



Narrowing the List

Develop a College Search Profile

Many students enter their senior year of high school with one goal in mind: going to college. The vast majority, however, have little idea of where they would like to go. Now is the time to think about which criteria is most important to you as you research various colleges and/or universities. Beginning self-assessment can be as simple as deciding if you would rather attend a college in a city or in a rural setting. Below are some of the criteria to help you develop your very own college search profile.

- **Geographic Location** - Ask yourself: how far is too far? A plane ride home once or twice a year may be costly and keep you from family events like your little brother's soccer games. Is a quick commute home a less expensive and more feasible alternative?
- **Enrollment Size** - A larger university may offer classes in a lecture hall with upwards of 100 students or more enrolled. To be successful in that type of environment, students need to be self-motivated because contact with professors may be limited.
- **Intended Major/Curriculum** - It is important to research majors available at schools you're interested in. Having an idea of what you may want to major in can help you decide if schools offer programs that meet your needs. You will want to ask such questions as "How competitive is this major at this school?", "Are internships required?" and "What kind of jobs can I get with this major?" Not sure about what you want to study? Check out the next article about how to search for your majors that might be right for you.
- **Entrance Difficulty** - Schools may have specific requirements regarding acceptable GPA and SAT/ACT scores. Review your transcript and your potential school's requirements with your guidance counselor. Do you meet the school's basic entrance requirements? Are you a good fit academically for that school?
- **Activities/Athletics** - Students interested in playing Division I or II college sports should register at the NCAA's web site at www.eligibilitycenter.org and also become familiar with regulations and scouting practices.

Center for College Planning at the NHHEAF Network Organizations

The Center for College Planning at the **NHHEAF Network Organizations** is dedicated to providing students and families with valuable information about the college planning process—from savings options and college admissions requirements, to applying for financial aid and scholarships. We serve all student populations: traditional, continuing education, graduate and adult learner. We offer college planning materials and coordinate speakers for schools, businesses and community organizations free of charge. We provide dynamic small group workshops in our Concord, New Hampshire office. We also provide a toll free college planning hotline and comprehensive Web site. Our goal is to promote higher education as the means to achieving personal, career and life goals.

The NHHEAF Network Organizations

The **NHHEAF Network Organizations** are comprised of four independent nonprofit organizations dedicated to streamlining the student loan process:

New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation (NHHEAF) guarantees, originates and disburses your loan.

New Hampshire Higher Education Loan Corporation (NHHELCO) funds your loan.

Granite State Management & Resources (GSM&R) services your loan.

NHHEAF Network Educational Foundation (NNEF) administers charitable giving.



The NHHEAF Network Organizations
Center for College Planning
1.888.7.GRADUATE x119
collegeplanning@nhheaf.org

College Tip of the Month:

Choosing your high school best friend as a college roommate is easy but might not be in your best interest. College is about branching out and meeting new people from different places with different perspectives.

- **Cost** - Talk with your parents about what schools you can afford and what you can do to help cover some of the costs. Remember, often financial aid can make an expensive college affordable. Having a realistic picture of your ability to pay without considering financial aid is important. Keep in mind cost is not always an indicator of quality. You'll only get out of a college education what you put into it!

The Search is On!

Depending on how specific you are with your search criteria, college search engines may match you with up to 200 schools! That's a lot to sort through. High school seniors only have a few months to determine which schools they want to send applications to so it is critical to narrow the list in a reasonable amount of time.

You can narrow this list by becoming more specific in their search profile. For example, are you interested in a campus that has a robust Greek life? Is

there a specific activity, like intramural sports, that is a "must- have" in your criteria? NHHEAF highly recommends www.bridges.com, a college search engine that has about 7,600 schools listed in the program, to help you start narrowing down your list. The site allows you to search and compare schools based on a number of criteria including size, location, campus setting and major. You can access this web site from home by visiting the www.bridges.com and entering NHHEAF's user ID (0105773) and password (higher).

How many colleges should I apply to?

