



# Your College Navigator, LLC

Admissions by design, not chance!

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## February 2020

Juniors – Begin your college search

Juniors – Map out dates and prepare for spring SAT and/or ACT exams

Seniors – Contact colleges to be sure your applications are complete. Send mid-year grades if required. Update colleges with any new information that might influence admission

## March 2020

9th, 10th and 11th grade students - Make plans for a productive summer. Investigate summer programs, jobs, internships

11th grade students – Create an initial list of colleges

Prepare for spring SAT/ACT exams

## Our Up-coming Seminars

**Feb.13** – Pt. Washington Library

**March 11** – Mid Island Y JCC

**March 19** – Great Neck Library

**March 30** – Manhasset Library

To register go to  
[www.ycnavigator.com](http://www.ycnavigator.com)

## Outstanding School-Year Campus Visits

Everyone is familiar with the standard information session and campus tour. Many are similar, and as a result, you learn little about the college that is of significance to you. A well-executed visit will not only provide the opportunity to obtain significant insight into each college, but provide an opportunity to advance your candidacy as well.

Competitive colleges make admissions decisions on how well they believe the student fits their academic, personality and social profiles, and ways in which the student can contribute to the college community. Your objectives in visiting a college should be to determine your fit, to identify specific areas in which you can contribute, and ways in which you will benefit. Use your visit to make quality contacts with college professors, curriculum advisors, admissions officers, and students.

Over and above the info session and campus tour, here are several ideas to make the most of your visit:

**Prepare** – know exactly what you want to accomplish, and set up your appointments before you arrive.

**Go where students congregate** - Engage with other students to learn what they like about the college, what they would like to see improved, and how easy is to make friends. Eat at the cafeteria or the student center.

**Social activity** - learn what drives the social activity at the college. (e.g. Greek life, sporting events, intramural sports, dorm life, etc.).

**Audit an introductory course** in a subject of interest to you. Determine if the

subject matter, teaching style, student participation and use of technology appeals to you.

**Meet with a professor** in a subject of interest and learn how the teaching in this subject differs from the teaching of the subject at other colleges.

**Experiential learning** - What research, internship and professor interaction opportunities are there, and how does one get involved in each of these areas?

**Sports/performing arts** – if these areas are of importance, meet with the appropriate coach or director. Determine the opportunities for you to participate.

**Clubs/activities** – meet with a student in 2 clubs/activities and determine what makes these activities interesting and learn of the role you can play should you attend.

**Core curriculum** - learn about the courses required of all students. Do these courses appeal to you?

**Specific major/professors** - If you know your major, meet with a professor to learn what makes their program unique, the specific courses and other requirements necessary to graduate. Does this approach appeal to you?

**Undecided major** - If you are unsure of your major, learn the details of the college's program for undeclared students.

**Teaching style** – Does the college's teaching style (e.g. lecture/note taking, class discussion, student presentations, collaboration with others, laboratory, research, etc.), match the way you learn best?

**Academic intensity** - learn of the academic intensity at the college and how competitive the students are. Is the environment collaborative or competitive?

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## Famous lawyers and their undergraduate degrees:

### Hilary Clinton

(former) Secretary of State  
Political Science

### Ann Coulter

Radio Personality  
History

### John Grisham

Author  
Accounting

### Elizabeth Marston

Co-Creator of Wonder Woman  
Psychology

### Judy Scheindlin

Judge Judy  
Government

### Will Shortz

Puzzlemaster  
Enigmatology



## Resources

### American Bar Association -

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal\\_education.html](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education.html)

### National Association for Law Placement -

<https://www.nalp.org/prelaw>

## Majoring in Pre-Law

If becoming a lawyer sounds like a good way to ensure job security, earn a decent living, challenge your brain, and make a difference in the world, you might think majoring in “Pre-Law” would be your best bet. Think again. **There is no such thing as a “Pre-Law” major.**

Although there is no Pre-Law major, the term itself is not meaningless. It refers to advising programs that support students in preparing for and applying to law school. These programs often have advisors who devote themselves to helping students understand different types of law, explore various legal careers, and manage the law school application process. Pre-Law advising programs often sponsor lecture series, job shadow opportunities, and internships.

So, what *is* the best major to pursue for law school? The most common majors of law school applicants are: Political Science, History, English, Psychology, Criminal Justice, and Economics. But this doesn't mean that they're the best choices. Majors with the highest acceptance rates into law schools include: Physics, Philosophy, Biology, Chemistry, Government Service, Anthropology and Economics. In truth, the *best* major for applying to law school is the major that most interests you.

The American Bar Association (ABA) has identified a list of “Core Skills and Values” that competitive law school applicants should possess. They include:

Analytical / Problem Solving Skills

Critical Reading

Writing Skills

Oral Communication/Listening Abilities

General Research Skills

Task Organization/Management Skills and Public Service and Promotion of Justice

These skills can be developed and honed in almost any major you might choose.

Successful law school applicants should have a broad understanding of history and the factors that have influenced the development of our society, as well as a funda-

mental understanding of political thought and the contemporary American political system. They should also possess mathematical and financial skills, such as an understanding of basic pre-calculus mathematics and an ability to analyze financial data. Knowledge of human behavior, social interaction, cultural differences, international institutions and issues, world events, and the increasing interdependence of the nations and communities within our world are also important.

If most of what you know about legal careers comes from watching Perry Mason or Law & Order reruns, you're in for a huge surprise. Criminal trial attorneys account for only a small percent of practicing lawyers. Traditional legal career paths include private practice lawyer, government attorney, corporate lawyer, entertainment lawyer, and public interest lawyer. Most attorneys spend a tremendous amount of time researching matters and composing documents.

