

H-B Woodlawn

The College Application Process

For Parents of Juniors

February 24, 2021

PROGRAM:

- ✓ **College Advising at H-B Woodlawn**
 - TAs—yours and others
 - Fatima Posada-Bellaz
 - Casey/Kate
- ✓ **Overview/Timeline of the college application process**

- ✓ **The importance of finding fits**

APPLICATION ITEMS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SENDING IT?	COMMENT
Application (usually online)	Student	Submit well before deadline
Test Scores (SAT, ACT)	Student	Submit well before deadline
Essays and Supplemental Forms	Student	Submit well before deadline
Transcript	TA	
TA recommendation	TA	Submitted with transcript
School Profile	TA	Submitted with transcript
Secondary School Report	TA	Submitted with transcript
Teacher Recommendation (s)	Teacher(s)	Request by end of Junior year

- ✓ **NOVA Pathways Program**
- ✓ **Naviance/Family Connection**
- ✓ **Resources**
 - Handouts
 - ✓ College Timeline for Junior and Senior Year
 - ✓ Application Options
 - ✓ College Finances Simplified
 - ✓ Financial Aid Terms
 - ✓ Brief Review of College Guidebooks
 - ✓ SAT or ACT
 - ✓ Applying to a Service Academy
 - ✓ Finding the Right Fits
 - ✓ Handouts on Naviance
 - English Department
 - College Essay/SAT/ACT writing prep
 - College Essay guidance—Fall Senior Year
 - Web Resources--See Back
- ✓ **Questions and Answers**
- ✓

TURN OVER FOR WEB RESOURCES

WEB RESOURCES

Teacher/Advisors For a staff directory go to: <https://hbwoodlawn.apsva.us/staff-pages/staff-directory/>

Casey Robinson casey.robinson@apsva.us

Kate Seche katherine.seche@apsva.us

Fatima Posada-Bellaz fatima.posadabellaz@apsva.us

H-B Woodlawn College Page: <https://hbwoodlawn.apsva.us/college-corner/>

FAFSA—official site <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>

Most financial aid begins with the FREE Application for Federal Student Aid. This is the official site.

*****Junior parents start here:** <http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/>

Federal Student Aid www.studentaid.ed.gov

Federal Student Aid, an office of the U.S. Department of Education, provides information on a variety of college related information.

Financial Aid info www.finaid.org

This site provides information on scholarships, loans, and saving for college. It also has calculators and a free scholarship search.

Family Connection (Naviance) <https://student.naviance.com/hbwoodlawn>

Student use this site to track applications and get information about colleges and careers.

Common Application www.commonapp.org

Over 700 colleges accept the common application. The College of William and Mary, University of Mary Washington, University of Virginia and several other Virginia colleges use the Common App.

Coalition Application <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/>

A newer application portal, the Coalition Application has over 140 colleges and universities that are currently using it. As of 2018, Virginia Tech exclusively uses the Coalition App.

NCAA – sports www.ncaa.org

If the student is thinking of playing sports at a Division I or II school, check out this site.

ACT—ACT testing and prep <http://www.actstudent.org/>

Particularly popular with colleges in the middle states, the ACT has been growing in use in the Atlantic coast states. This site has information on both the test and test prep. Virginia colleges and universities accept the ACT.

College Board/CSS/Profile www.collegeboard.org

<https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp>

College Board has information on the SAT, PSAT, AP, and financial aid, including financial aid information for the CSS/Profile used by many private colleges.

Khan Academy www.khanacademy.org

College Board and Khan Academy have teamed up to provide free, personalized SAT resources for all students.

