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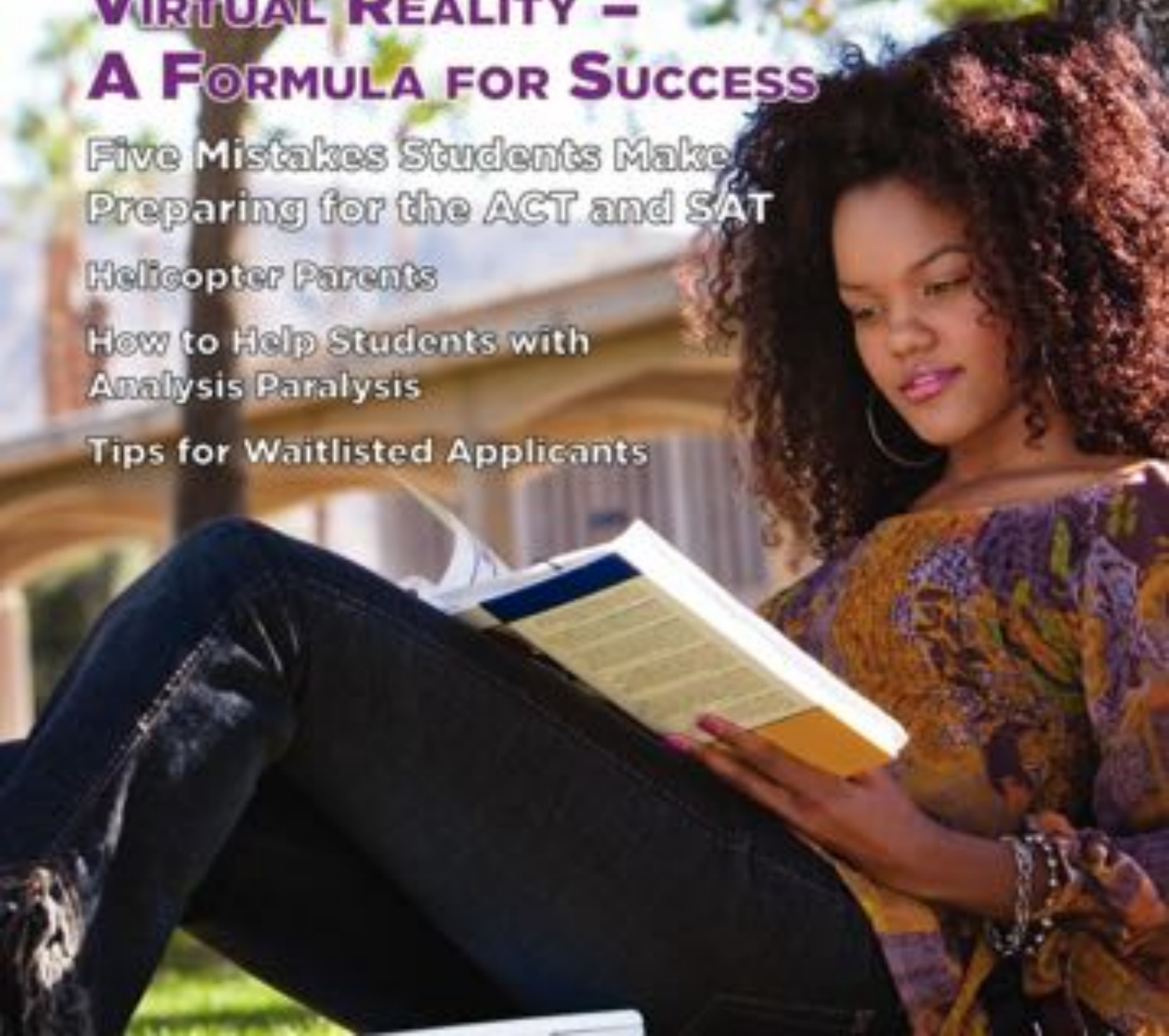
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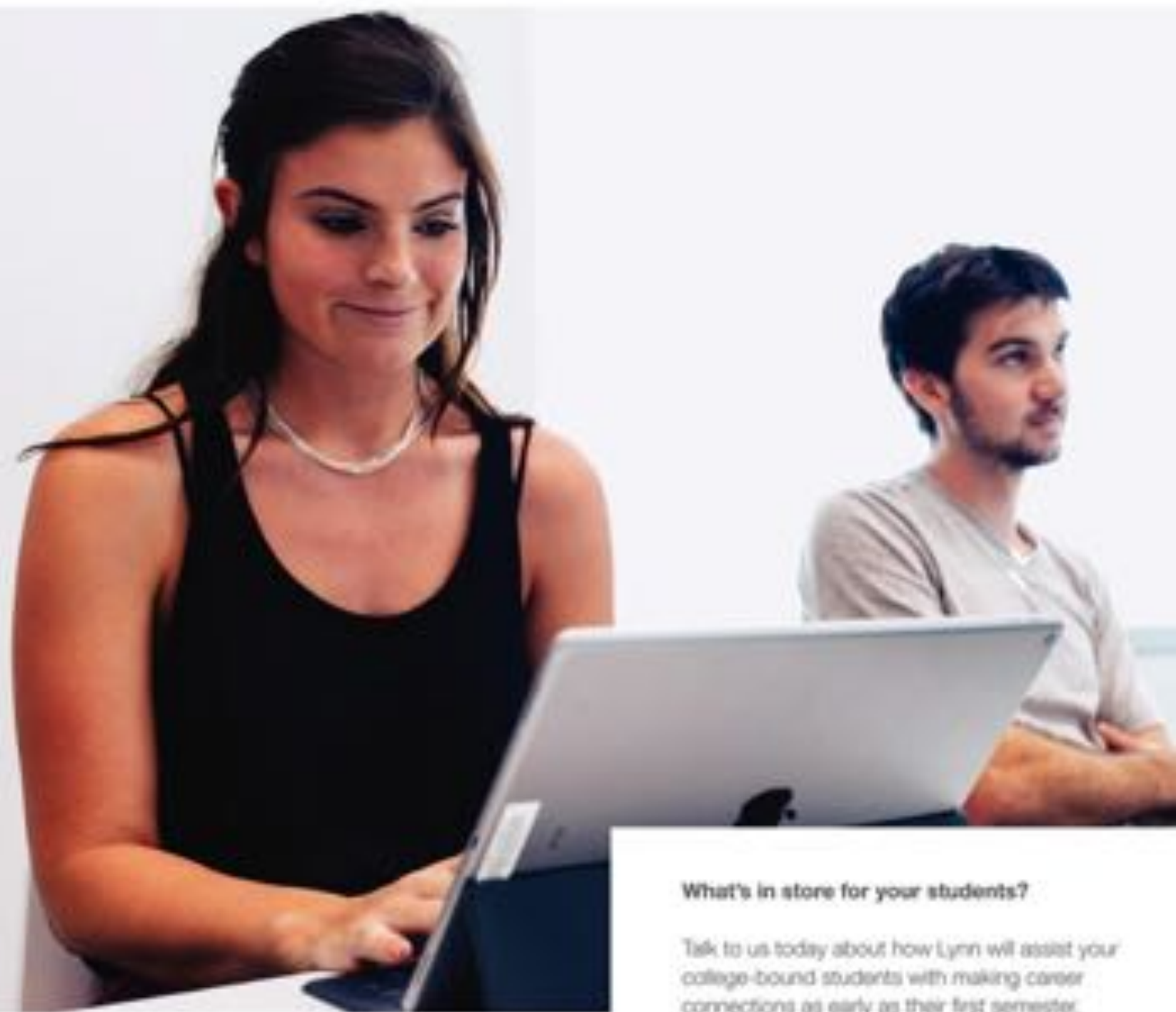
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## Dear Counselors

### Survey Says!

Signet Research, a leading survey company, just conducted its annual survey of Counselors who received the Fall 2017 issue of LINK for Counselors. More than 300 Counselors completed the survey and we were very pleased with the results. The average Counselor spent 40 minutes reading their issue and the issue was shared with an average of 2.5 Counselors per copy. With a total print distribution of 25,000 copies per issue, this extrapolates to a distribution of more than 62,500 Counselors who read the print issue, plus an additional 20,000 who received the digital version.

Signet Research randomly chose one survey respondent to win a \$100 gift card and Daisy Colom of Belleville High School in New Jersey was the lucky winner. We really appreciate all of you who took the time to complete the survey as it provides valuable feedback we can share with our advertisers and allows us to continue to provide our content to you free of charge.

This feedback also helps us plan future content. One piece of feedback we received is that Counselors would like to see more information about Scholarships that are available for their students. Therefore, we decided to launch a new feature, Scholarship Watch, where we will feature a number of Scholarships that are available to students (see pages 52 & 53). We also got feedback that Counselors would like to know about other websites and blogs that provide useful information. LINK for Counselors blog and website was recently chosen as one of the top blogs/websites for Counselors on Feedspot so we included a feature that included some of the other blogs and websites they chose on page 58.

Thanks again for taking the time to read this issue and to share it with other Counselors in your school. We are always looking for great content so if you have anything you would like to share with your peers, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Regards,

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# Who's deciding?

What's going on in admissions offices as they pour through piles of applications, and how can your students improve their odds.

By Jim Paterson



Once a student has selected colleges that they'd like to attend and has sent off application materials, they wait - often never knowing for certain who is making the decision about their future or how the decision is made. And even before that, they sometimes don't know ways they could have had more influence on the process.

Admissions officials say students might have a leg up if they had a better understanding of what colleges want and what happens to their application material. And, experts say, counselors should remind them to just speak up.

"We often get asked if it's okay to request certain information or ask a certain question. The answer is always absolutely yes," says Rachelle Hernandez, associate vice provost for enrollment management and director of admissions at the University of Minnesota. "Our goal at the end of the day is to enroll students who will have an exceptional experience and graduate in a timely manner. When students and families ask questions that are important to them, it helps us do that."

So that's the first thing your students should understand about the admissions process. There is a lot to understand, and they can ask questions. Admissions offices like it if they do.

Beyond that, here are a few other tips about the application screening process that might put a student in the best position to have their application favorably received.

## The impression

First, in the relationship with the college, students should know it is important to be in touch with a specific person.

"I always encourage students to connect with someone in the admissions office early on," says Jennifer Fondiller, dean of enrollment at Barnard College in New York. "From my side of the desk, I love being able to put a face to a name and to answer questions from a student directly."

Fondiller notes that admissions counselors are usually assigned to a region and specific schools, so one will know something specifically about your area, your school and the students locally who have attended. "They're also often the ones reviewing the application, too, so who better to connect with," she says.

Deb Shaver, dean of admissions at Smith College in Northampton, MA, also says prospective students should realize that these admissions counselors are their advocates. "They're looking for a reason to admit, not reasons to deny. Seeing that process through this lens is very important," she says.

Busy admissions officials note, however, that there are some things students can do to make the relationship better.

"Pay attention to the details," says Laura Lavergne from the University of Texas Office of Admissions. "The material they have to submit can vary from school-to-school, and sometimes even from major-



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to-major. So it's important to follow directions closely," she says.

Mistakes in the application can cause the people reviewing it to think less favorably about a student's ability to handle college work, but might also delay the application or even put it out of contention. If they haven't heard something from a school, they should get in touch, says Christina DeCario, associate director of admissions at College of Charleston.

"Sometimes things happen" she says. "Transcripts get lost in the mail. Technical difficulties occur. Test scores get bounced out of the system because just one digit in a social security number was off. Things fall through the cracks. We try our very best to keep track of the thousands of applications and materials that come to us, but you are responsible for your application. Being proactive benefits you and teaches responsibility."

Other admissions officials note that the applicant should be the one responsible for most of the process rather than parents or counselors, to build their skills and show schools they can take on responsibility.

Jennifer Ziegenfus, associate director for recruitment at Towson University near Baltimore, notes that while admissions officials want to be helpful, applicants should be judicious with their calls and emails, trying to resolve questions on the school web site or with other sources who have information about testing and financial aid, for example. They should realize admissions officials are busy and it may not make a great impression if they are bothersome.

They should contact a counselor over the summer before they apply and right after they apply, she says. "It's an informal way to show your continued interest," she adds, noting that admissions counselors may not know immediately about every application. It isn't necessary to ask if the application has been received.

Ziegenfus says students generally should not send more than four emails and they should be brief and to the point. Applicants should clearly identify themselves, where they are from and use an ID number that the school generally assigns. Application material should be with your application, not attached to email later, she says.

Despite that, she points out, that students should

not hesitate to show "demonstrated interest", ranging from attending an open house or visiting the campus to contacting the admissions office with good questions. When a student shows a specific school is a priority for them they may get more favorable results; colleges want to increase their odds that the students accepted will enroll.

Coming to visit the school makes a good impression inside admissions offices, says Mark Ledoux, senior associate director of admissions at Kent State University. It shows serious interest and helps the student understand the school and get good information. "It is perhaps one of the most important things you can do," he says. "It is the best way to find out all that the school has to offer and to see if it is the right fit for you and your family."

Schools are happy to accommodate visits, he says, but students should be sure to schedule well in advance and let the admissions office know about special requests - for instance if a student wants to speak to a faculty member or sit in on a class. Those contacts, too, can pay off since sometimes specific departments are involved in final decisions.

Anthony Fontana, associate director of admission at the University of Denver, also says students should know that people in roles like his can help with the exploration of colleges generally and with information for counselors. "We are genuinely interested in the success of students. While we want them to come to our institution, we want to be as helpful as possible to get them to a place where they get the right fit. That, he says, means they can offer advice about the student's application and qualifications and opportunities for financial aid - and even recommendations for other schools if they don't think theirs is appropriate."

## The process

Typically, experts say, applications are screened by a group of "readers" who can include the admissions counselor, others in the admissions office, trained volunteers or staff from the departments to which they are applying and sometimes others, even some students. Often applications are screened immediately for grades or test scores, sometimes electronically, although other factors might be weighed later. Admissions officials note that while all parts of the application are considered, grades are key and make the biggest impression.

Often two officials will read the applications, and

if they agree, the application is considered favorably and if they don't a third reader will evaluate it or a group will.

Ziegenfus says students should make sure the high school sends transcripts and that test scores are sent to the appropriate schools that want them. They should complete the application thoroughly and take time to do the essay, but shouldn't obsess over it or make it too contrived or have it done by someone else.

Apart from paperwork, the tone of application material is important as officials read documents and share their thoughts. Some experts note it should have a theme, consistently describing the student in some specific way: a hard worker, a leader or someone who has overcome obstacles, for instance.

"Be genuine," says Mitch Warren, director of Admissions at Purdue. He says in the essay students should "write in their own voice and not try to make themselves sound smarter with complex words. You don't want your essay to sound fake. Tell the truth and own up to any issues."

The same thing applies to letters of recommendation," he says. "A recommendation from a teacher who watched you struggle can show how you respond to challenge. The ability to overcome challenges and difficulties can say quite a bit about a student's perseverance, drive, and determination."

Experts say recommendations that sound packaged and don't suggest the writer knows the student don't help, so it's best to choose someone who will write an authentic note rather than someone who seems simply to have status but may not know the student well.

Rick Bischoff, vice president for enrollment at Case Western Reserve, has similar advice about any list of extracurricular activities. "Substance matters. Rather than worrying about how long your list of extracurricular activities is, make sure you are contributing to your community. Whether it is your school, neighborhood or religious organization, get involved. Do things that matter to you and spend a significant amount of time doing them."

He notes that this sort of work can also lead to good, impressive recommendations, and the combination can be valuable as admissions offices review an application.

In the end, however, several experts have noted that acceptance can sometimes be simply based on luck – when a student's application arrives or, perhaps, if one reviewer, like a student, played the violin or played football and likes them because of it. It also can be determined by how a department at the school is filling up with applicants.

However, they also note that much of it is in the hands of the student. "Parents, counselors, teachers, and friends will have a huge impact on that final decision, but the student needs to know and own the process. The earlier and more often students make decisions independently, the better they become at understanding their personal values and how future decisions align with those values. And colleges will see that."

### Inside admissions

Here are 10 key things to tell your students about how to make an impression with a college admissions office.

**1. Someone will be assigned to your school or region. Get to know them.**



# EDUCATION?



## 2. Don't over do the contact/questions

- and make correspondences efficient and clear. Don't be afraid to ask good questions.

## 3. They appreciate a visit to the school.

Let them know you are coming, and make sure you plan ahead with them if you want special treatment like a meeting with a particular department or an opportunity to sit in a class, which can help since those people may review applications.

## 4. "Demonstrated interest" is important

- showing that you are seriously considering the school.

## 5. They like efficiency.

Include all the information called for, complete it accurately, send it when required and don't include extraneous material.

## 6. Be genuine.

Let the people deciding on your application see what you are about, especially the essay and in the people you choose for recommendations. Make an impression, but don't be

corny or contrived.

**7. Follow up.** Without being a pest, get in touch if you haven't heard from the school and should have. Mistakes happen in the process.

**8. Stand out.** Make an impression on an admissions counselor, others in the office and on the panel reviewing your application.

**9. Grades matter.** Other things are considered, but most admissions officials will tell you that grades are the best indication of the type of student you are - and the type of student they can expect you'll be.

