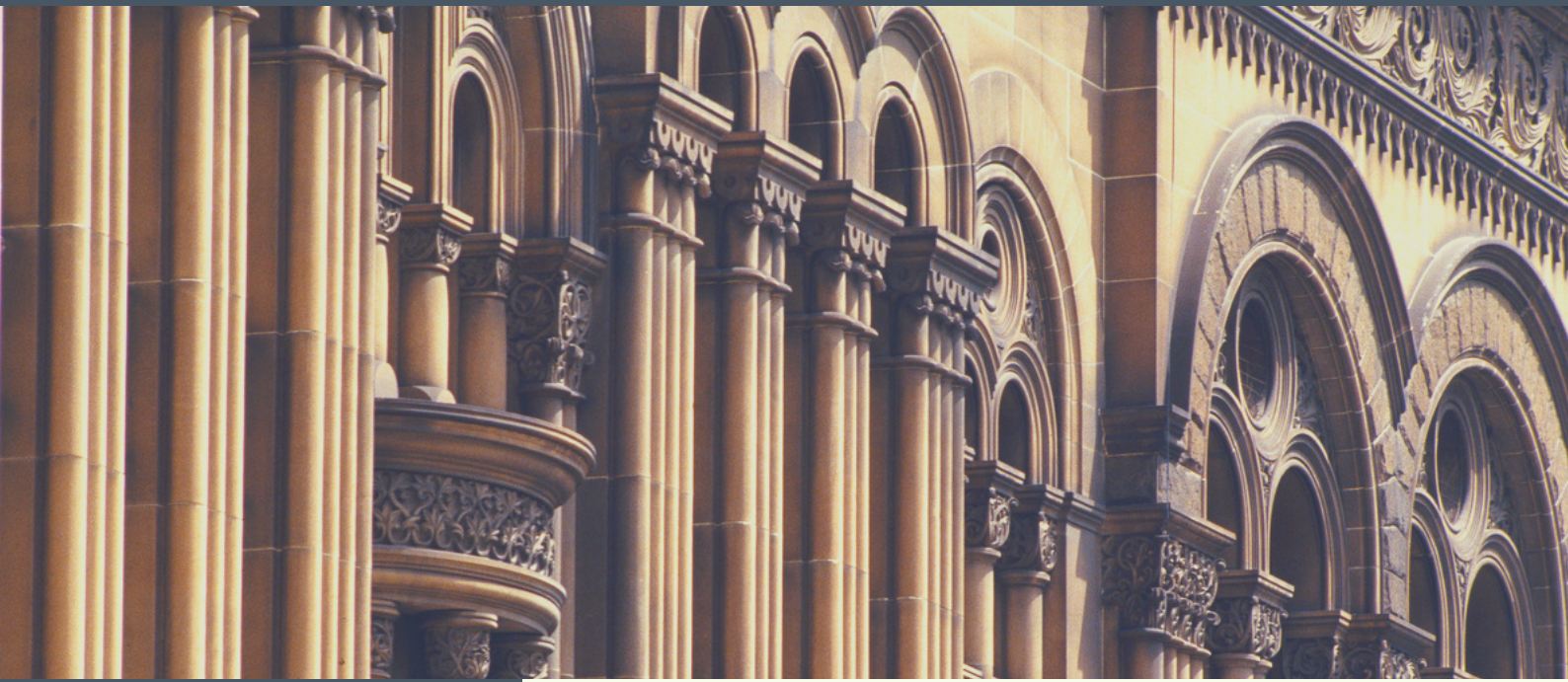


JUNE NEWSLETTER

FROM LAMEIRE COLLEGE CONSULTING



CHECK OUT WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE:

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How to Narrow Down Your School List

Colleges come in many different specialties, sizes, and areas of expertise. One of the most daunting tasks when it comes to college applications is putting together the college list itself. With so many options to choose from, it can be hard to narrow down your list to schools that fit your preferences and profile best. Fortunately we are here to help you with this tricky (but fun!) endeavor. In the meantime, it is good to start organizing your thoughts on what you want out of your college experience, and the types of schools that might fit you best.

An important thing to keep in mind is that the ultimate goal of choosing a college is to graduate with a degree that will get you a good job or into the graduate school of your choice, while also allowing you to enjoy your time there and grow as a person. Just because your dream school has a great football team or fun traditions doesn't mean it's the right school for you. The best way to see if a school is right for your college list is to do research. You can gather information from school websites, from teachers and counselors at your high school, and even from family and friends. Some schools even have hotlines where you can call and speak with

alumni. Speaking with people is a fantastic way to get a real insider's tips and information on what it was like to attend a specific college. You'll be able to find out things about the school on a deeper level by asking questions about the campus, dorm life, food, safety, and more. In addition, websites such as Niche, College Board, Unigo all have great information on student experiences and professor ratings.

When doing research, think about the factors that you find most necessary to have during these four years and ask about those. One of the first questions we ask our students is: does location matter? There are some students who would be happy going anywhere in the States (or even overseas) for college. Others prefer to stay somewhere close so that they can still visit home relatively easily every once in awhile. In a similar vein, it's important to consider the benefits and drawbacks of urban versus rural schools. Urban schools are usually located in large cities and offer better access to internships, networking opportunities, and cultural experiences. They also typically have a more diverse student body. Rural schools, on the other hand, are great for students who enjoy being close to the outdoors and are willing to trade up not having as defined of a college campus. There is also the potential for a more close-knit student body.