Timeline for the College Application Process

Class of 2022

January 2021

- ✓ Continue to do well in classes.
- ✓ Log in to your Naviance account through your My Access dashboard and begin to use it in the college application process.
- ✓ If interested in a service academy, immediately apply for summer seminar.
- ✓ Meet with TA to discuss senior year courses; continue to challenge yourself academically but be realistic.
- ✓ Meet with your TA to plan standardized testing. Visit <https://www.fairtest.org/university/optional> to see if your college choice is test optional.
- ✓ ACT on Apr 17, June 12 and July 17 (all these tests are Saturday tests).
- ✓ SAT on Mar 13, May 8, and June 5 (all these tests are Saturday tests).
- ✓ Prepare for the ACT or SAT by signing up for a prep course, working with a tutor, or doing SAT/ACT practice tests. Practice tests can be found on the ACT and SAT websites.

February 2021

- ✓ Continue research on colleges by talking with teachers, your TA, Fatima and by using Naviance, book and web resources.
- ✓ Make use of HBW's College Corner. <https://hbwoodlawn.apsva.us/college-corner/>
- ✓ Plan a volunteer/intern/job/class option for the summer of 2021.

March 2021

- ✓ Arrange visits to selected colleges over Spring Break if possible or check out their websites for virtual tours.
- ✓ Review with parents the family resources available for meeting the costs of college.
- ✓ Get an early estimate of eligibility for federal student aid.
- ✓ Go to <http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/>
- ✓ Continue to research colleges taking into account family finances.

April 2021

- ✓ **If you have not already done so, meet with your TA to discuss the college application process.**
- ✓ Continue researching colleges.
- ✓ Visit colleges during Spring Break if possible or check out their websites for virtual tours. Also, check out <https://artofcollege.org/> for videos of college tours created by a HS counselor.
- ✓ Sign up to take the SAT or ACT in May or June.

May 2021

- ✓ **Meet with your parents and your TA to be sure your college plans are appropriate for your academic and personal goals.**
- ✓ Ensure that you are doing your best in your current courses.
- ✓ If not already done, create a list of colleges that interest you.
- ✓ If you are interested in a campus in another country, pay special attention to deadlines as they are often earlier than US universities.

June 2021

- ✓ **Contact potential teacher recommenders before school is out.**
- ✓ Finish your current courses with strong grades.
- ✓ Visit college campuses-include interviews when possible-during the summer.
- ✓ Continue to refine your list of colleges.
- ✓ Identify who is available at HBW for summer help in the college application process.
- ✓ Create a resume in Naviance. Only your TA and teacher recommenders can view this resume and it can aid them when writing your recommendation letter.

July/August 2021

- ✓ Work hard and enjoy your summer internship/job/volunteer activity/class.
- ✓ Draft at least one college essay.
- ✓ Assemble portfolios or audition materials if a visual or performing artist.
- ✓ Complete NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse Form if you hope to play Division I or II sports.
- ✓ Identify an Early Action College to apply to.
- ✓ If considering a Common Application college, create a Common App account after August 1.
- ✓ Register for September ACT or August-October SAT.
- ✓ Keep your list of colleges up to date in Naviance.

August 2021/ September 2021

- ✓ Make your list of schools you are thinking of applying to. Log in to **Naviance** and use the college search tools.
- ✓ Be sure you have a “safety” school that you would be pleased to attend. Safety means you are likely to be admitted and can afford to attend.
- ✓ Get your parent(s)’ advice and guidance as you make decisions. Parents can fill out the **FAFSA forecaster** (<http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/>) to **anticipate possible financial aid contributions**. Also check out <http://www.finaid.org/>. (You cannot officially fill out the FAFSA until after October 1, 2018.) Ask your parent(s) to be honest about preferences for your decision (location, type of school, etc.) and about financial parameters. (Parents should tell students “We can write a check for \$_____” so they can consider scholarship opportunities and potential acquisition of debt.)
- ✓ Consider creating a **new email address** (with Yahoo, Gmail, etc.) to use specifically for applications (like “johnsmithcollege@gmail.com”. You will have to check it frequently, if that’s what you use to communicate with colleges and the Common App.
- ✓ Getting an **early start on the Common App and its essays** (one long, one an explanation of an extracurricular activity you’ve been involved in) is a good idea. The Common App has its own essays, and many schools have supplements that they ask you to fill out. **Agree to “FERPA”** which authorizes the school to release data about you.
- ✓ After filling out the FERPA waiver, log in to Naviance and link your Common App to Naviance. This allows us to send your transcripts and letters of recommendation electronically.
- ✓ **Register for the SAT or ACT** if you wish to improve your score.
- ✓ **Check the websites of colleges** you’re interested in to see if they have a list of suggested / required courses (e.g. William & Mary requires 4 years of a foreign language, even though Virginia only requires 3).
- ✓ Investigate if schools have **early applications**, and consider whether or not you want to apply early to any school. Some colleges (like William & Mary and UVA) have **Early Decision**, where if you apply and get in, you are required to attend the school. Others (like JMU and UVA) have **Early Action**, where you can apply early and find out whether you were accepted, but you are free to apply to and attend other schools. Typically, if you apply early, you will find out whether you got in by December. Regular decision applicants usually find out in March or April, and you typically commit to a college by May 1.
- ✓ Think about which teachers you will ask to write you a **letter of recommendation**. Typically, colleges want recommendations from a teacher who has taught you in 11th or 12th grade and know you well.
- ✓ Provide teachers that are writing a letter of recommendation for you with a resume and/or brag sheet.

