



Students and Parents

General rules to live by in the college search process

STUDENTS:

Ten Rules To Live By In The College Search Process

1. Be true to yourself. While you should listen carefully to the advice of others, avoid being overly swayed by peer pressure or the impressions of others.
2. Begin the college search/process early, allowing plenty of time to gather information, to think about your decisions, and to process the paperwork.
3. Gather information from several sources. Use computer sources such as Family Connection and Bridges and Choices programs if available at your school. Visit www.collegeboard.com and college websites directly to gather information. Additionally, the College Board's The College Handbook is a valuable resource as well as college and university view books and catalogs. Have discussions with current college students and alumni.
4. Visit the schools to which you apply. There is no substitute for seeing the college and getting the feel for the "match" with your personality and your aspirations.
5. Apply to colleges of varying selectivity standards. Have at least one, preferably two "anchor" colleges on your list. While it is okay to apply to one or two "reach" colleges, be realistic - are the colleges within the range of possibility?
6. Process your applications carefully. Allow plenty of time to complete the applications, especially the long and short essay questions (if applicable) which allow the college admissions committee to know you. Maximize every part of the application, presenting your strengths, your strongest qualities.
7. Proofread, proofread, proofread and revise your applications. Start with a rough draft (a copy of the application, if necessary). Read essay questions carefully, making sure you answer the questions. Revise your responses. While it is usually OK to have someone react to your essay responses, it is, of course, assumed that the writing is your own. Make a copy of all materials mailed to colleges for your own records.
8. Remember, a deadline is a deadline is a deadline. Plot your deadlines on your calendar and establish a workable plan for completing the applications in plenty

of time. Allow for unexpected complications at the last moment. Be sure to note if the college's deadline is a "due there by" or "postmark by" deadline if you are applying via U.S. Mail.

9. Don't let the process get you down. Keep in mind that thousands of other students are applying to college along with you and that others share your fears and concerns. Find ways to relieve your stress, and don't hesitate to ask for help when needed. Support your classmates, and they will support you
10. KEEP YOUR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR INFORMED. Remember your guidance counselor wants to help you, and they can help the most when they know what you plan to do!

It is important to keep everything and maintain complete and accurate records!

PARENTS:

Ten Rules To Live By In The College Search Process

1. Be respectful of your son or daughter's ownership of the college admissions decision-making process. It is the student who will spend the years on the college campus, and therefore, the decision must ultimately be theirs. Students can gain decision-making skills, improve their self confidence, and develop perseverance which will help them throughout their lives. Remember, your role is to be supportive.
2. Endeavor to be realistic regarding your child's abilities and talents. While each student is special and has unique qualities and abilities, it is difficult for a parent to be entirely objective about one's own child! Remember that college admissions are extremely competitive (especially within state) and there are many talented young people.
3. Give your son or daughter the benefit of your wisdom and your experience, and tell the student "up front" if there will be restrictions (financial or otherwise) on his/her college options.
4. Remember, the student want and needs your help in the process but does not need to be overwhelmed with your impressions and ideas. Be available to help when help is solicited.
5. Help with some of the logistical aspects of the college-search process. Plan travel arrangements to campuses, schedule college interviews (where available), and schedule testing. Help to ensure that critical deadlines are met.

6. Be supportive of your child's aspirations, but encourage him/her to be realistic. Help him/her to select the "best" college choices, not necessarily the "top-name" or most prestigious institution. Most importantly.
7. When in doubt, ask. The College Counselor is available to help with your questions and concerns. Also, the university-level counselors can offer their insight. It is natural to have questions during this time period.
8. Prepare your child to be an independent being. Encourage time away from home when your child must be self-reliant. Help establish a checking account, and help your child learn to do his/her own laundry.
9. Realize that the college admissions process is a highly stressful time for the student as well as the parent. Take each part of the process a step at a time, and remember that help is always readily available.
10. Prepare for the transition to college. The summer after high school graduation, as well as the first semester of college, can be difficult periods. As your son or daughter makes the adjustment from high school to college, avoid over-reacting to new situations; try to sort through the conflicts and issues as they arise.