.

THE ESSAY

1. Answer the question or topic specifically.
2. Write expressively. Colleges want to see good writing and engagement of ideas. There are no right or wrong answers. The essay is your chance to speak to the Admissions Office and tell them something about you.
3. Have someone you trust proofread your essay, but do not lose your own voice.

ADMISSION SELECTION FACTORS

1. Overall academic record: class rank, GPA, course difficulty/rigor
2. Test scores: ACT, SAT (if required)
3. Recommendation letter/s.
4. Personal talents and potential contributions: athletics, leadership, artistic, musical, community service, and employment.
5. Admissions office interview and other references.
6. Other factors: family legacy and special talents.