October 2021

- ✓ Plan weekly to provide enough time for schoolwork, college applications, and ongoing extracurricular activities. If you plan to apply early to college, your application will be **due November 1**.
- ✓ **Create a FSAID so you and your parents can electronically sign your FAFSA** (<https://fsaid.ed.gov>)
- ✓ **Begin filling out the FAFSA with your parents.**
- ✓ **Take the SAT or ACT** if you wish **to improve your scores**.
- ✓ Check your college choices for other **required financial aid forms** (e.g., CSS Profile).
- ✓ Communicate regularly with your teachers to be sure you are aware of your standing in each class so there are no surprises on your report card.

November 2021

- ✓ If you apply early to college, your application is **due November 1**. Submit online or mail applications in time to reach the colleges by the November deadlines, even if deadlines are for postmarks. Continue to monitor the status of your applications.
- ✓ Plan weekly to provide enough time for schoolwork, college applications, and extracurricular activities.
- ✓ **Take the SAT or ACT** if you wish **to improve your scores**.
- ✓ Check your college choices for other **required financial aid forms** (e.g., CSS Profile).
- ✓ **Search for scholarships.**

December 2021

- ✓ **Early action/early decision candidates should have a response by early December** from some colleges. If accepted, follow the instructions accordingly. If deferred or denied, submit applications to other colleges.
- ✓ If deferred, consult with your TA for next steps to increase the likelihood of a regular decision acceptance.
- ✓ **Submit online or mail applications** in time to reach the colleges **by the December/January deadlines**, even if deadlines are for postmarks. Continue to monitor the status of your applications.
- ✓ **Check** to be sure colleges on your list **have received official test scores**.
- ✓ **Search for scholarships.**

January 2022

- ✓ Maintain your effort in every class. Admissions staff frequently reviews progress reports for signs of slacking!
- ✓ Most colleges will request a **midyear transcript and report (with updated transcript)**. The colleges' deadlines for this report are often earlier than what is possible. A google form will be emailed to you by Fatima so she knows where to send your midyear reports in late January-early February.
- ✓ The **Student Aid Report (SAR)** should be **checked for accuracy**.
- ✓ **Search for scholarships.**

February 2022

- ✓ **Monitor your applications** to be sure that all materials are sent and received on time and that they are complete. Use the colleges' web sites when possible, but do not hesitate to call if there is a concern.
- ✓ If SAR has not been received, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 800-433-3243.
- ✓ **Search for scholarships.**
- ✓ **Continue to do well in classes.**

March 2022/ April 2022

- ✓ Review your acceptances and financial aid awards. Compare financial aid packages in making your decisions.
- ✓ **Notify colleges if you eliminate** them from your consideration.
- ✓ Decide on the one college that you will attend and **send in your tuition deposit (usually by May 1)**.
- ✓ Discuss with your TA steps to take to be taken from a wait list.
- ✓ **Continue to do well in classes.**

May 2022

- ✓ **Wait-list candidates** may still hear positively, but they should have (and be acting on) **backup plans**.
- ✓ **Continue to do well in classes.**
- ✓ Join Facebook group for the freshman class at the school that you will attend.

