



# THE COLLEGE CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS

April 2023

Volume 30 Issue 8

## STEPS TO TAKE AFTER COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE OFFERS

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org)

If you've received acceptance letters from multiple colleges, congratulations! You should be excited that your hard work has paid off. The next step will be deciding which college is best for you.

First of all, don't worry about choosing that one perfect college—there's no such thing. College is what you make of it: What you do while you're there matters more than the college name on your diploma. Here's how to make your decision.

- **Get More Information About Each College After Receiving Acceptance Letters** - You probably already gathered a lot of information about each of your college choices during the admissions process, but digging even deeper can help you make the best choice.
- **Ask the Right Questions** - When making the ultimate college decision, it's important to ask the right investigative questions about each of your choices to see which college fits you best.

Questions you can ask include:

- How many first-year students return? How many students graduate?
- Does the college offer the majors I'm interested in?

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## HOW TO REVIEW AND COMPARE YOUR FINANCIAL AID AWARDS

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org)

How much financial aid you receive may vary between colleges and may change with each year you attend. It's important to understand how much your college expects you to pay. Reviewing your financial aid award letter is one way to identify the amount of aid you'll receive to help pay for college. When reviewing your financial aid award, there are a few steps you can take to ensure you're making a financially informed decision.

1. **Gather the information you need** - You'll need the financial aid award offer from your college, which may have been mailed, emailed, or posted on your student portal. If you haven't received your offer yet, the best way to figure out when you'll get it is to contact the school's financial aid office and ask. In addition to the financial aid offer, you should determine the cost of attendance by looking at the college's website or the college's profile on BigFuture.
2. **Assess the different types of financial aid on your financial aid offer** - Financial aid can include grants and scholarships, loans, and work-study. Grants and scholarships are free money you do not have to repay and are generally

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## HOW TO HELP TEENS FIND A GOOD COLLEGE FIT, FROM A UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

[grownandflown.com](http://grownandflown.com)

Let me start with an observation. The college search process has changed significantly over the last decade as the general economy has shifted. For many families, selecting a college is among their most critical decisions.

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## SCHOLARSHIPS

### QUESTBRIDGE SCHOLARSHIP

The National College Match is a college admission and scholarship process through which high-achieving, low-income students can be admitted early with full four-year scholarships



### FORT ROSECRANS MEMORIAL DAY SCHOLARSHIP

For high school seniors in San Diego county. Essay required about student's feelings about the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery. Deadline to apply is April 28th.



### RISE SCHOLARSHIP

Rise is a program that finds brilliant people who need opportunity and supports them for life as they work to serve others.



### ASHRAE ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIP

\$3,000 scholarship for students pursuing engineering degrees. Apply by May 1



### AROUND THE CORNER FROM COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

Open to current high school students planning to attend college. \$1,000 scholarship. Deadline is June 30th



### THE GLORIA BARRON PRIZE FOR YOUNG HEROES

A program of the nonprofit organization Young Heroes Project, celebrates inspiring, public-spirited young people from diverse backgrounds all across North America. Apply by April 15th.



### STOKES EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

Interested in a career in computer science and national security? This \$30,000 a year scholarship plus guarantees you a job after college at Fort Meade, MD.



### HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION

Manages 70 of the largest need based scholarship opportunities in the country for high school juniors who have faced or overcome obstacles. Scholarships by state and by career.



## SENIOR CHECKLIST

-  • Keep your grades up
-  • Check college portals
-  • Compare Financial Packages
-  • Research Scholarships
-  • Schedule Admitted Student Day Tours

### FUN FACT:

The probability that admissions officers will take back a rejection letter is just around 1% to 2%.

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- What can I do for fun?
- What kinds of students feel at home at this college?
- **Get Answers from Direct Sources** - The best place to get an answer depends on the question. Here are some sources that can provide information:
  - People who work at the college
  - Current students at the college
  - The college's official website and its College Search profile
- **Visit—or Revisit—the Campuses** -If possible, check out a college's campus to get more information. If you can't visit the campus, you might be able to find a virtual tour on the college's website that will provide insight. Another online option is to explore student videos on College Search to hear about student experiences on select campuses.
- **Think Things Over** - You've done the research and asked questions. Now it's time to check your own thoughts and feelings.
  - How did I feel when I was on campus at each college I visited?
  - Which colleges best match my list of must-haves?
  - At which colleges can I imagine myself as successful and happy?
- **Compare the Colleges** - Use your new information to sort the colleges by what they offer and what you want. Make a list of the pros and cons of each college. You can also use College Search to compare up to three colleges side by side.
- **Compare Financial Aid Awards** - Once you've been accepted to the colleges of your choice, talk to your family about which ones work best for you financially.

## COLLEGE NEWS

**Colorado College** said it will no longer participate in U.S. News & World Report's undergraduate rankings, becoming the second institution to drop them in recent weeks over equity concerns.