**10. Take responsibility.** Admissions officials know when a student has.

*Jim Peterson has written broadly on career exploration, academic success and other education related topics for several national and trade publications. He was a school counselor and was formerly named "Counselor of the Year" in Montgomery County, MD, a large Washington, DC-area district. He is currently a writer for many education publications and websites, based in Lewis, DE.*

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# TIPS FOR WAITLISTED APPLICANTS

By Dr. Brittany Maschal

Some colleges and universities just can't admit all the students they'd like to in regular decision. Often, the result for students that schools would like to admit is only slightly more desirable than getting rejected: placement on the dreaded waitlist. Always let hopeful waitlisters know that getting admitted from the waitlist is not easy, but it is possible. After accepting a spot on the WL, many students just "sit" on the list—rarely do students continue to communicate with the school and go above and beyond in showing them that the college is their number one. The "sitting" method works for some students, and especially students at schools that take very few students from the WL. But, for students who want to increase their likelihood of being admitted, "working" the waitlist can do exactly that—work!

Before jumping into the waitlist strategies outlined below, it is important students deposit at their first choice where admitted, and get excited about the prospect of attending. I suggest taking advantage of admitted student days and other events that help students connect with their potential future classmates. These events are often very informative and fun, and help students take their minds off their waitlist status.

I also suggest that students, counselors, and parents get familiar with the available waitlist data. I have found the site College Kickstart very useful as they provide waitlist data from many top institutions and present it clearly and concisely, typically in tables.

Once a student has accepted their spot on the WL, deposited elsewhere, and familiarized themselves with the waitlist data, I suggest considering the strategies below. Not all of them here are new, but I have

tested the ones that are a bit outside of the box, and they work!

## Standard strategies and to-dos:

- I. Write a waitlist letter. This letter should contain information updating the school on what you've been up to both inside and outside of the classroom since the time you applied. Consider including:
  - A. A paragraph or two of "academic" updates. Spend some time talking about coursework and school projects, and make connections to future courses of study. You can even drop in related courses you'd like to take from the college/university you are writing to, like those you'd include in a (Why School) essay.
  - B. A paragraph or two of "extracurricular" updates. This would include school and non-school clubs, service commitments, and/or other leadership experiences you can highlight. Like the academic paragraphs, making connections to similar opportunities you plan to undertake at the college/university you are writing to would be nice additions. For example, if you talk about a new project you spearheaded as VP of your school's Interact Club, you may want to include that you hope to lead a similar project within a specific club or group at said college/university. Being very specific and naming the clubs or groups by name is important.



C. A paragraph that talks about the additional ways you have connected with and continued to get to know the college/university since you applied. This could include visiting (even if you've already visited campus), meeting with someone in admissions on campus or regionally, setting up an informational interview with a local alum, reaching out to your local regional alumni group (more on this below), or continuing to connect with your regional rep via email.

D. A paragraph that reiterates your interest in the school, and that if admitted, you will attend. If you are not 100% committed to attending, do not say so in the letter.

2. Send your waitlist letter to your regional rep. Ask them if they have any advice for you as a waitlisted candidate. Keep this line of communication open; do not email them every week, but stay in touch to continue to demonstrate interest.
3. Ask your counselor to call the admissions office and advocate for you, as well as provide any additional information they may have that will support your candidacy. Ask them to back up what they say on the phone in an email, too, if they have time and are willing!
4. Obtain and have an extra letter of recommendation sent, but only if the school welcomes extra LORs (some schools explicitly state on their WL docs they do not welcome or want extra LORs).

A teacher, coach, or someone else close to you who can speak to your potential contributions to the university could draft this letter.

5. Many students ask if it is helpful to get a note from well-known and/or famous people. These are helpful to send, but the answer is no unless the person really knows you or they are a very high-level donor with solid connections to admissions. If you think that a big name vouching for you will help, it generally doesn't as a stand-alone factor, and officers can see through these often brief and less than meaningful notes.
6. Make sure updated grades/transcript are sent promptly. Your grades should have remained the same or gotten better, not dipped. If your grades have gone down, this will not work in your favor.
7. If possible, visit the school and swing by admissions to reiterate interest. Sit in on a class, stay overnight, take advantage of any admissions events/programming you may not have taken advantage of the first time around.

I'm often asked if I think doing everything on this list is too much, and I do not—all these strategies are acceptable forms of demonstrating interest even when combined. Accepting your spot on the WL is a standard, required communication. Sending a waitlist letter, and even a follow-up email after a few weeks if a student has something additional to add that is worthy of sending (for example, an award at school, National Merit, a promotion at work, or admission to a selective internship/summer program) is not communication overkill. When a counselor calls a school on the student's behalf to advocate for them or help them have an extra letter of support sent, it's not viewed as bothering the school. Even if a student shows up on a campus visit and drops by admissions and says hello, they are not going to get penalized.

Now showing up and begging, pleading, showering everyone in the office with gifts, staying for two hours until someone will meet with them, or other over the top gimmicks or antics would be looked down upon, so make sure students know this type of behavior is not appreciated or welcomed. Ultimately, students should look back on being waitlisted and feel like they gave it their best shot.

*Dr. Brittany Maschal worked in admissions and student services at Princeton, Penn, and JHU, and is the founder of Brittany Maschal Consulting. <http://brittanyconsulting.com>. She can be reached at [bmascal@gmail.com](mailto:bmascal@gmail.com)*



# Five Mistakes Students Make Preparing for the ACT and SAT

By Vicki Wood



In the college admissions process, there are few tasks more intimidating—to students and parents alike—than the ACT and SAT. The fluid nature of college admissions means that policies and strategies have changed since the parents were in high school, and the hype surrounding these tests can cause students to make rash, fear-based decisions about their preparation. Here are five mistakes you can help prevent your students from making as they prepare for the ACT and SAT.

## 1. Taking an official test administration as a “practice” test

Some students believe they must take an official ACT or SAT prior to studying in order to get a feel for the test and a baseline score, but this is a foolhardy strategy. Official tests are stressful and costly, and subpar scores can cause additional anxiety. Admissions officers at colleges that require all test scores will invariably see these scores, too, and may wonder why the student scored substantially lower than in subsequent attempts.

Students should instead take a free, full-length practice test under timed conditions in order to determine their score range. Both the College Board and ACT offer free official practice tests on their websites, which students can print in order to simulate testing conditions. Test takers should only attempt the official ACT or SAT after they have studied and are confident that they are prepared.

## 2. Preparing too early...or too late

Believe it or not, there is such a thing as preparing too early. Sophomores should work on basic

reading skills and may complete the Question of the Day provided by the test makers, but they should not take timed practice tests and sections. There is a finite amount of official practice material available for both tests and students who begin studying too early, risk depleting these questions and tests.

A more common mistake is waiting too long to prepare. Students need more than a week or two to study for a multi-subject test, especially one that has such important implications on their future. Ideally, we recommend three to four months of preparation for the average student.

## 3. Studying for the ACT and the SAT at the same time

While many students are submitting both ACT and SAT scores on college applications, it would be a mistake to study for these two tests simultaneously. It is true that the tests are now testing similar content and in some instances are nearly identical in format, but the ACT and SAT still have subtle differences. For this reason, students should study for one test at a time. Once the student feels she has maximized her score on the first test (preferably in three or fewer administrations), she can begin studying for the other test, at which point she will find that her previous preparation for the original test will apply for the new test as well.

## 4. Reviewing the wrong material

It's natural to gravitate toward the material or subject area that we find the easiest to understand. I have always been strong in verbal courses, but

certain subjects in math can leave me feeling intimidated or unprepared. So when I began my ACT and SAT journey at PowerScore, I had to spend a lot more time relearning math concepts than I did studying grammar or reading. At first, it was puzzling and uncomfortable, but by immersing myself in the field that I feared the most, I became fluent in the math concepts on the tests. Now I thoroughly enjoy teaching ACT and SAT Math, mainly because I understand students' confusion and want to share the secrets I have learned with them.

Your students are likely to review the subject areas that they prefer, so you must encourage them to tackle that which proves the most difficult. There is no point in studying what they already know; it is only by addressing their errors and mistakes that they will learn from them.

### 5. Cramming the day before the test

High school students have been programmed to schedule their most intense day of study on the day before the actual test. If there is a Chemistry test

on Friday morning, it's pretty much a guarantee that most of the Chemistry students will be cramming on Thursday night. But imitating this behavior for the ACT or SAT would be a mistake. Students would be better off taking a cue from professional athletes, most of whom do not work out or practice the day before the competition. They give their muscles a chance to rest and rejuvenate, and a student's brain works much the same way. Cramming the night before a test can cause fatigue and poor performance, so it's best that students take the day off from a serious study the day before the ACT or SAT.

As the testing season for juniors begins, it's important to keep these common mistakes in mind. With a little research and some encouragement, students can get their preparation off to a positive start.

*Vicki Wood is with Powerscore Test Preparation. She can answer any questions you have about the SAT or ACT by e-mailing her at [vwood@powerscore.com](mailto:vwood@powerscore.com) or visiting their website at [www.powerscore.com](http://www.powerscore.com).*



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# Does character count?

Do colleges care about the “quality” of a prospect, and how should they measure it if they did?

By Jim Patterson



When Ari Worthman talks about how a student's character can pay off for them, he has a very vivid image in his head from a very rainy day in Florida.

He was a high school college counselor, and as he left his school one day, he noticed that a student who he was particularly proud of was standing in a drenching rain – holding an umbrella over the head of a big security guard who was directing traffic, both of them with huge smiles on their faces.

“This young woman was a top student – straight A's, challenging classes, high testing –but I worried that she didn't have a ‘wow’ factor to make her pop,” Worthman, now director of college counseling at Lakeside School, an independent school with two campuses in Seattle. “She wasn't a state-ranked athlete, or an amazing artist, or an internationally ranked mathematician. Rather, she was kind, selfless, thoughtful, and compassionate – qualities that can be difficult to highlight in the few short pages of a college application.”

But Rothman found a way to help.

“I had never seen a student do such a thing, but felt the compassion it reflected was worthy of mention. So, I told this story in my recommendation.”

The girl was admitted to some of the country's top colleges, and two admissions officials told Worthman the story caught their eye. One told him it was a deciding factor in admitting the girl.

He and others who work on college admissions say that sort of character quality should be more heavily weighted in the admissions process, but

there are various views about whether it is – or even if it can be.

## More than grades?

It is commonplace to hear advice for students suggesting that characteristics besides grades and test scores count in college applications – that admissions representatives look at how the applicant “gave back”, or their involvement in extracurricular activities and whether they were a leader or a good citizen.

Kristina Wong Davis, the provost for enrollment management at Purdue, says most schools use a “holistic admissions review” process that includes “all aspects of who a student is”.

“We read application material to achieve a sense of who this student is and if they would make a good member of the academic, social and cultural environments on our campus,” she says. “The review is about identifying those students who will be successful on our campus in all aspects of the experience.”

David Boisvert, vice president for enrollment management at Wilson College in Chambersburg, PA, says his school's approach to screening students is similar.

“We believe strongly in evaluating prospective students about their experiential learning outside the classroom too, in work experience, travel, and service to the community. The transcript doesn't always tell the story of a student's ability to succeed, and so we also may inquire whether their counselor

may know something that could support the student.”

And there have been organized efforts to highlight other characteristics. An article last year in *The Atlantic* magazine reviewed those efforts, including a more recent project called *Turning the Tide*, where “a broad coalition of college admissions offices have joined forces to collectively encourage high school students to focus on meaningful ethical and intellectual engagement”.

#### **That group says its three goals are:**

- Promoting more meaningful contributions to others, community service, and engagement with the public good.
- Assessing students’ ethical engagement and contributions to others in ways that reflect varying types of family and community contributions across race, culture, and class.
- Redefining achievement in ways that both level the playing field for economically diverse students and reduce excessive achievement pressure.

Meanwhile, Robert Massa, head of admissions for Drew University in Madison, NJ, has co-founded the Center for Character and Admissions, which is hoping to “define strategies and experiments that elevate character attributes in the admission equation.” Its membership includes representatives from some of the country’s top universities, and from SAT and ACT and public education and private schools.

Massa believes that it pays off for the student and the college if non-academic factors are given more weight in the process. He also cites research indicating that students who are screened with these measures do as well or better than other students.

#### **Just a glimpse**

But others believe that colleges will continue to focus on transcripts and test scores as their primary criteria for admissions.

“Some colleges and universities have done better in getting to know students on a more personal level in college visits and face-to-face interviews, encouraging personal essays, and letters of recommendation,” says Jana Karas, director

of counseling at Franklin, NJ, High School in Somerset, a former state counselor of the year. “This still only provides a glimpse into a student’s social-emotional preparedness for college, and it can sometimes be contrived because they can manipulate the admissions process.”

She says colleges have little incentive to look primarily at these other factors.

“At the end of the day, colleges are businesses, and the ability to identify students based on high academic achievement, as culled from course rigor and grades and standardized academic test scores, will remain the highest priority.”

Others also are concerned a system that measures these qualities will be manipulated by some.

“I do worry about trying to create a new system that will measure qualities that will supposedly make people better people,” Wesleyan University President Michael Roth told *The Atlantic*. “Because insofar as it becomes a new system, it will be gamed by people who already pad their resumes with all kinds of activities that supposedly show empathy, but really show a desire to get into schools where empathy is a criterion for admission.”

There have been efforts to measure these qualities fairly, Massa notes, and he and others hold out hope that while colleges will continue to measure traditional academic skills, they’ll give more attention to others. Some colleges have hired experts to determine how their admissions material can give them a better picture of a student beyond test-taking.

Worthman says he believes these traits are indicated with a simple test – whether the student is a “giver or taker”. “There are students who have those “wow” factors because they have sucked dry every resource in their community to enhance themselves – the amazing athlete who rose to the top through tons of one-on-one support from the coach, or the artist with incredible talent that pursued personal lessons, or the student who harnessed her school’s resources to become the top mathematician in the region,” he says.

“But what have they given in return? Are they collaborative? Do they use their talents for good, either by informally helping classmates who are struggling or even by volunteering their time at art programs that serve under-resourced segments

of the community? Developing talent inevitably requires seizing opportunities – or ‘taking’, for lack of a better phrase. But what’s being given back in return?”

In the end, how can counselors make certain that a student who they believe has strong non-academic qualities gets them noticed:

**The choices they make:** Showing a college strong character traits starts with demonstrating them long before the application process begins. Counselors can remind students early on that they will be judged – in college applications and in other things they hope to achieve – based on how they act, in big and small ways. Experts often say schools don’t do enough to teach and encourage character and non-academic qualities involving social and emotional health, and a counselor is a person to do just that.

**Letters of recommendation:** Experts say this is a place where these qualities can be most evident to an admissions staff, especially if they are on the fence about an applicant. Counselors can suggest to those potentially doing recommendations that they should highlight experiences they’ve had with the student that demonstrate these qualities. They can also let that type of student know they can perhaps subtly encourage persons writing letters that they’d like to promote those qualities. And if a counselor is writing a letter, they may want to take extra time to spell out these characteristics and give good examples, like Worthman’s involving the student holding the umbrella for the security guard.

**Essays:** Some admissions representatives note that there is a balance here that may be difficult for students to manage: on one hand they should not be shy about pointing out personal qualities that they genuinely possess that might be looked on favorably by college officials. However, they want it to sound genuine. One way, Worthman says, is to give concrete examples of such qualities and describe them “organically” rather than just “brag” about them.

**Interviews and visits:** To some degree, a student may have an opportunity to promote a strong character when they meet college representatives, and they can be coached to put their best foot forward. But Karas says it may be best if it is authentic and she and others worry about students who are over-prepared or don’t seem genuine. These



qualities are likely to be evident, again, if the student is reminded to give examples of them.

**Follow-up and small things:** A good way for this type of student to show such qualities is by doing thank you notes, recalling small things about an admissions representative or letting them know in the process that they are very interested and appreciate the office’s help. They may be able to indicate other qualities in small ways through their interaction with the school.

*Jim Patterson has written broadly on career exploration, academic success and other education-related topics for several national and trade publications. He was a school counselor and was formerly named “Counselor of the year” in Montgomery County, MD, a large Washington, DC- area district. He is currently a writer for many educational publications and websites based in Lewes, DE*

# Health Professions Your Students Can Start Now

By Elizabeth Drucker

Careers in the health professions are popular because they are interesting, lucrative, and many of them involve basic training that can involve little classroom or clinical experience. There are many health careers outside of medicine and nursing that are engaging and involve good people and interpersonal skills, attention to detail, and a willingness to keep an open mind and learn about the way health intersects with society. You may encounter students you advise who are looking for a rewarding career that doesn't require years of book learning. The health professions truly have something for everyone and every personality. Some people may be attracted to phlebotomy (drawing blood) because it is a fast-paced job that is easy to learn and involves putting people at ease during relatively painful procedures. Every skill level can be applied to health professions. For example, while a phlebotomist should have a somewhat outgoing personality, another one of your students might be more comfortable working as a veterinary technician where they deal with both sick and healthy animals, side by side with veterinarians at animal hospitals. Here are a few ideas for health careers that your students can start virtually right out of high school with much less training than would be required for a career in medicine, dentistry, nursing, or any of the other common health professions:

**Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or paramedic:** People who want to be EMTs often receive certification training at a community college where they shadow working EMTs and learn enough about medicine to qualify them as first responders. There are many different options for training and sometimes hospitals or fire departments also

offer courses. EMT hopefuls should be able to work under pressure and in fast-paced situations. They should also be somewhat good at science and math and able to calculate dosages of medications and take basic vital signs in emergency situations. **Pharmacy Technician:** This is a growing health profession where staff has the opportunity to work right alongside pharmacists at both hospitals and outpatient pharmacies. They answer the phones and process prescription refill requests in addition to maintaining order in the pharmacy.

