

Preparing

Talk – talk with your family, your high school counselor, friends, coaches, and anyone else who has served as a positive role model for you about your hopes, dreams, aspirations, fears, and desires for your future.

Learn – engage your education, learn how to study and take the most challenging courses that are available and appropriate for you. A strong academic performance in high school demonstrates to a college/university you are ready for the academic challenges you will face there.

Participate – get involved in a few extracurricular activities you really enjoy and commit to them. Strive to become a leader in that activity. Start writing for the school newspaper in ninth grade and work your way up to editor senior year. Life on a campus is more than classes and a college/university wants students who will enrich the experience for others.

Plan – what do you need to do between today and when your post-secondary applications are due to make yourself a viable applicant to the college or university of your choice? Are you taking the necessary courses? What standardized tests are required?

Researching

Learn as much as you can about schools that interest you to discover if they are right for you. You should learn a lot more than just whether or not they offer your possible major. Empower yourself by having the necessary information to make knowledgeable decisions. Fortunately, learning about colleges/universities has never been easier. The information you should be looking for is usually just a click away.

Some questions to help you get started:

1. How much does it cost to attend and might you qualify for financial aid?
2. What types of financial aid are available?
3. What resources are available? How do they support a student with learning differences or who is physically challenged?
4. What activities and clubs are available?
5. What are your housing options?
6. Does the college have a career guidance and placement office? Pre-professional advising (pre-med, pre-law, pre-vet, etc.)?
7. Your counsellor will be able to help you think of many, many more questions that you should be considering.
8. And if you can...visit the college or university. There is no substitute for first-hand experience.

Applying

Actually applying for admission to a college/university is not as intimidating a task as you may think. Yes, you will need to complete forms online; gather information about yourself, your family, your activities; and, most likely, you will need to write a personal statement. It is all very doable. Your counselor is there to help—ask.

Some things for you to remember:

Do not miss deadlines—submitting an application for admission or financial aid after the deadline may automatically make you ineligible for consideration.

Fill out additional financial aid forms because financial aid procedures can differ from school to school.

You need to be the sole author of your application—complete it yourself. You may ask for advice, but the words need to be yours.

No college should ask you where they rank on your list. You are not obligated to tell post-secondary institutions where else you are applying.

You should never feel pressured into applying to a post-secondary institution—admission officers are there to tell you about opportunities and give you accurate information.

Deciding

Once the admission offices have notified you of their decisions, you need to make your decision as to which school you will attend. It is a big decision, and an important one. Take your time, carefully evaluate all of the information and make the choice that is best for you.

- If you have received financial aid offers, compare them carefully. Determine exactly what your out-of-pocket cost will be to attend each school.
- Attend prospective student events at the colleges/universities to which you were admitted.
- Talk to your family, your counsellor and those you trust.
- You should never submit an enrollment deposit to more than one school. It is an unethical practice that may result in your acceptances being withdrawn by the colleges/universities involved.
- Once you have decided, notify the colleges/universities that you will not attend and request to have your application closed.
- If you have been offered a spot on a Wait List, learn what you need to do to be an active member of the Wait List.
- Be sure that you have a place to attend if you are not eventually offered admission off the Wait List.

What activities and clubs are available?

What are your housing options?

Does the college have a career guidance and placement office? Do they have pre-professional advising (pre-med, pre-law, pre-vet, etc)?

Your counsellor will be able to help you think of many, many more questions that you should be considering.

If you can, visit the college or university. There is no substitute for first-hand experience.

NACAC Overwhelmed by the College Admission Process? (2015) Retrieved from

<http://www.linkforcounselors.com/working-independent-counselors/>