

IMMEDIATE ADVICE:

- Encourage your junior to utilize Naviance to help build college lists over the summer.
- Encourage your junior to study for Regents exams – CUNYs use math & English scores for college course placement freshman year
- As a college list is being built, investigate if those colleges require SAT subject tests or an essay portion of an ACT or SAT. This requirement is declining.

HOW TO ASSESS COLLEGES

- ✓ Graduation rate: percentage in 4 years vs. 6 years
- ✓ Sophomore year retention rate
- ✓ Location – what are the surroundings? Bustling vs. quieter? Does it bring students together or is it a commuter campus?
- ✓ Campus Life – crime rates, # of physical assault cases
- ✓ Student body – diversity statistics
- ✓ Services for students with disabilities
- ✓ Financial Aid
 - Are merit or talent based scholarships offered?
 - Need based funds available – if they say they give 100% demonstrated need, then in what form? Is it Loan Based?
- ✓ Post college debt – **this was the #1 deterrent for students to go away last year!**
- ✓ Professor ratings, such as through Princeton review or College Confidential = website with ratings
- ✓ Setting aside the format of the website (which can be tricky), look at wording in descriptions of programs and student expectations
- ✓ Program/Major offerings (what's the most popular)
- ✓ Career placement and preparation (Swarthmore pairing with employee in career of interest) or SUNY Albany has several 5 year programs (BA + MA).

There are dozens of options of questions to ask when visiting or when reaching out to colleges and below are some samples.

One helpful link is: <https://blog.prepscholar.com/good-questions-to-ask-on-a-college-tour>

- ◇ How many of your sophomores return to complete their degree?
- ◇ Do you have an honors college?
- ◇ How easy is it to change your major?
- ◇ Do undergraduates receive assistance in locating internships?
- ◇ What is your typical financial aid package (loans vs. scholarships vs. grants)

- ◇ How much time do students typically spend on homework?
- ◇ What is the average college debt that students leave with?
- ◇ Do you have a writing or tutoring center and how do I access it?
- ◇ Ask the guide why he or she decided to attend the college you are visiting
- ◇ What kind of dorm choices are there?
- ◇ How many lecture-sized classes does the typical student take?
- ◇ What sets you apart from other colleges with similar popular majors?
- ◇ How many computer labs are on campus?
- ◇ What sort of abroad programs do you offer and are they limited to specific majors?
- ◇ Approximately how many transfer students do you accept per year (maybe add specifically into a BFA program)?

TIPS ON PERSONAL ESSAY

- ❖ Students can visit college office for formal handouts with tips
- ❖ Student must be sure the prompt picked is answered!
- ❖ Student should focus on what is important to him or herself, not what they think the college wants to hear
- ❖ Give the admissions reader a better sense of students' qualities and uniqueness not evident from any other portion of application

Purpose of the essay is to:

- Find out if student can follow directions
- Check for grammatical abilities and possibly make course placement recommendations
- Understand how the student will fit or contribute to the campus community
- Help a borderline accepted categorized student get in
- Qualify student for scholarship consideration

Some helpful scholarship sites:

- <https://yescollege.com/guides/weird-scholarships/>
- <https://www.niche.com/colleges/scholarships/>
- <https://www.nitrocollege.com/scholarships/minorities>

And the micro-scholarship program called **RaiseMe** – it's amazing!! www.raise.me

OUR ADVICE on applying

- Students should apply to a minimum of 7 colleges, and at least 4 of those should be “target schools” meaning that most current freshman had a similar GPA and similar SAT or ACT score to your student at time of application
- We are more comfortable with students applying to 9-12 colleges
- Over 12 is better for those students looking at BFA programs, but not better suited for students pursuing a general Bachelor’s degree, as many schools ask for supplemental short answers and those tend to get sloppier as more are written. NO student should apply to over 20 colleges. CUNYs we count as 1, no matter how many are selected.
- Students should not limit themselves to only BFA programs – there are many top notch BA programs with same or similar major.
- There is no SAFETY school anymore. The term “likely” is more popular. More students are being placed on waitlists than before, which is why college application selection should be SOOO careful.
- Students who score low on ACTs or SATs twice in a row should consider colleges who do not require standardized tests. The number of test optional schools is growing.
- Students need to pace-out their applications and start drafting personal essay in summer. Be mindful of audition deadlines as early as mid October and EARLY ACTION or EARLY DECISION deadlines of November 1. Certain scholarships also have specific deadlines which require entire application to be complete, like USC and Boston University.
- Last minute decisions are not advised and cannot be accommodated.

Ways to Save MONEY

FEE WAIVERS are available for ACT tests, SAT exams, College Applications, and AP exams, but your student must be listed on the Free/Reduced lunch list to receive.

Haven't submitted a lunch form yet and think your family qualifies for free or reduced lunch status? Search "NYC DOE Lunch Form"

Reach out to colleges to inquire about SPECIFIC scholarships they offer. (ex. Bucknell has 2 renewable scholarships: \$10,000 for science majors and \$20,000 Civic Engagement Scholarship)

Students can apply to scholarships NOW!

- Visit their Naviance account under scholarship tab
- Start a Raise.Me account
- Visit the bulletin board on 4th floor for posted flyers
- Also, Check out websites listed at end of other handout

College application fees will add-up, especially when adding AUDITION FEE + Application Fee. Students on Free/Reduced lunch can receive fee waivers. Families must apply every September for proof of lunch status with the DOE.

- IF students have used a waiver for an SAT exam, they have 4 reserved hard copy fee waivers in their College Board account.
- SUNY offers a fee waiver that covers up to 7 schools.
- CUNY offers a fee waiver for up to 6 schools (must get code from college office and almost MUST apply through CUNY portal)
- NACAC fee waivers can be used for most colleges (form needs to be filled out with PPAS official seal)

Some students will qualify for EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS, discussed in the PowerPoint. These provide students who fit certain income and academic requirements with admissions consideration. Known as SEEK at CUNY, EOP at SUNY, and HEOP at private New York colleges. They are competitive, but very worth pursuing.