**Stanford University** sues Santa Clara County to give tax relief to faculty homeowners

Less than a third of undocumented students who apply for state financial aid in California for college enroll and receive the help, according to a new report from the **California Student Aid Commission**.

**American Public University** System's Sports Management Programs Earn Specialized Accreditation from the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA)

**West Virginia** will allow people with concealed carry permits to take guns onto public college campuses beginning in July 2024, [The Associated Press reported.](#)

California governor Gavin Newsom's proposed budget puts funding for **UCLA** on the line if the highly selective university doesn't create a guaranteed transfer pathway for community college students.



**COLLEGE NEWS**

**University of California System** bans fully online degrees  
The 10-campus system closes a loophole that could have let undergraduates piece together a degree. Experts and some inside the system say that in justifying its decision, UC perpetuated outdated claims about online learning.

By one count, the United States is home to more than one million unique educational credentials, which represents a more than threefold increase since 2018.

**Whitman College** in Washington Approves New Concentration in Human-Centered Design which encourages students to understand the deeper meaning of objects, spaces, systems and beyond—and how to evaluate people’s interaction with the designed world, to start in Fall 2023.

**The University of Alaska system** offers more than 40 programs directly related to the construction industry in Alaska, from carpentry to surveying, heavy duty equipment to welding, and civil engineering to project and construction management, these programs range from short-term certificates to four-year degrees and beyond

**Columbia University** will no longer require applicants to send SAT or ACT scores for undergraduate admissions, making it the first Ivy League institution to adopt test-optional policies indefinitely.

**JUNIOR CHECKLIST**

-  **ACT** - Next test date is June 10th. You must register by May 5th. It takes 30 minutes to complete registration and you will need a photo.
-  **SAT** - Next test date is May 6th. You must register by April 7th.
-  Attend Virtual College Visits
-  Create your college list

**NATIVE AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Association on American Indian Affairs has teamed up with the American Indian College Fund to provide scholarships to undergraduate Native American students. Apply by May 31st

**SCHOLARSHIP FOR DREAMERS**

\$4,500 per year for four years for undocumented students with goals to attend college.



**COCA COLA SCHOLARS PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIP**

\$20,000 achievement-based scholarship awarded to graduating high school seniors. Students are recognized for their capacity to lead and serve, as well as their commitment to making a significant impact on their schools and communities. Application is open



**HSF SCHOLARSHIPS**

More than 150 scholarships for Latino students with or without US citizenship.

**NEXT LEVEL STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP**

The \$1,000 NextLevel Student Scholarship is available to students each semester who are pursuing a career in law, compliance, or public policy.



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preferred to the other two types of financial aid. Knowing the different types of financial aid is essential to successfully interpreting your costs.

### **Calculate how much you'll have to pay the college**

There are tools available to help you calculate your costs; try using the College Cost Calculator to figure out how much you'll have to pay. We recommend calculating your estimated bill before loans by subtracting grants and scholarships from your direct costs, which includes tuition and fees, housing, and meal plans if living on campus. The estimated bill before loans will show how much you need to pay directly to the college.



### **Identify the long-term costs of borrowing student loans**

If you plan to take out student loans to help cover your costs, you should calculate the long-term costs of borrowing them. Different loans may have different terms, interest rates, and benefits. For example, direct subsidized loans won't accrue interest while you're in college at least half time, while unsubsidized loans will. Remember to account for all the years you'll be attending college. Use [a loan calculator](#) to identify the monthly payment if you were to repay the loans over ten years and consider the differences between federal loans and private student loans.

### **Consider your indirect expenses**

Indirect expenses are costs beyond what you need to pay directly to the college. You will need to purchase supplies for your classes such as books, technology, and notebooks. If you plan to live on campus, you may need to consider the cost of traveling back and forth each semester including for holidays. These expenses will vary from one college to the next, so understanding how they differ can help in making a college decision.

### **How to compare your financial aid offers**

To help determine which college makes the most sense for you financially, start with these questions when comparing your college options.

- How much will each college cost for one year? - Compare the estimated bill before loans are applied. This will help you understand the breakdown of your bill and ensure you know how much each college is asking you to pay per year.
- How much will you need to borrow in loans for each college? - Borrowing money in the form of student loans is the reality for many students who plan to attend college, but what you'll need to borrow at each college may vary. Consider the cost of each college after subtracting grants, scholarships, and other available resources (such as contributions from any college savings accounts), to determine how much you may need to borrow.
- What are the different indirect expenses of attending each college? - These indirect expenses will vary based on a few factors, such as what's included in tuition and fees and the location of the campus. If one college covers books in their tuition and fees, it could save you a significant amount of money over the course of a degree. Don't forget to consider specific costs related to traveling to and from college. For example, going to an out-of-state college may require you to buy multiple plane tickets. While not paid directly to the college, these costs impact how much you'll pay.

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Families are looking at a competitive job market and believe this decision will impact their child's earning potential (and, hence, everything else) for the rest of their lives. They are searching for value.