June 2022

- ✓ If necessary, **request a final transcript** be sent to the college where you will attend.
- ✓ If necessary, **provide your TA with an addressed, stamped envelope** to send your final transcript to the college you will attend.
- ✓ **Notify the college** of any **private scholarships or grants** you will be receiving.
- ✓ **Notify Fatima of all scholarships you have been awarded!**
- ✓ Determine when payments for tuition, room, board and meal plans are due.

July 2022/ August 2022

- ✓ You should **receive information from your college** about housing, roommates, orientation and course selection. Respond promptly to all requests for decisions or further information.
- ✓ Begin **preparing for your new lifestyle and responsibilities**. Budget time & money; establish priorities.
- ✓ **Pack** for college.
- ✓ Write **thank-you notes** to all who helped you apply to college.

Application Options - Pros/Cons

Check college websites as these may change by the time that you apply.

Early Decision (W&M/VTECH/CNU/UMW/UVA) Usually on or **before** November 1st

- Pros** If successful, application process is over by mid-December
- Cons** BINDING - Must go to the school if accepted
Doesn't allow for stellar grades of first semester to boost gpa
Commits to a college regardless of financial aid package
Cannot apply to any other schools
May produce an early case of "senioritis"
- Good idea for:** Student with a clear vision as to college choice
Student who is a good match for the school
Family that has the financial resources

Early Action** (JMU/VTECH/CNU/ODU/UMW/UVA/Radford/GMU) On or **before** November 1st

- Pros** Nonbinding - Doesn't prohibit other applications
Application process can start and end early
- Cons** Doesn't allow for stellar grades of first semester to boost gpa/rank
Shortens the time available for the application process
- Good idea for:** Student who is a good match for the school,
JUST ABOUT EVERYBODY

Regular Decision (all) Usually on or **after** January 1

- Pros** Allows for stellar grades of first semester to boost gpa/rank
Allows review of financial aid package before committing
- Cons** Extends the anxiety created by the process
If multiple acceptances, more stress
- Good idea for:** Student who needs more time to consider possibilities
Student who needs more time to improve academic record
Family that wants to see the financial aid package before committing

Deferred enrollment (A student is accepted but elects to defer attendance for a semester/year)

- Deadline** As soon as a student is accepted, the student can request a deferment
- Pros** Allows for another year of maturity before college
Gives time for special opportunity—travel, work, study
- Cons** Cost of college will rise
May not be used profitably
- Good idea for:** Student with a clear purpose for the time before enrollment

COLLEGE FINANCES SIMPLIFIED

1. Family submits FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).
2. Analysis of FAFSA results in EFC (Expected Family Contribution).
3. Colleges receive data from FAFSA, CSS, and institutional forms.
4. College computes COA (Cost of Attendance).
Sample COAs: UVA \$ 35,744* U Richmond \$ 72,450*
\$6,465 for NOVA (does not include living costs)*
5. Colleges re-calculate EFC from all data.
6. College Financial Aid Office subtracts EFC from COA to determine Financial Need.
7. College “**meets**” financial need with FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE.

TWO HYPOTHETICALS

STATE U		PRIVATE U
\$35,744	COA	\$72,460
\$10,000	EFC	\$10,000
\$25,744	NEED	\$62,460

FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE

STATE U		PRIVATE U
\$ 0	GRANT	\$10,000
\$ 2,500	WORK/STUDY	\$ 7,500
\$ 1,500	STUDENT LOANS	\$ 7,500
\$ 2,000	PARENT LOAN	\$10,000

Sources: *Big Future bigfuture.collegeboard.org

SCHOLARSHIP LIST IN NAVIANCE

- ✓ Uploaded centrally and information is available to all APS seniors
- ✓ Include a blurb and requirements for each particular scholarship as well as a link of PDF of the scholarship application.
- ✓ Arlington Public Schools does not sponsor, endorse, recommend or screen companies whose offers are posted in SC. Families and students are reminded that they need to complete their own research on these companies to determine if they wish to engage in any of their opportunities or services.

SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS

Be careful when searching for information on student financial assistance. Make sure information and offers are legitimate. Don't fall prey to fraud. Estimates show that families lose millions of dollars to scholarship fraud every year.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) cautions students to look for these telltale lines:

- ✓ "The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back."
- ✓ "You can't get this information anywhere else."
- ✓ "I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship."
- ✓ "We'll do all the work."
- ✓ "The scholarship will cost some money."
- ✓ "You've been selected by a 'national foundation' to receive a scholarship" or "You're a finalist" in a contest you never entered.

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Brief Review of College Guidebooks

Comments by Ray Anderson

1. **The Best 386 Colleges** **Princeton Review**

This is a fine tool—an easy-to-read guide with heavy emphasis on quotations from current college students about what their college is “really like.” Many high school students trying to figure out how to distinguish one college from another will find this guide the way to go. There are over 60 top 20 lists of best/worst, such as “Most Beautiful Campus”, “Students Study the Most”, “Party Schools”, and “Most Politically Active Students.”

As the student reads this guidebook she will record notable quotations on a chart divided into “PROS” and “CONS” or collects preferences on a spreadsheet. When this process is concluded the student should have two sets of quotations: one describing a college profile to be actively considered and another describing a college profile to be avoided.

Use Yale Daily News **Insiders Guide to the Colleges** as an alternative or addition to **The Best 385 Colleges** to create the student’s personal college profile.

2. **Looking Beyond the Ivy League Colleges that Change Lives** **Loren Pope/Penguin Books Loren Pope/Penguin Books**

These books by Loren Pope, long time college counselor in Alexandria, Virginia, are wonderful for the student who doesn’t exactly fit into the choice between the Ivy League and state public colleges. His humanistic approach to matching the student with the school is useful reading for all. His particular emphasis is that the best college education is found at a small liberal arts college. These books are good to read early in the process for orientation and when the process doesn’t seem to be working.

3. **The Fiske Guide to Colleges 2021** **Edward B. Fiske**

This guide to just over 300 of the best colleges is equivalent to the Princeton Review guide. The tone is more of a summary description of each college, but it does include student quotations, “overlaps” and other features found in **The 378 Best Colleges**. The ratings and descriptions are subjective. They come from questionnaires and interviews with those associated with the colleges. The Fiske can also be used to create a “Pros” and “Cons” chart or preferences list.

4. **America’s Best Colleges (U.S. News Ultimate College Guide)** **U.S. News and World Report**

Formerly found in print form, U.S. News and World Report that started it all, in terms of “rating” colleges and continues to do so through their website. Their website covers essays on a number of topics related to college applications and college life as well as ratings using 4 tiers in each of a number of categories: National Universities; Public National Programs, etc., these ratings are hotly debated in college circles because they are primarily statistical comparisons that rely on accurate collection and intelligent emphasis of factors for success..
<https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges>

Applying to a Service Academy (Pre-COVID)

Applying to a service academy is much more arduous and multi-layered for both student and TA than applying to other universities.* While there are variations in the process, below is a general outline of what the process entails. Ideally the student will begin in the junior year. Here are the key elements, but be sure to check with each academy as these vary. **N.B. Keep copies of all paperwork.**

Preliminary Application—gives enough information that they say, “Yes, you can apply.” Then a full application is sent to the student by the academy.

Summer Seminar—not a requirement, but highly recommended. The student applies beginning in January of the junior year. The one-week session—basically a boot camp—is in the summer between the junior and senior year. Will conflict with the last week or so of HBW. Gives a snapshot of the first year at an academy.

Recommendations—need at least three. One from a math teacher, one from an English teacher, and one from the TA. The student may also be able to submit one from a coach, church or scout leader.

