

After You Click “Submit”

What you should do after your applications are complete.

Congratulations, you completed your applications. You finished your essays, letters of recommendation, and college admission tests. You have worked hard and are ready to enjoy the remainder of your senior year! But, before you can completely relax, there are a few things you need to do to ensure you have great college options:

TO DO AFTER COMPLETING YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS:

- Check your email – frequently! Colleges will communicate almost exclusively by email. Colleges will often have instructions on actions they want you to complete, opportunities available to you, and any missing items from your application. Parents: Colleges will email your son or daughter. Not you! Students: Follow instructions carefully - if you do not understand requests, pick up the phone and call the admission department for an explanation.
- Create a portal page. Many colleges will send you information on setting up a student portal either during or right after the application process. Do this as soon as you receive instructions. These portals are temporary until you are officially accepted. Once you are accepted and make your final college choice, the portals will disappear except for your new college home!
- Continue to explore the colleges that you sent applications; you won't have much time to make a final decision once acceptances are sent. Be prepared!
- Start applying to scholarships if you haven't already done so.
- Keep up your senior grades! If you have a change in schedule or a serious drop in grades, you will need to notify each school to which you submitted an application. Better to alert them early, than to have them rescind your offer after they receive your final transcript. Most schools do not accept grades lower than a “C” in college prep courses senior year. You know what this means: No senioritis!

TO DO ONCE YOU KNOW YOUR ACCEPTANCES - ALSO KNOWN AS DECISION TIME!

- First and foremost, remember that the deadline to decide is May 1. Once you decide, let your college of choice know your decision, and let the other schools that sent you acceptance notices know that you will not be enrolling. You may open up a much desired space for a wait-list student!
- If time permits, revisit the schools from whom you have received an acceptance. Make sure these visits are in-depth: meet with department faculty and students, spend the night in the residence hall, and eat on campus in the cafeteria. Tour any facilities that are important to you (e.g., rec center, art studio, dining facilities, theater, etc.)
- Review your Key College Criteria (remember that activity?) Why did you put the college on your list in the first place? What notes do you have on the school? Ask deeper questions to help you discern which college or academic program has what you are looking for. Which school offers more assistance with job placement? Ask about internships – are those common or difficult to find? How integrated is the study abroad program? Or service learning? Does the school have a strong pre-law/pre-med/pre-business school advising program?
- Think about location! When you graduate from college, many job recruiters will come from the area and/or state where you are located. Can you see yourself getting a job there? Are you willing to live there for several years, at least? These factors can greatly influence where you end up living when you complete your degree.
- Cost. Plain and simple, which school will cost you the least? Which one the most? Read the financial award letters carefully. Does one school require you to take on more loans? Are there hidden costs for you – additional travel expenses if the school is in another state or country? Check out graduation rates. Will it take you four years or five or six to graduate? A school that costs a little more but guarantees a four-year degree may cost you less in the long run. And colleges that are strong in job placement may help you secure a good-paying job to help pay down your debt more quickly.

TOOLS TO HELP WITH THE DECISION:

- Map your college choices against your Key College Criteria to see where each school stands.
- It might seem simplistic, but using a 'Pro versus Con' chart can give you a visual picture of each school. Be honest with yourself.
- Try rating the schools from 1 – 10 on different topics - location, major, size, and activities, for example. See which schools are stronger or weaker.

Relax! There are many schools that are a good choice for one student. Once you decide, dive in! Take advantage of all that the school has to offer and get involved quickly. Remember that it's not where you go to college that counts but what you do when you get there! Once you make your decision, remain connected to your portal and emails so you don't miss important deadlines. Most schools will require you to submit a deposit for housing fairly early and will give guidance on orientation, move-in, purchasing books and scheduling your classes. Stay connected!