

A red graduation cap with an orange tassel is positioned diagonally across the frame. The cap is a deep red color, and the tassel is a vibrant orange. The background is a solid red color, creating a monochromatic effect with the cap.

Finding Your Best College Fit

November 2025

College & Career Counselors

Kellie Wiedlich

Sarah Pace

Rachelle Gough

A "**good**" **college** is a place where a student will thrive; where they will be exposed to new ideas, new challenges and perspectives different than their own; where the student grows intellectually and personally; and where they have the opportunity to take advantage of experiences that will open their minds to different experiences and cultures that may shape their professional journey.

There are many great choices—not just **one** right fit for a student.

- Dr. Stefanie Niles, President of Cottey College and Former NACAC President

Agenda



- Keynote:

Lauren Sciocchetti, Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management at Ursinus College

- Finding Your Right Fit College
- Admissions Considerations: Are You a Fit For Them?
- Action Items & Advice
- Upcoming Events

Lauren Sciocchetti

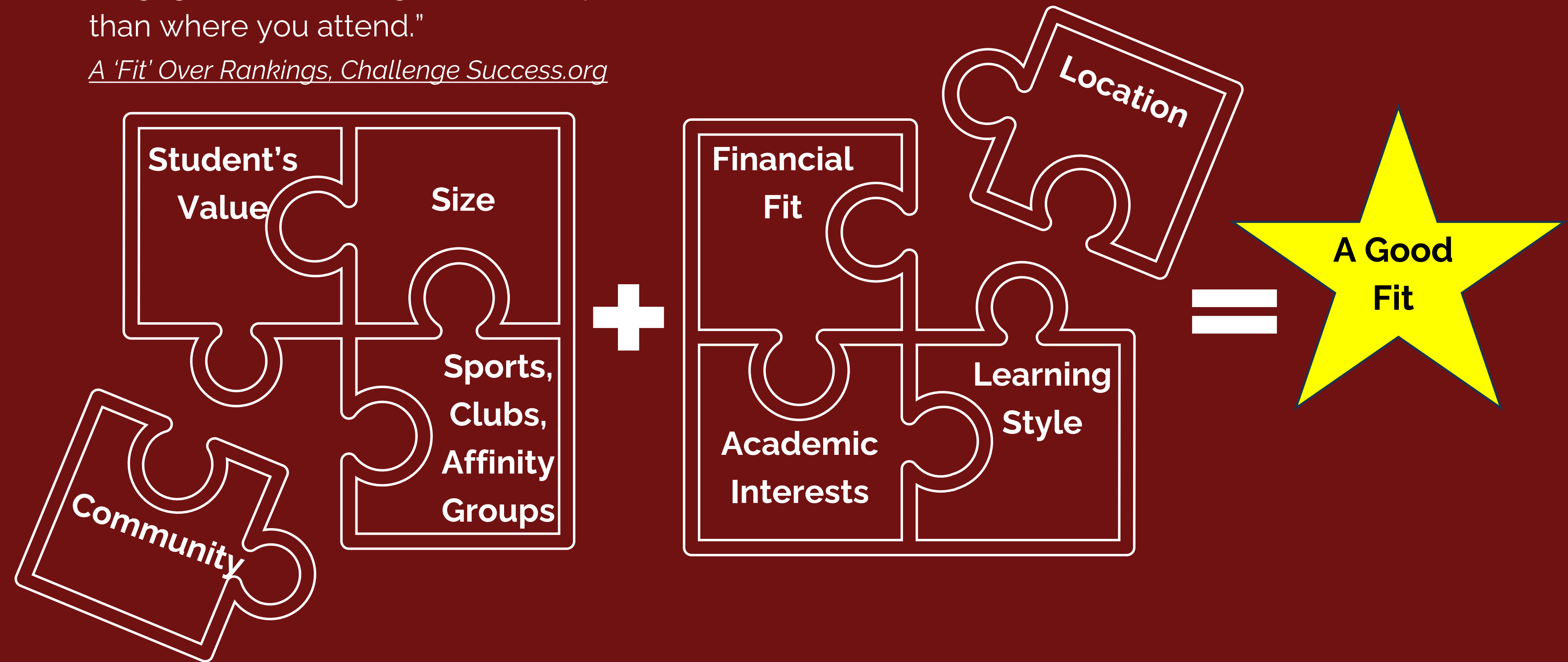
Associate Vice
President of
Enrollment,
Ursinus College



Finding YOUR Fit:

“Engagement in college is more important than where you attend.”

