The College Search

How to Make a College List

1. Get to know yourself & what's important to you
2. Do some research (see below on where to look)
3. Look for patterns and repeats
   a. What do I like about this school?
   b. # of Students
   c. Do I know students/ alums? What do they say?
   d. What majors are strongest?
   e. What appeals about student life/ extracurricular opportunities?
   f. General Acceptance Rate
   g. GPA/ Test Score Ranges
4. Visit some schools & revise list as relevant
   a. Don't forget to "**demonstrate interest**"
   b. Consider whether you've met prerequisites for school/ department
5. Consider the role of finances/ scholarships
6. Narrow down the list - don't forget to choose a school you LOVE for each category
   a. 3+ reach/ long shot
   b. 3+ target/ possible
   c. 3+ match/likely
7. Consider Early Action/ Early Decision Strategy

Where to Look

- College Navigator (US DOE)
- Naviance/ Scoir
- College/ University Websites
- College Fairs
- Fiske Guide to Colleges (or online access at www.collegecountdown.com)
- Princeton Review
- Colleges that Change Lives
- Finding Your Dream School - Jeff Selingo
- www.collegeessayguy.com
- The College Finder www.collegexpress.com
- www.unigo.com
- www.niche.com
- www.collegedata.com

- [College Board/ Big Future](#)
- College Confidential
- US News & World Report
- www.collegekickstart.com
- TikTok & Instagram (really!)

Finding the Best Fit Schools for You

- Evaluating & assessing schools
    - Size – number of undergraduates/ presence of graduate students
    - Geographic location – which US region? Urban/ suburban/ rural?
    - Program offerings & strengths – in general & in area of your specific interest
    - Cost
    - Class size – small seminars, large lectures, combination
    - Student/ teacher ratio
    - Relationship between professors and students
    - Research/ internship/ study abroad opportunities
    - Career services/ graduate placement
    - Campus culture
    - Extracurricular offerings
    - Support for groups of students like LGBTQIA+, First Generation, international students, students with learning differences or mental health needs
    - Retention/ graduation rate

- Assessing the academics (you are going to school, after all!)
    - Do you know what you want to major in? If so, what programs & resources does the school have that fit your interests?
    - If you're unsure at this time, would you prefer a school with an exploratory program?
    - Do you hope to attend graduate or professional school after college? If so, does the college offer resources to help prepare students for that transition?

- Factors used to determine a school's competitive ranking – note that these factors mostly measure statistical fit and not actual appropriateness of any individual school for your interests/ needs
    - Typical statistics of admitted students
        - GPA
        - SAT/ ACT test score (if submitting)
        - Class Rank

- ■ % of admitted students who submitted apps without test scores (test optional)
  - ○ % of Students Accepted
  - ○ % of Students Attending (Yield)
  - ○ Overall Reputation

- Assessing your own candidacy
  - ○ How close are your GPA/ test scores to those of typically admitted students?
  - ○ Where do you stand in comparison to your high school peers? Are you at the top/ middle/ bottom of your class? Have you taken a rigorous academic program at your school?
  - ○ Does the school offer a strong program in your area of interest?
  - ○ How have you demonstrated your strengths through extracurricular activities?
  - ○ Do I meet any of the college's Institutional Priorities?

Selectivity Levels

DREAM/ UNLIKELY: Student stats are at low end or below school's stats AND/OR *acceptance rate below 15%* for <u>all</u> students

REACH: Student close to reaching median school stats AND competitive for activities or with other factors like legacy, athletic recruitment, special skills, early decision

TARGET/ POSSIBLE: Student at or above the median for scores and grades; school *not more selective than 30% acceptance rate for the most competitive students; higher acceptance rate for less competitive students*

LIKELY/ MATCH: Student well above the median for scores and grades; acceptance rate is *above 50-80% depending on student stats*