

Postings
From New Trier's Post-High School Counseling Office
For the Class of 2017
April, 2017

Happy April showers and welcome back from spring break!

Remember, you have until **May first at midnight** to deposit at the college you plan to attend.

Last month's newsletter, which can be found on your Naviance homepage under "Messages" on the right-hand side of the page, contains all of the nuts-and-bolts information about finding your decisions, handling wait-list situations, and depositing for your reference. This month's newsletter will focus on additional aspects of your decision regarding where to enroll.

So, how on earth do you choose one college over another? We'd like to refer you back to the research you did initially in your investigation of colleges, and have you consider these factors:

Do a self- assessment; how often do you think you might like to come home for visits? How realistic or inconvenient would that be from the schools you are considering? In addition to distance, think about the cost of your visits as well.

While about seventy percent of all college freshman have no idea about their intended program of study, or major, you should spend some time looking at the college catalog online for the colleges you are considering. Check out the range of majors and dig more deeply to see what courses you need to take to get specific degrees. The last third of the catalog should list a description of each college class by department (English, biology, accounting, and so on) that will give you a description of exactly what each class entails. If a college doesn't have enough courses in an area of interest to you to keep you intellectually engaged, it may not be the place for you. Ideally, you did this research early while you were investigating your potential schools, but if not, do it now!

Make a pro/con list of each school you continue to consider. If that doesn't help so much, try a twist on the traditional list and make a list of the things you would miss from College A if you enrolled at College B, and then a list of things you would miss from College B if you enrolled at College A. While we recognize that making lists is tedious, it is the **ONLY** way to get those many ideas swirling around in your brain in coherent, discernible form. Feel free to discuss these lists with your parents or post-high school counselor.

While we know that a tremendous part of considering colleges may be the overall opinions of your peers, please, please select a school that fits **YOU** not your best friend. Part of making adult decisions is figuring out what benefits you as opposed to a one-size-fits-all option, so being true to your own head and heart is essential. There are many great colleges out there for each student, and this decision should revolve around what works for you and your family.

Remember not to just select “the best school you got into.” College rankings have very little to do with the academic integrity of a school and are more a reflection of admission trends such as how popular the school is. Selectivity of admissions is purely economics: if a lot of students apply for a limited number of spaces, that school will be hard to get into. Rankings are partially based on how many students are denied and how few offers a school has to extend to fill its freshman class, and these factors have nothing to do with what goes on in the classroom. In many cases, colleges become significantly harder to get into when their athletic teams do well in post-season play!

Many factors affect what makes a school good for you, such as:

- Academic programs offered

 - Range of options and/or depth and breadth of specific programs

- Location

 - Distance from home, urban/suburban, proximity to health care

- Cost

- Size of classes

- Availability of classes to graduate on time

- Social factors

 - Greek system, school spirit

- Study abroad opportunities

- Living options

 - Suite style, double room, living/learning communities

- Opportunities for research or required senior thesis/capstone project

- Career services

We know you have an ideal version of college, but encourage you not to select a school because it is pretty or because the food is supposed to be excellent there. Try to think about what it would be like to live there on your own, sharing living space and establishing yourself as a learner and a community member there.

We also know that there will be a significant amount of changes you will go through when you move onto campus, so we encourage you to talk with friends and family about the amount of studying you should be doing outside of class, navigating a schedule that is different every day, learning how to manage money, doing your own laundry, and living with a roommate.

Every college, no matter how perfect for you, will bring some amount of discomfort. If you anticipate being challenged in ways you have not been challenged previously, you won't be surprised and should be more equipped to handle things. There will be a safety net of resources at every college, which will be covered in next month's newsletter.

If you are waitlisted at your top-choice school, you will still need to deposit elsewhere by May first; please let your New Trier post-high school counselor know about your waitlist situation so we can help.

Remember, your New Trier post-high school counselor is here to help. Feel free to reach out any time.