A 'Fit' Over Rankings, Challenge Success.org

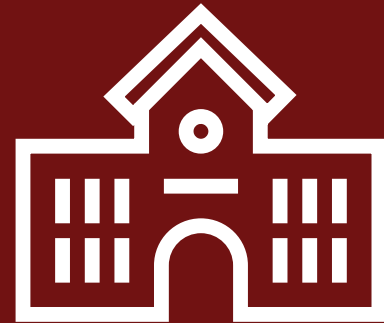


Types of Colleges and Universities



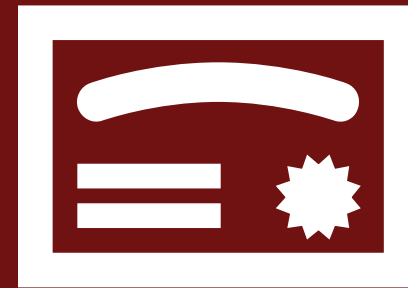
“Traditional” Colleges & Universities

- Flagship Public Universities
- State-System Schools
- Liberal Arts Schools
- Private Colleges & Universities



Community Colleges & Junior Colleges

- Associate Degree programs
- Certificate programs
- Transfer programs



Vocational & Trade Schools

- Certificates or Associates degree in career-specific fields like:
- Culinary arts
 - Firefighting
 - Building trades
 - HVAC



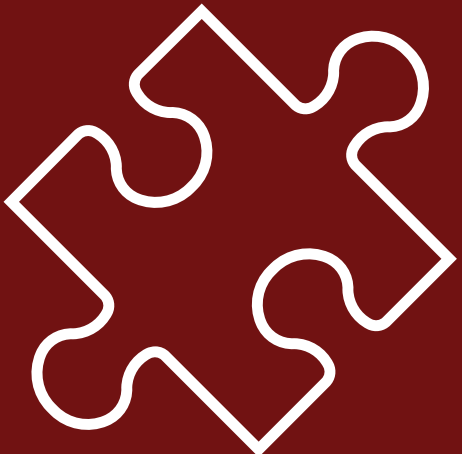
US Military Academies

Students earn a bachelor's degree tuition-free in return for military service after graduation.



Specialized Colleges

- Visual & Performing Arts Schools
- Technical Institutes
- Religious Colleges
- Single-Sex Colleges
- Specialized Mission Schools
 - HBCU
 - HSI

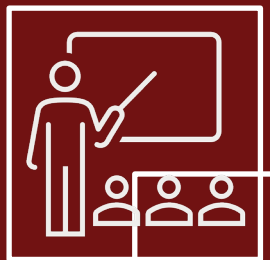


Academic Fit



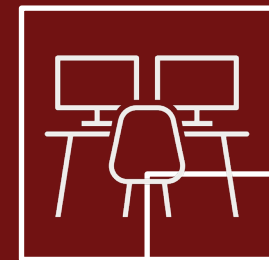
Program

- If I know what I want to major in, do they offer it?
- If I am undecided, do they offer a breadth of options?
- If I decide to change my major, what are my options?
- What opportunities do they offer? Study Abroad? Co-Op?



Environment

- What is my ideal learning environment? Small classes? Large lectures?
- Am I prepared for the challenge at this college?
- What is the academic culture like on campus? Collaborative? Competitive?



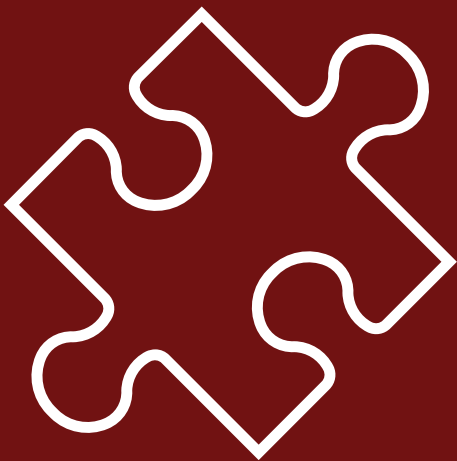
Supports

- What academic supports are available to all students?
- What sort of first-year programming/orientation do you have for incoming students?
- What is the first-year retention rate?
- If I have a documented learning need (IEP/504) what supports are available?



Career/Outcomes

- What is the four/six-year graduation rate?
- What career services are available? Are there guaranteed activities that every student completes?
- Internship opportunities/requirements
- Job placement & graduate school acceptance rates



Financial Fit

Family Conversations

What is my family's ability to pay for college?

What limitations or parameters do we have?

What expectations are there for me to contribute through work or loans?



Institutional Considerations

Total Cost of Attendance and Estimated Net Price

Is Admissions need-blind or need-aware?

What percentage of students receive need-based aid?

Merit-based aid options

History of meeting demonstrated need

History of low student debt upon graduation

Estimate Your Aid

[Home](#) > [Admission & Aid](#) > [Financial Aid](#) > [Estimate Your Aid](#)

Estimate Your Cost for 2025-26

Estimate your share of college costs and how much financial aid you may be eligible to receive. We offer two calculators that will help your family determine how much they may be expected to pay.