It may be tempting to send out fifteen to twenty applications and hope for the best, but that strategy could cost you a lot of time to prepare each application, as well as a lot of money in application fees. Students in New England apply, on average, to 6-10 colleges. The Center for College Planning suggests the 2-2-2 Approach. This approach allows you to choose a variety of schools but keep things manageable. With this balanced strategy, students apply to six schools with two being reach, two being targets and two being "probables". Here's how those terms break down:

Reach schools: The applicant meets some of the requirements for admission or is very close to meeting all but falls short in an area. For example, a student may not meet typical the GPA, but has outstanding SAT/ACT scores.

Target schools: The applicant is the typical student that this school accepts in terms of GPA and standardized test scores.

Probable schools: The applicant meets and exceeds typical requirements for admission.

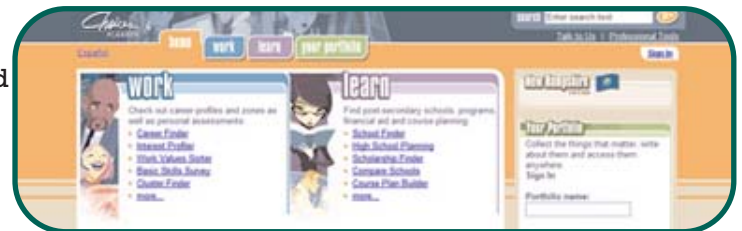
For help in narrowing down your list, feel free to call the Center for College Planning at (800)525-2577, ext. 119, or e-mail us at collegeplanning@nhheaf.org!

Visiting the campuses

While it may not be realistic to visit every school that appears on your list, it still remains the best way to learn about the school. It is exceptionally important that you visit the campus once you are accepted and before mailing your room deposit. Never make your final decision without first visiting the campus. Reading college brochures and surfing college web sites are a great way to gain information about the school. But, nothing can compare to seeing it firsthand. Visiting allows you to experience the campus' personality.

Best of the Web College Search Engines:

- www.collegeweeklive.com
- www.collegeview.com
- www.campustours.com
- www.petersons.com
- www.usnews.com/education
- www.collegenet.com



Seniors: Earn a \$1000 Scholarship

High school seniors, don't miss the opportunity to earn a \$1,000 scholarship! Enter the Destination CollegeSM speech contest and have a chance to be the featured speaker at our event in March and walk away with \$1,000 towards your college education. We want to hear about your college planning experience- you have already gone through the rigor of taking tests, meeting deadlines and getting applications completed so now is a great time to share your wisdom with high school juniors that are about to embark on the same process. Write a short 5-7 minute speech and send it to us by January 29, 2010. Focus on what you did right and what you would have done differently if you had to start the process all over again and remember, you are helping high school juniors prepare for what to expect. The winner will get to present their speech at the Destination CollegeSM event on March 27, 2010. To find out more about the contest, log onto www.destinationcollege.org.



TIPS for the Campus Visits

Schedule your visit-

Visit at a time when there will be someone available to meet with you to give you a tour of campus. Leave enough time to walk around on your own after the tour. You may want to get some unrehearsed answers from students on campus about their experiences and soak up the atmosphere of a typical day without a tour guide.

No time? Cluster visits geographically-

Organize trips so that you are able to visit two or more schools in the same area. Some colleges even team up to promote this practice. In general, keep your college visits to no more than two schools in one day. Three visits in one day can be too much to absorb. If you visit too many schools on one day the details about the school's programs and facilities may get blurry!

Reflect and write-

Jot down a few notes to capture your impression of the campus immediately after the tour. Record the names of the college staff you talked with and send them thank-you notes. Begin making relationships on campus from your first visit! Most communication (including thank you notes) become part of your admission file.

Make the most of your visit-

Before arriving on campus, contact a professor in your intended field of study or an advisor of a club that interests you to arrange an informational meeting. There is no substitute for talking with faculty members in the discipline you'll study as faculty will have useful information and insight from their professional and educational experiences.

Try the food and see a dorm-

Remember, the campus will be your second home. You want to make sure it's a good fit. Have lunch in the cafeteria. Tour the first-year student residence halls - and look at not only dorm rooms, but look at the common areas, the laundry facilities, and bathrooms!

Collect materials-

For the school's official information, pick up all of the admissions materials and financial aid brochures. For a student-oriented perspective, check out the student newspapers and websites as well as activity and campus calendars to get a sense of what campus life is really like.

