

The National College Planning Summit

The 6 Steps to Finding the Right College

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1. What is the Right College?

- a. It's the school where the student has found the proper place for them. The student has done planning and has goals and ideas of majors and careers that fit him or her.

2. Why is finding the "correct fit" so important when choosing colleges to apply to? What are some of the statistics on education & college costs today?

- a. 60% of entering freshman have done zero career planning - This makes them vulnerable to transferring or dropping out which adds extra years in college.
- b. They may lose credits and have to retake classes when they transfer.
- c. The average annual cost for a Private College for one year is around \$50,000 per year and some are approaching \$70,000 per year. Adding an additional year or two is costly!
- d. It is now taking an average of 6.2 years to complete the 4 year degree. Transferring is a big reason that it is taking longer than 4 years to graduate.

3. What do today's HS Students need to think about? What do they need to ask themselves?

- a. What are my goals in life?
- b. What am I interested in?
- c. What challenges me?
- d. What is my learning style?
- e. What is a good learning environment for me?
- f. Where do I fit in the world of work?
- g. What am I looking to achieve?

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4. What aspects of college should be considered when choosing a college?

- a. What are the Majors and Academic Programs?
- b. Where do I fit academically? Students should be challenged but not overwhelmed.
- c. Location – Do I want to be close to home or far away, in a city or rural?
- d. Public vs Private
- e. Campus Life – religion, diversity, fraternity or sorority, activities
- f. Athletics
- g. Big or Small
- h. Cost
- i. What is important to me?

5. Can you explain the idea of Reach, Target and Safety schools as this relates to selecting a college?

- a. Reach – These are your dream schools and being admitted is a stretch. The admission and academic stats indicate your chance of being accepted is low, but you would love to attend these schools.
- b. Target – Your chances of being accepted are good. The school academics fit with your grades. There is no guarantee but you are in the school's profile.
- c. Safety or Fallback - Your chance of acceptance is very high. You are a student at the top of their profile. For example – their average GPA is a 3.0 and yours is a 3.7
- d. It is important to apply to all three. The majority should be your Target schools but also a couple of Reach and Safety schools.

6. What is the most important first step that parents and students should take before they start the college selection process?

- a. Career and Education Planning Research.
- b. Take various assessments about your work interest, personality, work values and your skills.
- c. Match occupations that fit your different assessments.
- d. Learn what types of majors are required for these occupations.

7. What do you say to the student who says “I’m only 16 - How do I know what I want to do for the rest of my life?”

- a. It's never too young to think about “What Do You Want To Do?”
- b. Who are they going to be?
- c. It's their life and they need to take control of it.
- d. Career Planning is a lifelong process of exploring and planning your career and educational goals compatible with who you are.

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- e. Career Planning is useful in planning your High School Classes or extracurricular activities.
- 8. Shouldn't students try to get into the "BEST" school possible and then figure out a major?**
- a. The "BEST" School may not be a good fit.
 - b. It may not have the majors and programs that you are interested in. Not all Colleges offer all majors- even the big state universities.
 - c. You may not be successful at this school.
- 9. Why is visiting colleges so important- preferably in person but at least a virtual tour?**
- a. First impressions give you the overall feel of the campus.
 - b. Ask yourself, "Can I see myself here?"
 - c. What are the dorms like, the classrooms, the food, does it feel safe?
- 10. What are the Six Steps to Finding the Right College? What is the proper decision making model of career planning?**

Step 1 - Assessing the Student's Interests and Strengths.

- a. Who I am? What am I happy doing?
- b. What interests me?
- c. 62 % of students stick with their major if they have taken a work interest assessment.
- d. Students who haven't taken a work interest assessment change their major 78% of the time.

Step 2 - Identifying Career Goals.

- a. Match the student with occupations and fields that they are interested in.

Step 3 - Identifying Majors to study to attain the Career Goal.

- a. What major do I need to reach the Career that I am thinking about?

Step 4 - Select Colleges based on Majors that I'm interested in.

- a. Find colleges that offer the majors I want to pursue.
- b. If you're not sure between 2 or 3 majors, choose a school that has all the majors you are potentially interested in.

Step 5 - Narrow down your college list to find the Best College Fit.

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- a. Visit the campus.
- b. Review the Academics and Majors
- c. Location and Size
- d. Cost
- e. You want the student to match the occupations with who they are.

Step 6 - Apply to 6-10 colleges with selections from Reach, Target and Safety schools.

11. Let's talk about some bad reasons to choose a college?

- a. My best friend, boyfriend or girlfriend is going there.
- b. My parents went there.
- c. Choosing the school solely based on the Reputation – whether it is an “Elite” School, a Party School, a Liberal School, a Conservative School.
- d. Assuming a Private College is too expensive.
- e. “I love their sports team.”
- f. There is no fee to apply to the college.
- g. I missed the Application Deadline for my first choice school.
- h. I don't have any Back-Up Choices so I'm going here.

12. As you mentioned earlier, the reality is 60% of Entering Freshman Have No Career Goals, No Major and are Undecided and Uncommitted. What often happens to these students?

- a. 1 in 3 students will transfer to another college.
- b. 1 in 4 students will drop out.
- c. Half of freshman will leave or transfer to a new school after their first year.
- d. The majority of these students did not plan and are floundering in college. They may drop out completely or take additional time to graduate.

13. How does Career Dimensions Help Students?

- a. Focus 2 – Is our Program for College Students -One third of US colleges use this program.
- b. The MCP Program (My Career Profile) is for High School Students.
 - i. Students take assessments of their interests, personality, work values and skills.
 - ii. They are matched with occupations&careers that fit their assessment.
 - iii. They can research the occupations and the majors needed to achieve the career.
 - iv. Students use the college search component to find schools which offer the majors and also the other factors important to the student, such as location, size, academics, cost etc.

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- v. It is easy to use, web-based and self-guided.
- vi. Career Planning is a lifelong process of exploring and planning your career and educational goals and making sure they are compatible with who you are.
- vii. It is important to remember that Career Planning is not a “One-Time thing and now I’m done.” We encourage students to play “what-if” and change their college search or retake the assessments. Use the program over the course of the year and really explore.

14. How do people contact you?

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