Juniors Aiming for College #2: Academic Fit & Researching Colleges

Resources & Guidance on College Fit page

shorewood.ssd412.org/programs-services/college-career/college-home-page/college-fit

Look for how-to's & answers on the site

College Fit has three components



Start with GPA

Even though admission is not all about the numbers!!

Admission Factors

Your transcript is the most important application piece.

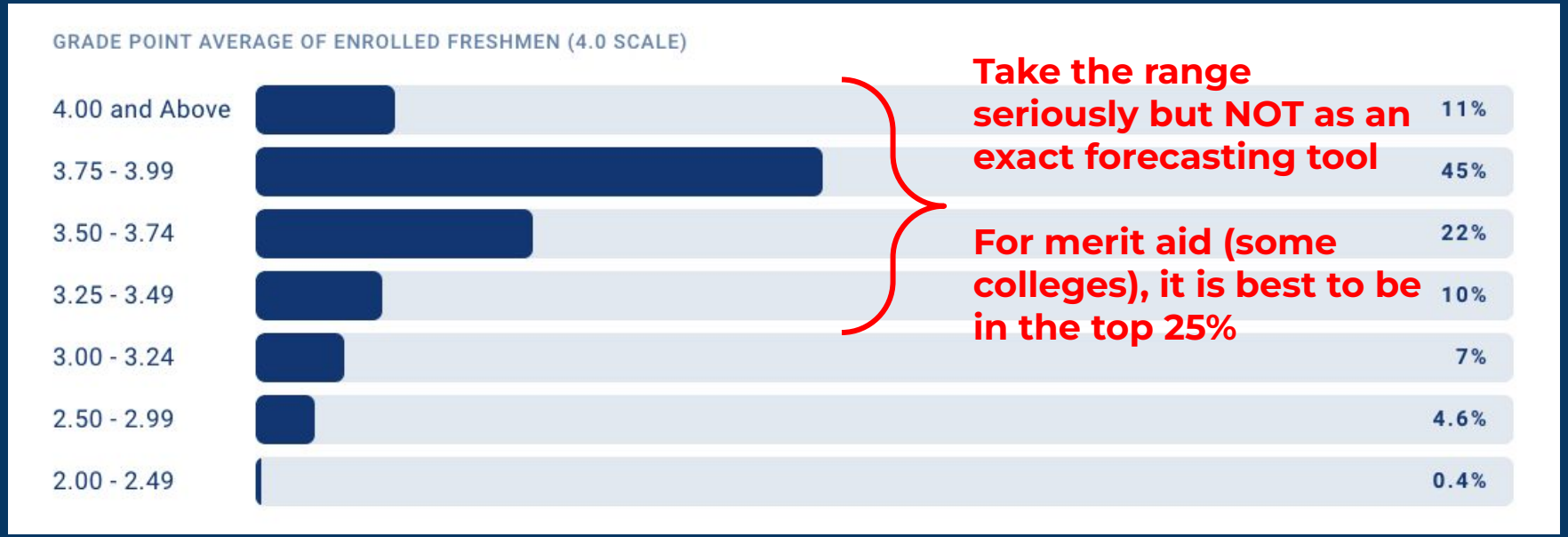
***Both* grades and rigor are considered**

Source:
NACAC Factors in Admission Decisions, Fall 2023

PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2023

	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
High school grades in college prep courses	185	76.8	15.1	4.9	3.2
Total high school grades (all courses)	185	74.1	18.9	5.4	1.6
Strength of high school curriculum	185	63.8	22.7	10.3	3.2
Positive character attributes	184	28.3	37.5	18.5	15.8
Essay or writing sample	185	18.9	37.3	26.5	17.3
Student's interest in attending	185	15.7	27.6	25.4	31.4
Counselor recommendation	185	11.9	40.0	27.6	20.5
Teacher recommendation	185	10.8	40.5	28.1	20.5
Extracurricular activities	185	6.5	44.3	30.8	18.4
High school class rank	183	5.5	22.4	43.2	29.0
Admission test scores (ACT, SAT)	185	4.9	25.4	38.9	30.8
Portfolio	185	4.9	10.8	24.3	60.0
Interview	185	4.3	8.6	32.4	54.6

Useful Tool: CollegeData.com



Whitman College 11.2023

Also has: Admission Rates, Selection Factors, Test Score Ranges
Uses *nationwide* data

