

College Research

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

~ Confucius

There are thousands of colleges in the United States! How do you begin to develop a list of schools to consider? Finding the right college is more than knowing whether they offer certain majors. Do you want to know if a particular school requires specific prerequisites, or if a college has a ski club? If you have not completed the interest profiler or career research discussed previously, we recommend trying those out before you start your college research. You will be better prepared to start your college search with the answers you discover about yourself and potential careers.

Things to Think About as You Begin the College Search

Interests and Talents: Keep in mind the subjects and activities you enjoy the most as you consider colleges. A few questions to ask yourself:

- What major will help you meet your career goals?
- What are the requirements for your major?
- What clubs, activities and sports (see page 38 for NCAA Info) would you like to participate in at college?
- Are you interested in an opportunity to study abroad?
- Is diversity of students important to you? Do you want to go to school with people from other parts of the United States or from other countries?

College Setting: Where the college is located and the atmosphere at the college can have a huge impact on your level of comfort. Be sure to think about these factors:

- Do you want to live at school or at home?
- Is the college's distance from home important to you?
- Are you looking for a particular climate (snow vs. beach)?
- Would you want a school where students live on campus and participate in weekend activities?
- Is the location or size of the town/city where the college is located important to you?

- Is the size of the student body important to you?
- What are the facilities like? (i.e. dorms, classrooms, labs, gym, cafeterias)

College Cost: There are many sources of financial aid; therefore cost should not exclude any of your college choices at this point. (see information on safety schools on page 9.) There are many factors that determine how financial aid is awarded, these include:

- Family income
- Family size
- Family assets
- Other family members enrolled in college
- Student income and assets

To get a better sense of the **MINIMUM your family will be expected to pay** each year for college, go to the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) calculator at one of the following websites: www.collegeboard.org/student/pay/add-it-up/401.html.

Beginning in October 2011, each college website will have a **Net Price Calculator** that will use the EFC to take the next step: Estimate a potential financial aid package, including what scholarships and/or grants the student may receive based on academic record. It will then show you what that college could cost you out of pocket. You can access this calculator via the college's website or the above website through college board.

College Searching

Internet Searches

There are several programs which allow you to select certain criteria from an extensive list and then a list of schools that match your criteria will be provided. For example, you could select the following:

- Programs/Majors: Biology and Biochemistry
- Campus Setting: Urban
- Location: New York or Massachusetts
- Enrollment (size of school): Medium – 5,000 to 10,000 students
- Sports: Division 3 Bowling

You would then be given a list of colleges that match all of those criteria so that you could then research those schools. **Even if you are undecided about a major, think about the other things you would like in a college when doing some searching.**