MyinTuition Calculator

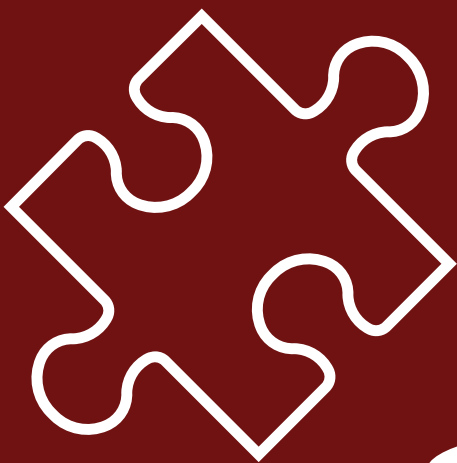
A quick six question survey about your family's finances to determine an estimate of your family's contribution and financial aid range.

[MyinTuition Calculator »](#)

Net Price Calculator

A more detailed and personalized calculator that will help estimate your family contribution and financial aid range.

[Net Price Calculator »](#)



Personal Fit: Community and Value

When we add value, we recognize our own unique gifts and the positive impact we can have on others. We are reminded that we matter." [Dr. Sarah] Bennison explains that researchers have "traced the **correlation between a strong sense of *matter*ing**—feeling valued and adding value—and **positive mental and physical health benefits**." She says, "Mattering also **yields stronger academic outcomes**." When we feel truly seen, heard, and valued by professors, we are happier and learn in deeper ways."

"The Question Every College Applicant Should Ask," by Brennen Barnard (Forbes)

Academic

How You Connect In and After Class?

Interactions with professors

Support in Picking a Major

First-Year Experience

Residential

How At Home You Are In Your Dorm

Residential communities

Roommate selection

Extracurricular

How Welcome and Engaged You Feel In Your Activities

How accurate is the list of clubs available?

How easy is it to join a club?

How do you start a club of your own?

Summarized from
Dream School by
Jeffrey Selingo

Admissions: The NACAC Report

How Do Colleges Determine If You Are a Fit For Them?

PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACTORS IN
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Key Takeaway

Transcript and academic rigor are the most important factors in admissions across the board.

Admissions: The Transcript

Core Subjects



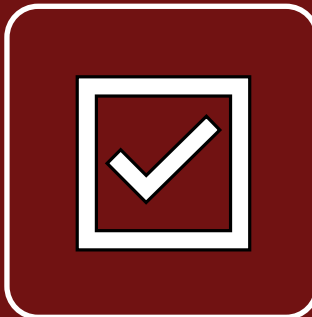
Focus on **science, English, math, world language**, and **social studies** when planning your courses.

Rigor of classes

Grades and cumulative GPA

Academic trends

All grades matter...but some more than others.



Grades in electives like Theater, Physical Education or Art are considered, but don't usually get a ton of scrutiny in the review process

Consider Major Alignment



Some non-core classes (*i.e. business or engineering*) can show alignment with your intended college major, but think of them as supplements to your core classes...**not replacements.**

11/5/2024

Student Transcript

Page 1 of 1

To:

From: Radnor High School

130 King of Prussia Rd

Radnor, PA 19087

Principal: Dr. Joseph MacNamara

Phone: (610) 293-0855

CEEB #: 394133

Student:

Birthdate:

Graduation Date:

Phone:

Student ID:

Grade: 12

Radnor Township School District Grade Scale

A+ = 98.5-100

A = 92.5-98.49

A- = 89.5-92.49

B+ = 86.5-89.49

B = 82.5-86.49

B- = 79.5-82.49

C+ = 76.5-79.49

C = 72.5-76.49

C- = 69.5-72.49

D+ = 66.5-69.49

D = 62.5-66.49

D- = 59.5-62.49

F = 0-59.49

P = Pass

WD = Withdrawal

NG = No Grade

2021-2022

Grade 09

Radnor High School

Course	FIN	Credit
05060641	9th Grade Health	A+ 0.50
05060642	9th Grade Wellness	A+ 0.50
05040414	Algebra I A	B- 1.00
05070516	Behind The Scenes Workshop	A 0.50
05030322	Biology A	B+ 1.00
05010110	English 9 Lit & Comp H	A- 1.00
05111101	Essentials of Cooking	A+ 0.50
05020211	Govt & Econ H	A- 1.00
05050561	Spanish I A	B- 1.00
WGPA: 3.5952	Credit: 7.000	

2022-2023

Grade 10

Radnor High School

Course	FIN	Credit
05081080	Business Law & Marketing	A 1.00
05030332	Chemistry A	B- 1.00
05040424	Geometry A	B+ 1.00
05050505	German 1/2 A	A 1.00
05060631	PE 11/12 Team Sports	A+ 0.50
05060622	Tenth Grade Health	A+ 0.50
05010120	World Literature H	A 1.00
05020221	World Studies H	A 1.00
WGPA: 3.8571	Credit: 7.000	

2023-2024

Grade 11

Radnor High School

Course	FIN	Credit
05040434	Algebra II A	B- 1.00
05010130	American Literature H	A 1.00
05020230	AP US History	A- 1.00
05050503	German III A	A 1.00
05060639	PE Majors H	A+ 0.50
05060633	PE Weight Training	A+ 0.50
05030342	Physics A	A 1.00
05151205	Principles of Photography	A+ 0.50
WGPA: 3.9487	Credit: 6.500	

2024-2025

Grade 12

Radnor High School

Course	FIN	Credit
05020260	AP Economics	0.00
05010171	Film Analysis I	0.00
05050504	German IV A	0.00
05990040	Integrated Senior Seminar	0.00
05151250	Intro to Engineering Design H	0.00
05040448	Precalculus A	0.00
	Credit: .000	

Type

GPA

Cumulative Weighted GPA

Cumulative Unweighted GPA

Total Credit: 20.500

3.7967

3.691

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Students and families
tend to overemphasize
test scores. It moves
the needle less than
you think!

