

Choosing The Right College: 10 Common Mistakes



Choosing Colleges to Consider: Common Mistakes (1)

- **1. Don't pick a college based on friends/current partner preference:** Most students try to pick a college based on what their current partner wants. This is not a good way to choose colleges. Whether your current boyfriend/girlfriend or friends wants you to go to the same college, it might not be the best option. Your credentials may not fit the school or you may not get enough financial aid. You need to choose what is best for you (Your current partner and you can decide if there are alternative ways to accommodate both). **Note to Professor:** Talk about at least two scenarios and provide solutions to each .
- **2. Don't pick a college based on family preference:** Some kids feel pressure to attend the school that a parent or parents wants. This is a big problem. First, you did not make an individualistic decision to join that college. Be honest with yourself. If you do agree with your parents, make sure there is no doubt in your mind (Talk about why choosing your family choice is bad).
- **3. On the same note, do not choose a college based on opposing your parents:** Your parents advice should be taken into consideration. (Explain why).

Choosing Colleges to Consider: Common Mistakes (2)

- **4. Don't pick a college on just location:** You should consider the location when applying to college. If you can save money by staying home, then you should consider a few local colleges. This should not be your sole purpose on basing your decision. Whether it is close or far, the college that best fits you will be more beneficial in the long run. (Give an example about location).
- **5. You want to attend this college for partying purposes:** Never attend a college based on its reputation as a party school. This may seem like a factor for you, but the truth is this decision can mess you up. Common sense tell us that partying hard in college could lead to failing a lot of classes and dropping out. Use your own discretion on this point.
- **6. You want to attend this college due to its sports team:** This would be different if you were trying to go pro in sports. It is not beneficial to do this when you just love to watch the team. You can go to a college with a good sports team. It should not be a big factor in your choice (It will not affect what you job outlook unless your trying to go professional). Remember, it is more important to go to college where your credentials and/or accomplishments will stand out.

Choosing Colleges to Consider: Common Mistakes (3)

- **7. Focusing on one or two colleges (Being narrow-minded):** If you just limit the choices down to one or two, you could be in big trouble. First, you may not get into your desired college. Second, you may not receive the best financial aid package from your top pick. Last point, you may have more checkpoints for another college than your top choice (it makes more sense to go where the checkpoints lead). (Give examples).
- **8. Don't mark off a college based on student body:** Some students will not go to colleges with certain body of members (like an atheist at a Catholic College). Unless the school requires church attendance, an atheist should not scratch off a Catholic College. Some of these Colleges may have better financial aid packages and programs of study. Sometimes, the college that seems to be an awkward choice can be the best pick. (Give other examples).
- **9. Don't obsess with college rankings:** The rankings do not affect your ability to get hire overall (may help some if Ivy League). Many people get hire from state and small private colleges at Fortune 500 Companies. Make good grades and network a lot. College rankings are usually flawed, so do not depend on them.
- **10. Visit the colleges before making a final decision:** Why would you make a decision before visiting the actual colleges? You should visit the colleges before ruling them out. If you cannot afford this, watch YouTube videos about each college (try to find some with good and bad reviews). You should try to get a feel for your choices. Check out reviews of colleges at Unigo (<http://www.unigo.com/>).

Activity: Watch “Declining by Degrees: Higher Education at Risk”

- **Activity: Watch the documentary (made in 2005-still relevant today).**
- **<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcxDVYo2wH8>**
- **Discuss video in group sessions (pick a time slot on the calendar). This is a live chat with me and possibly other students.**
- **1. What are some reasons for increase in tuition?**
- **2. Are we more focus on teaching kids or just passing them?**
- **3. How do we fix the issues brought up in the film?**

Choosing Colleges to Consider 20 Common Questions to Ask



Choosing Colleges to Consider 20 Questions to Ask

- According to Campus Explorer, here are 20 questions you suppose to ask before applying to colleges: (Explain in your own words each question in further detail focus on all of them except 5, 11,12, 13, and14. Just state those like the questions are).
- 1. What are the averages for GPA, ACT, and SAT for each college I am interested in?
- 2. How many students apply and get accepted to each college I am interested in?
- 3. Do the schools take ACT/SAT parts as a whole or separate?
- 4. Can you receive credit for A/P courses?
- 5. Are freshman courses taught by professors or teacher assistants?
- 6. What is the teacher/student ratio?
- 7. When is it necessary to declare a major?
- 8. What are the academic requirements for my degree program or major?
- 9. What is the ratio of students finishing in four years or less?
- 10. What is the average school class size in the programs I'm interested in?

Choosing Colleges to Consider 20 Questions to Ask (Cont.)

- According to Campus Explorer, here are 20 questions you suppose to ask before applying to colleges:
- 11. What teaching methods are used for my degree program (lecture, group discussion, fieldwork, etc.)? Note: Not too important of a question
- 12. What are the student body demographics?
- 13. What percentage of college students live on-campus in dorms versus off-campus in apartments?
- 14. What percentage of the student body belongs to the Greek system?
- 15. How much did the cost of room and board, tuition and fees go up from last year?
- 16. What are the deadlines for admissions and financial aid applications?
- 17. Can I apply to the school early decision or early action?
- 18. When is my admission status decided, and when will I be notified?
- 19. What percentage of students receive financial aid at the college?
- 20. What kind of job placement programs are available for students?

Exercise #2



Pick at least 10 Colleges for Practice and Ask the twenty questions

- 1. Pick at least 5 Colleges (rank according to criteria) for Practice (None of these are set in stone).
- 2. Answer the 20 questions using the internet. Try your best to answer the 20 questions about each college.
- 3. Come up with two additional questions yourself for personal use
- 4. Submit to through email!

- Approximate time 2 hours to 3 hours.

Picking the right college for you.

- After the exercise we just did, one must ask these points (no particular order) about their best option. Note: Give examples!
- 1. How much does it cost to attend (tuition, room/board, fees, etc.)?
- 2. What is the average amount of debt at chosen colleges?
- 3. Which college do I stand the best chance of getting into?
- 4. What things are not taken into consideration by the 20 questions?
- 5. Which college fits me the best overall?

The End of Lesson 2

The End!