**Phlebotomist:** Medical Assisting schools offer certification programs in learning how to draw blood from children and adults. This can be a useful certification to have when you are looking to obtain a position in a doctor's office as a medical assistant because doctors want to hire professionals who are competent in performing medical procedures including blood draws and other tests. Students should be patient and able to work with diverse groups of people and able to work under pressure in a fast-paced environment with a large amount of people that need to have their blood drawn. They should also have good manual dexterity and steady hands when they draw blood. And, of course, they shouldn't be squeamish about seeing blood.

**Medical Assistants:** there are programs for MAs all over the country where they teach students how doctors run their practices. Students learn a great deal about the field of medicine they work in and the job involves much more than taking vital signs and weighing patients at the beginning of their appointments. They learn a lot about medicine because they are usually the first people patients speak

to when they get to the doctor's office and the MA makes notations in the patient's chart about the chief complaint and symptoms he or she is experiencing.

**Behavioral/Mental Health Technician:** This position usually requires a high school diploma and involves on the job training usually in a psychiatric hospital or group home. BHTs run support groups for patients, help them reach their daily goals they have for themselves, and monitor the safety of the inpatient psychiatric unit. Workers in this field need to learn about all the various psychiatric disorders and how to safely monitor patients while promoting resiliency and mental health.

**Health Information Technologist:** In this position, workers maintain medical records and fulfill requests for these documents to be sent out to patients, physicians at hospitals and medical offices, and attorneys who need medical records for cases such as medical malpractice lawsuits. This career involves an associates degree at a community college.

The above careers are some of the hottest jobs in the medical field today. There truly is something for everyone. You can help your students in their search for the perfect career by learning more about these

and other health professions. Students with many skills and interests can excel in the health professions field. These fields offer room for growth, opportunities for learning and advancement, and a chance to interact with interesting people and make a difference in the lives of many people on a daily basis. Every city is unique in the health care educational opportunities that are available to your students, so it wouldn't hurt to make an effort to take stock of which programs are offered in your community and what your students can get out of it. It is never too early to practice for your student's careers and even towards the end of high school, your students can begin training for one of the above-mentioned healthcare positions such as being a paid or volunteer EMT. It's also important to note that these more entry level positions can lead to more involved and detailed health care professions such as going for the Registered Nurse (RN) degree, all the way up to medicine. These positions also offer an ability for your students to practice their interpersonal skills, including working with people in stressful situations. It doesn't hurt to have an extra certification on someone's resume, especially if you have a student who is applying to a nursing school, where they like to see that their applicants have an idea what the healthcare and nursing environment is really like.



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# Digital gaming offers new dimensions of opportunity

By Alireza Tavakoli



The digital gaming industry is in the midst of incredible growth, and students who want to enter that arena have a world of possibilities.

In 2016, the global games market earned about \$101 billion, according to Newzoo, a leading provider of gaming market information. That includes games played through personal computers, internet browsers, gaming consoles, tablets, and smartphones. In North America alone, 2017 revenues are estimated at \$27 billion. According to the Entertainment Software Association, nearly 66,000 people work in the U.S. digital gaming industry, and they earn an average annual salary of \$97,000.

It's an exploding industry with a broad spectrum of employment options, and students who want to study computer science have access to a wide array of opportunities. A digital gaming degree can help graduates find positions with major employers such as Microsoft or Nintendo, independent companies or even create their own mobile game applications. Graduates with a bachelor's degree can achieve success in the field, but a master's degree or higher often will offer better starting positions with better pay and benefits.

Digital gaming covers platforms from gaming consoles and massive online multiplayer platforms to tablet and smartphone apps. The tasks and skills required to create these games are as broad as the gaming platforms. In addition to basic computer programming skills, students will explore all the elements of game creation.

Designing interactive software is an important skill in and of itself. Students who master this type of

programming will be able to work on many different types of systems, including those outside the gaming industry. As students learn more about the process of designing and creating games, they will be exposed to and develop skills typical software engineers do not cover. This broad knowledge means graduates have an edge in multiple areas of computer engineering.

Some of the most exciting developments in digital gaming are the emergence of virtual reality and augmented reality games. Virtual and augmented reality used to be features only found in museums and educational activities. Today, they are becoming part of the digital gaming industry.

Virtual reality games allow the user to interact with an entirely virtual environment through the use of a special visor and other equipment such as sensor gloves. For example, a user could navigate a virtual rendering of the International Space Station and interact with the environment.

As research into virtual reality continues and more games are developed, users may one day be able to put their smartphones into a headset and play a game. In fact, now that Facebook has acquired the virtual reality programming company Oculus and announced the release of a virtual reality headset, we likely will see new Facebook-based virtual reality games and applications.

The University of Houston-Victoria in Victoria, Texas, is doing research on the cutting edge of virtual reality programming. Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Defense, the university is developing a way for humans in a virtual environ-

ment to interact with robots, which will take those commands and apply them in the real world. This has exciting applications for organizations such as NASA, where a human operator could use a virtual rendering of the surface of Mars to interact with a rover and choose specific samples based on the virtual environment.

Augmented reality games allow users to interact with virtual items in the real world. Pokémon Go is a recent example of an augmented reality game. The smartphone application was extremely popular in the U.S. and is still played by many gamers today. Pokémon Go paved the way for augmented reality to become more widely used. After the game's launch, other games soon were in production including a "Walking Dead"-themed app that allowed users to fight virtual zombies.

When looking at the advancements in virtual and augmented reality, it's possible that we may even see this technology used in making movies. The public already has access to equipment to create 360-degree panoramic pictures, so how long would it take to offer immersive film experiences that allow movie-goers to watch films from within the actors' virtual environment?

After looking at all the exciting advancements in virtual and augmented reality gaming and some of the popular games of today, it's easy to get excited about becoming part of the digital gaming industry. But great games take an equally great amount of effort to bring them to life.

## **Students considering pursuing a degree and career in digital gaming need to consider a few questions:**

### **What part of game development interests me?**

When students start out in an academic program, they will be exposed to many different aspects of game design. They will learn about coding, design, graphics, animation, modeling, story creation, narration, writing and other skills. Once they've gained experience in these areas, they will be able to choose what most interests them. Whatever their interests are, students should be prepared to study and learn as much as possible, because they will need multiple skills to be successful in the industry.



### **How can I prepare for a college program in digital gaming?**

Many high schools offer electives or extracurricular programs that train students in program writing and computer engineering. In addition, local universities may offer after-school classes or summer camps that feature elements of computer engineering. For example, UHV offers an after-school robotics class for high school students that teaches the basics of programming, especially programs that help the robots interact with the physical world, such as solving mazes, recognizing colors and moving objects. Students should find groups and activities that are relevant to their interests and take advantage of those opportunities.

The truth is there's much more involved in getting a digital gaming degree and working in the gaming industry than playing video games all day. Graduates will be part of a challenging, competitive field that requires constant learning and growth. From a game's first inspiration to its final launch, there are countless hours of work in programming, design, animation, art, story development, graphics and much more.

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# Getting On Board With Online Instruction

By Eran Weuler



I owe one of my most distinct memories of high school to a friend who helped me through my junior year precalculus class. I've always been pretty good at math, but during a particular stretch of the fall semester, I found myself struggling to grasp one of the concepts we were covering. This was back in the early 2000s, so I was still using a dial-up internet connection, and smart phones didn't yet exist. For some reason, I failed to realize that finding a tutor was an option, and there was no way I was going into school at 6:15 AM for my teacher's regularly scheduled extra help session. I would thus pick up the phone (yes, a "land-line", now commonly referred to with a mix of sentimentality and sarcasm) next to the desk in my room and call my friend Dan to ask for help with our homework. He was able to explain things effectively enough to get me to understand what was going on. (Thanks Dan!)

I didn't realize it at the time, but this was my first experience with remote tutoring.

Since then, technology has far transcended the telephone and has moved onto the screen. Indeed, no less than one-hundred percent of the tutoring I provide—which covers the SAT, ACT, and academic subjects like math and science—happens online. Relatively inexpensive pieces of hardware and software allow me to connect to and work with any of my students from anywhere in the world at any time. Sometimes, I sit back and reflect on how far we've come since the turn of the new millennium. My reverie, however, is always troubled by one stubborn fact: despite all the new resources available, relatively few students are tak-

ing advantage of online instruction.

Before continuing, it's necessary to clarify what I mean by "online instruction". Though the kind I and my colleagues perform happens in real time, live instruction isn't imperative. Indeed, even searches for very specific academic topics can yield an overwhelming array of recorded or otherwise well-structured content. Thus, "online instruction" can refer to live, recorded, or even text/graphic-based educational material. No matter the form, we're swimming in it.

But in place are several key barriers to the regular adoption of online learning modes. In many cases, parents and students suspect that learning while lacking physical proximity to the teacher is less effective than traditional in-person learning. They also believe that virtual tutoring or class sessions leave open too many opportunities for distraction. Still more skepticism centers around accountability: it seems more likely that students who are separated from their teachers by a screen will take their work less seriously, and that their teachers won't be able to evaluate the effort with which assignments are completed.

All of these concerns are understandable. Given the unique personality, academic strengths and weaknesses, work ethic, and learning capabilities of each student, they may even be well-founded. But more often, they reflect misconceptions that are at best flimsy worries, and at worst obstacles that discourage access to a helpful learning option.

I started tutoring students online in early 2012, when my colleague and current Method Test

Prep Director of Online Learning Elliot Bock helped introduce the software we needed to bring our tutoring online. At the start, even I had reservations. My first few web sessions seemed weirdly impersonal and somehow "unofficial". But I did my best to teach effectively, and soon enough, began to realize the positive impact I was having on my students, who were making real, measurable progress. Before too long, I and my other colleagues who took the online plunge understood: with a few minor adjustments to our approach and a few creative ways to gauge accountability (asking students how to explain their reasoning behind even questions they answered correctly, for example), our online sessions could be just as productive as in-person sessions, and yielded results that were just as positive to boot. Students actually got a kick out of seeing equations and verb forms appear on the screen in real time; likewise, they enjoyed the ability to collaborate using the real-time drawing tools we could make available. In our online multi-student classes, there was so much student participation (via a dynamic chat inside the virtual classroom) that we were astounded—absent the perceived judgment of their peers, online students were far less bashful about engaging in the discussion and offering answers. Moreover, the relationships we've been able to establish with students and their parents who have chosen to pursue online learning have proved just as fruitful as those we have long cultivated with the families we've worked with in person.

What strikes me most is that all of this takes place independent of location. Scheduling is often much easier, and no time is lost (either on the students' end or ours) to driving to houses or tutoring

centers. Most importantly, it allows the students access to the tutor who is truly right for the job. In many areas of the country, scheduling and geography can significantly impact the availability and quality of the tutor who ends up working with a student; with online sessions, such barriers are dissolved.

It's true that for some students, online tutoring is not ideal. Those students who struggle with ADD/ADHD, significant learning and processing disorders, or other learning differences may gain less from online sessions than from traditional in-person sessions. Sometimes, a mixture of the two formats actually works well. As with most things, it depends on the individual and should involve input from the parent, student, and tutor.

As counselors, you can help introduce the idea of online education to students who are seeking academic help or test prep outside of school. Many times, students are unaware that online instruction is a viable option, that it can provide just as much quality as traditional in-person education, and that it can vastly benefit their academic standing in the long run. Most new things in education require a certain degree of exposure and openness before they become widely accepted; online learning is just one of them. By simply raising the possibility of online tutoring, courses, and other modes of instruction, you can help your students take advantage of the full scope of resources that are available to help them succeed.

*Evan Wessler is the VP Education of Method Test Prep. He can answer any questions you may have about the SAT or ACT by e-mailing him at [evan@methodtestprep.com](mailto:evan@methodtestprep.com) or visiting the Method Test Prep website at [www.methodtestprep.com](http://www.methodtestprep.com).*



# How to Help Students with Analysis Paralysis

By Liz Funk

To an outsider, it's an excellent problem to have: a talented high school student has acceptance letters to multiple colleges that she is interested in attending. To that student, though, the multitude of options can feel dizzying. When faced with a number of choices with unique appeals high school seniors occasionally struggle with analysis paralysis - they have spent so much time and energy trying to figure out where to enroll that they cannot make a decision.

"Over the past few years, we have seen our admitted students apply to more and more institutions, which of course leads to more options available to them when it comes time to make a decision," says Janelle Holmboe, vice president for enrollment and marketing at Warren Wilson College in Asheville, North Carolina. "We have also seen an increase in students changing their mind; calling us back after they've decided to enroll somewhere else and asking if they can still attend Warren Wilson instead. I do think this speaks to the college-going culture, which is increasingly overwhelming and pressure-filled for young people."

With this in mind, encourage students to be methodical as they consider their options (especially so they don't have a situation where they make a choice and then change their minds).

Taylor Homeyer, an admissions counselor at Missouri State University, advocates making a tried-and-true pros and cons list. "I'm a big believer in 'pro/con' lists. Our mind naturally gravitates toward what we like and what we don't like, and finding a concrete, tangible, written source to

navigate those thoughts can be fantastic. One time I had a student that brought a yellow legal pad and had pages of pros/cons for three different schools on her campus visit. This allowed the student to easily communicate what she really enjoyed about each school and what the biggest turnoffs were."

Homeyer also recommends gently opening a line of dialogue with students who are stalled in their decision-making. "High school students can be prone to not share how they are feeling when it comes to the next step in life." He says that having an engaged counselor "can help the student open up and communicate how the student is feeling in regards to making a decision. More times than not I'd imagine, simply by communicating, the student will be able to orally navigate their own decisions by being prompted."

Dr. Caitlin Fass, a psychology professor at Mount St. Mary's University in Maryland, suggests that students can start the decision making process with their preferences. She encourages having this kind of dialogue with students: "What are the top five priorities you have in a college? Make the list. Are there any schools that can be eliminated because they don't meet all 5 priorities? Work from there. Checklists are amazing tools for decision making," says Fass.

Encourage high school seniors to use their love of social media in their research process. Allison McPeck, a counselor at Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts, encourages her students to look at the social media profiles of students currently enrolled at the colleges they are considering.

Says McPeck, "I encourage students to get on some group chats and to reach out to alumni. Reach out to current students! You're not going to get a better perspective than students who are there, in the day-to-day of things."

Once a student has narrowed their options down to two or three colleges, it may be a good investment to do another round of college visits. "Take another visit if you can. It's important to feel like you can see yourself there for at least four years. It's even better if you feel like you might live in the area after graduating and you want to be part of the community," says McPeck.

"I think that 'fit' or 'gut instinct' is a valuable part of the process since it can help a student deduce what their day-to-day life might be like," says Janelle Holmboe. "We've all had the experience when traveling of feeling like we could live in the place we're visiting—and the same experience the opposite way, where it's a nice place to visit but nowhere we'd like to live. You need to feel like the college you choose is somewhere you'd like to live."

Finally, encourage students to turn down the volume on their FOMO—"fear of missing out." In fact, it's doctor's orders. Says Dr. Fass, "Know that the 'fear of missing out' and feelings of regret probably won't be as strong as you imagine. Cognitive psychologists have been studying this for decades. They've found that we tend to think we'll regret big decisions more than we actually do, after the fact. When you decide on a college and go there, you'll likely embrace that college and justify why you went there."

*Liz Funk is a writer who has been covering the college search and college admissions since 2005. She runs a digital marketing and content strategy agency, Liz Funk Consulting, and she speaks at colleges around the country about mental health awareness for high-achieving college students.*

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# Helicopter Parents

How to Deal with Helicopter Parents During the College Essay Writing Process

By Kim Lyfian



On the eve before the Nov. 1 early application deadline, a friend called me in a panic.

It wasn't an emergency, but I couldn't bear another conversation about what parents on the Upper East side of Manhattan were saying about that school counselor, or college, or that I was wrong about her son's essay: What if he didn't get into College X because his essay lacked sophistication, or sounded like an immature 17-year-old boy?

It was late at night, and I didn't answer the phone. An urgent text followed: Was I available for a phone consult? I had already read the essay and given it a glowing review. Now what?

There was nothing wrong with the essay. In fact, her son's essay about the night he learned to "just let it go" while doing a stand-up routine in a NY comedy club, hit the mark; it sounded like an insightful 17-year-old boy wrote it.

At the deadline, my friend was a mess. I called her back. She said the pressure was too great. She was expected to do everything for everyone. She tried to back off, but she had to help. How could he turn this in? What did she do wrong? Despite my praise on her son's meaningful, heartfelt college essay that illustrated how much he had grown, through stand-up comedy, she had passed the essay around to other professional writers (she is a journalist) – and even to her therapist.

She heard this: It wasn't sophisticated. Immature. Just not good. Pedestrian. Colleges need more. He won't stand out. How would this get him into Stanford or the Ivies, she wondered? (He was never

going to Stanford or Harvard.... He was applying to SUNY schools!) She then got out her red pen and changed words to make it more mature. And she rewrote sentences to make it sound more sophisticated. Along the way, her son's voice disappeared. So did his self-esteem.