Key Takeaway

Admissions: Standardized Testing

Current Landscape: Each year, more colleges announce returning to requiring test scores. It can be helpful to think of colleges falling into three categories:

Testing is still important

- Test Required
- Test Recommended
- Test Preferred

Testing can add value

- Test Optional
- Test Flexible

Testing is a lower priority (or not one at all)

- Test Optional
- Test-Blind
- Test-Free

2,100+ colleges/universities are test optional or test-free

- For a complete list, visit www.fairtest.org

AP Scores: Not an Expectation

AP scores are **not** a significant factor in most colleges' process. Official scores can be sent to the college you choose to enroll for credit but are rarely needed for admission applications.

Radnor School Profile: Where do you fit in your class?

Grade Distribution

Classes of 2021-2025				
Quintile	Mean WGPA	Mean UWGPA	Mean SAT	Mean ACT
I	4.21	3.98	1473	32
II	3.96	3.78	1370	30
III	3.72	3.58	1294	29
IV	3.39	3.28	1197	26
V	2.61	2.56	1104	22
Overall	3.58	3.44	1307	28.8
Middle 50%	3.3 - 4.0	3.2 - 3.8	1190 - 1450	25 - 33

Class of 2026		
Quintile	Mean WGPA	Mean UWGPA
I	4.18	3.97
II	3.96	3.79
III	3.73	3.59
IV	3.37	3.29
V	2.69	2.64
Overall	3.6	3.47
Middle 50%	3.23 - 4.02	3.18 - 3.84

Honors/AP Distribution

In 9th grade, 72% of the class of 2026 took at least one Honors Courses

In 10th grade, 38% of the class of 2026 enrolled in at least one AP class

By 12th grade, 25% have taken 11+ Honors classes and 11% of the class have taken 10+ APs

Ranking

Radnor High School does not report rank.

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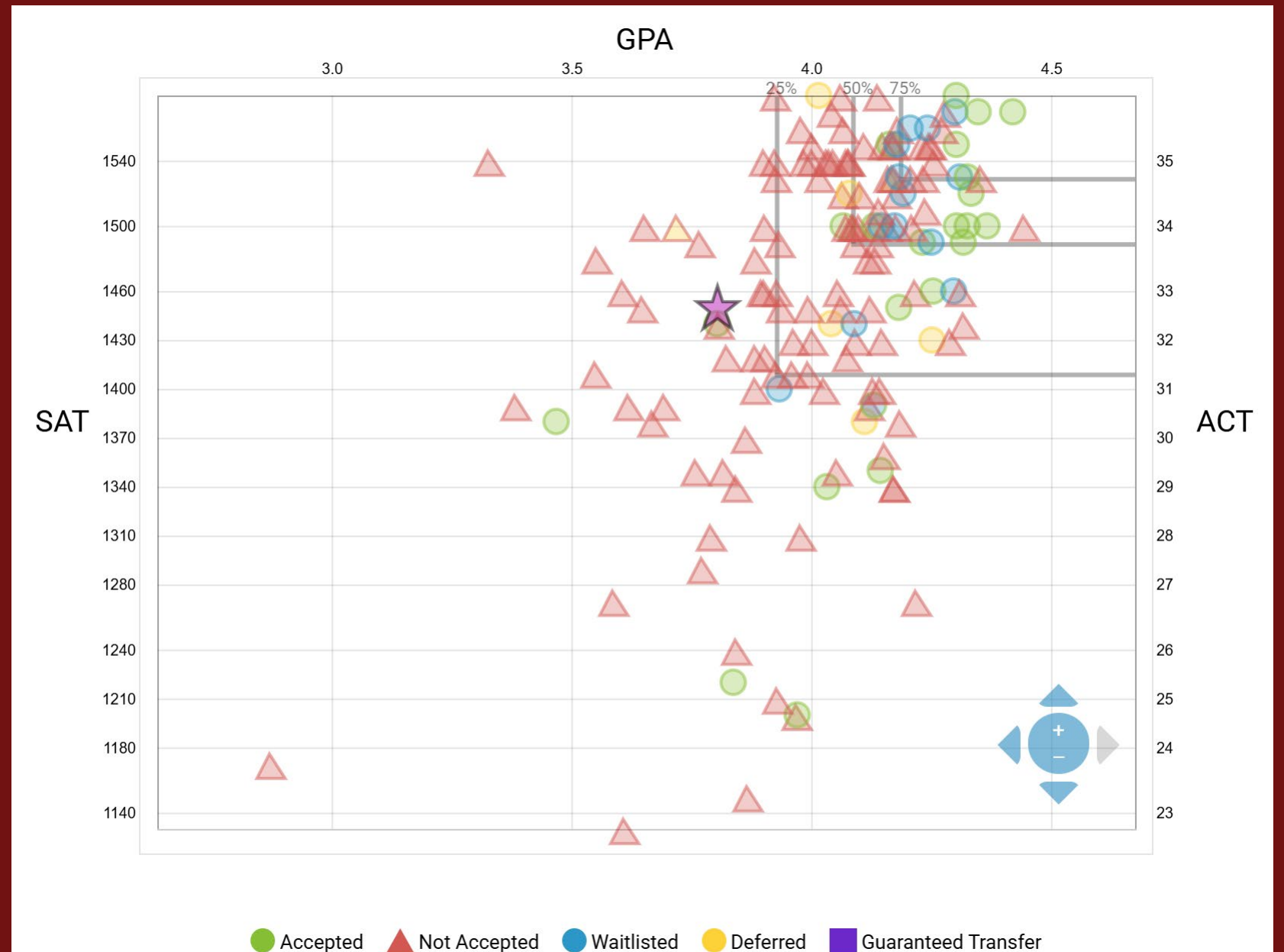
<https://rhs.rtsd.org/fs/resource-manager/view/11362e9a-8096-4a42-a6cf-c98a901cf156>

