



Your College Navigator, LLC

Admissions by design, not chance!

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June 2017

Graduating Seniors:

Thank teachers and others who helped you

Thank scholarship providers

Have your final transcript sent to your college

Summer 2017

Do Something Interesting

Job, internship, or community service; summer program

Rising Seniors

Do your research - Use websites, guidebooks, virtual online tours and on-campus tours and thru interviews

Begin work on Common Application and other applications as they become available

Craft your essay

Narrow college list

Prepare for fall SATs and/or ACTs

College tours & interviews

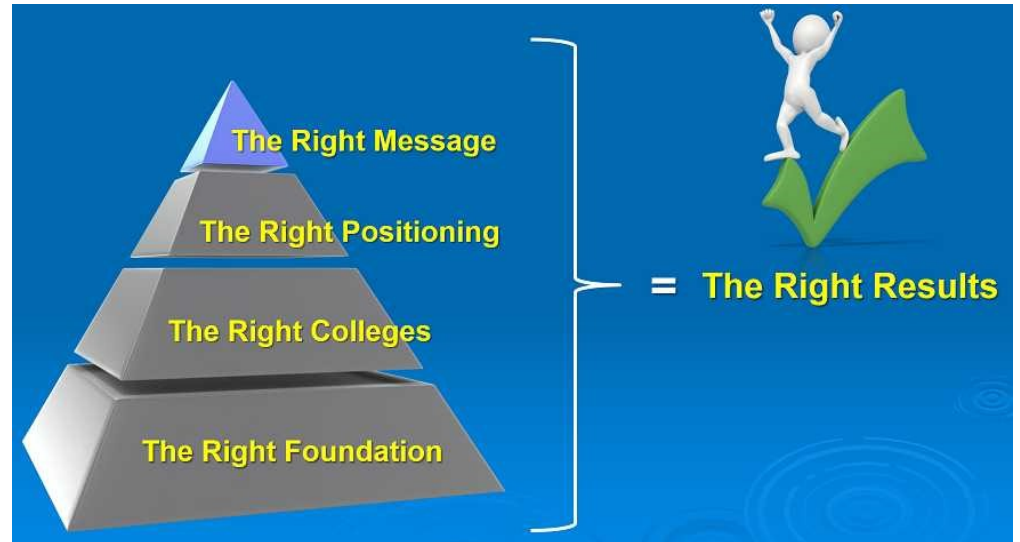
Underclassmen

Prepare for fall PSAT

August 2017

26th—SAT Reasoning & Subject Tests

The 4 Key Steps to College Admission Success



College admissions requires more than strong academic transcripts and good extracurricular activities. By being thoughtful and deliberate, students can demonstrate to admissions that they are a perfect fit for their college.

Following are our **four critical steps** to admission to the right colleges.

The Right Foundation – It is important that students craft the right high school curriculum and test prep strategies. And you need to focus on depth and achievement in extracurricular activities. Remember, college admission begins the day you enter high school. Don't wait until your junior year to begin developing a solid foundation.

The Right College – Determining the right college is much more than looking at the rankings. Among the over 30 areas to consider when considering a college are the competitiveness of the academic environment, compatibility of teaching style with the way you learn, opportunities for obtaining experience, and the program to help undecided students select a major.

Getting-in is only the first half of the college process. **Getting-out** with a rewarding career is the other half. Consider the college's 4-year graduation and 2nd year retention rates, the strength of the program in your selected major, the companies that recruit on-campus, and the graduate school success rates among the key factors.

The Right Positioning – Your application should not be the first time that the college learns of you. The well-positioned candidate makes contact with a college well before they apply. This contact can take on many forms, including meetings with professors, coaches, admissions reps, and current students.

The Right Message – Successful applicants paint a picture of themselves by cohesively connecting the dots. As a result, the admissions committee has a clear image of who the student is and what they will bring to the college. Every component of a student's application is an opportunity to market yourself.

It is vital that students have a well-thought out plan in each of these four areas.

Financial Matters: Legal and Financial Issues Before College



If your child has turned or will turn 18 before college begins, she is legally an adult, and you, her parent, lose the legal authority to make decisions on her behalf. That means that you have no legal right to see her grades, manage her finances (although you remain responsible for paying her college tuition), make medical decisions or speak with her doctor. So, before she goes off to college, consider asking her to sign some documents that will allow you to continue to help your child.

Writing Great College Essays

Start early. The more time you have, the less stress you'll feel. Even if your college list isn't 100% finalized yet, it's not too early to start thinking about your application essays.

Your essays are important, but essays are only a piece of what admission officers will consider. Do the best job possible with your essays, but an essay by itself – no matter how creative or well written – won't overcome an application that is weak in other areas. *All* parts of your application deserve attention and thought.

Your best idea may not be your first one. Staring at a blank computer screen can be intimidating, so it's tempting to jump on the first idea you have and start writing. Try to resist. The most powerful essay ideas often rise to the surface *after* the more obvious topic you think of first. Give other ideas time to percolate.