One counselor recently told me in an email, "A challenge I have is convincing parents that I read hundreds of essays a year, and I know what stands out, what resonates, what's forgettable, what's cliché, what will elicit eye rolls... trust us a bit more."

We have developed some good solutions for dealing with parents who overstep their roles with essay coaching.

First, we try to understand why parents overstep their role. In our experience, there are three reasons:

- 1. Fear:** Parents are afraid they missed something they should have done to help their children succeed. They would do anything to support their children, but since they don't know what to do, they get involved in unhelpful ways.
- 2. Lack of understanding:** Parents know very little about what a college essay is, how it fits into the larger application package or what admission officers are looking for.
- 3. Need for control:** Parents are used to micromanaging their children's decisions and assignments. They don't know how to step away.

We have found there are some respectful ways to support students and challenging parent's assumptions.

Above all else, we acknowledge parents' concerns, while sharing why we know what we are talking about. It's important to stay calm and confident; most parents will follow your lead.

I was able to calm my friend. And, after she stopped crying, I explained why he should submit his own essay – the original draft I had read before the team of well-meaning adults ruined it. And while I am not sure what happened beyond that conversation (I stopped asking...), I remained composed and focused on what was best for her son: feeling confident.

## Parent Involvement - Challenges and Solutions

Here are the most common issues we face, plus tips for addressing them with parents and students. When talking to concerned students and parents, consider sharing examples of students who chose similar topics and/or had similar writing skills to illustrate your point. You know what you are doing; by confidently supporting their editorial choices, you will be helping students tell their stories in their own voices and in their own words.

### Issue 1: Parent tells the child what to write about

**How to talk to the student:** Start with this question: What do you want readers to learn that they can't find out from the rest of your application? Focus on characteristics, not accomplishments. Then help the student identify a topic that illustrates what they want readers to learn. Chances are good that their parent's ideas don't speak to that characteristic.

**How to talk to the parent:** Share the student's answer to your question. Tell the parent that the topic their child chose is perfect because it illustrates that characteristic. Point out that any topic that illustrates the characteristic can make an effective essay. The topic need not be impressive, utterly unique or otherwise outstanding. The key word is effective. A college

essay has a job to do. The student needs a topic that will help the essay do that job.

### Issue 2: Parent over-edits the essay

**How to talk to the student:** Point out where and how the current draft sounds different from earlier drafts. We start with a low-stakes free writing activity to help the student recognize their writing voice. When an essay seems over-edited, we bring it out to show them what they sound like when they aren't trying so hard.

**How to talk to the parent:** Explain that admissions reps can't bear over-polished essays. This is one of their pet peeves. Share recent articles, listservs and other sources that address this issue. Praise the student's natural writing voice, and remind parents that admissions representatives expect essays to sound like they were written by teens.

### Issue 3: Parent questions your judgement

**How to talk to the student:** This is between you and the parent. Do not put the child in the middle. While the college application process may shine an unforgiving light on family dynamics, recognize what you can and cannot affect, and focus your attention accordingly.

**How to talk to the parent:** Remind parents why they hired you – for your expertise! Explain that you visit dozens of colleges, speak to countless admissions reps, and keep current on key issues in the field. Encourage them to voice their concerns, then point out why your approach works.

*Kim Lifton, president of Wow Writing Workshop, is a former journalist who keeps her finger on the pulse of the college admissions industry. A national expert on the college application essay, Lifton blogs for Wow and industry trade publications; she speaks at schools and industry conferences throughout the U.S. Wow is a national company that helps students, professionals and nonprofits handle any writing challenge. High school students use the Wow Method to write an application and graduate school admissions essays. Wow also trains professionals who work with students on the college application process. You can reach her at Kim@wowwritingworkshop.com.*



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# The Need to Lead

Colleges look for leadership, but it's not easy for every student, and there are other ways to impress

By Jim Paterson



Your students may now have something new to worry about as they apply for college admissions these days – evidence of leadership. And some are probably wondering how to get it and others are fearing taking on such positions won't be easy or come naturally.

College representatives and consultants say schools often seek such experience in prospective students. "We look for students who make a difference in their schools and communities, so tell us about your leadership activities," says the admissions office web site at Princeton. In a list of qualities that colleges seek in applicants, a popular College Board web site lists leadership first.

Some critics say, however, that colleges are emphasizing leadership experience without proof that it relates directly to college success, or success in life generally, and that it may be unfair to gauge students by attainment of those experiences.

Regardless, it's a significant concern, and counselors can help students tackle it.

## It's expected

"Admissions offices do look for evidence of leadership within college applications," says Nancy Grisesmer, an educational consultant in Oakton, VA, who writes about the college application process. "In fact, if you read between the lines, you'll often find questions on applications that have been designed to get at a candidate's leadership experience or potential."

"Yes, colleges value applicants who show lead-

ership," says Lisa Nelson, who helps students access college with Dunbar Educational Consultants in New Canaan, CT. "The ability to work with others is significant because it is an indication of the applicant's ability to connect with his or her peers."

In a lengthy article in *Atlantic* magazine, writer and scholar Tara Isabel Burton argues, however, that leadership experience is over-emphasized.

"Do we need a graduating class full of leaders?" she asks. "Or should schools actively seek out diversity in interpersonal approaches—as they do in everything else?" She notes that independent thinkers, or good team players may be as valuable – and that students from other cultures may not come from environments where only one concept of leadership is as valued or understood or where as many opportunities are available.

Nelson says your students need to be aware of this priority in admissions offices but counselors may have to help them understand that these experiences don't come only from student government or sports teams. "Leadership doesn't have to have a title to make it meaningful," she says. "It is more important for a student to focus on his or her contributions and experiences rather than the title."

In fact, says Jeff Fuller, former director of enrollment at the University of Houston, students should "brag about things they have done and overcome, large and small". That, he says, shows the sort of skills schools are looking for when they ask for examples of leadership.



### Not what's expected

Often, schools will value other skills and traits like initiative, creativity or resourcefulness, according to Rick Bischoff, vice president for enrollment at Case Western Reserve. He says colleges are interested in how you relate to peers, problem solve and how you approach learning so that you are "the type of student whom teachers love to teach".

"They'll take notice of that, too. You'll be a better college student."

And that, after all, is what colleges are looking for, experts say: students who will succeed in school and contribute to the college in some way. Seeking leadership skills seems to be one way to find those applicants.

Students should also recognize, Bischoff says, that not only should students be able to record these other efforts on application material, often teachers, administrators or advisers will take note in letters of recommendation and can talk about the work the student did, which might be as valuable as listing a leadership position in accomplishments.

Here are a few ways you can tell students to show these qualities that colleges may be looking for.

**Start an organization.** We've heard this before, but students may not be aware that this can be a relatively small group that is active and about which they feel passionate. One group of six girls simply began a

"Girl-power" organization where they raised money for less visible but valuable causes and became well known in the school for their effort. Other students have begun organizations about topics in which they are interested (a chess or film club) or a major they are considering (business, health or the environment). The key, Fuller says, is to show that the group counts and that the student got it started and worked hard at it.

**Smaller scale.** Baby-sitting requires a lot of decision making. Camp counseling positions show a student can lead. Even organizing a musical group or a study session, or being a key player in a significant classroom project can be mentioned.

**Active participation.** Sometimes vice presidents of an organization or committee chairmen (or even just members) who are hard workers can show qualities that are noteworthy, especially to adults who might be writing recommendations.

**Internships or volunteering.** Initiative here is key, and taking on responsibility. Students should show they sought out such an opportunity in a place where they wanted to learn skills – not just that they stumbled into a slot or got it from a neighbor.

**In writing.** Students who aren't comfortable leading a group, may find their voice with a student newspaper or literary magazine – or by starting their own blog on a legitimate issue or topic and building a following. Maybe broadcasting or theater



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is a way for them to show they can express themselves and engage others.

**Tutoring or helping a teacher.** Helping other students with their work shows mastery of a subject and leadership on a one-to-one level that is important. Perhaps teaching music or another skill. Assisting with a club for younger students is a great opportunity, or helping out a teacher can show valuable traits – and may lead to other help in the classroom and good recommendations.

### **A good citizen**

Nelson says that often showing that you support others – particularly someone in a difficult circumstance – is a trait that others value. Talking about or being actually involved with bullying prevention is a key example. Then, she says, let the college know about it.

“Perhaps they have led by example in the classroom with their tireless work ethic, had an ability to collaborate well with others, or willingness to forge their own paths and interests,” says Grace Mulliken, a former high school counselor who now works as an educational consultant in Westport, CT. “These potential leaders are not easily swayed by the crowd, have the capacity to envision things that their peers cannot, and have usually garnered the quiet respect of both teachers and their peers. This is the kid you want in your group project. As a school counselor, I often spoke about these characteristics in my letters of recommendation.”

Former Dallas area high school counselor and administrator Diane Wilcox says these efforts “often take more skills than more formalized leadership roles.”

“Instinctive leadership is an art and a gift. Colleges like to see evidence that an applicant can think on their feet and problem solve in all settings,” she says.

The key, she notes, is for applicants to “think about the type of student the college wants on their campus, and show them that’s the type of student they are.”

*Jim Peterson has written broadly on career exploration, academic success and other education related topics for several national and trade publications. He was a school counselor and was formerly named “Counselor of the Year” in Montgomery County, MD, a large Washington, DC-area district. He is currently a writer for many education publications and websites, based in Lewes, DE.*

## **COUNSELORS CAN HELP STUDENTS LEAD**

HOW CAN COUNSELORS HELP STUDENTS WHEN COLLEGES LOOK FOR LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE OR LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL IN APPLICANTS. THERE MAY BE SOME WAYS TO HELP THEM THAT ALSO MAY MEET GOALS OF YOUR OWN DEPARTMENT.

**Create opportunities.** Talk to your department or the administration about ways to provide a variety of students more opportunities to lead, whether its in tutoring programs, more and smaller extracurricular activities, expanded student government structures or as helpers in the classroom or in the school offices.

**Work with them.** Counselors can sponsor organizations that accomplish their tasks and give students an opportunity to lead – a support group for a specific student issue or a “leadership” organization for students who lack social skills. Find a group of quiet students who are known to work hard and bring them together and ask them to solve a nagging problem with your school culture. Suggest opportunities where students can lead by writing.

**Point it out.** Show your students the ways that they may be developing leadership skills and don’t know it (see main story) or other skills as a hard worker, creative thinker or resourceful summer job employee that might be noteworthy to schools.

**Tamp down worries.** Some parents and counselors say students are becoming worried about their leadership gap – one more thing that busy and stressed students have to think about in high school. Assure them that colleges will appreciate other things about them and that they’ll find their niche.

**Make a point.** When you are writing letters of recommendation or talking to a college representative, point out the less traditional leadership skills a student may have, and make the pitch for an awareness of such characteristics.

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# Keep Calm and Carry On

By Connie Voss



**When the future is uncertain, and isn't it always? This counselor has learned to keep her calm and help her students carry on in stride.**

A once little known British poster said: "Keep Calm and Carry On." It was printed by the British government before the start of World War II as one in a three-part series of "Home Publicity" posters. It could just as well have been published by Heidi Clark-Smitley, Director of Guidance and College Counseling at Catholic Central High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

"I tend to push the fact that it's not where you go to college, it's what you become," says Heidi. "It's not the university; it's the student. Success in life is not contingent on where you go to school." She says she offers this advice to students to deflate the hypertension of perhaps not getting into their 'ideal' university of choice and to give them the confidence of knowing wherever they go they can get an education and find employment opportunities.

But what about applying the "Keep Calm and Carry On" motto to counselors themselves, when they get stressed and hypertensive?

Heidi is very conscious of the topic of self-care. She warns, "We have to be thoughtful about the things we do as counselors and know how to set boundaries." She goes on to say how important it is to spend time with our own families and to drop the daily "baggage" at the front door as much as we can. She has found that not checking emails throughout the evening and not giving out

personal cell numbers are two good ways of setting boundaries. Concentrating on physical fitness is another. She added, "I also find it healthy to go to the school plays, concerts or fundraising events. This allows me to rub shoulders with my peers, parents, kids, donors and others in the community. Rather than having an out-of-body experience, it is an out-of-context experience that allows others to see you as a fellow educator, parent and human being rather than always being known for your role as 'the counselor.'"

"Instead of grading papers, we are measuring individual by individual to see how the kids are transitioning through those developmental years, she says. "Like any profession, it's not as easy as it sounds. We do it because we love adolescents and because they are in a developmental stage that has pains and joys unique to that phase in life. We often get caught up in the mental and emotional problems we encounter and it can take a toll on our personal time and wellbeing. It's just human to take it home with us. If we are not genuine, kids pick it up on it."

During a typical day, Heidi says her primary thoughts center around a list of priorities. Since there is power in face-to-face contact, she determines who she should see in person, who to email or who to phone. However, her priority is always to be physically present for students who need her, and to follow-up on any issues or conversations they may have had. She also frames out her course of advising or secondary planning, career development, college planning, college search and college fit as it pertains to each student.



### **Making a difference one at a time...**

"Take care of you, take care of your family and take care of this place," is a motto promoted by the school's principal, Greg Deja. It may sound narcissistic to take care of yourself first, but if you are unhappy and unhealthy, it makes it more difficult and less effective when you are trying to assist others in finding their way. Heidi expounds on the subject, "That's why flight attendants tell adults to put on the oxygen mask first then hand it off to the child. It also reminds me of the starfish story about a young who boy picks up stranded starfish on the beach after high tide. A passerby asks what difference it could make to throw them back into the ocean one at a time when hundreds of starfish lay stranded and could die. As the boy threw another starfish back into the ocean he answered, 'It made a difference to that one.'"

Grand Rapids Catholic Central High School has ridden tides of change since its founding in 1906. It is located in the once vibrant downtown area that descended into neglect and disrepair but is now being reinvigorated. Even so, students come from several counties to attend the school. Some are from wealthy and middle-class families, others are from low-income families and still others have been homeless. Heidi says regardless of the student's socio-economic status, she sees the same insecurities. They all are searching to know who they are, what they are good at, what their future holds and how they can achieve whatever success means to them.

Teachers and counselors are also aware of "student stress" being put on teens by society, parents or

peers. Heidi says the heightened level of anxiety is a real element. Studies show that today's parents are far more involved in their children's lives and are often putting tremendous pressure on their kids to have the grades and extracurricular activities that look good on a college application.

High schools are also seeing a trend of "grade grubbing"—wanting teachers to give kids one or more points higher on tests because GPA is so important. To counteract this, she and her staff try to reassure kids in their junior year that they are more than a number and they are not defined by their test scores or their GPA. They tell students, "Colleges want to know the authentic you, what you are passionate about and what issue gets you going so you can help make a difference."

Heidi's best advice to students and to fellow teachers and counselors is to keep a sense of humor. She says her husband taught her that and she didn't know laughter would be the key to their marriage. She explains, "The older I get the more I see the importance of humor. I recently darted off to a conference wanting to look my best. That's when I realized I was wearing two brightly colored shoes but each was a different color. Panicked, I called my husband to bring me a match for either one. But it was too late so I decided to sack vanity and use the moment. I told the students the different colors represented the choices they will have to make about which college to choose."

Heidi is also a big proponent of the gap year for some students so they can explore what interests them most rather than being under pressure to select a major prematurely. She worked for a pittance one year in Honduras teaching English as a second language and says it proved to be far more valuable to her future education than she ever imagined.

Heidi and her husband have three boys; one is now a teenager and will be attending high school. This will surely be another test for her to practice her motto to "keep calm and carry on."

*Connie Voss has been writing professionally for over 40 years. Her body of work includes a wide range of technical articles and human interest stories. She researched and wrote *St. Thomas High School in the 20th Century*, an account of the first 100 years of a well-known Houston, Texas boys school. She writes a monthly column on advertising and marketing and assists a variety of industrial firms with their advertising communications.*



# If You Could Give Your Seniors Only One Piece of Advice About College...

...what would it be?

By Dan Lipford

One candidate would surely be to keep their grades up because GPA is the prime determinate of a student's admissibility. Another might be to focus their efforts on schools to which they'll have at least an outside chance of admission, and because most schools publish average GPAs and mid-50 percentile SAT/ACT scores for students admitted, that's easy to do. And another might be to work hard on finding a good educational and experiential "fit"—a school at which they can both do well and feel comfortable.

Every one of those are extremely good pieces of advice, but is that the best we can do? What if we could give them advice—a roadmap to follow while they're in college—that would give them an enhanced chance of feeling, after they graduate from college, engaged in their employment and having high assessments of their well-being, including their satisfaction with their relationships, their physical health, their communities, their economic situations, and their senses of purpose?

That sounds about as unlikely as finding a unicorn grazing in your front yard, doesn't it? But it turns out that something very much like that roadmap exists, and the cartography is very strongly supported by data from the Gallup-Purdue Index.

The Gallup-Purdue Index is a joint project of Gallup and Purdue University, and its 2013 stated goal was "to conduct the largest representative study of college graduates in United States history." Initially, 30,000 graduates were surveyed, but that's now over 60,000.

