



College Smarts Planning Seminar

Hosted by:

The College Resource Center

10370 Richmond Ave Suite 1290

Houston, Texas 77042

www.thecollegeresourcecenter.com

(713) 447-6277

Snewton11@aol.com

COVID-19 COLLEGE ADMISSION OVERVIEW

- Colleges are mindful of the challenges with standardized testing and as a result admissions committees have either made test scores optional or not require them at all.
- Some colleges are offering tuition discounts such as comparable pricing to home-state public school tuition prices as well as other incentives.
- Admissions review will still be based on the student's academic performance demonstrated on your transcript, academic enrichment, insightfulness of essay(s), extracurricular activities, leadership, work experience, volunteer experiences, and home responsibilities.
- Demonstrated interest will now involve virtual engagement with the colleges in addition to interviews and contact via email and phone calls to admissions representatives.

Competitive colleges will put review emphasis is the student is the “right-fit” based on passion in a subject/major, cause, ideals, and/or initiatives.

College Selection

Make your college choices purposefully! Find the right fit!

Things to Consider When Choosing Colleges:

- **Reputation of major** – What school best fits your career goals? Research your schools.
- **Know admissions difficulty** – Are you likely to be accepted? Select a combination of reach, target, and likely schools.
- **Size** – Are you comfortable with the size of the school?
- **Faculty** – What are the reputations of the faculty members? Are faculty members accessible?
- **Special Programs** – Does the school have internships or other options to introduce you to potential careers?
- **Career Advising** – How well does the school advise students about their majors and careers? Does it track the careers of former students and make the information available? Do you help their graduates find positions?
- **Graduation Rate** - What portion of students who begin the program complete it? How long does it take most students to obtain a degree? Where do they go to graduate school?
- **Job Placement Rate** – How long does it take a student to find a job after graduation and how many find jobs? What types of companies recruit on campus?
- **Financial Aid** – What types of financial support are available? Applying to a variety of schools will provide more options.



College Selection cont.

Other Important Factors:

- Distance from home
- Social Activities???
- Climate
- Campus Setting
- Location (urban/rural)
- Housing
- Accreditation
- Student to faculty ratio

College Admission

*The key to obtaining admission to any college is learning how to present yourself and make yourself stand out among the thousands of highly qualified applicants.

Factors That Influence Admission Decision:

- GPA / Grade Trend (grade scale.... 4.0, 5.0, 6.0)
- Class Rank (most significant in Texas)
- Personal Essays – Make sure to answer the prompt!
- **Demonstrated Interest – has gone virtual**
- Alumni / Campus Interviews
- Personal Qualities – compassion and humility (can be shown through extracurricular activities, volunteering, working with others)
- Geographic Area (some colleges like to pull students from different regions of the country)
- Difficulty of Courses (Honors / AP /IB)
- **SAT, SAT Subject Test, ACT with or without Writing - every school have distinct guidelines; may only be need for special programs, scholarships, or honors programs. Check with your individual colleges.**
- Counselor / Teacher Recommendations – very important this year
- Auditions / Portfolios (for visual / performing art applicants)
- High School's Profile and Rigor
- Special Categories (including academic interests/endorsements, talents, athletics)
- **COVID-19 Question**

College Selection cont.

How to Get Stated....

- Evaluate your academic, extracurricular and personal activities to determine what your chances are of being accepted.
- Be careful about accessing the minimum requirement for admission; this is simply a benchmark for being considered for the college or program. Majority of the time, the admissions yield is higher.
- Applying early! **I recommend** you submit a month or two before the postmark deadline for early consideration, usually **November 1st**. However, this is superseded by any institutional scholarship deadline, usually October 15th or Early FAFSA which opens **October 1st**.
- Know which application is best for you: **ApplyTexas**, **Common Application**, the **Coalition Application**, the **Universal Application**, and/or **QuestBridge** Application (need-based supplemental application).
- Start working on your college essays early. You will probably have to write several drafts in order to produce a strong essay.
- Participate in virtual information sessions and tours (majority of the colleges are tracking your online interest). Schedule the virtual interview (or local interviews) ahead of time (you may have to submit your application first).