Making Contextual Decisions Through SC²IR



University of South Carolina

Columbia, SC



University of Virginia

Charlottesville, VA

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Key Takeaway

Demonstrated interest matters a lot to some schools and is not a factor at others.

Admissions: Demonstrated Interest

C7. Relative importance of each of the following academic and nonacademic factors in your first-time, first-year, degree-seeking general (not including programs with specific criteria) admission decisions.

	Very Important	Important	Considered	Not Considered
Academic				
Rigor of secondary school record	☒	☐	☐	☐
Class rank	☒	☐	☐	☐
Academic GPA	☒	☐	☐	☐
Standardized test scores	☐	☐	☒	☐
Application Essay	☒	☐	☐	☐
Recommendation(s)	☒	☐	☐	☐
Nonacademic				
Interview	☐	☐	☒	☐
Extracurricular activities	☒	☐	☐	☐
Talent/ability	☒	☐	☐	☐
Character/personal qualities	☒	☐	☐	☐
First generation	☐	☒	☐	☐
Alumni/ae relation	☐	☐	☒	☐
Geographical residence	☐	☒	☐	☐
State residency	☐	☒	☐	☐
Religious affiliation/commitment	☐	☐	☐	☒
Volunteer work	☐	☐	☒	☐
Work experience	☐	☐	☒	☐
Level of applicant's interest	☐	☒	☐	☐

Common Data Set (Section C7)

The **Common Data Set** for each college, in general, gives you a great sense of their applicant pool and how they evaluate applicants.

We recommend prioritizing demonstrated interest at any college that marks it as **Considered** or higher.

Google: [Name of College] +
Common Data Set



How Can you Demonstrate Your Interest?

Engage Online

Open emails and spend time on the college website. Many colleges keep record of these interactions.

"Unofficial" Interest

If you've done a lot of independent research on a college, engaged with alums or connected in other ways, be sure this is captured in your app.



Visit Campuses

Make sure your visit is documented/recorded by admissions— otherwise, it won't be part of your application.

Meet Representatives

Attend college fairs, school visits, and speak /email with your regional admissions rep. They don't bite!



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Key Takeaway

Letters matter. Make sure you are getting to know your teachers and counselors so they best reflect you as an individual student.

Teacher Recommendation

1

Primary Source

Provides a zoomed-in view of your classroom presence.

2

You as a Learner— Beyond Your Grades

Can showcase your curiosity, collaboration, and growth as a student, or highlight your role as a bridge-builder, challenger, or intellect.

3

Who Should I Ask?

Most colleges require **two teacher recommendations**. It's best to ask teachers from junior year core subjects who know you well.





Counselor Recommendation

Secondary Source

Provides a compilation of notes from you, your family, your teachers and our direct interactions.

Student Advocacy

Seen as a **letter of advocacy**— rather than just a recommendation.

Help Us Complement Your Story

We ask for student and parent input to make sure that we have the whole picture of you – from academic accomplishments, personal characteristics, extracurricular involvement and extenuating circumstances.

Don't rush your junior questionnaire (coming Spring 2026)!