Along with grades, Colleges value *Rigor* and *Trends*

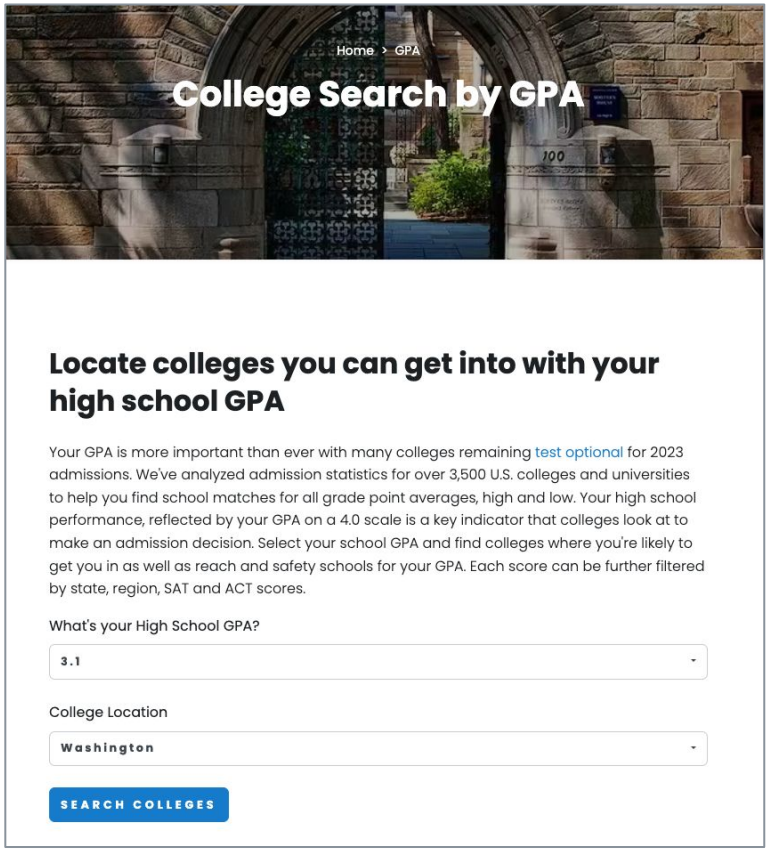
There isn't a magic number of APs or Running Start classes, but colleges like to see you challenging yourself, and being successful.

Grades:	A	B	C	D	E/F	Other	Trend
English:	2.0	1.0	0	0	0	1.0	↓
Language:	0.5	1.5	0.5	0.5	0	0	↓
Math:	0	1.0	2.0	0	0	1.0	→
Science:	1.0	1.5	0.5	0	0	2.0	↓
Social Science:	2.0	0	0	0	0	0	→
Total:	**5.5**	**5.0**	**3.0**	**0.5**	**0**	**4.0**	↓

Example from CGN Live Event on the SRAR/ Student Reported Academic Transcript. Shows what the college sees on their side; a grade distribution with trends through high school. The same presentation showed how colleges count "rigor points".

Use College Simply

- Colleges rarely have set GPA cutoff levels
- However, grades are a major factor in decisions
- If Sammy Stormray has a 3.11 GPA, then they should be realistic about their options
- College Simply is a first step

