

## Postings

From The New Trier Post-High School Counseling Office  
For Members of the 2019 Graduating Class and their Parents

March, 2018

We in the post-high school counseling office know that during the fourth quarter you have a significant amount of academic, classroom obligations, but we thought we'd take this chance to talk more about the college investigation process.

**There is no completely correct or incorrect way to investigate colleges;** however, we'd like you to use as many objective sources as possible. The pink section of the college counseling binder has a wealth of information about checking out colleges as well.

**After your initial meeting** your New Trier post-high school counselor will put suggestions on your Naviance "colleges I'm thinking about" list. *These are only suggestions – your counselor doesn't know you well enough yet to have a definitive list!!!*

Your job is to investigate four or five colleges at a time, take notes on the bright green section's "Gimme Five" sheet, and bring your notes to your second meeting.

We recommend you begin the investigation with the *Fiske Guide to Colleges* or *The Yale Daily News Insider's Guide to Colleges*. The purpose of these guides is to provide a feel for student life on campus – nothing is set in stone, and the information is designed to help readers decide if they might be a *personal* match for the student body on the respective campuses.

Not all colleges are included in these guides, however, so you may begin – or progress – to the college's individual websites for information.

Here, we'd like you to dig around under "Academics" and "Programs" to see what specific majors are offered, how they are described and even if you might like to study them. You can dig deeply to find out how extensive, say, the finance major is at Lehigh as opposed to the one at Indiana University. Exploring the depth and breadth of academic offerings helps you determine if the college is a good *intellectual* fit for you.

Even if you have no idea as to what you wish to study – as about 70% of all applicants – you may find areas of interest – or of NO interest – as you look through these offerings.

You might also want to see what courses are *required* for your college graduation in specific majors.

Feel free to print these pages for inclusion in your binder – closer to the end of the process you will find it helpful to compare specific programs as you make your final decision about where to enroll.

If you are a college athlete, check out their specific athletic program you wish to join. If you are a theater major, look at the number and kind of productions and the facilities each college offers. Follow your interests and your heart to find colleges that appeal to you.

Yes, we know that there are many, many colleges you might love. Yes, it is really confusing right now. It gets better! We want you to have the courage to find colleges you like that may be out of the mainstream of the New Trier culture if they appeal to you and your specific interests.

**The other assignment you have** is to speak to one academic teacher to set up a potential college recommendation letter. While many colleges *accept* and some *require* two letter or more, unless your list has colleges that require two, please only ask one teacher. Your binder has a list of the colleges that currently require two academic letters in the yellow section.

Academic courses are in English, math, lab science, modern and classical languages, and social studies.

Your teachers need not know anything about you outside of class – their job is to describe you as a learner in the classroom which includes your classroom behaviors and your educational strengths and weaknesses.

Your daily adviser should not be used as an academic recommendation unless you have your adviser as a teacher as well.

College prefer recommendations from junior-year teachers because they see you every day in class; sophomore teachers will likely have forgotten many of your specific strengths, and so that letter may not be as strong.

Once you determine whom to ask, arrange to speak to the in person (NOT over email!) teacher at his or her desk. Don't be nervous; they expect to advocate for their juniors! You can say, "I am starting the college process and need a teacher recommendation; would you be willing to write for me?" If a teacher accepts the responsibility, you can be sure that your letter will be overwhelmingly positive.

Thank the teacher profusely, and then within the next day, email a brief thank-you email to create a record of your request and the teacher response.

**Your daily adviser does not write a letter for you;** advisers answer a survey about each junior advisee and your assigned New Trier post-high school counselor writes on your behalf. This letter describes you as a member of the larger New Trier community and includes all aspects of your life, such as academics, extracurricular activities, and your specific strengths as a human being. The counselor writes for each junior and uses adviser information and parent information as a backdrop for the letter. **Parent forms are due by June 1, 2018.** Your post-high school counselor also uses your relationship to get to know you to write a terrific letter of advocacy on your behalf, so make sure you visit regularly and are invested in the process with your NT counselor.

**Otherwise, remember to keep your focus on your academics;** it's your opportunity to demonstrate to colleges the level of achievement you are capable of earning.

**Also, you should know that Naviance will take some time to update your test scores;** the testing companies will not send results to any high school for six to twelve weeks, so your Naviance account will not be updated as quickly as we'd like. Only you, your authorized parent(s) and post-high school counselor can access this, so just keep your newer scores in mind

as you check out those scattergrams. New Trier enters scores usually a day or two after they arrive.

**If you miss a meeting with your New Trier post-high school counselor,** just drop in to the front desk of room 201 and reschedule. And remember to bring any notes from your college research with you.

That's all for now; good luck on that junior theme!!!