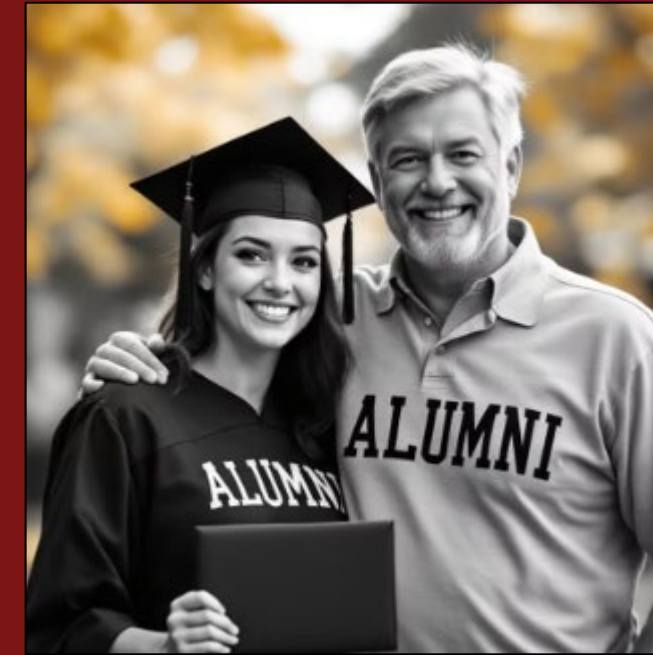
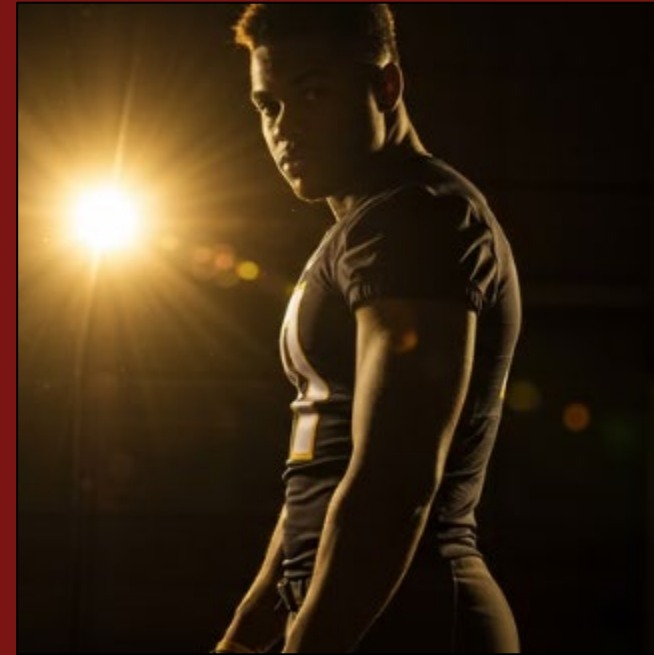




**But this NACAC report doesn't include a key
factor in some admission decisions:
institutional priorities.**

College Essay Guy

Common Institutional Priorities



Priorities may include academic goals, special talents, legacy status, financial needs, and geographic representation. **They vary from college to college, are not easy to research/are not often public knowledge, and often shift from year to year.**



Action Steps for Students



Recognize Where You Have Less Control

Many factors in admissions will be set in stone by the time you apply next fall/winter. Focus on what you can control.



Keep Grades Up + Choose Classes Wisely

Maintain consistent performance and challenging courses.



Stay Educated

Attend Counseling Department Programming and your College & Career Counselor for advice and direction. See Schoology and/or Instagram for news and upcoming events.



Demonstrate Interest

Show strategic and intentional interest in colleges— especially your Target and Likely schools.

Action Steps for Students



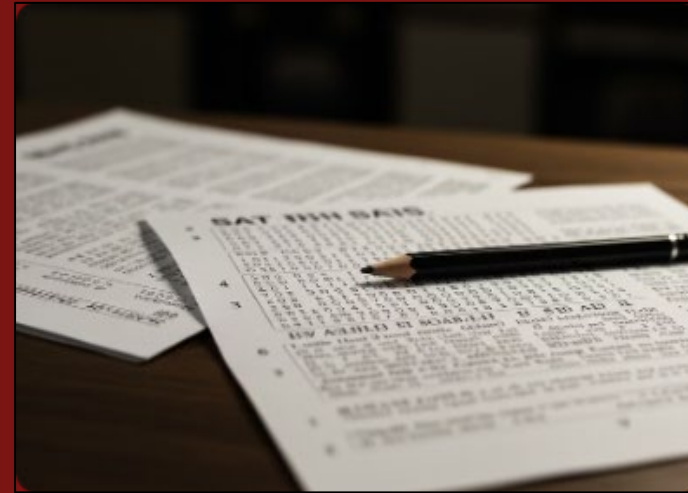
Summer Initiative

Be purposeful with your activities this summer. These don't have to be expensive "pay to play" programs— in fact, self-directed initiatives often stand out most!