Congressional nomination—submitted by a congressman or senator or the Vice-President. The student in the spring of junior year should contact congressman and senators. Find out what the process is.

Standardized tests—must submit SAT or ACT scores.

Official application—must submit the official application. The earlier the better. The aphorism “First come, first served” applies here.

Medical Examination—must have a physical and eye exam. DODMERB (Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board) will give you the names of doctors. Do as soon as possible.

Fitness test (Physical Aptitude Exam)—is sometimes administered by our PE teachers. It usually involves such things a one-mile run, sit-ups, shuttle run, kneeling basketball throw, and standing broad jump. Each academy sets its own standards. Practice for the PAE.

Interview—This is usually done by officers with special training for interviewing. This relationship is integral to a positive outcome.

One of the intriguing aspects of the process at one of the academies is that the student could receive a “letter of assurance” in September of the senior year but still not be admitted. We’ve had students matriculate at all but the Merchant Marine Academy, so we should be able to put an aspiring service academy student in touch with people who have been through the process. Another unique feature of these applications is that the student may hear as early as October or as late as May of the senior year.

US Naval Academy <http://www.usna.edu/Admissions/>

US Air Force Academy <http://academyadmissions.com/>

US Military Academy <http://admissions.usma.edu/>

US Coast Guard Academy <http://www.cga.edu/admissions.aspx?id=59>

US Merchant Marine Academy <http://www.usmma.edu/admissions/>

*A service academy application will be more arduous and complex because as a TA you may have to submit recommendations and forms to the academy, a congressman, and two senators.

FINDING THE RIGHT FITS

Comments by Mark Dodge

Too often, students (and their parents) put great pressure on themselves to gain admission to elite, highly selective colleges and universities, under the mistaken impression that only admission to those schools will lead to success in career and life. Many students (and parents) also have a strong emotional need for the validation that comes with acceptance into an elite school - “yes, I truly am as smart and talented and wonderful and better than others as I think I am.” When approached this way, the college search becomes a competition, an effort to out-do other students and demonstrate superiority. A whole industry has sprung up to take advantage of this situation - we have college application coaches, college board exam preparation courses, essay reviewers, and others geared towards “helping you get in to the college you need.” Certainly these services have their place, but too often the college application process has become filled with anxiety and dread. To be blunt, getting into the “best” college is not important – getting into the “right” college is.

A famous inscription at the temple of Apollo in ancient Delphi read, “**γνθι σεαυτόν**” - that is, “Know Thyself”. This ancient Greek wisdom should be our guide as we enter the college selection process. As a student assesses her or his personal strengths, weaknesses, and preferences, a picture should begin to appear of the sort of college best suited to that student. As this picture emerges, you can then look for actual colleges which most closely match the picture. Below are a set of questions that a student may use to begin thinking about the best learning environment for him or her:

1) What size school is best for me? The tradeoff here is between relationship and opportunity. At a small school (say 2000 students or fewer), you will be well known by your professors and other students. Class sizes will be small and you will have more opportunities for discussion with classmates and professors. Many small schools make a special effort to include and integrate students. For example, it is not uncommon for professors to host students for dinners in their homes. There is usually a sense of “family” - every one is looked after and supported.

A large school (say 12,000 or more) will have big time sports events, concerts, and other performances. If you love being part of a big crowd cheering at football games, watching your team (and sometimes yourself) on TV, and being around celebrities and award-winning professors, a larger school is your choice. There are more events and opportunities and activities going on at a big school – but, your classes (particularly the first two years) will be larger and more lecture oriented, and you will have much less academic and emotional support from the school.

Medium-sized schools offer a compromise between these two – they may have significant athletic programs, for example, but probably won't have big TV appearances. And you will be a little more anonymous than in the smallest schools, but there will still be a significant degree of support.

Generally, students who are more assertive and independent, and who like a high energy and activity level, can handle a large school, while those who want a more comfortable and secure situation should look for a smaller school.