Many law school graduates never actually practice law. They view legal education as a useful foundation for a wide range of careers. Several bestselling authors, politicians, corporate business people, and entertainers have attended law school and have found that their legal backgrounds played a significant role in their success. Non-traditional careers for law school graduates include journalism, real estate, nonprofit management, entrepreneurship, and the arts.

Employment of lawyers is expected to grow by 10 percent through 2020. Because the number of law school graduates now is outpacing the number of openings at law firms, new lawyers are increasingly working in non-traditional careers, where legal education is desired but not required.

The median salary range for lawyers with less than one year of experience is \$45,000 to \$68,000 per year, according to a 2010 PayScale survey. The median annual wage of all lawyers that year was \$112,760. Of course, many lawyers earn far in excess of these figures, depending on the field of law they practice.

## Financial Matters: Understanding Net Price



Families often experience sticker shock when contemplating the cost of college, but it's the **net price**, rather than the sticker price, that prospective students need to consider. Each college publishes the **COA or Cost of Attendance** at that institution. The COA includes room, board, tuition and fees, along with an estimate for books, personal expenses, and travel to and from campus. The COA is the sticker price.

Relatively few families actually pay the full COA for their child. Instead, various grants, loans, and work study earnings all affect the actual net price of college. Let's look at the factors that affect the net price. Net price depends upon the family's individual financial situation as computed by the **FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Stu-**

**dent Aid)**, the form required by all colleges. The FAFSA will calculate an **Expected Family Contribution, or EFC**. Your actual net price, however, may be influenced by the college's financial aid policies that determine the percentage of need they will meet, and further affected by how much the college actually wants a particular student to enroll.

**Need** is the difference between cost of attendance and expected family contribution. Some colleges will meet 100% of need, while others with smaller endowments meet a lower percentage of need. When a college strongly wants to enroll a particular student, they will offer **grants** to make up a larger percentage of the difference between need and COA. In addition to having excellent grades and test scores, certain applicants may be sought-after by colleges because they contribute to geographic or ethnic diversity, because they bring special abilities and aptitudes (musical, athletic, etc.), or because they have interests and skills in particular majors.

Your net price can be met in several ways. One component, the expected family contribution (EFC), might be met through the family's assets, college savings plans, and/or loans. A second way to meet your net price is through **self-help** money earned through the student's employment, and money that a student might borrow through a federal or state loan. The **GAP** is the balance needed beyond the EFC and self-help, which can be met from family assets, income, or parental loans.

**Merit aid** is free money provided in the form of scholarships and grants because the college is eager to enroll that student. Applicants are most likely to qualify for merit aid if their GPA and test scores place them in the top quarter of accepted students. Soon after admission decisions are released, students who applied for aid will receive notification of their financial aid package. Compare these packages to determine the **net cost** of education to your family before making a final decision as to which college to attend.

## Outstanding School-Year Campus Visits (continued from p.1)

**Admissions Counselors** – If possible, schedule a one-on-one appointment with the admission counselor who reads applications from your school. Take a short resume with you that s/he can add to your file and be prepared to ask 3-5 questions that reveal both your strong interest in that school and give you more information about your possible choice/s of major. Important – go into that conversation alone! You are the prospective student (not your parents!) and you want to show confidence and maturity.

**Financial Aid** – Paying for college is a huge issue for parents and during your weekday campus visit, it is a great idea to meet with a financial aid representative, to ask your many important finance questions. Making an appointment ahead of time is usually required.

Remember that personalizing your visit is usually possible on a regular school day but requires planning, sometimes weeks in advance. Check online, call all the college's admission office, or the department to learn of the best way to proceed.

And always send a quick personalized thank you email after each of your conversations. It matters!



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**Check our website for  
upcoming seminars**

## “Elite” Summer Programs

Many students have probably been impressed with the fancy mailings they’ve been receiving notifying them that “You’ve been nominated” or “Congratulations, you’ve been identified as a strong candidate for our selective summer program.”

Hopefully, your scam antenna is up. You are probably asking yourself why so much money is being spent on these fancy envelopes, the personalization, the multitude of enclosures, etc. Yes, you’re right, it is a marketing ploy. We often wish we could convince these companies to reduce their marketing costs and then cut the fees for these programs.

Many of the programs are solid. Students may have great experiences, learn a lot, and enjoy being in an academic environment on a college campus away from their families - those are all points in their favor. The downside is that they are very pricey, hence elite, and are typically not very selective at all. We refer to many of them as “pay-to-play” programs. They carry little or no weight in the college admission process.

The companies and the colleges behind such programs have typically created for-profit enterprises to benefit their company or college, even if they are offered at or by a non-profit institution. Often, they run elaborate marketing campaigns that make the programs look as if they are incredibly selective. That is usually not the case.

The big question is, “Will these programs help get you into college?”

Colleges may be happy to see these programs on a student’s resume because they may indicate the student has intellectual/personal interests and commitment, but they also generally indicate that the student is from an upper-middle-class background and can afford a \$3000-\$10,000+ summer experience.

So, if the biggest reason you’re considering attending one of these programs is because you think it will seal the deal to gain acceptance at your dream college, think again. These programs won’t hurt you, and if your family can afford it, they can provide great learning experiences and exposure to professors and other motivated students.

Another motivation to attend might be to “test-drive” a college campus or a city to see if it represents a good fit; if that’s the case, then these programs can be incredibly valuable on a variety of levels. You may have assumed you wanted the hustle-bustle of a city, but the reality of noisy streets and a more impersonal campus and student body may not jibe with what you anticipated for your college experience. How wonderful to learn that now, while you’re still in high school, instead of finding that out freshman year!