According to [gallup.com](http://gallup.com), The Gallup-Purdue Index

is the first measure to evaluate the long-term success of graduates in their pursuit of great jobs and great lives, as measured by the Gallup Employee Engagement Index and Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index, respectively.

So what were the college-related things that made significant differences in students' lives after they graduated? Here's a clue: "what" mattered a lot more than did "where."

Based on their reported satisfaction with their relationships, their physical health, their communities, their economic situations, and their senses of purpose, here's how the "where" played out for the students who reported themselves to be thriving in all five areas (as a percentage of all students surveyed):

GROUP	%
All graduates	10
Graduated from schools ranked among the top 50 national universities by USN&W Report	11
Graduated from schools ranked among the top 50 liberal arts colleges	13
Graduated from a public school	10
Graduated from a private, non-profit school	11

(Note: Only for-profit schools did significantly worse than the above.)

That makes it clear that if your students want to feel that they're living highly fulfilled lives after they graduate, where they go to school makes surprisingly little difference, and certainly not enough

difference – if happiness is what they're after – to justify spending big bucks to attend Highly Selective University.

Of course, some students equate future happiness with future earnings, but there's a body of evidence that indicates that future earnings might depend at least as much – and maybe more – on the student as it does on the school that student attends.

In their 1999 report for the National Bureau of Economic Research, Stacy Berg Dale and Alan B. Krueger, while admitting that "students who attend colleges with higher average tuition costs tend to earn higher incomes years later," wrote that the findings of their research

...cast doubt on the view that school selectivity, as measured by the average SAT score of the freshmen who attend a college, is an important determinant of students' subsequent incomes. Students who attended more selective colleges do not earn more than other students who were accepted and rejected by comparable schools but attended less selective colleges.

And Dale and Krueger say that's in perfect concert with the conclusion of Shame Hunt in an unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation for Yale University in 1963. In what Dale and Krueger refer to as "seminal research," Hunt wrote,

The C student from Princeton earns more than the A student from Podunk not mainly because he has the prestige of a Princeton degree, but merely because he is abler. The golden touch is possessed not by the Ivy League College, but by its students.

So, if it's higher income after graduation that matters most to your students, while higher tuition trumps average SAT scores, all other factors being equal, we need to advise students to be careful about their values. First, they—and you—would have to be "media-deaf-and-blind" not to know that a sizable number of celebrities with astronomi-

cally high incomes are so miserable that they end up being drunks and/or drug addicts and/or dead from their own hands. And for every one of those people, there are undoubtedly thousands more who would readily trade their elevated incomes for living a highly fulfilled life. Second, the Gallup-Purdue survey makes it clear that a heavy debt load after graduation is every bit the bumper one might expect it to be, making paying higher tuition now in the hope of higher income later in life a questionable proposition.

So, you might well ask, where's the unicorn? We've shown you how little "where" matters, and now here's the part that does matter, the "what":

Graduates reported greater senses of well-being if they did any one of these things while they were in college, and the more of them they did, the greater their senses of well-being after graduation were:

- developed a relationship with a mentor
- participated in or did a project that lasted a semester or more
- had a job or internship that was directly connected to their chosen field
- involved themselves deeply in a campus organization or activity (not a little involved in a number of them)

So what's the single best piece of advice we could give to seniors/rising seniors about college? Our candidate is that if they want to feel fulfilled in life after they graduate, to focus on schools where accomplishing those four things would be easiest to do — and to do all four of them, without fail — regardless of where they go to school. And if only just a few of them took that advice, there'd be that many more happy people in the world, which would be a very pleasing return on investment.

*Dan is an Educational Consultant, Master Tutor, teacher, and Director of Special Projects for Score At The Top Learning Centers and Schools. He loves learning, empowering students, writing educational material and blogs, and reading almost everything. On occasion, he writes for pleasure, and his poetry has appeared in multiple small press journals. His Master's degree is in Speech-Language Pathology, and he lives in Coconut Creek, FL with his wife, Barbara, and their Cairn Terrorist (Opps: Terrier) puppy, Ash. He can be reached at dan@scoreatthetop.com or via his website at www.scoreatthetop.com*



# How to Identify Extracurricular Overload

By Dawn Marie Barbyte



A quick glance at many young people's calendars reveals how busy today's teens are as they head off to a myriad of extracurricular activities. While some kids thrive with an abundance of extracurricular activities and consider it the best part of their day, others suffer the effects of overscheduling, such as eating disorders, depression and anxiety.

There is no doubt that extracurricular activities play a positive role in your student's development, and can help shape well-rounded individuals. However, too much of a good thing can sometimes be a precursor to burnout. Leslie Rescorla, PhD, Director of the Child Study Institute and Psychology Chair of Bryn Mawr College says "childhood needn't be an endless treadmill of productivity. Unstructured time can be very rewarding, kids require downtime." We need to appreciate tremendous stuff happens in unorganized activities. Ensure that there is a time when your child's calendar is clear- time, which belongs to him and no one else. Today unstructured play is under siege as the push for achievement reigns. In the rush to offer kids an edge we are denying children the opportunity to use their imaginations.

"One must also be cognizant that extracurricular activities in moderation are advantageous to development if kids are enjoying them, they offer a wide range of invaluable life skills", says Ellen Smith. For example, talents can flourish, teamwork in competitive sports promotes cooperative skills and they can boost social skills as kids strike up friendships.

Many educators and psychologists caution that the greatest hazard for this generation of kids

isn't that they are missing out, but that they over-programmed. As counselors, we need to be able to determine when enough is enough. In striving to give teens an edge, many kids today go overboard. Help teens avoid the trap of thinking they need to book every waking moment with activities because they take away from the free time that is why being a teenager is so great. In arranging a diverse menu of activities, all with the best of intentions, you may fail to notice your student's plate is already full. Students continue to be pushed into activities because of their parents desire to have them involved in something, not necessarily their desire to be involved. When scheduling extracurricular activities for your student, ask yourself: What is my student missing? Who am I doing this for? According to Ellen Smith, "Counselors need to listen closely to their students, if your student is unhappy and complaining that they don't get to do what they want, it's time to reevaluate your student's schedule."

It's paramount to understand, however, that the amount of scheduled activity students enjoy varies widely. Ms. Smith explains, "Some kids may thrive on a schedule that others find too stressful. Conversely, some youngsters will be bored by a lifestyle that others find comfortably low key." How do we know what is enough to keep our children stimulated and what is too much that they miss out on the carefree days of adolescence? Just how much of your students time should be scheduled and programmed?

First, before signing your student up for the next activity, talk with them and ask a few questions:

- ✓ What is your favorite thing about this (class,

sport, or event)?

- ✓ What do you wish you had more time to do?
- ✓ Do you really want to be involved in this?
- ✓ If yes, why?
- ✓ What are you willing to give up in order to be involved in this activity?

Secondly, Ms. Smith says, "Moderation should be key as you help your students set up their schedule." Consider that when students are overscheduled they are bound to feel overwhelmed which may have unintended consequences like the potential for stress disorders and burnout. Ms. Rescoela cautions if you see the following signs in your student's behavior, it's time to reconsider your students' bustling schedule:

- ✓ Does your student seem tired all the time?
- ✓ Do they have sleeping or eating problems; either too much or too little?
- ✓ Is he irritable or agitated?
- ✓ Are there complaints like frequent headaches and stomach aches?
- ✓ Is schoolwork slipping?
- ✓ Is there an inability to complete homework on time?

If you see these signs, which can be the hallmarks of a stress disorder, sit down and talk with your student to discuss concerns and see what can be cut back to reduce pressure. If an activity adds lots of stress to your student's life, it may not be for them.

Some tips to avoid extracurricular overload and ensure that your students are on the right track academically:

- ✓ Help students set and make their priorities clear at the onset. Their grades should come first.
- ✓ Help them adjust priorities if a club was only joined to make their college application more desirable. Ask students if this is something they really wish to be a part of or it is simply to increase appeal on their college applications? Make sure that the extracurricular activities your students are involved in are related to fields and hobbies they wish to pursue and don't serve as fillers on

college applications.

- ✓ Help students make smart choices! Is this specific activity going to help with a specific goal? Ask students to reflect on whether or not the extracurricular activities they are involved in are helping them achieve their goals.
- ✓ Discuss proposed activities at length and write down the time commitment needed, the amount of practice involved and how it will impact your student's life. Clearly weigh the pros and cons by making a list and discussing each at length. Does your student understand the effort needed?
- ✓ Help your students manage their time by writing down all school, social and extracurricular activities on a calendar and review often. Update regularly as school projects are assigned.
- ✓ Ask your student if this is something they are really enthusiastic about or feel pressured to do? If your student is particularly busy one week with school assignments, missing softball practice isn't the end of the world.
- ✓ Talk about the pitfalls of competition with your student. Try to emphasize winning isn't everything!
- ✓ Let your student know nothing is written in stone! If your student is feeling stressed out and wishes to quit for any reason, let them know they can come talk with you and adjust their schedule.

To determine if your student is overscheduled, ask them the following questions:

- ✓ Are you enjoying the activity?
  - ✓ Are you learning through your involvement?
  - ✓ Are you participating in this activity because you genuinely want to or do you feel pressured to?
  - ✓ Are you able to keep grades up despite your involvement?
  - ✓ Do you have time to socialize in your schedule?
- If the answers to any of the above are no, it may be time to reevaluate participating in that activity.

*Dawn Marie Barhyte is a widely published freelance writer and former educator who continues to touch lives of young people through her writing.*

# School Counselors + Virtual Reality = A Formula for Success

By Angela Cleveland and Robbi-Je Wathen



Did you know that school counselors across the nation are quickly becoming influential advocates for using virtual reality in education? School counselors are in the unique role of implementing virtual reality across the K-12 spectrum to address a variety of distinct needs. They support students as they enter the school, when selecting courses, and helping them to find post-secondary success. School counselors are discovering that a full spectrum of student needs can be met with the support of virtual reality apps.

## Building Understanding of Students' Backgrounds

When new students who have a unique background enroll in a school, it can be difficult for some staff and students to fully understand what their worlds were like prior to moving to the district. These differences can involve moving from a rural to an urban community or entering a school district as refugees from a war-torn country of origin.

School counselors strive to build empathy and understanding so students and staff understand new students' life experiences and can be sensitive to their needs. Virtual reality provides a platform to have an immersive experience that leads to an understanding of the lives of others. One popular app school counselors are using is Global Nomads Group (GNG VR Lab), which shows the lives of three young people from different parts of the globe. This VR lab is compatible with the affordable, widely available Google Cardboard viewer.

GNG VR Lab offers free curated VR content and accompanying lesson plans. According to Global

Nomads Group, "The real benefit of VR as an educational tool lies in its ability to promote active learning. Research has shown that while we only remember about 20% of what we hear and 30% of what we see, we are able to remember up to 90% of what we do or simulate, which tells us that that teaching through VR is considerably more effective than many conventional methods."

## Adapting to a New School

Transitioning to a new school can be stressful for students. Whether students are transitioning to the next grade level or are new to the district, change about the unknown can cause some students (and families) to worry. School counselors are using Cardboard Camera, which is compatible with the Google Cardboard viewer, to take free 360-degree photographs of classrooms. Sharing these photos is easy and allows students and families to not just view but to have an immersive experience in the setting.

School counselors report that families and students feel more comfortable and confident starting the school year, transitioning to a new grade level, and managing other school-based changes when they are given a thoughtful introduction and know what to expect. Virtual reality platforms like Cardboard Camera provide the ease and versatility for counselors to support students and families during these transitional times. If a picture is worth 1,000 words, a virtual reality experience must be worth 10,000 words!

## College Visits at Your Fingertips

The college application process has become increasingly streamlined due to innovations like The CommonApp, Naviance, Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success, and Common Black College Application. Technological advances have allowed colleges to expand their geographic applicant pools. In fact, your student's geographic diversity is a growing topic among college admissions counselors. The Ivy Coach writes about it in this article.

Students who previously might have limited their post-secondary options to local schools are being encouraged by their counselors to cast a wider net to consider options beyond their backyard. Organizations like Accepted to School provide a free platform for school counselors to connect students in middle and high school with college admissions officers across the nation. The demand for information about lesser known universities is increasing. How can school counselors be expected to know everything about all these universities? How can they help students with limited financial means know what the campus is like? How can students and families know if the college is the right fit?

One answer to all these questions comes in the form of Virtual Reality (VR). Many colleges have VR tours on their websites and on various applications such as YouVisit, Campus Tours, and ECampus-Tours. Universities have teamed up with Google Cardboard and other low-cost VR players to up the ante and give students and families a realistic view of their campus. Some schools are even sending students and counselors VR players with a QR code linked to their VR content. Counselors are using VR-compatible Google Street View to provide information about what the community surrounding the school is like. This immersive experience can make a big difference in where a student applies.

Students are applying to more and more colleges each year. It's not always possible to tour each one. School counselors often report that the greatest benefit of using VR in the post-secondary selection process is that it provides students and families with financial limitations the opportunity to experience no-cost college visits. VR is expanding options and increasing opportunities for a cost-efficient college degree.

Are you interested in learning more about how school counselors are using virtual reality? Are you looking for some free resources? Check out Counselors for Computing!

*Angelo Cleveland has 15 years experience as a school counselor. She consults for the National Center for Women & Information Technology's Counselors for Computing. Angelo received the "2017 NJSCA School Counselor of the Year" award. Learn more about her at [www.angelocleveland.com](http://www.angelocleveland.com).*

*Bobbi-Jo Wathen is a school counselor in Hartford, Connecticut. She is an advocate for STEM education, and she supports school counselor career guidance that integrates computer science with every area of interest.*



# You've Earned It! The Secret of Self-Esteem

By Dawn Marie Barlyte



All counselors are concerned about how to prepare youngsters for the world they will face as adults. Will they be able to conquer peer pressure, get into a good college, or find a well-paying job?

Popular opinion is that the future of most young people is determined by the level of their self-esteem. High self-esteem is vital to a student's success and the cornerstone of a positive attitude towards life. Many of us have received the message that whether or not our students develop positive self-esteem is up to us. However, self-esteem is not something we confer upon a student. It is cultivated by the quality of experiences and relationships students are exposed to.

Schools can certainly influence these. With healthy self-esteem, a student possesses a powerful tool that can help them feel capable in the face of frustration, defeat, and stress. Students with high self-esteem have a can-do attitude and accept life's ups and downs graciously. A solid foundation of self-esteem is fundamental to create the drive to excel. However, what many of us have come to believe about self-esteem is deceptive. Feel good self-esteem has pervaded our schools for decades. Many of us have come to believe self-esteem is enhanced through praise, regardless of performance. In a rush to give our students a healthy dose of self-esteem some adults go too far to offer accolades. This can oftentimes backfire. What has often been missing from the self-esteem equation is the bedrock upon which self-esteem depends—actual accomplishments and personal qualities.

"Competency-Based" self-esteem centers on teaching students the skills and behaviors that will enable them to effectively master their environment. It is earned through the student's actions, achievements and demonstrated competencies. Many schools believe indiscriminate praise is necessary for kids to feel good about themselves. Building kids' self-esteem has become an increasingly confusing business. Some say praise, praise, and praise. More recently, other experts are saying we should back off on the flattery. Caring adults want each child to feel confident and unique. However, there is a growing concern among child development experts that we are going overboard.

The belief that high self-esteem is the foundation for emotional health and success began back in the 60's. There have been a myriad of studies to date on the relationship of self-esteem to academic performance, prosocial behavior and juvenile delinquency. Everyone was jumping on the "I'm special" bandwagon, from policymakers to educators. Advisors and teachers were told to pump up kids' self-esteem. But a Columbia University study revealed that excessive praise could actually make a child feel less confident. Moreover, when a child's self-esteem isn't based on actual skills and achievements, children remain dependent on the evaluation of others.

It doesn't take kids long to realize that all praise may not be justified. A student who is praised too much may fall into the great expectations trap. These young people feel that the only way they can be accepted and loved is to keep performing at higher levels. Too much praise can also set up a fear-of-failure scenario. Kids become so dependent

on the approval of others, they may be afraid to take risks. Scared that they won't be able to do a task perfectly, they shrink from action.

Studies conducted by the University Of Virginia suggest that healthy self-esteem emerges from accomplishments, hard work and achievement.

"Earned self-esteem" is based on success in meeting the tests of reality.

It is hard won, develops slowly, but is stable and long-lasting. Self-esteem enhancement programs are now trying what they call "external to self" activities, which are not self-oriented and yield healthier results.

Researchers maintain positive self-esteem develops as young people focus on external pursuits and receive timely feedback following meaningful activities.

Too often, well-meaning adults gush with praise until it becomes meaningless. Students can tell if praise is excessive or undeserved. They may come to believe some adults have low standards. If everything a student does is labeled as being terrific, they may be unprepared for the real world where others don't go out of their way to commend. By offering praise indiscriminately, you are doing a disservice

to your student. Students need and deserve realistic feedback about their accomplishments to become cognizant of their strengths and weaknesses. According to Jack Canfield, president of The Foundation for Self-Esteem, adults can accomplish more by giving "timely, specific and accurate feedback."