2) What is the best setting for me? The atmosphere of a college is greatly affected by the community it resides in. Generally, settings are categorized as urban, suburban, college town, or rural. Schools inside big cities often promote the activities and opportunities available within the city as an adjunct feature of their education. They don't usually talk as much about the higher crime rate, noise, and pollution... Suburban schools can provide some of the opportunities of a city school in a more secure environment. Watch out, though – many suburban schools are predominantly commuter schools, so there may be less on-campus life than you think.

College towns tend to exist to support the college they are nearby, so most of the shops and activities in the town are geared toward the college. This can be cozy, but not nearly as lively as an urban school. Truly rural schools focus almost all their energy and activities on the college itself – these are largely self-contained communities. At best, this brings a strong sense of community – at worst, a real sense of isolation.

3) What kind of weather do I like? Yes, you are going to be living there for four years, and if you hate snow and ice, that is a legitimate concern when selecting a college! On the other hand, it doesn't make much sense to apply to Florida schools if your favorite hobby is snowboarding.

4) Does it matter how far away the school is? How often do you want to be able to come home during school holidays? For most students, consider applying to schools at least 50 miles away, but no more than 500 miles. Most students want to be far enough away that they are independent from their families, but not so far that it is more than a one-day drive away. On the other hand, if you have extended family living in a particular area, or you just want the adventure of an international school, don't automatically rule out more distant schools. Still, if you pick a more distant school, it should be for a specific reason, and you need to be aware of what you are giving up.

5) Should expense of the school affect my decision? Absolutely! It is during the junior year that students need to have a heart-to-heart talk with their parents about finances. Most private schools run about \$50,000 a year, and most in-state public schools run about \$20,000. Yes, private schools will provide some financial aid, but they generally assume you can pay more than you think you can! Outside scholarships can help with incidental expenses, but rarely are they large enough to really put a big dent in the overall cost of college. Students and parents need to take a cool, clear approach to finances before choosing which schools to apply to. And when looking at costs always focus on the *Cost of Attendance*.

6) How highly should I consider academic ratings? Here, you truly need to match your strengths to the school profile. Most colleges publish the GPA range and SAT (or ACT) scores of their median students. If your GPA and scores are significantly below these, then you probably won't get in and if you do, you'll likely struggle. Ask your TA or the school college counselor for help if you can't find this information. Naviance's Family Connection makes this information easy to find.

7) What if I don't know what to major in? Join the crowd! Most high school seniors don't know exactly what they want to study. Generally, the first two years of college give you a chance to try a number of different courses, and then you make your decision in the junior year. Some majors (particularly engineering majors) do require an earlier choice, though. But bear in mind that larger schools generally offer more majors, which means more choices. Naviance's Family Connection connects majors to colleges and has an interest survey that can help you think about careers and majors.

8) What if I do know what I want to major in? Great! By all means, look for schools that have that major, and it is fair to consider the rankings for those schools. But bear in mind that a lot of students change their major at some point in college (often two or three times), so don't focus on a particular major too narrowly.

9) How important is it to visit the schools before I apply? Perhaps surprisingly, first impressions are a pretty good indicator of how comfortable a student will be at a school. The first impression is certainly more important than a published rating. Go to the school and take a look, particularly at the students, attend classes, talk to professors, and read school newspapers. Do these look like people you want to spend much of the next four years with? Can you see yourself fitting in with them?

10) Should I pick a college or a university? What's the difference, anyway? A university normally has a post-graduate program, and thus has a strong focus on academic research. This has pros and cons – a professor who is a good researcher is by no means automatically a good teacher. On the other hand, you might have opportunities to do undergraduate research at a university, where those might be limited at a college.

To summarize – the factors that need to be considered when selecting a college are the size of school, geographical location, school setting, cost, distance from home, and a good match for your academic credentials. After that, you should look for particular majors or programs if you know what you want. If possible, confirm your choices with a visit so you can get a first impression.