Something else that's important to consider is the size of the school. Big schools come with more opportunities (bigger research endowments, larger array of student opportunities like clubs and events, etc.) but attending one also means bigger class sizes and potentially feeling "lost in the crowd." Smaller schools, similar to more rural schools, offer a more close-knit community and more easily accessible student-professor interactions. It's worth noting, by the way, that public schools do tend to be larger than private ones. UCLA, for example, has an undergraduate population of 31,000 students! UT Austin has 40,400 students, and University of Michigan has 29,000 students. Carefully consider whether or not you feel you'd be able to thrive at a large university. On the flip side, also consider if a small, intimate school would be a better setting for you.

One of the best ways to get a true feel for whether a college is right for you is to visit the campus, take a tour, and, if possible, stay the night with current students. When visiting a potential college, you can also sometimes set up meetings with professors who teach a subject you're interested in. It may also be helpful to speak with an admission officer who can help you understand the application process and the school's admission requirements too. If you have an opportunity to visit campuses, prepare a list of questions you have ahead of time and don't be afraid to ask the tough questions that are really important to you. Remember, all current college students were once prospective students graduating from



WHAT ARE SOME QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK ON A CAMPUS VISIT?

- *How many of the courses are taught by a professor and how many by a teaching assistant/grad student?*
- *Is the teaching innovative, discussion- and project-oriented, or is it mostly lecture-oriented?*
- *What is the average class size of introductory classes?*
- *How much help outside of the classroom do you get from professors?*
- *What opportunities are there for undergraduate research?*
- *How many students participate in undergraduate research?*
- *What is the four-year graduation rate?*
- *What percentage of students live on campus?*
- *How safe is the campus? Is there any kind of shuttle service between classroom areas, the library, the student union, and the dorms? How late does it run?*

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Once you have your list of pros and cons put together, begin comparing the different schools and choose your top ten or so favorites. Within your list of favorites, choose schools with a range of qualities. Have a dream school, have schools that are financially affordable, and have schools where your grades meet all of the requirements and you have a high likelihood of being accepted—aka your safety, reach, and match schools.

Remember, you will ultimately choose a school where you will spend four of the most critical years of your life. Instead of letting this decision scare you, make the journey to finding this school engaging and keep yourself open to possibilities. You may find that a school you'd never considered going to before starting the college application process ends up being your dream school. We are here to help you on this journey - together we can help find the best possible fit for you.

- Shirley Young



WHAT IS THE ADVERSITY SCORE?

The SAT has often been the topic of heated debates. From leaked tests and “unfair” curves, the controversy over various aspects of the SAT are a stranger to no one. The most recent discussion has been around the Adversity Score (or Adversity Index) that The College Board announced will be available to all colleges this fall.

First, a little background on the Adversity Score. The College Board has been developing this tool for a few years and piloted it with a number of schools last year. This fall will be the first time this score is available to everyone. The way it works is that admissions readers will have access to something called the Environment Context Dashboard (ECD). This ECD will provide information on 15 different factors about each student to complement their test scores. These factors are meant to show information about the student’s social and economic background, including crime and poverty levels in the student’s neighborhood as well as information about the student’s school, including the number of students who receive reduced lunches and the percentage of students who go on to college after graduation.

A few more details that are particularly important to know about this score is that race will not be included in the information collected about the student. However, Natalie Escobar of The Atlantic states that, “considering that poverty rates and property values have often been affected by racist policies, the score will likely capture some of the economic disadvantages that fall hardest on people of color.” Based on this idea, many people are saying that while race will not be directly stated on the ECD, the adversity score may be used as a way to get around the prohibition of race-based admissions policies. Another important detail about this score, and one that has been critiqued by many, is that the adversity score will not be made available to students and parents. It will only be seen by colleges when reviewing a student’s application.



As with all new policies, you’ll find people on both sides of the argument. People who support the addition of an adversity score say that it’s more data and that more data is always a positive thing. They also mention that schools that follow a holistic review of applications look at these factors anyway and that this score will do nothing more than provide additional context to a student’s application.

However, critics of the policy say that this score perpetuates inequality. Additionally, many people feel that this score proves something that the SAT has been denying for a long time: the SAT isn’t an objective measure of academic success that is applicable to all students. By adding in this adversity score, The College Board is in some ways admitting that other factors need to be taken into consideration when it comes to standardized tests. Finally, another concern is that there will be ways to cheat the system by showing a different address that would qualify an applicant for a higher adversity score, which may not be truly indicative of the student’s social and economic environment.

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Previously, making the inclusion of standardized test scores optional in college admissions was, and still is, an attempt by colleges to combat the fact that socioeconomic status as well as access to good schools, test prep, and other resources have caused wealthier students to get higher scores on average than middle and low income students. Some critics of the adversity score say that introducing this score into the admission process is just a ploy by The College Board to get schools back on board with using the SAT as part of their admissions process.

Many people are hoping that this adversity score will provide colleges with the opportunity to accept students they may have previously overlooked while others are hoping colleges will ignore these scores in order to avoid the inherent unfairness they see in this score. Either way, we can be confident that the debate over this issue will continue throughout this application season and in the years to come.

-Claire Schadler

REMINDERS FOR UNDERCLASSMEN

- Assess your time commitment and performance in this year's subjects. Do you need to make plans for academic support for next year?
- Evaluate your time commitment between coursework and extracurriculars. Were the commitments well-balanced?
- Prepare for and schedule SAT/ACT and Subject Tests. For younger students, continue to develop fundamental skills.
- Finalize summer activity plans.

REMINDERS FOR RISING SENIORS

- Ask teachers for LORs.
- Begin the Common App essay.
- Continue to narrow down the college list.
- Have candidates for Early Decision/Early Action colleges.
- Prepare for and schedule any remaining SAT/ACT and Subject Tests.
- For international students, have the TOEFL planned.
- Finalize summer activity plans.