While encouragement and acceptance are vital to a growing child, total indulgence, acceptance and lack of frustration can be damaging. Child development experts agree youngsters need to experience failures to develop a sturdy, competent self-esteem. Feeling competent is synonymous with self-esteem. After-all self-esteem is strengthened when an obstacle is overcome. If we've learned one thing, it is that praise needs to be tied to genuine achievement if it's to have any lasting effect. To help students blossom and develop healthy self-esteem we need to pull back and allow them to handle life's trials and tribulations as well as find solutions independently. The sooner students learn failing is a natural part of life, the more they will be willing to test their abilities. This builds a sense of mastery, a precursor to high self-esteem. We are forever being confronted with tasks that present a challenge so why should we shield our children from facing obstacles?

Allowing students to face routine challenges



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prepares them for life's inevitable demands. When a problem is solved, a feeling of accomplishment flourishes, building the confidence that if a similar problem arises again, it can be met and overcome. Self-esteem thrives on successes. It's also vital to encourage your child to be as self-reliant as they are able. To truly boost your students' self-esteem you need to do a little less and let them do a lot more. Students of all ages need to feel a sense of responsibility to mature, feel capable and independent. By imparting responsibility it will become easier to reinforce the positive and give timely feedback.

Finally, self-esteem does not equal selfishness. Doing for others is as important as doing for ourselves. We can instill this virtue early on.

Whether we do errands for an elderly neighbor or collect food for a food pantry, these meaningful activities will bring a sense of pride, accomplishment and healthier self-esteem.

While a high self-esteem may not protect your students from all of life's challenges, it can provide a key to reach their full potential. What best gives a student high self-esteem is a genuine appreciation of both their personal qualities and accomplish-

ments as they grow. High self-esteem does not guarantee that a student will be successful; However, it does offer a solid foundation, which can be relied upon in times of challenge. While there is no magic formula, here are some guidelines.

#### Ten tips to help boost your students' self-esteem:

- Be a positive role model
- Encourage your students to take risks
- Give choices and encourage good decision-making
- Avoid rushing in too early to fix a situation
- Be specific with praise
- Praise effort as well as outcome
- Appreciate your students' interests
- Affirm students' altruistic efforts
- Support your students' strengths
- Help your students discover talents

Following are some strategies to work on self-esteem with your students:

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- Encourage students to focus on achievements rather than failures. Remind them that everyone excels at different things, and that they should focus on those things they do well and cheer others for their success. If a student does fail at something, prompt them to review what they did right, where they fell short, and how they can do better next time.

- Prompt students to try new things and give themselves credit.

Help them experiment with different activities to get in touch with talents and gifts.

- Help students edit those thoughts that are negative and leave them feeling inferior.

- When students are unhappy with something they can change, encourage them to work towards that goal. If it is something they have no control over, help them work on accepting it.

- Help students set reachable and realistic goals. Encourage students to break bigger goals into smaller steps to boost their sense of competence and accomplishment.

*Dawn Marie Barbate is a widely published freelance writer and former educator who continues to touch lives of young people through her writing.*



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# Scholarship Watch

By Jason Bullock



We recently surveyed the readers of our Fall 2017 issue and asked you what you would like to see more of in the magazine. The number one answer was information on Scholarships available for your students. Going forward we will feature a number of scholarships available in each issue. The only requirement we have on the Scholarships we will publish is they have to be available to use at any U.S. College.

## 1. Order Sons of Italy in America

**Leadership Grant:** Applicant must be of Italian heritage and be a full-time student attending or planning on attending an accredited four-year institution who has demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and a distinguished level of scholastic achievement. Recipients will be officially recognized in May at the SIF's National Education & Leadership Awards (NELA) Gala in Washington, DC. Monetary awards are presented directly to students' academic institutions in accordance with eligibility requirements.

Minimum Award: \$5,000/ Maximum Award: \$25,000

Deadline: February 28

Contact: Sons of Italy Foundation, (202)547-2900, [scholarships@osia.org](mailto:scholarships@osia.org), [www.osia.org](http://www.osia.org)

## 2. E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship:

Applicant must be the child or grandchild of an active or deceased member of the American Postal Workers Union; the parent or grandparent must have been a member in good standing for at least one year preceding application or death. Selection is based

upon academic record, personal qualifications, SAT Reasoning or ACT scores, and total family income. Relatives of APWU elected National Officers are not eligible. Number of awards = 5.

Award Amount: \$1,000

Deadline: March 31

Contact: American Postal Workers Union, (202)842-4268, [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org)

## 3. Utility Workers Union of America

**Scholarship:** Applicant must be the child of an active member of the Utility Workers Union of America. Selection is made by the National Merit Scholarship Corp.

Minimum Award: \$500/ Maximum Award: \$2,000

Deadline: May 31

Contact: Utility Workers Union of America, (202) 899-2851, [rfarley@ufficio.org](mailto:rfarley@ufficio.org), [www.uwua.net](http://www.uwua.net)

## 4. National Oratorical Contest

**Scholarship:** Applicant must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident under 20 years of age, must be attending high school or junior high, and must compete in the American Legion oratorical contest at the national level. Award must be used at a college or university in the U.S. for actual school costs, including tuition, room and board, fees, and books. Number of awards = 54

Minimum Award: \$1,500/ Maximum Award: \$19,000

Deadline: December 2018

Contact: American Legion, (317)630-1249, acy@legion.org, www.legion.org

**5. Coca-Cola Scholarship:** Applicant must be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, U.S. permanent resident, temporary resident, refugee, asylee, Cuban-Haitian entrant, or an humanitarian parolee planning to pursue a degree at an accredited U.S. post-secondary institution. Applicant must have a minimum 3.0 GPA and be an incoming freshman. Selection is based upon leadership, character, and merit. Number of awards = 250

Minimum Award: \$4,000/ Maximum Award: \$20,000

Deadline: October 31

Contact: Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, (800)306-2653, scholars@coca-cola.com, <http://www.coca-colascholarsfoundation.org/apply/>

**6. National Health Service Corps:** Applicant must be a U.S. citizen or national enrolled or accepted into an accredited school in the U.S. as a full-time student. Average of 147 awards given per year.

Deadline: April 27

Contact: Health Resources and Services Administration, (800)221-9393,

[www.hrsa.gov/index.html](http://www.hrsa.gov/index.html)

#### **7. Morton Gould Young Composers**

**Award:** Applicant must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, or an international student with a student visa, and be under the age of 30. Applicant must submit a completed application form; one reproduction of a manuscript or score; biographical information including music studies, background and experience, and a list of compositions to date. Number of awards = 35

Minimum Award: \$250/ Maximum Award: \$2,500

Deadline: March 1

Contact: American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) Foundation, (212)621-6327, concertmusic@ascap.com, [www.ascapfoundation.org](http://www.ascapfoundation.org)

**8. Benjamin Eaton Scholarship:** Applicant must be a foster, adoptive, or birth child in a licensed foster home and a member of the National Foster Parent Association. Number of awards = 5

Award Amount = \$1,000

Deadline: March 31

Contact: National Foster Parent Association Inc., (253)853-4000, info@nfpainc.org, [www.nfpainc.org](http://www.nfpainc.org)

#### **9. LULAC National Scholarship Fund:**

Applicant must be a United States citizen or legal resident who has applied to or is enrolled in a college, university, or graduate school, including two-year colleges, or vocational schools that lead to an associate's degree. Three types of awards are available: National Scholastic Achievement Awards, applicant must have a minimum 3.5 GPA and if student is an entering freshman, a minimum ACT score of 29 (SAT Reasoning score of 1350) is required; Honors Awards, applicant must have a minimum 3.25 GPA, and if the student is an entering freshman, a minimum ACT score of 23 (SAT Reasoning score of 1100) is required; General Awards, grades and academic performance will serve as indicators of potential; however, emphasis may be placed on the individual's motivation, sincerity, and integrity, which can best be revealed through a personal interview and in the personal essay. Need, community involvement, and leadership activities will also be considered.

Minimum Award: \$250/ Maximum Award: \$2,000

Deadline: March 31

Contact: League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) National Educational Services Centers, Inc., (202)835-9646, [scholarships@lnesc.org](mailto:scholarships@lnesc.org), [www.lnesc.org](http://www.lnesc.org)

**10. Ellis W. Hawley Prize:** Awarded for the best book-length historical study or dissertation on the political economy, politics, or institutions of the U.S., concerning its domestic or international affairs from the Civil War to the present.

Award Amount: \$500

Deadline: October 3

Contact: Organization of American Historians, (812)855-9852, [awards@oah.org](mailto:awards@oah.org), [www.oah.org](http://www.oah.org)

# Why Helping Students Choose Career Pathways are More Important than College Exploration

By Syreeta Kumarvitch



For many high school students, the view of the school counselor is to help them get into college. With changes in our workforce, school counselors find that their students need to obtain a postsecondary education to reach their goals. More so, many school counselors across the nation may be faced with state standards for college applications and acceptance. There is a total disconnect here, meeting the needs of students while matching state standards. How are your students truly benefiting from college counseling education?

## Why Career Exploration is More Important

We may hear the story of a student who pursued a college education and graduated with a degree in education, but ended up with a career in business. Or the college graduate from art school who now holds a career in nursing. These may sound far off and distinct, but students are finding that within their four years of postsecondary education, the job market changes. More so, some employers see a bachelor's degree as a symbol of the skills needed to complete a postsecondary education, rather than focusing on the academic matter.

In a study conducted online from CareerBuilder by Harris Interactive in 2013, 36 percent of all college-educated workers said they wished they had chosen a different field. Between enrollment and graduation, students may find changes in their desired career field - but are they choosing one that is best for their skills or based on monetary and security concerns? These should be balanced with the help of a school counselor, but students should have

a working idea of what career field they want to pursue before even graduating high school. Within the first two years of postsecondary four-year degree programs, students have the opportunity to explore different elective coursework - if they are undeclared. These electives may help students solidify their career choice and field, based on their aptitudes.

## College and Career Guidance and Counseling Programs

Even the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education of the U.S. Department of Education review *College and Career Guidance and Counseling* recommends a seemingly 50/50 approach addressing career development and college exploration. Mostly in the academia requirements, career guidance and counseling programs will:

- Work with parents and students in reviewing academic curriculum requirements
- Consider and arrange advanced placement or dual enrollment credits
- Guide students in preparation for standardized college admissions tests
- Review all options for financial aid and postsecondary financing.

## In supporting career development, these programs and school counselors could:

- Help students create career portfolios

- ❑ Arrange job shadowing, work placement, and community-based learning experiences
- ❑ Organize workshops, classes, or focus groups on job skills and personal development.

Apart from preparing students for college, what work is being done to help students discover their strengths for career choice? We often hear about Colleagueboard and Naviance, but what face-to-face time do students receive by counselors or others on the topic of career development?

In a drafted position statement, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) reviews this exact role:

Collaborating with students, families, educational staff and the community, the school counselor works to ensure all students select a postsecondary path to productive citizenry (e.g. military, career technical certificate or two-/four-year degree program) appropriate for the student.

What is "appropriate for the student" isn't always the most revered statement, as evidenced earlier. Are school counselors even tasked with enough time to provide accurate career counseling services? The topic of role advocacy and time management for school counselors has been a long struggle as some are seen as disposable and administrative at best. Above all, it is the role of any school counselor to recognize that success in student development comes from the intertwined growth in the career, academic, and social/emotional domains.

The National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) has developed college and career readiness counseling guides for school counselors at all levels. Elementary and middle school counselors focus on six components of college and career readiness while high school counselors attend to eight, adding college and career admission processes and transition from high school graduation to college enrollment. At all levels, school counselors are urged by the NOSCA to address the following: college aspirations, academic planning, enrichment and extracurricular activities, college and career exploration and selection, assessments related to college and careers, and college affordability planning.

Discover more: *ACA's College and Career Counseling Tools*

School counselors are expected to become leaders

and models in college and career readiness. As key components of schools, it is their role to take charge on this learning for students and to collaborate with teachers and principals in making changes school-wide.

*Syrenna Komonovitch is a school counselor in New Jersey and editor of [OnlineCounselingPrograms.com](http://OnlineCounselingPrograms.com) where she creates counseling education and career resources for a variety of professions and populations. If you are looking for school counseling resources and cannot find them, email her at [skomonovitch@online-counselingprograms.com](mailto:skomonovitch@online-counselingprograms.com).*



CONFERENCE	LOCATION	DATE
Miami National College Fair	Miami, FL, Doubletree by Hilton Miami Airport and Convention Center	February 25, 2018, 12:00-4:00 p.m.
St. Louis STEM College and Career Fair	St. Louis, MO, St. Louis University, Busch Student Center	March 4, 2018, 1:00-4:00 p.m.
Syracuse National College Fair	Syracuse, NY, SRC Arena Onondaga Community College	March 15, 2018, 9:00-12:00 & 5:00-8:00 p.m.
Upstate South Carolina National College Fair	Greenville, SC, Furman University - Timmons Arena	March 15, 2018, 5:00-8:00 p.m.
Charlotte National College Fair	Charlotte, NC, The Park Expo and Conference Center	March 18, 2018, 12:00-4:00 p.m.
Tampa National College Fair	Tampa, FL, Tampa Convention Center	March 18, 2018, 12:00-3:00 p.m.
Rochester National College Fair	Rochester, NY, Rochester Riverside Convention Center	March 18, 2018, 1:00-3:30 p.m. & March 19, 2018, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Raleigh National College Fair	Raleigh, NC, Raleigh Convention Center	March 20, 2018, 4:30-7:30 p.m.
Buffalo National College Fair	Buffalo, NY, Buffalo Niagara Convention Center	March 21, 2018, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 - 8:30 p.m. & March 22, 2018, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Baltimore STEM College and Career Fair	Baltimore, MD, Coppin State University - Physical Education Complex	March 22, 2018, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Atlanta National College Fair	Atlanta, GA, Georgia International Convention Center	March 25, 2018, 12:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
West Michigan National College Fair	Grand Rapids, MI, DeVos Place Conference Center	March 27, 2018, 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. & 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Hartford National College Fair	Hartford, CT, The Connecticut Convention Center	March 28, 2018, 9:00-11:30 a.m. & 6:30-8:30 p.m. & March 29, 2018, 9:00-11:30 a.m.
Metro Detroit National College Fair	Novi, MI, Suburban Collection Showplace	March 28, 2018, 6:00-8:00 p.m. & March 29, 2018, 8:30-11:30 a.m.
Springfield National College Fair	West Springfield, MA, Eastern States Exposition	April 9, 2018, 9:00-11:30 a.m. & 6:30- 8:30 p.m.
Dallas/Ft. Worth National College Fair	Irving, TX, Irving Convention Center at Las Colinas	April 9, 2018, 5:00-8:00 p.m.
Montgomery County National College Fair	Gaithersburg, MD, Montgomery County Agricultural Center	April 10, 2018, 9:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. & 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., & April 11, 2018, 9:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Austin National College Fair	Austin, TX, Palmer Events Center	April 10, 2018, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Providence National College Fair	Providence, RI, Rhode Island Convention Center	April 10, 2018, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

CONFERENCE	LOCATION	DATE
Boston National College Fair	Boston, MA, Boston Convention & Exhibition Center	April 12, 2018, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. & 6:00-8:30 p.m. & April 13, 2018, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Memphis National College Fair	Memphis, TN, Agricenter International	April 12, 2018, 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. & 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Houston National College Fair	Houston, TX, NRG Center	April 12, 2018, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. & 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Prince George's County National College Fair	Hyattsville, MD, Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex Center	April 13, 2018, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Las Vegas National College Fair	Las Vegas, NV, University of Nevada Las Vegas - Cox Pavilion	April 16, 2018, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. & 6:00- 8:00 p.m.
Ventura / Tri-County National College Fair	Ventura, CA, Ventura County Fairgrounds	April 17, 2018, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
San Diego National College Fair	San Diego, CA, San Diego Convention Center	April 19, 2018, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. & 6:00-8:30 p.m.
Columbus National College Fair	Columbus, OH, Greater Columbus Convention Center	April 21, 2018, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
New York National College Fair	New York, NY, Jacob K. Javits Convention Center	April 22, 2018, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Cleveland National College Fair	Cleveland, OH, Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland	April 22, 2018, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Orange County National College Fair	Anaheim, CA, Anaheim Convention Center	April 22, 2018, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.
Honolulu National College Fair	Honolulu, HI, Hawaii Convention Center	April 24, 2018, 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. & 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Inland Empire National College Fair	Ontario, CA, Ontario Convention Center	April 24, 2018, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
New Jersey National College Fair	Secaucus, NJ, Meadowlands Exposition Center at Harmon Meadows	April 25, 2018, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. & 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Los Angeles National College Fair	Pasadena, CA, Pasadena Convention Center	April 26, 2018, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. & 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.
San Francisco National College Fair	Daly City, CA, Cow Palace Arena and Event Center	April 28, 2018, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.
Nashville National College Fair	Nashville, TN, Nashville Music City Center	May 6, 2018, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Denver STEM College and Career Fair	Denver, CO, University of Denver - Gates Field House	June 3, 2018, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
San Francisco National College Fair	Daly City, CA, Cow Palace Arena and Event Center	April 28, 2018, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.
Nashville National College Fair	Nashville, TN, Nashville Music City Center	May 6, 2018, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Denver STEM College and Career Fair	Denver, CO, University of Denver - Gates Field House	June 3, 2018, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Please check with show organizer to confirm dates, location and times or for further information



## Feedspot recently recognized **LINK for Counselors** as one of the top Blogs/Websites for Counselors (we were #5).

There were some other great blogs/websites that were recognized that we thought would be of interest to our readers so we have listed some of those below:

### 1. Confident Counselors

[www.confidentcounselors.com](http://www.confidentcounselors.com)

About Blog - We are a group of school counselors, psychologists, and social workers working together to bring resources to our colleagues. This was made for you. Confident Counselors is a monthly roundup of resources, products, best practices, articles, comic relief, blog posts, give aways and ideas in action.