After going through this process of self-evaluation, the next step is to begin finding schools that match your criteria. Here again, the TA or college adviser can be helpful in making suggestions. Which leads to the final question:

11) How many schools should I choose? Around five. It is helpful if at least one of those schools is either a rolling decision or early action school – that means you can apply and get an answer back early. If this is, say, your third choice, and you get accepted, then you need only apply to the two schools that you'd prefer above it. In general, applying to more than five schools is costly and time-consuming, and maybe an indication that you are pushing too hard to get into elite schools. Or it means that you are not carefully analyzing the differences in colleges. And, it is actually better to apply early to a school that is not the most selective on your list – the goal is to get accepted early so you can shorten your list.



Student role vs. TA role

Student role:

~**Fill out the FERPA waiver.** By doing this, it links Naviance to their Common Application. NOTE: This is very important. If the student does NOT fill this out, then the TA is unable to send documents via Naviance to common app schools. Non common app schools (VT or JMU for example) are not affected. The FERPA waiver can be found on your Common App account. Juniors will do this September 2021

~**Add colleges to the “colleges I’m applying to” tab.** Doing this lets the TA and teacher recommenders know where you are planning on applying to college.

~**Fill out requests to teachers for letters of recommendation.** Doing this invites the teacher recommender and enables them to upload letters for the student.

~**Go to the CollegeBoard or ACT website to submit your SAT or ACT scores electronically. THIS IS NOT DONE AUTOMATICALLY THROUGH NAVIANCE.** This is a step that the student must do on their own.

~**After hearing back from colleges with their decisions, update Naviance with their acceptances, denials, withdrawal of applications, etc.** This helps keep our statistics current on Naviance.

TA role:

~Upload TA letters of recommendation.

~Complete Common Application and/or NACAC counselor forms.

~After uploading these forms, they send the forms electronically to the schools.

~Forms that are sent by the TA are:

- TA letters of recommendation
- Common Application and/or NACAC Counselor Forms
- The student transcript
- The H-B Woodlawn Profile

~TAs can check to see whether colleges received electronic forms

**H-B WOODLAWN
CLASS OF 2020
SENIORS' PLANS BY STATE**

ARIZONA (1)

University of Arizona--1

CALIFORNIA (1)

Harvey Mudd College--1

COLORADO (4)

Colorado College--2
Colorado State University—1
University of Denver--1

FLORIDA (2)

Flagler College--1
University of Miami—1

GEORGIA (2)

Agnes Scott College—1
Georgia Institute of Technology--1

ILLINOIS (2)

Loyola University Chicago—1
University of Chicago—1

INDIANA (1)

Indiana University, Bloomington--1

KENTUCKY (1)

University of Kentucky--1

MASSACHUSETTS (3)

Clark University--1
Mouth Holyoke College--1
Tufts University--1

MARYLAND (2)

Maryland Institute College of Art—1
University of Maryland, College Park—1

MINNESOTA (1)

St. Olaf College--1

NEW HAMPSHIRE (1)

Dartmouth College—1

NEW YORK (11)

Columbia University--1
Cornell University—1
Fordham University—1
Ithaca College—2
The New School—1
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute—1

NEW YORK (CONTINUED)

Sarah Lawrence College—1
Skidmore College—1
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry—1
Vassar College--1

NORTH CAROLINA (1)

Warren Wilson College--1

OHIO (1)

The College of Wooster--1

OREGON (1)

University of Oregon--1

PENNSYLVANIA (6)

Drexel University—3
Mercyhurst University—1
University of Pittsburgh—1
Temple University--1

RHODE ISLAND (1)

Brown University--1

TENNESSEE (2)

University of Tennessee, Knoxville—1
Vanderbilt University--1

VIRGINIA (55)

Christopher Newport--2
George Mason University—6
James Madison University—3
Northern Virginia Community College--12
Radford University—1
University of Mary Washington--2
University of Virginia—6
Virginia Commonwealth University—7
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University—9
The College of William and Mary—7

VERMONT (1)

University of Vermont—1

QUEBEC (2)

Concordia University--1
McGill University—1

ENGLAND (1)

University of York--1

GAP YEAR/WORK (6)