Stay true to yourself. The biggest mistake students make with essays is trying to write about a topic that they (or their parents) *think* colleges want to

FERPA release: with your child's permission, you can speak with the college about her performance. Colleges often have their own FERPA releases, so ask your college for a copy.

HIPAA Authorization: allows you to access your child's health records and speak to her doctors.

Advance Care Directive for Health Care: allows you to act on your adult child's behalf in the event that she is incapacitated and unable to make decisions for herself.

Durable Power of Attorney: allows you to act on your adult child's behalf regarding legal or financial matters.

You can get the last three forms mentioned from your family lawyer. Having these in place while your child is away

at college may provide the whole family with extra peace of mind.

This is also a good time to address money management issues.

Set up a bank account that will allow you to easily transfer money to her account. Find out which banks have ATMs close to campus—college kids usually don't write many checks. Be sure to check on fees for using an ATM that's not part of your bank's network. Those fees can add up!

Make plans to protect student property. College kids tend to have a lot of valuable electronics and computer equipment. Renter's insurance can protect your investment if these items were to disappear. Your homeowner's policy might also cover dorm room possessions—check with your agent.

hear about, rather than writing about something that the *student* is truly interested in or excited by. The result is usually an essay that sounds hollow and flat. Instead, look for your essay ideas in the experiences, people and events that matter most to *you*. Not only will your essays be easier to write, but they'll sound like you. And that is *exactly* what colleges are hoping to hear in your essays: **YOU**.

Be honest. College admissions officers are masters at spotting any form of plagiarism or essays written by someone other than the student. Your work should always be your own. At the same time, don't embellish or stretch the truth when telling your story. Once you do, it stops being *your* story.

Use a conversational tone...but don't get overly friendly. Your college essay shouldn't sound like an academic paper or a job application. It is OK to use a more conversational tone for application essays. On the other hand, your essay shouldn't be so informal that it sounds like you're posting

on a friend's Facebook page.

Focus. Find your main topic, and stick to it. Keep asking yourself what information is truly essential to telling your story. Everything else can almost always go.

Be ready to edit and rewrite. Don't expect to write a masterpiece on your first try. A good college essay usually requires several edits and revisions to become a *great* college essay.

Ask for feedback, but be selective. When it comes to admission essays, the old adage holds true: too many cooks spoil the brew. While getting feedback from a few trusted advisors is essential, the more people who chime in with suggestions and ideas for your essay, the less likely that your own voice will shine through.

Proofread, proofread, proofread. Nothing kills an otherwise strong application faster than an essay riddled with spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors!



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Check out our website for
upcoming seminars

Considering Applying Early Decision

Traditionally, college application deadlines were often in January. More recently, however, there has been a push for earlier applications, with admission programs that include Early Action, Early Action II, Early Decision I, Early Decision II and even a few Single Choice Early Action programs enticing applicants with the promise of earlier decisions and possibly better chances for admission. This more hurried approach has contributed to an increase in stress levels for many seniors.

Early Decision

Early Decision (ED) is a binding application program that has a November 1st or 15th deadline. Students are generally notified before Christmas whether they have been accepted, rejected or deferred to regular decision. Since it is binding, students who apply ED and are accepted must withdraw any other college applications. Students can apply ED to only one college, and the student's parents and Guidance Counselor must sign an agreement with the college confirming that the applicant has done so.

Early Decision can (the operative word here is "can") offer the applicant a significantly higher acceptance rate, depending upon the college. The 2017 edition of the Princeton Review's *The Best 381 Colleges* states that Elon University received 504 Early Decision applications and accepted 86%. Its regular decision acceptance rate is listed as 57%. If you love Elon and know deep-down that if you are accepted that's where you'd love to go, then applying Early Decision and knowing

within six weeks is a very good thing. Davidson College had a 22% acceptance rate for regular decision but that jumped to 48% for ED. Not all colleges, however, are so generous in their ED offers. In the 2015-2016 cycle, Rice University received 1,389 ED applications and accepted 20%. Their regular decision acceptance rate was 16%, so applying ED provided a boost of only 4%.

When students apply ED, they are a captive audience. The college doesn't have to wonder where else they're applying or if they'll enroll if accepted. A college's yield is the number of students that say "yes" to the college's offer of admission. Colleges are often evaluated on their yield percentage and ED applicants increase the yield. Many colleges fill as much as half their incoming class with ED candidates. The regular decision pool then becomes more competitive because the college will frequently look to balance the class, i.e., they may need more theatre majors, more students from Kansas or more soccer players. If a student has applied ED, she is saying it's her first choice. *The biggest downside of ED* is that students are unable to compare financial aid offers, which are typically made in March.

A word of caution: don't get caught in the trap of "I'm applying Early Decision somewhere, I just don't know where." **Apply ED only if you are convinced of your passion and commitment to becoming a student at that college.** Otherwise you might be trapped in a school that is not one in which you will thrive.