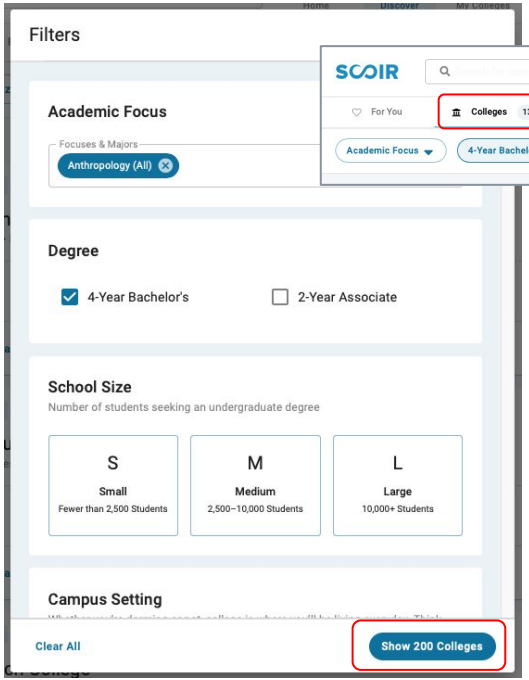


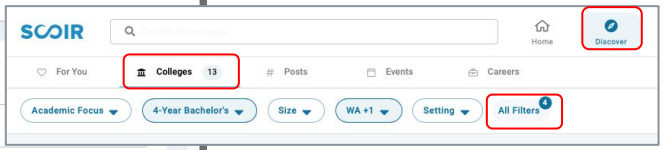
Tool: College Search by GPA

After GPA, Look for Academic Areas

Majors: Use Scoir & the College Finder

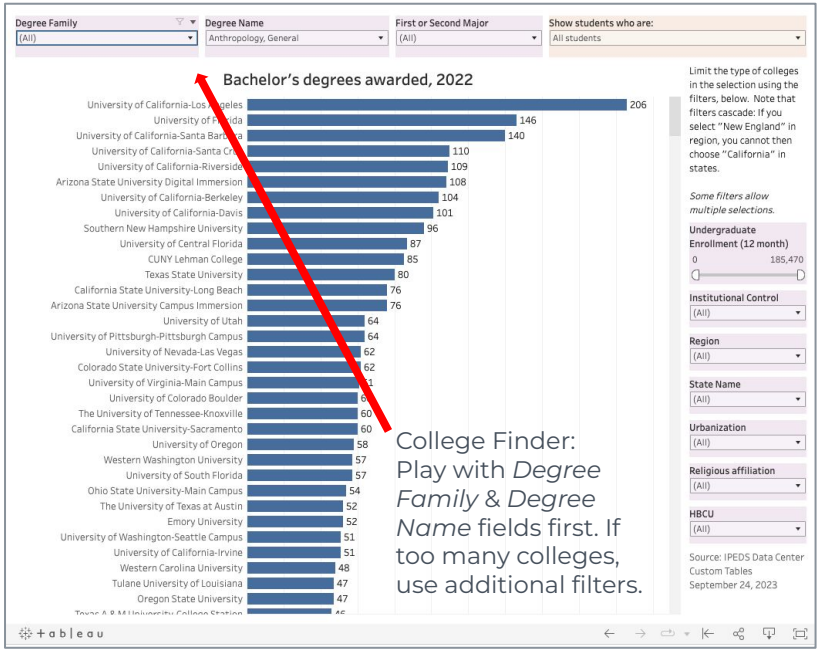
Scoir via Classlink; College Finder listed on College Search Tools





Scoir:
Discover > *Colleges* > *All Filters* > fill in Academic Focus

Play with filters to get a decent # of colleges to look through. 200 is too many



College Finder:
Play with *Degree Family* & *Degree Name* fields first. If too many colleges, use additional filters.

Research Potential Majors

At at least one large college & at least one small college:

1. Browse majors
2. Select a group or a particular major
3. Look at the classes required. Do they sound interesting?

Go back to the College/Dept page

1. Look at the faculty. What are they studying?
    a. Is there anyone whose research interests you or with whom you would like to work closely?
2. Look at the latest news. Any developments?
3. Can you tell anything about the community?

What do you do with all of the info you look up?

Recommended: College List Worksheet

Warning: it might look a little crazy!