What does this mean? We don't have to guess—we have lots of data on when and why college matters. In essence, students need to go to a college with these qualities:

- Mentorship matters. It turns out that mentorship is one of the defining characteristics of a transformative college experience. In particular, faculty mentorship is crucial.
- Students get involved. Students are more likely to succeed when participating in activities outside the classroom that supplement their learning (athletics, student organizations, the arts, etc.).
- Lateral learning takes place. Students learn a lot from one another. They need to be at a college where they are surrounded by peers who are in college for the right reasons and are pushing and prodding each other in the right ways.

The question is: How do you find a college where your son or daughter is likely to become immersed quickly, develop a close mentoring relationship with a faculty member, and get involved in sustained co-curricular activities that allow them to find good friends and develop strong life skills?

Have a conversation about fit. Now is the time to have a serious conversation with your son or daughter about where they are in their personal development and what kind of college will be best for them. Are they more likely to thrive in a lecture hall or small classes? Will they be more comfortable in an urban or rural setting? What kinds of people do they tend to thrive around? Make sure you understand the financial costs. The sticker price, meaning the listed tuition, is not altogether helpful. Make sure you understand: How many years does the average student take to graduate?

One of the mistakes prospective families make is selecting a college because of very small differences in price. Fit is most important. It does not make sense to go to a slightly less expensive college if the fit is not right. At the same time, debt does matter. I believe a *manageable* level of debt is worth it to get an education that is the right fit for the student, and families need to determine what that level is for them.

Choose a college where your son or daughter can pursue their passions. If your son or daughter plays a sport or has a passion for an artistic endeavor, choose a college where they can pursue that passion. This is important — don't choose a college where they only will be able to watch others perform. Choose a college where they will likely make the team, be cast in a play, join a music ensemble, and have a chance to pursue their passion.

This is also true for students who want to major in the sciences. So much of the value of undergraduate work in the sciences comes from hands-on research. Choose a college where undergraduates get to conduct their research and where it is built into courses. Be wary of places where graduate students replace professors in classrooms and knock undergraduates out of the labs.

Pay attention to the first-year program. Transitioning into college can be hard. Select a college where a lot of attention is paid to how students transition into college and the support they receive if and when they stumble.

Once students get connected to courses, faculty, friends, and co-curricular activities, they will be fine. Visit the colleges one more time. If you have narrowed it down to two or three colleges, revisit them. Try attending one of the April Visit Days most colleges offer for admitted students. Let your son or daughter spend the night at their top two or three colleges, and tell them to go with their gut. Don't be strident with your views. Ask your son or daughter questions, as opposed to offering observations. Where do they feel comfortable? Which one feels right?

Here are some essential questions to ask during the April Visit Days but not often thought of: What is the endowment size per student? Endowment translates into the financial resources a college can spend on providing student experiences. What is the mood on campus? You want to be where faculty, staff, and students are proud of the college. And pay attention to location. You want to be on a campus that has a good vibe. I also think there is a massive advantage to being in a location with a healthy community surrounding the college and easy access to an airport and city.

Once you select a college, make sure the conversation continues. But try to dial down the stress. As I mentioned earlier, there are many colleges in this country where students can get an excellent education. Too often, the rankings lead readers to imagine choosing the right college is about where it sits on a list. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Choosing the right college is far more personal than that. It's about fit. And remember, we expend way too much energy worrying about getting in and selecting the right college and not nearly enough focusing on how to transition into college and take full advantage of the college experience.

## THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS GETTING WAITLISTED APPEARS TO BE GROWING

Students are sending in more applications per capita, and their decisions about which college they will attend are becoming more unpredictable. For this reason, more students are being put on waitlists. The waitlist is a strategy used by colleges, even the most elite ones, in order to protect themselves from declining yield rates. (Yield is the percentage of admitted students who enroll.) To be considered a selective school, colleges need to have a high yield. Putting students on a waitlist lets a school lower its acceptance rate and raise its yield.

Students who get waitlisted end up in limbo because the college has not said yes or no, but "maybe." According to a recent study, "The number of students [ultimately] admitted from [a] waitlist declined 46% [from one year to the next]: from 61,000 for the Class of 2024 to 33,000 for the Class of 2025." If a student is waitlisted, there is still a possibility, while slim, that they will be offered admission. Typically, a student who has been "invited" to the waitlist must notify the college via their admission portal whether they would like to be considered for admission from the waitlist.

**EFFECT:** Students who get waitlisted may not have an offer from their first-choice college until after the May 1 decision deadline has passed.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Being on the waitlist is a chance to review one's options. If a student is invited to the waitlist at a school they still may want to attend, they need to follow the college's directions of continuing interest. This may include writing a letter of continued interest, sending in an additional recommendation letter, or simply checking a box. If a student decides to remain on the waitlist, they should still enroll and send a deposit to another college in case they are not admitted from a waitlist. And yes, a student can stay on more than one waitlist.