### 2. The Corner on Character

[www.corneroncharacter.blogspot.com](http://www.corneroncharacter.blogspot.com)

About Blog - I'm a school counselor, character coach, and author in Frisco, Texas who hopes that you'll find something that will positively inspire, intrigue or influence you while you're here.

### 3. Simply Imperfect Counselor

[www.simplyimperfectcounselor.com/blog](http://www.simplyimperfectcounselor.com/blog)

About Blog - Simply Imperfect Counselor was made for school counselors, education bloggers and mamma's who want to raise em' right! If you love kids, education, and mental health, you will feel right at home here. So, kick up your feet, grab that coffee and stay a while! On this site, you can expect to get up-to-date, usable information and resources related to school counseling and parenting kiddos.

### 4. Exploring School Counseling

<http://exploringschoolcounseling.blogspot.com/>

About Blog - I love to learn and I love to share! Much of what I know about school counseling has been learned through trial and error in the everyday experiences of working with students, teachers, and families. I am forever grateful to my mentors and colleagues who have shared advice and their best practices with me. It is my desire to "pay it forward" to offer ideas, resources, and encouragement to others.

### 5. Counselor Up!

[www.counselorup.com](http://www.counselorup.com)

About Blog - Hi, I'm Rebecca Atkins! I'm a school counselor & central office administrator. On my blog, Counselor Up, I share tips on organizing your comprehensive school counseling program, lesson plans, group ideas, and individual counseling tips. Counselor Up! is a place to share some of the ideas, organizing tools, and planning for a comprehensive school counselor program!

### 6. College Counselor Traci

[www.counselortraci.com/blog](http://www.counselortraci.com/blog)

About Blog - My Name is Traci, And I Am The Direct Product Of An Un-mazing Teacher And Un-mazing Counselor Who Believed In Me When No One Else Did...

And I Plan To Pay It Forward In A Big Way. On This Website You Will Find Tons Of Resources To Refresh Your Counselor Life!

### 7. Hatching Results

[www.hatchingresults.com/blog](http://www.hatchingresults.com/blog)

About Blog - Hatching Results provides training, consultation, grant writing and program evaluation to support school counselors, administrators and school districts in designing, implementing and evaluating school counseling programs. We teach, empower and support those who use data in an effort to improve efficiency and effectiveness, leading to improved outcomes for students.

### 8. Connected School Counselor

[www.connectedschoolcounselor.com/blog](http://www.connectedschoolcounselor.com/blog)

About Blog - Hello, I'm Judi. A mom, school counselor, creative and entrepreneur.

I'm here to help school counselors thrive through creating Connection, Clarity & Self-care. I help school counselors get organized & practice self-care.

### 9. The Extraordinary School Counselor

[www.extraordinaryschoolcounselor.blogspot.com](http://www.extraordinaryschoolcounselor.blogspot.com)

About Blog - I have been a school counselor since 1997 and have been blessed to work at every level, including high school department chair. I have worked in three states and for six school districts. Currently, I am the Supervisor for the 3rd largest school division in VA. This is a blog that is full of information, resources and insight to help today's school counselors become extraordinary!

### 10. Counselors' Corner

[www.hsca-counselorscorner.blogspot.com](http://www.hsca-counselorscorner.blogspot.com)

About Blog - A Blog of views and opinions from school counselors about the counseling profession.

### 11. Counselor Clique

[www.counselorclique.com](http://www.counselorclique.com)

About Blog - Hi, I am a High-school counselor, connector, idea-sharer, caffeine addict.

### 12. SchoolCounselor.com

[www.schoolcounselor.com](http://www.schoolcounselor.com)

About Blog - SchoolCounselor.com was created in 1999 by Russell Sabella, PhD for the purpose of advancing solution focused counseling and technology literacy among counselors. School counselors and other educators can explore free resources, and learn from our video tutorials.

### 13. School Counselor Stephanie

[www.schoolcounselorstephanie.com/blog/](http://www.schoolcounselorstephanie.com/blog/)

About Blog - With over 20 years of teaching and counseling experience, I am currently a bilingual school counselor in a Central Texas public school system. This website addresses current issues in the school counseling world! In my monthly posts, I will provide helpful tips and links to enhance your counseling.

### 14. High School Counseling Corner

[www.tomahawkscounselingcorner.blogspot.com](http://www.tomahawkscounselingcorner.blogspot.com)

About Blog - A resource for students in grades 9-12 from the first day of high school until the day they earn their diploma.

# Paying for college

There are huge numbers of scholarships, grants and other prizes available to all students. Financial aid and scholarships aren't just for the valedictorian or varsity quarterback.

By following these tips, you can increase your chances of tapping into the billions of dollars available every year to students just like you!

- Step 1** Fill out the FAFSA ([www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov))
- Step 2** Research and apply for private scholarships
- Step 3** Supplement with loans if necessary
- Step 4** Repeat steps every year!

**All this financial aid jargon have you confused? Here's a vocab lesson:**

- **Grants:** A grant is a financial award given to a student for the purposes of paying for all or part of college expenses. A college grant does not have to be repaid by the student.

- **Scholarships:** A financial aid award that does not have to be

## Helpful tips as you fill out the FAFSA Application:

- ▶ Read all directions slowly and thoroughly.
- ▶ Note your state and school deadlines for filing financial aid. Apply early, if possible, before you even know if you're accepted to a new school.
- ▶ Estimate your income if you are unsure of the actual amount.
- ▶ Do not use the term 'N/A' or leave a question blank. Both of these responses can slow the filing process.
- ▶ Make sure you sign or e-sign all submitted documents.
- ▶ Keep copies of your financial aid documents for future FAFSA filing.
- ▶ For more information, check out: [www.finaid.org/fafsa](http://www.finaid.org/fafsa).

repaid. Scholarships are generally made based on an applicant meeting certain eligibility criteria.



- **Loans:** Financial aid awards that the student or parent borrows from a lender, the school or other third party. Loans must be repaid by the borrower according to the terms of a promissory note, usually with interest.
- **Work-study:** A work-study program allows a student to earn money by working part time during the school year as a component of their financial aid package. These jobs are usually on campus.



### Read more!

Get more tips on how to pay for college at [LINKForCounselors.com](http://LINKForCounselors.com)

# Tips on How to Read Your Award Letter

## Cost to Attend

- Letters with full disclosure will break down university estimated costs that include: room/board, tuition, housing/meals and even materials/fees for a total cost of attendance.
- Know the rules of the scholarship program before eliminating housing/meal plan costs; some scholarships require students to live on campus.
- Inquire about average course materials/fees that may be hidden. It can cost \$200+ in textbook fees alone for one course.
- Look for program premiums where applicable. These may not appear until stated on the first bill.

## Scholarship Aid

- Many colleges only provide merit-based scholarships for the first year or make it a practice to renew scholarship aid at lower rates in subsequent years. Before assuming scholarships are renewable, understand the renewal criteria and rates for upperclassmen. Colleges offering renewability or scholarship awards to upperclassmen can be more affordable options in the long term.
- Universities can reduce or rescind an academic merit-based award based on final graduated high school transcripts rather than locking in a scholarship early with incentives to improve grades/test scores by high school graduation.
- Scholarship aid deducted from university cost provides the net price to attend—this is the true cost—use this figure for financial comparison purposes. Remember to include room and board fees if the awarded scholarships require it.
- The Pell Grant or other forms of aid that are usable at any university should not be included in the net price.

## Federal Financial Aid

- All U.S. citizens who have a social security number and filed taxes are eligible to receive some form of financial aid as determined by FAFSA results.
- Schools may showcase the lowest possible out-of-pocket costs by using the tactic to package more loans than a student is actually eligible for.
- The Pell Grant is based on financial need, but many schools may base it on national averages (rather than identifying appropriate student need through FAFSA) and automatically apply to your bottom line, even if you're ineligible to receive it.
- The Federal Direct Loan will be broken out into a subsidized or unsubsidized allotment. A single lump amount may be provided because allocation varies from student to student.
- The Federal Parent PLUS Loan may deceptively list a much greater amount of PLUS loans, regardless of eligibility, in order to cover the outstanding balance and make it appear as if no out-of-pocket costs remain.
- Schools may award work-study when job placement is far from a guarantee.
- A transparent university will include the low-end of what a student can receive in federal aid, so that the remaining balance calculation gives the most accurate view of cost.

## Estimated Remaining Balance

The remaining estimated balance (or bottom line) is common among award letters. As you consider this number, be cautious: just because you see a \$0 out-of-pocket cost from a college's award letter doesn't mean that's what you will actually see on your first statement.

# Involve your parents

Choosing the college that's right for you is most likely the biggest decision you've faced. It's a decision that will shape your future and impact the rest of your life.

### Lean on your 'rents

Don't make the decision alone. Ask your parents for help and support in making your college decision. Your parents make important decisions every day. Their wisdom and experience can be a useful tool in sifting through college pros and cons.

### They have experience

Parents only want the best for their child. Providing honest and sincere guidance on decisions you are making about your future will give you confidence you are making the right choice. Plus, they have even more right to feedback if they went to college themselves. Sure that was a while ago—but they know how the system works and can give great anecdotal tips about campus activities, the school's location and the overall college experience.

### Who knows you best

Parents know you best! Dissuading you from one choice, in favor of another, is only to help you accomplish the goals you're setting out to achieve in life. They want to ensure the "real" you will love

the school you attend and find many outlets for success, academically and socially.

### They are financially involved

Although we're talking about the next four years of your life here, parents may be helping you pay for it! That's yet another reason you should consider their opinion. They see college as an investment in your future, but it's also coming out of their savings account—so it's also an investment in their eyes.

**Try this activity: have a friend or relative be the mediator and ask you and then your parents the same questions:**

1. Where should you go to school — near or far away?

YOU: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR PARENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

Write out your answers without discussing them—then do a big reveal. Talk about the answers—were they different? Were they the same? Having a talk about

where and why you disagree is a great step toward making the right college choice. In the end, all your parents want is for you to be happy. Keep them in the loop, and they'll help you make the informed decision you'll be happy with.

2. What is your top choice university and why?

YOU: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR PARENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What kind of major should you have?

YOU: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR PARENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

# Take a college tour

Sure, you can tour a campus online these days. But there's nothing better than a campus tour when you're trying to get a feel for the college or university. In order to make the most of your college tour you have to be prepared. Follow these steps and you'll be a college tour pro!

## Be prepared

Research its outstanding programs, faculty-student ratio, educational mission — even its mascot. Know the competitive sports teams and major rivals. Prepare yourself with all of the pertinent, public info about the college.

### SCHOOL NOTES:

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## Read while you wait

Once you arrive on campus, check out the bulletins, pick up a copy of the college newspaper or magazine and don't forget to grab a few brochures from the admissions office. This will help familiarize you with the campus basics, so you can focus on more in-depth questions while touring.

### Questions to ask the tour guide:

- Why did you choose this college?
- What was your best experience here?
- Why did you stay after freshman year?
- What's your plan for after graduation?

## Ask questions

Sometimes the excitement of the tour can lead to lots of distractions, which means you may forget to ask questions. Be sure to create a list of questions before the tour and keep them handy the day of. Reference it regularly to make sure you've got all the answers. If a question hasn't been addressed, ask it!

### YOUR QUESTIONS:

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## Talk to students

Some of your best feedback will come from students who are actually at the college! They are living

the life you may live everyday, so who better to give you insight on the day-to-day activities on campus? Visit the campus coffee shop or commons and ask students what the campus is really like (It's OK to leave the tour guide and/or parents behind on this one!)

## While on the tour

Your tour guide will be an actual student at the college you are visiting, so be prepared to ask questions.

## After the tour

Write down five impressions of the school. Consider the campus personality, diversity of the student body, the size of the lecture halls and student interaction. These little mental reminders will help you compare colleges later.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

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## Find your match

Get matched up with your perfect college at **LINKForCounselors.com**



# Consider a two-year college

You're on the last leg of your high school education about to head out on your own and take on the world. One of the most important decisions facing you is your education and your career plans.

You can be anything you want to be...the possibilities are endless. The first step though, after thinking about the careers you may want to pursue, is deciding what kind of training and education you will need to achieve those goals.

Here are some of the educational options available to you:

## 1 Community college

Those who go to community college obtain a general academic education that can help you get all your core courses out of the way and prepare you for a four-year school with a specific major. This education typically takes two years and can provide you with a solid base of academic knowledge that you can then apply to a number of different career paths. So if you don't know what you want to do when you grow up, that's OK. You can check out classes that sound interesting and find out if the career suits you.

## 2 Technical school

Technical school, sometimes

also referred to as vocational school, is almost the complete opposite of college. Rather than receiving a generalized education, students who enroll in a course of study at a technical school take very specific classes that prepare them for a particular job (for example: culinary arts, massage therapy, office management, cosmetology, fashion design, or information technology). Although vocational classes are typically found in community colleges, there are also a large number of technical institutes that provide this kind of training.

There is no "best" or "worst" choice; both of these educational possibilities has advantages and disadvantages. However, in order to determine which path is the right one for you, you must first consider your potential career path and the ensuing requirements.

### Keep a few things in mind:

If you're not sure about what you want to do for a living, or which career you'd like to pursue, community college may be the best option. This is because college allows you to "try on" different disciplines and see which one fits best.

If you know exactly what you want to do, perhaps a technical school is the right choice. This is particularly true if the career you're interested in requires hands-on technical knowledge and experience. One of the great aspects about a technical school is the amount of practical experience you will obtain during your course of study, which will directly translate to the job.

What if you're not sure about what you want to do? Some of you may already know exactly which career path you want to pursue. However, if you don't know, don't worry — you're not alone! It may take a while for you to decide and that's OK. Talk to your parents, friends, teachers and counselors, and tell them about some of the career choices you're considering or ask them for suggestions.

Taking some time to really think about what you want to do and what will make you happy is just as important as deciding where you'll go to make your dreams happen.

*Excerpted from "What school is right for you" by Anne Chaconas, director of admissions counseling for PowerScore Test Preparation ([www.powerscore.com](http://www.powerscore.com))*



## BAYLOR INSTITUTE FOR AIR SCIENCE

**Location:** Waco, TX

**Website:** [www.baylor.edu/aviation](http://www.baylor.edu/aviation)

**Year Founded:** 1845

**Type of Institution:** Baylor University is a private christian university that blends nationally ranked interdisciplinary research with an international reputation for educational excellence.

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 15:1

**Tuition Costs:** \$21,000

**Room & Board:** \$6,000

There is only one choice when you are searching for a professional aviation program coupled with a stellar education from a world-class, faith-based university. At Baylor University's Institute for Air Science, we offer you an aviation Bachelor's degree along with opportunities to enjoy a fulfilling college experience and student life on a tradition-rich campus. Soar to new heights and discover Baylor's one-of-a-kind spirit of community and faith!

**Telephone:** 254-710-3563

**Email:** [bias\\_office@baylor.edu](mailto:bias_office@baylor.edu)



## CENTRAL ARIZONA COLLEGE

**Location:** 8470 N. Overfield Road,

Coolidge, AZ 85128

**Website:** [www.centralaz.edu](http://www.centralaz.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1962

**Type of Institution:** Community College

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 15:1

**Institutional Designation:** Accredited by Higher Learning Commission

**Tuition Costs:** \$86 per credit hour for Arizona residents / \$170 per credit hour for out of state residents

**Room & Board:** [www.centralaz.edu/reslife](http://www.centralaz.edu/reslife)

For more than 45 years, CAC has been serving and educating the diverse communities of Pinal County, AZ. With five campuses and three centers located throughout the county, CAC provides accessible, educational, economic, cultural and personal growth opportunities for all ages. The college offers nearly 150 degrees and certificates, on-line and university transfer courses, career training and personal enrichment classes. An on-campus living environment featuring residence life options is available at the Signal Peak Campus.

**Telephone:** 800-237-9814





## ERSKINE COLLEGE

**Location:** Due West, SC

**Website:** visit [erskine.edu](http://erskine.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1839

**Type of Institution:** Private, Christian 4-year liberal arts

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 12:1

**Tuition Costs:** \$34,095

**Room:** \$5,800 **Board:** \$5,550

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$35,595 (5C)

**Average Percentage of Financial Need Met:** >95%

**Average Scholarship/Grant Aid Awarded:**

\$22,570

**Average Work-Study Aid Awarded:** \$1,500

Erskine is national ranked among the best liberal arts colleges and is featured as one of the 50 Most Beautiful Christian Colleges and Universities in the nation. As the first Christian college in the state, Erskine has provided excellent education in a nurturing atmosphere for over 175 years. Erskine's small size and rich tradition of scholarship create an ideal atmosphere for students who desire close working relationships with faculty. The results of this intensely relational approach are demonstrated by Erskine's exceptional rates of acceptance and completion in both research and professional graduate programs, with several programs achieving near 100% placement.

