

Making Choices About Colleges

Step One:

Know yourself and your reasons for wanting to attend college.

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

Step Two:

Consider college characteristics.

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

Step Three:

List, compare, and visit colleges.

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

Step Four:

Apply for admission and observe deadlines.

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

Step Five:

Make a final decision.

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