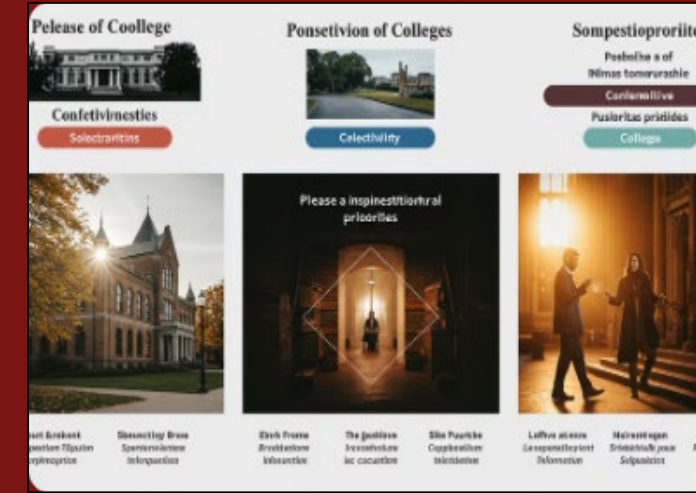
Recommendation Letters

Prioritize teachers from core subjects who know you well and can speak to your academic abilities and engagement. Plan to ask teachers for letters in the Spring of Junior Year.



Testing Plan

Consider your standardized testing plan and approach. We recommend taking a test at least once, in case you end up needing it for colleges or scholarships with shifting requirements.



Data-Driven College List

Build a balanced college list that aligns with your goals and preferences + prioritize schools where you might have a competitive edge.



Check Your Email!

Consider creating a new email specifically for college purposes, and check it often!

Advice for Parents



Support and Empower

Let your student take the lead in their college search and applications. Allow your student to take ownership of their decisions while being there for guidance and support.



Gain Financial Clarity

Research college costs and financing options. Use tools like Net Price Calculators or MyIntuition on college websites to estimate cost. Set and discuss financial boundaries.



Manage Expectations

Communicate openly and set parameters. If there are financial or location constraints, share that with your student. Discuss limits early. Can they apply to schools across the country or abroad? Be upfront about any restrictions.



Focus Beyond Admissions

Keep the college search and application process from dominating every conversation. Pick one night weekly to discuss college topics. Keep the rest of the week college conversation-free.

Advice for Parents



Support a Thoughtful College List

Be thoughtful in list-making – a long list isn't always better. Encourage lots of first choices instead of one dream school. Help your child focus on fit, not name or prestige.



Help Your Student Reflect and Grow

Applying to college is a time for self-reflection. Encourage your student to reflect on where they are now and who they aspire to be. Emphasize resilience. Growth comes from setbacks.



Stay Grounded in the Process

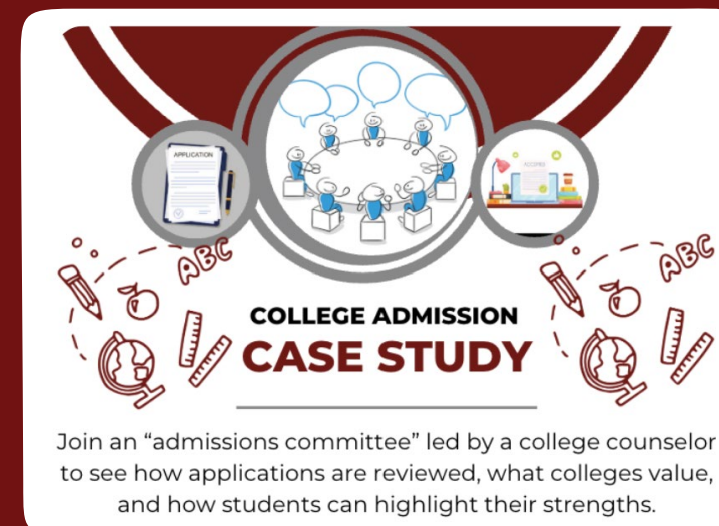
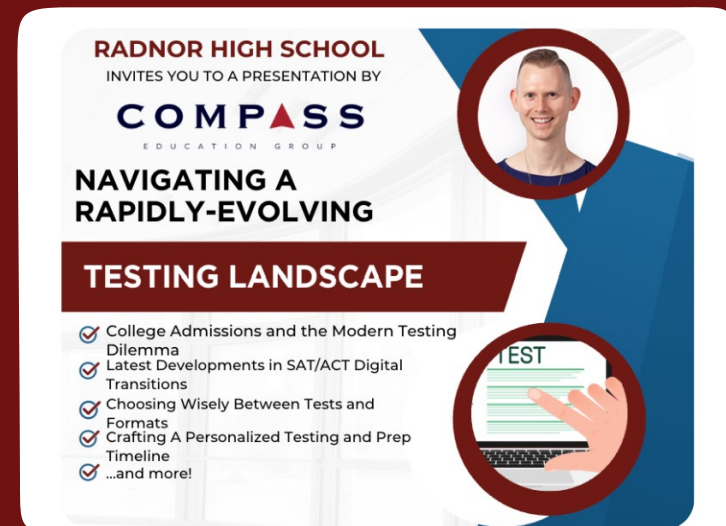
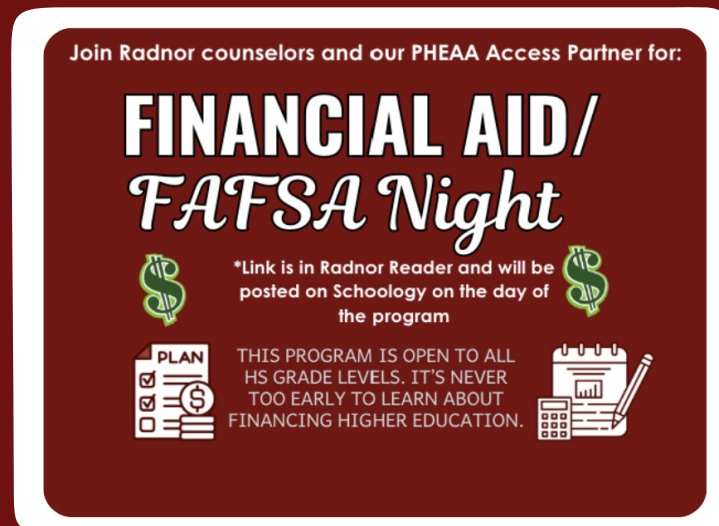
Just as every student is an individual, every college admission journey is as well. Comparing your child's college list, dreams, or application status to those of others is counterproductive.



