

## **Junior Year College Search Guide**

Gearing up to apply to college next fall takes time and focus. Juniors should be developing concrete lists of college criteria and putting their college priorities in priority order.

What are the most important factors for you in choosing a college? What is critically important for a college to offer you? Could you deal with colder weather if a school in the North has a strong program for your major? Could you handle a college that is not connected to a big city if the special support you need is visible and available?

Here are some steps you can take now to get your college search primed to take off.

### **High School**

- Stay focused on academics
- Do not lighten academic load for senior year
- Meet with your high school counselor
- Stay involved in school activities

### **Standardized Testing**

- Prepare for ACT/SAT tests
- Register for ACT/SAT
- Register for AP tests
- Register for SAT Subject Tests, if appropriate

### **Exploration**

- Use the Web to search college websites
- Explore college admission requirements
- Meet with college representatives
- Get involved in clubs and activities that spark your interests and passions

### **College Fairs**

- Develop questions to ask college reps at a college fair
- Explore different types of college fairs like general college fairs, performing arts, special needs, student athletes, Historically Black College fairs, religious organizations, etc.

### **Campus visits**

- Drive by local colleges and get a sense of the different types of colleges
- Make appointments to go on campus tours to colleges of interest
- Schedule to attend a class on campus
- Eat on campus
- Visit a residence hall
- Meet with admission staff

### **Do not:**

- Let this search consume every dinner conversation at home.
- Bow out of the conversation and let others take over the driver's seat.
- Forget to recognize that cost is a factor.
- Forget that this search must, must, must include some colleges to which you are admissible. You need to have a safety school, a school to which your chances of admission is very high, and you need to love it.

Get ready to start the engine and survey the scene. Get set to make some major life decisions. Go head long into this search, keeping in mind that there are many colleges that could be a perfect fit.