It's a **Thinksheet**

link: College List Worksheet

Worksheet has Personal, Academic & Financial Fit

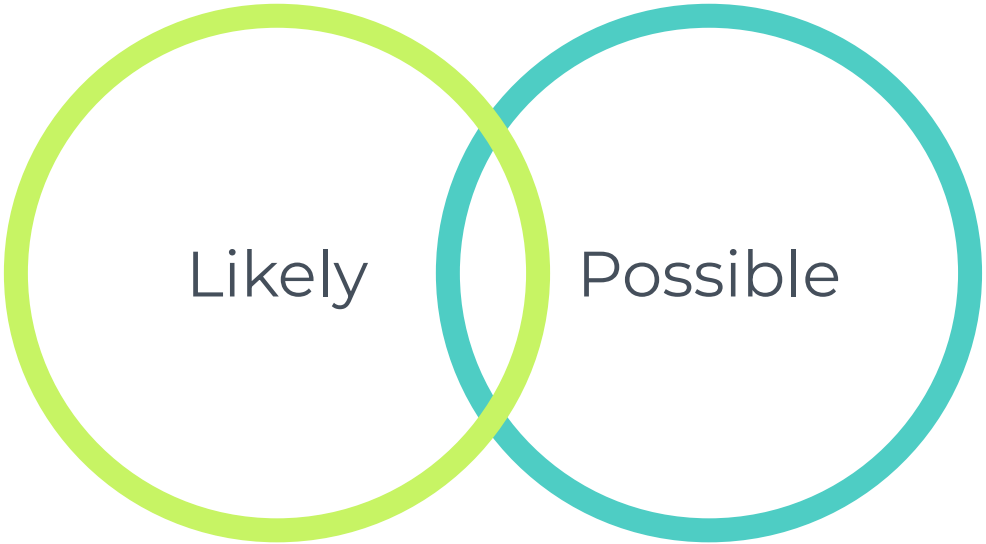
Research Colleges	Personal Fit			Engagement					
To save your own version, click File above then select Make a Copy.	*College characteristics that not only meet your personal preferences for location, size, major, but that truly stand out and fit YOU*			*"The students who benefit the most from college are those who are most engaged in their academics and campus communities, taking advantage of the opportunities and resources their particular institution provides. Engagement is the key. " Fit Over Rankings Report*					
SHOREWOOD COLLEGE & CAREER LIST WORKSHEET	**Setting trait** I'm excited about	**Academic trait** I'm excited about	**Social trait** I'm excited about	**Taking a Course** that makes learning exciting	**Working with Professors** who care about students personally	**Finding a Mentor**	**Working on a Project** across several semesters	**Participating in an Internship** that relates to classroom learning	**Active in Extracurricular Activities**
Colleges You are Thinking About									
Example: Gonzaga University	sun & snow	Political Science major/ small	dorms, emphasis on service	Politics & Food!	seems like it; need to research	probably--Dr. SBT's course on Hunger	Directed study option	yes--DC semster program	political clubs, intramural sports,

	Academic Fit			Selectivity				Financial Fit					
	Make sure you are an academic match			*Just because you meet academic averages doesn't mean you will get in. Make an honest assessment.*				*Money is a common dealbreaker; check now to be sure the college is a viable choice for you. College pricing is like airline tickets, where different people pay different prices.*					
	My GPA	Avg GPA of Admitted Students	My Test Score	Avg Test Score	Average Acceptance Rate	Rejection Rate	Most Important Admission Factors	Comparison to Accepted Students (possible? likely? match? stretch?)	Maximum/ year my family can pay	Sticker Price	Average Net Price	My projected Net Price	Merit Scholarships available?	Average % Need Met

link: College List Worksheet

Make a copy and customize

Be ambitious *and* realistic



You want both:

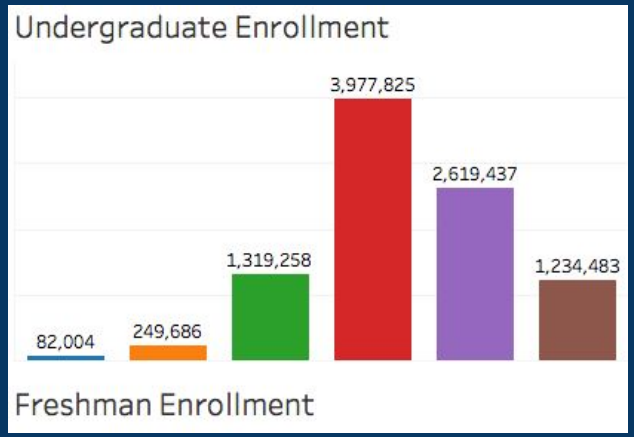
1) colleges you are **likely** to get into and
2) colleges it is **possible** you will get into on your list

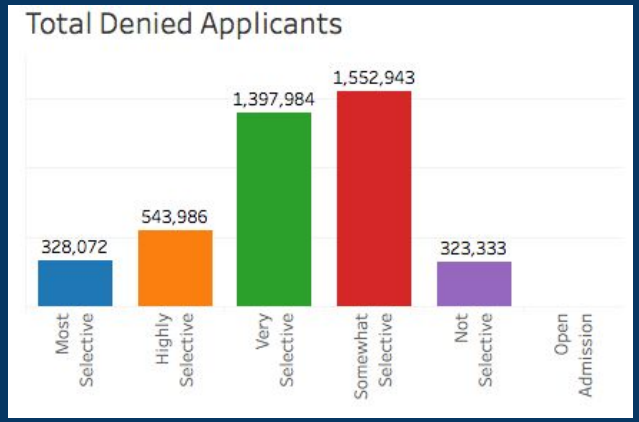
Academic Fit Principles

- Admission is the gate, not the goal
- Being in the top 25% can mean better $$
- Rankings are gamed
- The “best” school is the best place for you
- Look beyond the usual options
- A big name school is not necessary for doing big things
- No single factor will make or break your chances