Stay Educated

Remember – college admissions has changed since our time. Attend Counseling Department Programming and encourage your student to have open communication with their College & Career Counselor.

Upcoming Evening Events



Financial Aid & FAFSA Night

Navigating College Admissions Testing

College Admission Case Study

College Financial Planning

College Admissions Panel Discussion

December 4, 2025

6:30 PM

Zoom

January 15, 2026

6:30 PM

Zoom

February 19, 2026

6:30 PM

Zoom

March 12, 2026

6:30 PM

Zoom

April 16, 2026

6:30 PM

RHS Auditorium

(Registration Required -
see Radnor Reader for
details)

Upcoming School Day Events

- **Individual Post-Secondary Planning Meetings for JUNIORS and their Families**

Beginning December 1st. Meetings MUST be scheduled during the student's free period. Please email RHSCounseling@rtsd.org to schedule when you are ready!

- **College, Career & Trades Fair (Students Only)**

December 11, 2025 during Lunch & Learn, RHS Auditorium Lobby

- **Volunteer Fair (Students only)**

March 25, 2026 during Lunch & Learn, RHS Auditorium Lobby

- **Spring Workshop Series**

Lunch & Learn, Dates TBD

Topics include:

- College Athletes
- Students with Learning Differences & Academic Supports at the College Level
- Visual and Performing Arts

- Attending College Abroad
- Gap Year
- Considerations for International Students

- **Civil Service Fair (Students Only)**

April 30, 2026 during Lunch & Learn, RHS Auditorium Lobby

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RADNOR HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE "FIT" RESOURCES



SEARCH TOOLS & GUIDES



- Scoir
- [College Board: Big Future](#)
- Fiske Guide (Book)
- [www.appily.com](#)
- [www.fairtest.org](#)
- [www.collegeiq.com](#)
- K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Differences (Book)
- Common Data Set (Google "Common Data Set + [name of institution]")
- National Center for Education Statistics: [College Navigator](#)
- US Department of Education: [College Scorecard](#)

COLLEGE COST RESEARCH

- [myintuition.org](#)
- [collegecost.ed.gov/net-price](#)
- <https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/>
- Forbes: [College Financial Grades 2024](#)
- [studentaid.gov](#)
- [pheaa.org](#)
- <https://www.raise.me/>
- <https://educationdata.org/>



RECOMMENDED READING



- *Dream School: Finding the College That's Right For You*, by Jeffrey Selingo
- *Who Gets In and Why*, by Jeffrey Selingo
- *Where You Go is Not Who You'll Be*, by Frank Bruni
- *Black Family's Guide to College Admissions*, by Timothy Fields and Shereem Herndon-Brown
- *The Truth About College Admissions*, by Brennan Barnard and Rick Clark

INTERESTING FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Challenge Success: [The White Paper](#)
- Colleges That Change Lives: [www.ctcl.org](#)
- [The Right Way to Choose a College](#) (Wall Street Journal)
- [Beyond the Rankings: The College Welcome Guide](#) (The Hechinger Report)
- [The Question Every College Applicant Should Ask](#) (Forbes)



STAYING ORGANIZED



- Use Scoir to build your list! Here is a [helpful guide](#) for managing your college list on Scoir.



<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1763053540/radnorcom/iuu1bhfon2vdmdtbqynx/FitResearchResourceGuide2.pdf>

Final Thoughts

- Your future, your experience. Don't listen to the noise.
- You will end up where you are meant to be!!
- Give your parents a little grace — they're figuring out this college process right alongside you.



- *Remember: Success isn't one path — it's finding the right fit for you.*



Thank you!

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