



Creating a College List:

First question: Why are you going to college?

- Because everyone is doing it.
- It's easier than working.
- My parents won't let me sponge off of them anymore.
- I'm passionate about (fill in the blank).

Top Reasons Students List for Going to College

- To learn more about things that interest me.
- To be able to get a better job.
- To get training for a specific career.
- To be able to make more money.
- To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas.

Finding Your Fit

- “College is a match to be made, not a prize to be won. All too often, students and parents are romanced by a name rather than looking for the best matches. In the end, the best fit should be what the student determines, and there should be several fits, not just one.”
 - Frank Sachs, The Blake School, Minnesota

What Makes a College a Good “Fit”?

- Offers a program of study to match your interests and needs.
 - Provides a style of instruction to match the way you like to learn.
 - Provides a level of academic rigor to match your aptitude and preparation.
 - Offers a community that feels comfortable to you.
 - Values you for what you do well.
- Peter Van Buskirk, *Winning the College Admission Game*

Program of Study

- Most students change their major AT LEAST once while in college.
- “Undeclared” is OKAY!
- Your future career may have nothing to do with your college major—or may depend on it!
- Colleges report that 80-90% of their alumni who graduated more than 25 years ago are now in careers that did not exist when they graduated.

What if I Do Know What I'd Like to Major In?

- Think about what your favorite core subject is. This could guide you to related majors.
- Look for colleges that offer a substantive program in your areas of interest.
- It is okay to transfer after freshman or sophomore year.

Style of Instruction

- What is my learning style? Participant or Passive?

- > Who is your favorite teacher? WHY?
- > What is your favorite class right now? WHY?
- > Where are you most comfortable? Large group settings or small discussions? WHY?
- > Who do you enjoy talking with and brainstorming? WHY?

Level of Academic Rigor

- Colleges have different levels of academic competition. Look for words or phrases that describe this: “relaxed” or “rigorous” or “competitive” or “collaborative”.
- Check out college selectivity (most, highly, selective, competitive).
- Academic Profile: Do you fit in the “middle 50%”?

A Community That Feels Like Home

- Looking for the right “Real Estate”
- Trust your gut!
- Values: What is most important to you?
 - > Programs
 - > People
 - > Place/Proximity
 - > Prestige
 - > Principles

Other P's?

- Price (Pocketbook!)
- Personality
- Public/Private
- Perks
- Parties
- Politics
- Possibilities

The Best Fit May NOT Be:

- Where your parents went to college.
- Where your boyfriend/girlfriend attends.
- Who won the National Championship.
- Who has the coolest mascot.

Size

- Class size.
- Campus size: pedestrians, pedals, or peplemovers.
- “I don’t want to go to a school smaller than Creek...”

Location

- Close to or far away from home?
- In-State/Out-of-State
- Urban/Suburban/Rural
- Access
- Weather/Climate

Cost: Financial Fit

- Talk about it with parents.

- Don't rule out colleges early because of cost.
- Educate yourself about the financial aid process.
- Pursue scholarships!

Academic Programs and Environment

- Liberal Arts vs. Comprehensive University
- College vs. University
- Specific Majors
- Study Abroad
- Career Placement
- Internships/Co-ops

The Prestige Factor - aka The "Name"

- Education is a process, not a product.
- Beware of "rankings".
- Be open-minded.
- Many options for any one student.

Student Body

- Who do you want to surround you?
 - > People who look and act like you?
 - > People who look and act different from you?
- Liberal or Conservative
- Look for Keywords: adventurous, laid-back, energetic, friendly, independent, unconventional, outdoorsy, motivated.

Social Atmosphere

- Student Activities
- Greek Life
- Speakers
- Weekends – "suitcase" college? Commuter students?
- Demographics matter: where students are from.

Extra-Curricular Activities

- Sports: participant on the field vs. participant in the stands.
- Intramurals
- Clubs and Activities
- Volunteer/Community Service Opportunities
- Greek Life
- Arts Organizations: theatre, music, dance, art

Admissions

- If you are in the middle 50% admitted students: Competitive
- If you are in the top 25% of admitted students: Probable
- If you are in the bottom 25% of admitted students: Reach

Other Criteria to Consider

- Single Sex or Coed
- Religious Orientation/Affiliation
- Recruited Athlete
- HBCU ([Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#)) or HSI ([Hispanic Serving Institutions](#))

Practice Prioritizing

- Put the following on separate index cards and order them in terms of your priorities:
 - > Size
 - > Location
 - > Cost
 - > Academic Programs
 - > Prestige
 - > Student Body
 - > Social Atmosphere
 - > Extracurricular activities
 - > Admissions Probability

A Healthy College List

- Could consist of one to eight schools.
- Must include at least one “foundation” school – you know you will get into & be happy.
- Could include several “competitive” schools – you are in the middle 50% of admitted students.
- Could include several “probable” schools – you are in the top 25% of admitted students.
- Could include several “reach” schools - If you are in the bottom 25% of admitted students.

Resources and Research

- Family Connection by Naviance
 - > College Search
 - > Can save searches
 - > Research individual colleges
- College’s Website
 - > Academic programs
 - > Student life
- Evaluative Guidebooks
 - > *The College Finder*
 - > *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*
 - > *Princeton Review’s 361 Best Colleges*
 - > *The College Prowler Series*
- College Catalog
 - > Requirements for Major
 - > Who are the professors?
 - > Credentials?
 - > Research?
- Open your mail! Snail and E-mail!
 - > College Wednesday email blasts from Post Grad Center
- Attend college fairs, receptions and information sessions.
- Check Naviance, bulletin boards and your email for information on colleges coming to visit Creek. Talk with admission representatives who visit our Post Grad office.
- Visit Campus!
 - > Tour

- > Interview
- > Eat in dorm
- > Ask questions
- > Talk with faculty, coaches, admissions, current students
- > Spend the night, if you can!

Where Do I Go From Here?

- Prove Yourself: Take Required ACT and/or SAT tests.
- Ponder Your Options: Think about what is important to you.
- Probe the Possibilities: Research and Question!
- Plan: Have one and use your time wisely.