News Around the Nation

As people across the country scramble for ways to cut corners in the tough economy, colleges too, are looking for creative ways to save money from their stretched budgets. The *NY Times* reported recently that Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania went as far as to hold a virtual swim meet in the hopes of shaving a few dollars off of their budget. Swimmers from Bryn Mawr and nearby Dickinson College raced in their home pools separately and compared scores online to declare winners. Just how much savings did the virtual swim meet net the school? According to the school's athletic director, about \$900. Your thoughts? Post them at www.AskJoeCollege.com.

It's SAT and ACT Season Again!

As you collect college viewbooks and applications, look at the standardized test requirements at each school. Some colleges may require or recommend taking the SAT Subject Tests. Are you considering taking the ACT? While most colleges in the Northeast use the SAT, the ACT continues to be America's most widely accepted entrance exam. Virtually all colleges will allow you to substitute the ACT for the SAT. So if you score better on the ACT, send those scores to the colleges. Both the ACT and the SAT offer the option to send scores by test date. Students are allowed to choose the scores they want to send to colleges. However, it is important to note that some schools may opt to look at the scores from each setting regardless of the student's choice to send only their best scores. Both tests also allow students to view their scores online. SAT's *My SAT Online Score Report* will break down your test scores and give you percentile information regarding how well you stack up against of test takers in your group.

The SAT is offered on the following dates:

TEST DATE	TEST	REGISTRATION DEADLINE
December 5 th	SAT & Subject Tests	October 30 th
January 23 rd	SAT & Subject Tests	December 15 th

To register, look for test locations and take practice tests visit: www.collegeboard.com

The ACT is offered on the following dates:

TEST DATE	REGISTRATION DEADLINE
December 12 th	November 6 th

To learn more about the ACT and prepare for its content visit: www.actstudent.org or www.act.org/aap/pdf/preparing.pdf.

For a list of colleges and universities that don't require standardized test scores for admission, visit www.fairtest.org.

Did You Know?

Campus Spotlight

Did you know you can begin earning college credits while still attending high school? Southern New Hampshire University's "In the High Schools" program allows high school students attending certain NH high schools to take college level classes during the regular school day taught by their regular teachers. Earning college credits before enrolling in college can save thousands in tuition and get students prepared for college level work. Credits can be transferred to college transcripts depending on the student's college or university of choice. The program is enjoying great success as the number of students participating is steadily increasing. For more information and for a list of participating high schools visit www.snhu.edu.



Meet with your school counselor to ensure that you are registered for the appropriate senior courses. Confirm that your high school transcript satisfies all college entrance requirements.

Ask Joe College Blog

AskJoeCollege is a blog designed especially for high school students to ask questions or post their thoughts on everything college! If you have an admission, financial aid, career or any college life questions check out AskJoeCollege moderated by NHHEAF's CCP college counselor, **Rich**.



How Can We Help?

The NHHEAF Network Organization's Center for College Planning (CCP) provides students and families in New Hampshire with the tools and information they need to successfully fulfill their higher education aspirations. Here are some of the free offerings available:

- College Overview and Financial Aid Nights presented at your high school
- Webinars on topics ranging from managing college costs to SAT preparation
- College planning workshops offered at the College Planning Library in Concord
- One-on-one appointments with families to assist in filing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
- Specialized workshops for school counselors
- Live phone support 5 days a week for questions related to college admissions and financial aid



For more information or to register for a workshop or webinar, visit: www.nhheaf.org/events.asp.

1.888.7.GRADUATE x119

Upcoming:

**October: The Pros and Cons of
Early Decision and Early Action
Admission Procedures**

Your next college planning e-mail will be sent in October.

Meanwhile, utilize the college search engine web sites to generate a list of potential colleges that match your interests. Begin to narrow this list to a manageable number by doing research online, requesting materials and meeting with your guidance counselor. Enjoy learning about these colleges during your visits. Thanks and best of luck in your college search.

The NHHEAF Network Organizations are comprised of four 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that provide students and families with the resources and funding to pursue higher education aspirations. Funds generated by the Organizations make their charitable mission possible as student loan earnings are reinvested in programs and services that benefit citizens of New Hampshire. For more information, visit www.nhheaf.org.