Financial Aid

THE TOTAL COST OF COLLEGE

TUITION

FEES

ROOM & BOARD

BOOKS & SUPPLIES

TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

PERSONAL EXPENSES

COMPUTER EXPENSE

Financial Aid

Factors That Affect Your Financial Aid Eligibility:

- Academic Credentials
- Special Talents
- Financial Situation (in addition to COVID-19 impact)
- Housing Situation

How To Get Started...

- Do not wait for your admission decision to start applying for financial aid or merit scholarships.
- Research colleges that will offer the best aid package.
- Complete the necessary financial aid forms before the DEADLINES.
- Send in any supplemental information the school requests.
- Evaluate all financial aid offers and make final decisions by May 1st.

Financial Aid

PUBLIC vs. PRIVATE COLLEGES

University of Texas at Austin

Total Cost \$26,900~
Estimated EFC - 3,500
Financial Need \$23,400

Average need met is 80%
Amount of aid awarded \$23,000^
Unmet need is \$5,750
Actual EFC is \$5,750^

Stanford University

\$74,600~
- 3,500*
\$71,100

Average need met is 100%
Amount of aid awarded \$74,600
Unmet need is \$0
Actual EFC is \$0*

Which is the better bargain?

Financial Aid Cont.

- ¹EFC is defined as ones Expect Family Contribution towards college costs. Example is based on a family of 4 with an income annual of \$50,000 with no assets and one student in college. **NEW – MANY COLLEGES WILL GIVE AN AUTOMATIC \$0 EFC FOR THESE FAMILIES!!!!**
- ^The University of Texas and Texas A&M will offer \$0 EFC and to student who file the FAFSA by their respective priority deadline, you can **get full grant funding for Tuition. Addition expenses will have a combination of grant, loans, and work-study.**
- Stanford has a No-Loan Policy and aid is met with free money and work-study.
- Stanford has a “Zero Parent Contribution for Parents with Income Below \$65,000”

^Texas Advantage Commitment

<https://texasadvance.utexas.edu/>

*<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/finaid/undergrad/how/parent.html>
<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/finaid/undergrad/how/student.html>

TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

GIFT AID

Federal Programs

Pell Grant

SEOG

College-Based Programs

Scholarships

Need-Based Grants

Tuition Discounts

Endowment Aid

State Programs

Need-Based Grants

Scholarships

LOAN AID

Federal Programs

(Un)Subsidized Student Loans

PLUS Loans

College Programs

Loans

State Programs

Loans

WORK AID

Federal Programs

Federal Work-Study

College-Based Programs

College Work-Study

Financial Aid cont.

MERIT AID

Merit or (non-need) scholarships are defined as awards given on the basis of merit or personal attributes without regard to financial need. This means that you can earn over \$1 million and still be able to receive these scholarships.

The three main categories for merit-based scholarships are:

- Academic Scholarships – for students with superior academic achievement.
- Athletic Scholarships – for students with athletic talents.
- Artistic Scholarships – for fine, visual and performing art students.

There are colleges that also award scholarships to students for:

- Academic Majors
- Community Service
- Leadership
- Hobbies/Interests
- Religion Involvement
- Ethnic Background
- Children of Alumni
- Special Characteristics

Financial Aid cont.

How to Get Started...

- ★ Find out which colleges offer merit based aid scholarship programs.
- ★ Find out specific information on the type, number and value of scholarships.
- ★ Request eligibility requirements and application procedures for applying for scholarships.
- ★ Apply early! The earliest priority deadline is October 15th with the application and supporting document in file.

Financial Aid cont.

- **Forms**
- “Early FAFSA” – The Free Application for Federal Student Aid – opens October 1st for the 2020-2021 school year: www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- TASFA - Texas Application for State Financial Aid - opens October 1st for the 2020-2021 school year and can now be submitted electronically.
- CSS Profile – College Scholarship Service by College Board (required by most private schools and some public colleges. They will also open on October 1st for the 2020-2021 school year: <https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>
- IDOC – Document upload system that CSS Profile colleges use for submission of tax documents and verification forms
- Institutional Form – Some colleges have their own financial aid form; please check each of your school’s website for requirements.
- Verification Worksheet – If you are selected for financial aid verification, this form will need to be completed.



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