

Making Choices About College

Step One:

Know yourself and your reasons for wanting to attend college.

- Identify your strengths and weaknesses.
- Analyze your interests and values.
- Analyze your reasons for attending college.
 - To achieve a personal goal.
 - To increase your earning power.
 - To prepare for a career and expand learning.
 - For extracurricular activities and a fun social life.
 - Because of the influence of family and friends.
 - Because you feel like you should for some unknown reason.

Step Two:

Consider college characteristics.

- Majors and educational programs.
- Type of school and degrees offered.
- Admission policy.
- Location and size.
- Costs and availability of financial aid.
- College affiliation and accreditation.
- Campus activities.
- Academic reputation.
- Athletic reputation.

Step Three:

List, compare, and visit colleges.

- Compile information from several sources.
 - College catalogs, bulletins, videos, and web pages.
 - College representatives and college fairs.
 - Counselors and teachers.
 - Parents, students, and alumni.
- Prepare a college comparison checklist.
- Weigh advantages and disadvantages.
- Contact the admissions office for a visit to the campus.

Step Four:

Apply for admission and observe deadlines.

- Narrow your choices to a list of colleges in the following categories:
 - "Safety School" – a school for which you are completely qualified and will definitely be admitted.
 - "Realistic Choice" – a school for which you meet the qualifications for admission and will most likely (though maybe not definitely) be accepted.
 - "Fantasy School" – a school that you would really like to attend but is a long shot due to having a lower GPA, test score, or class rank than is required.
- Review college admission test requirements.
- Know application fees and deadlines.
- Submit application materials which may include:
 - Completed application for admission
 - Application fee
 - High school transcript
 - Recommendations
 - Admissions test results

Step Five:

Make a final decision.

- Review the colleges for which you were accepted, their pro's and con's.
- Consider the financial aid packages each school is offering you.
- Follow your heart.
- Notify all of the schools involved of your choice.

Narrowing Down Your College Options: Student Questions

Help focus your college search by circling the responses that best apply to you. If you cannot decide between two or more responses, circle all relevant responses.

- Do you prefer a school size that is...?
 - Small (under 1000)
 - Medium (1000-5000)
 - Large (5000+)
- Do you prefer a school location that is...?
 - Close to home (within an hour)
 - In Michigan
 - Out-of-state (but within a ten hour drive)
 - Out-of-state (but farther than a ten hour drive)
 - Out-of-the-country
- Do you prefer to attend a...?
 - Public college or university
 - Private, secular college or university
 - Private Christian college or university
- Do you prefer to attend a...?
 - Community college only
 - Community college then transfer to a four-year institution
 - Four-year institution only
- Do you plan on playing (or hope to play) collegiate sports?
 - Yes, definitely
 - Maybe, still considering it
 - No, definitely not
- Do you plan to live...?
 - At home
 - In on-campus housing
 - Away from home but off campus
- Do you prefer a campus that is in a...?
 - Large city
 - Suburb
 - Small town
- Do you plan to join a sorority or fraternity while in college?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
- Which of the following best describes your primary reason for going to college?
 - Get a solid education that will lead to a good job
 - Party
 - Make new friends
 - Play sports
 - Figure out what you want to do with your life
- Have you made a definite decision on what to major in?
 - Yes. I want to major in _____.
 - No. I have no idea.
 - No, but I have narrowed it down to _____, _____, or _____.
- Who will be paying for your college education?
 - You and only you
 - Your parents will pay for everything
 - A combination of you and your parents
- Do you plan to attend a college where the cost is...?
 - Under \$1000 per year
 - Under \$5000 per year
 - Under \$10,000 per year
 - Under \$20,000 per year
 - Cost doesn't matter

College Comparison Worksheet

	School Name:	School Name:	School Name:
Affiliation -Public -Private (independent or religious)			
Size -Very small (1,000 or fewer) -Small (1,000-3,999) -Medium (4,000-8,999) -Large (9,000-19,999) -Very large (20,000+)			
Community -Rural -Small Town -Suburban -Urban			
Location -In your hometown -Less than 3 hours from home -More than 3 hours from home			
Housing -Dorm (optional? required?) -Off-campus apartment -At home			
Student Body -All one gender -Co-ed -Minority representation -Primarily one religious denomination -Primarily commuter students -Primarily residential students			
Academic Environment -Majors offered -Student-faculty ratio -Faculty teaching reputation -Instruction by professors or assistants -Facilities (classrooms, labs) -Libraries -Independent study available -International study available -Internships available			
Financial Aid -Scholarships -Grants -Loans -Work-study programs			
Support Services -Academic /career/personal counseling -Student health facilities			
Activities / Social Clubs -Clubs, organizations, Greek life -Athletics, intramurals			
Athletics -Division I, II, or III -Sports offered			
Specialized Programs -Honors programs -Services for students with special needs			