Notes for High Achievers

- **Pay attention to admission rates,** which are not additive. If you apply to 10 schools with an average admit rate of 10%, your chances *do not* add up to 100%
- It is not rare for high-achieving students to be rejected from most places they apply **when they limit their list to the most elite schools.**
- Students will usually be **more successful** at top of a pool rather than at the bottom of a pool.

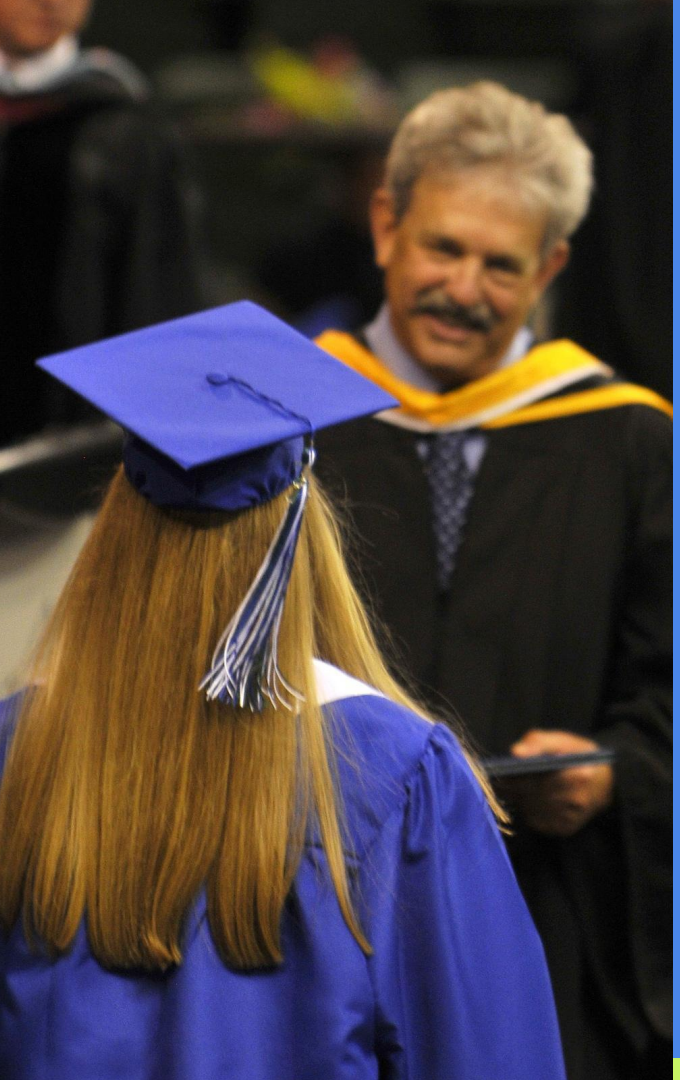




Don’ts & Do’s for Everyone

- **Don’t** dismiss a type of school without really looking into it
- **Don’t** give away your agency
- **Do** consider schools you have not yet heard of
- Women, consider women’s colleges
- Students of color, consider HBCUs/HSIs
- Realize that you have agency: your choices at the end of the process largely depend on your list selection

Photo by Kristi Lin



General Tasks & Tips

- If aiming for college athletics, sign up with NCAA Eligibility Center & NAIA
- Read school email & follow SWCCC on Instagram
- Have any name/ official document issues corrected
- Mind your social media
- Keep your record clean
- Contact & be engaged with colleges, including attending college visits
- Do well in school
- Be involved with causes you care about

For Two-Year Colleges

- Many of same steps required
- You have more time
- Programs are detailed on colleges' websites
- Be open to options!









College Admissions is NOT:

A value judgment on whether you are “good enough”.

About status. Aim high, but for the right reasons.

A game or prize.

One size fits all.

– Brennan Barnard, Letter to College Applicants *Forbes*