**Telephone:** 864-379-8838

**Email:** [admissions@erskine.edu](mailto:admissions@erskine.edu)



*Believe in the possibilities.*

## GANNON UNIVERSITY

**Location:** Erie, PA

**Website:** [www.gannon.edu](http://www.gannon.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1925

**Type of Institution:** University

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 13:1

**Institutional Designation:** Private - Religious

**Tuition Costs:** \$30,180-\$32,000

**Room & Board:** \$10,740-\$14,300

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$21,128

**Average Scholarship/Grant Aid Awarded:** \$19,494

**Average Work-Study Aid Awarded:** \$2,300

At Gannon University, we're focused on students' academic success by ensuring a high-quality education is within reach for all who are seeking to find their path and advance their career.

Gannon offers over 100 online and traditional Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral innovative academic programs where students practice hands-on, real-world application in exceptional learning environments on campus and in the community. More than 4,000 academically talented and diverse students enjoy a personalized experience through Gannon's low student-to-faculty ratio of 13:1. Our faculty experts inspire students and prepare them for the careers of tomorrow.

As a premier Catholic University, with locations in Erie, Pa. and Ruskin, Fla., Gannon is dedicated to excellence in teaching, scholarship, service and travel opportunities throughout the world.

**Telephone:** 814-871-7407

**Email:** [admissions@gannon.edu](mailto:admissions@gannon.edu)







## GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY

**Location:** Phoenix, AZ

**Website:** [www.gcu.edu](http://www.gcu.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1949

**Type of Institution:** Private, Christian

**Tuition Costs:** \$16,500

**Average Scholarship/Grant Aid Awarded:** \$7,900

Grand Canyon University is Arizona's premier, private, Christian university offering over 200 academic programs with over 150 online programs in high-demand fields of the 21st century. GCU also offers traditional students and working professionals generous scholarships and opportunities to graduate in less than four years. Visit [gcu.edu](http://gcu.edu)

**Telephone:** 855-GCU-LOPE



# HAMPTON

## UNIVERSITY

### HAMPTON UNIVERSITY

**Location:** Hampton, VA

**Website:** [www.hamptonu.edu](http://www.hamptonu.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1868

**Type of Institution:** Private

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 10:1

**Institutional Designation:** Hampton University, coeducational

**Tuition Costs:** \$22,630

**Room & Board:** \$11,218

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$27,548

**Average Percentage of Financial Need Met:** 51%

**Average Scholarship/Grant Aid Awarded:** \$10,825

At Hampton University "Inspiration to Impact" are more than words. We offer a rich academic environment that cultivates leaders. Through global scientific collaborations and modern research projects, our professors and students are asking questions and finding answers. We offer our students innovative courses that lead to 48 bachelor's, 24 master's programs, and doctoral or professional degrees in nursing, physics, atmospheric/planetary sciences, business leadership and administration, educational leadership and management, physical therapy, and pharmacy.

**Telephone:** 757-727-5000

**Email:** [admissioncounselor@hamptonu.edu](mailto:admissioncounselor@hamptonu.edu)





## HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

### HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

**Location:** Hempstead, NY

**Website:** [hofstra.edu](http://hofstra.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1935

**Type of Institution:** University

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 14:1

**Institutional Designation:** Private, Non-profit

**Tuition Costs:** \$43,950 (includes tuition and fees)

**Room & Board:** \$14,250

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$27,058

**Average Percentage of Financial Need Met:** 62%

**Average Scholarship/Grant Aid Awarded:** \$16,062

**Average Work-Study Aid Awarded:** \$2,950

Hofstra University offers students the complete college experience — a vibrant, active campus with hundreds of cultural and social events annually, small classes with experienced faculty, access to state-of-the-art technology and facilities — all less than an hour away from New York City.

**Telephone:** 516-463-6700

**Email:** [admission@hofstra.edu](mailto:admission@hofstra.edu)



## LANDMARK COLLEGE

### LANDMARK COLLEGE

**Location:** Putney, Vermont

**Website:** [www.landmark.edu](http://www.landmark.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1985

**Type of Institution:** Four-year, two-year liberal arts for students with learning disabilities and attention challenges

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 6:1

**Institutional Designation:** Private liberal arts

**Tuition Costs:** \$54,000 per year

**Room & Board:** \$11,410 per year (based on standard room and meal plan)

Landmark College is for students who learn differently, including students with a learning disability (such as dyslexia), ADHD, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD). LC champions a strengths-based model and gives students the skills and strategies they need to achieve their goals. Landmark College offers bachelor's and associate degrees, as well as a Bridge Semester, online dual enrollment courses for high school students, and summer programs for middle school, high school, and college students. The Landmark College Institute for Research and Training conducts groundbreaking research on learning disabilities (LD), ADHD, and ASD, and shares that knowledge with educators around the world.

**Telephone:** 802-387-6718

**Email:** [admissions@landmark.edu](mailto:admissions@landmark.edu)



## LYNN UNIVERSITY

### LYNN UNIVERSITY

**Location:** Boca Raton, Florida

**Website:** [www.lynn.edu](http://www.lynn.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1962

**Type of Institution:** Lynn University is an independent, nonprofit, coeducational, residential institution.

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 21:1

**Tuition Costs:** \$35,260

**Room & Board:** \$11,970

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$24,185

**Average Percentage of Financial Need Met:** 58.7%

**Average Scholarship/Grant Aid Awarded:** \$11,150

**Average Work-Study Aid Awarded:** \$2,039

Lynn University is an independent college based in Boca Raton, Florida, with approximately 3,000 students from 100 countries. *U.S. News & World Report* ranks Lynn among the most innovative and international schools in the region. Lynn's Dialogues curriculum and award-winning iPad program help graduates gain the intellectual flexibility and global experience to fulfill their potential in an ever-changing world.

**Telephone:** 561-237-7900

**Email:** [admission@lynn.edu](mailto:admission@lynn.edu)



## MERCYHURST UNIVERSITY

### MERCYHURST UNIVERSITY

**Location:** Erie, PA

**Website:** [www.mercyhurst.edu](http://www.mercyhurst.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1926

**Type of Institution:** 4-year, Catholic, liberal arts

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 14:1

**Tuition Costs:** \$34,050

**Room & Board:** \$11,000-\$13,000 (depending on residence hall)

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$20,000

**Average Percentage of Financial Need Met:** More than 90% of students receive financial aid

Mercyhurst University, founded in 1926 by the Sisters of Mercy, is a fully accredited, four-year, Catholic comprehensive institution, in Erie, Pa. The university offers more than 100 majors, minors and concentrations as well as unique post-baccalaureate, advanced certificate and master's degree programs. In addition, Mercyhurst provides certificate and associate degree offerings at branch campuses in North East, Corry and the Booker T. Washington Center. Inspired by our motto, "Carpe Diem" (seize the day), our faculty and students are busy making a difference on and off campus — from "the Hill" to the far corners of the world.

**Telephone:** 800-825-1926 x2202





## THE OCEAN CORPORATION

**Location:** Houston, Texas

**Website:** [www.oceancorp.com](http://www.oceancorp.com)

**Year Founded:** 1969

**Type of Institution:** Vocational/Trade School

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 30:1

**Institutional Designation:** Single Campus/Full

Academic Year/Proprietary

**Tuition Costs:** \$21,000

**Room & Board:** No on-campus housing and meal plans available

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$15,541

**Average Percentage of Financial Need Met:** 70%

**Average Scholarship/Grant Aid Awarded:** \$4,862

The Ocean Corporation has trained men and women for exciting new careers since 1969. Students train at The Ocean Corporation to become commercial divers and industrial NDT inspectors. We have been in the business for over 40 years and we know the "nuts and bolts" of both industries. Our hands-on training takes less than 8 months to complete and will give you the competitive edge you need to succeed.

**Telephone:** 800-321-0298

**Email:** [admissions@oceancorp.com](mailto:admissions@oceancorp.com)



## REGENT UNIVERSITY

**Location:** Virginia Beach, VA

**Website:** [www.regent.edu](http://www.regent.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1977

**Type of Institution:** Private, Liberal Arts, Christian

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 19:1

**Tuition Costs:** On Campus: \$16,650/year (24-36 credits/yr.); Evening/Online: \$395 per credit hour

**Room & Board:** Room: \$2,700 - \$5,900 per semester; Board: \$2,520 avg

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$11,889

**Average Percentage of Financial Need Met:** 60% (86% of Regent students receive financial aid)

**Average Scholarship/Grant Aid Awarded:** \$6,709

Regent University is an accredited Christian university offering high-quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs both online and on campus in Virginia Beach, Virginia. With more than 11,000 students, Regent's student body represents all 50 states, 75 countries and 39 denominations. Regent is "A" rated nationally for comprehensive liberal arts curriculum (ACTA, 2018) and among the nation's most affordable private Christian colleges (CCCU, 2016).

**Telephone:** 866.910.7615

**Email:** [admissions@regent.edu](mailto:admissions@regent.edu)



## Salisbury UNIVERSITY

### SALISBURY UNIVERSITY

**Location:** Salisbury, MD

**Website:** [www.salisbury.edu](http://www.salisbury.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1925

**Type of Institution:** 4-year, public comprehensive

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 16:1

**Institutional Designation:** A Maryland University of National Distinction

**Tuition Costs:** \$8,128 in-state; \$16,474 out of state

**Room & Board:** \$10,240 (based on "all day, every day" meals and double occupancy renovated dorm)

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$7,143 (need-based)

**Average Percentage of Financial Need Met:** 52.4% (need-based)

**Average Scholarship/Grant Aid Awarded:** \$2,514 (non-need-based), \$5,644 (need-based)

**Average Work-Study Aid Awarded:** \$1,888

Nationally recognized for academic excellence, Salisbury University is a proud member of the University System of Maryland offering 42 undergraduate majors, 14 graduate programs and 2 doctorates in nursing practice and education. SU is ranked among the nation's "Best Value" colleges by Kiplinger's Personal Finance, Money, Forbes and The Princeton Review and U.S. News & World Report. Washington Monthly also named SU among America's "Best Bang For The Buck" Colleges. See Gull athletes have earned 19 NCAA Division III national team championships. Founded in 1925, SU is just 2.5 hours from Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

**Telephone:** 410-543-6161

**Email:** [admissions@salisbury.edu](mailto:admissions@salisbury.edu)



## STEVENS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY THE INNOVATION UNIVERSITY™

### STEVENS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

**Location:** Hoboken, NJ

**Website:** [www.stevens.edu](http://www.stevens.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1870

**Type of Institution:** Private, non-profit

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 10:1

**Tuition Costs:** \$50,725

**Room & Board:** \$14,780

Located in Hoboken, NJ on the Hudson River overlooking the Manhattan skyline, Stevens is a high-energy, highly engaged campus community in which hands-on learning complements academic experiences. The combination of a rigorous curriculum, a focus on innovation and entrepreneurship, and tremendous opportunities for experiential learning aligned with industry needs has proven to be a winning formula for Stevens graduates over the years.

Recognized for putting the "hire" in higher education, a Stevens degree is a passport to a successful and stimulating career. Exceptional opportunities for internships, undergraduate research and cooperative education prepare students with skills that are in demand by the world's most influential employers, because they are skills that impact industries and innovations that drive our economy.

**Telephone:** 201-216-5000

**Email:** [admissions@stevens.edu](mailto:admissions@stevens.edu)





## TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**Location:** Tallahassee, Florida

**Website:** [www.tcc.fl.edu/link](http://www.tcc.fl.edu/link)

**Year Founded:** 1966

**Type of Institution:** Community college

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 24:1

**Institutional Designation:** Level II accreditation

**Tuition Costs:** In-state = \$101/credit hour.

Out-of-state = \$382/credit hour

**Room & Board:** No on-campus housing

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$5,601

**Average Scholarship/Grant Aid Awarded:** \$1,812

**Average Work-Study Aid Awarded:** \$4,000

TCC consistently places as one of the nation's top producers of Associate in Arts degree recipients among 2-year colleges. TCC is the top transfer school to neighboring Florida State University and Florida A&M University, due in large part to the TCC2FSU and TCC2FAMU transfer programs and the college's affordable in-state and out-of-state tuition.

Tallahassee, the capital city of the beautiful "Sunshine State," is recognized as one of the top college towns in the nation.

**Telephone:** 850-201-8555

**Email:** [admissions@tcc.fl.edu](mailto:admissions@tcc.fl.edu)



**TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY  
KINGSVILLE.**

## TEXAS A&M KINGSVILLE

**Location:** Kingsville, TX

**Website:** [www.tamuk.edu](http://www.tamuk.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1925

**Type of Institution:** Public

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 19:1

**Institutional Designation:** Four-year

**Tuition Costs:** \$8,462 per year based on 15 semester credit hours per semester

**Room & Board:** \$4,265 per semester, \$8,530 per year

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$14,742

**Average Percentage of Financial Need Met:** 75%

**Average Scholarship/Grant Aid Awarded:** \$6,837

**Average Work-Study Aid Awarded:** \$2,933

Texas A&M University-Kingsville is recognized on Forbes' Top Colleges list for 2017. Degree offerings include well-known programs in engineering, agriculture and music, and new programs in veterinary technology and criminal justice. Classroom learning is enhanced through hands-on research opportunities at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Recognized for excellence in affordability, financial aid, athletics and more, Texas A&M-Kingsville offers a complete college experience.

**Telephone:** 361-593-2315

**Email:** [admissions@tamuk.edu](mailto:admissions@tamuk.edu)





## NEW YORK SCHOOL OF CAREER & APPLIED STUDIES

A DIVISION OF TOURO COLLEGE

*Where Knowledge and Values Meet*

### TOURO COLLEGE, NEW YORK SCHOOL OF CAREER AND APPLIED STUDIES (NYSCAS)

**Location:** NYC

**Website:** [nyscas.touro.edu](http://nyscas.touro.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1971

**Type of Institution:** Comprehensive higher education system

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 19:1

**Tuition Costs:** \$14,600

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$9,000

**Average Percentage of Financial Need Met:** 90%

NYSCAS is ideally suited to reflect, and respond to, the challenges of this new era. Our tradition of academic excellence has given us the foundation and confidence to reach for new and unimaginable knowledge, while the diversity of our University system community makes it possible for students, faculty, alumni, and neighbors to interact with — and thus be transformed by — the multiplicity of human perspectives. At the same time, our numerous locations in the world's most global city offers us a unique laboratory in which to study the evolution of modern society, attract and learn from the remarkable people who make New York home and, in doing so, fulfill our responsibilities as active, engaged citizens.

**Telephone:** 212-463-0400 ext.5500

**Email:** [admissions.nyscas@touro.edu](mailto:admissions.nyscas@touro.edu)



## UC DAVIS

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

### UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

**Location:** Davis, California

**Website:** [www.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ucdavis.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1905

**Type of Institution:** Public research and land-grant university

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 19:1

**Tuition Costs:** \$14,382

**Room & Board:** \$16,136

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$18,271

Founded in 1905, UC Davis is one of the top public universities in the nation. We're known for working across disciplines to solve the world's most pressing problems and for our commitment to artistic and cultural expression. Our 5,300-acre campus is in Davis, a vibrant college town of about 68,000. The state capital is nearby as are world-class destinations like the San Francisco Bay Area, Lake Tahoe and the Napa Valley.

**Telephone:** 530-752-1930

**Email:** [marketing@ucdavis.edu](mailto:marketing@ucdavis.edu)





## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-VICTORIA

**Location:** Victoria, Texas

**Website:** [www.uhv.edu](http://www.uhv.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1973

**Type of Institution:** 4-year, public university

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 18:1

**Institutional Designation:** Bachelor's and master's

**Tuition Costs:** \$7,627 (full-time, in-state undergrad)

**Room & Board:** \$8,135

**Average Student Aid Package:** \$9,952

**Average Percentage of Financial Need Met:** 60%

**Average Scholarship/Grant Aid Awarded:** \$4,068

**Average Work-Study Aid Awarded:** \$2,065

The University of Houston-Victoria offers courses leading to 70 bachelor's and master's degree programs and concentrations in the schools of Arts & Sciences; Business Administration; and Education, Health Professions & Human Development. UHV provides face-to-face classes at its Victoria, Texas, campus as well as a teaching site in Katy, Texas, and online classes that students can take from anywhere. Since its founding in 1973, UHV has provided students with a quality education from excellent faculty at an affordable price.

**Telephone:** 877-970-4848

**Email:** [recruitment@uhv.edu](mailto:recruitment@uhv.edu)



# UTICA

## COLLEGE

### UTICA COLLEGE

**Location:** Utica, NY

**Website:** [www.utica.edu](http://www.utica.edu)

**Year Founded:** 1946

**Type of Institution:** 4-year, private, residential college

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 11:1

**Tuition Costs:** \$20,127

**Room & Board:** \$10,828

At Utica College, we are fully committed to making sure students from all income levels have access to all the benefits of a private higher education, including personalized mentoring and the most relevant learning experiences in and out of the classroom.

No college understands the need for affordability better than Utica College – which is why we boldly took the lead among New York's private colleges in 2016 to reset our tuition price by lowering it \$14,000.

Now Utica College has the best private college price among all our peer institutions in the Northeast – and that's before the financial aid we award as scholarships and grants to bring down your cost even further.

**Telephone:** 800-782-8884

**Email:** [admiss@utica.edu](mailto:admiss@utica.edu)





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