



Your College Navigator, LLC

Admissions by design, not chance!

Michael Binder
President and Founder
Phone: 516-367-6625

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

11th grade students – Continue developing and researching your list of colleges.

Prepare for spring SAT/ACT exams

Our up-coming Seminars

“Your Path to College Admissions Success”

(for 9th, 10th and 11th grade students and families)

March 11 – Mid Island Y JCC

March 19 – Great Neck Library

March 30 – Manhasset Library

April 6 - Garden City Library

To register for any of these seminars go to www.ycnavigator.com

Lessons Learned by Parents about Campus Visits

Right about now, as the parents of sophomores and juniors are scheduling flights, renting cars, making hotel reservations and booking spring break campus tours, this whole “college thing” becomes eerily real.

We recently spoke with two experienced parents who have done that recently, and have come out the other side smiling. Here’s their advice.

“I would say that the best thing we did regarding campus visits was to start early. We looked closely at upcoming days off, vacation days, even teacher workdays. If you wait until summer, you may not get a “real” feel of the campus dynamics. We made a point of visiting most schools at two different times to get an idea of school spirit, study habits and student engagement. Weekend sessions are very different. I also learned that colleges offer specialized sessions (engineering, business, honors college, etc.) only on certain days of the week.”

One parent was aware that she was embarrassing her son on a few campus tours when she asked one too many questions. “For me, I need to know everything about the school, the retention rates, the school spirit, the laundry facilities, etc. I always asked the tour guides about other schools they applied to and why they chose this school over the rest. Some questions seemed appropriate in the large group setting and I left others until we were on the student-led tour. I also asked about traditions on campus, study abroad options and the quality of the career services center.” Our advice - parents should ask questions when they must, but leave the bulk of the questions to their child.

This mom’s best piece of advice is to ask your child to write down his thoughts and

pros and cons about the college immediately after settling back in the car, because pretty soon one school can end up looking just like the rest. “I tried not to give my opinion before he did. I didn’t want to color his observations. I would ask the question and then wait until he was all finished to give my opinions.”

The mother of the second family, whose son ultimately applied early decision, started preparing in sophomore year because she felt it was important for her son to have a good working knowledge of each school prior to a visit. She made sure to ask the same questions on each visit. Her son always tried to make arrangements ahead of time to meet with an admissions counselor after the tour. This helped answer questions a student guide was unsure of, and gave the family a valuable point of contact.

You may also find that one visit simply isn’t enough. Families can later take advantage of Open Houses or Discovery Days offered by the schools, because they may provide even more information.

For one mother, the biggest take-away about campus visits was how a school organizes the visit, i.e., the time they may take to match your child with a tour guide who is currently majoring in your child’s area of interest, their willingness to coordinate what you may ask for beyond what is standard, etc. These special touches give you even greater insight into how student-focused each college really is.

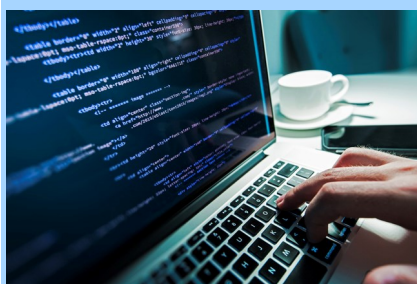
Both families found the process eye-opening. They both advised families to enjoy the process because it can get overwhelming at times. Their parting thoughts were to “make sure to stay up on deadlines for testing, applications, essays, scholarships, etc., but then get the tissues ready, because the tears will come when you realize that your baby has grown up and is ready to fly on his own.”

Career Paths for Computer Programming

- Software developer
- Web developer
- Computer network specialist
- Computer programmer
- Computer science teacher
- Systems analyst
- Database developer

Programmers may work in a variety of fields including:

- Finance
- Government
- Health care
- Marketing & advertising
- Data security
- Software publishing



Focus on Majors: Computer Programming

Computer programming is the study of computer languages and the ways to apply them. Students in this major learn how to develop, maintain, and fix software systems.

A major in computer programming would include classes such as database design, network security, and business communications. Courses are typically part lecture and part lab work. In lectures, students learn the necessary computer concepts, terminology and applications. In labs, students apply those lessons to real-world problems.

Labs are essential to the major because jobs in computer programming often require professionals to solve problems they have never seen before. New issues are constantly arising in technology, so computer programmers must be able to have the patience to solve difficult problems.

The major is designed to help students develop the necessary patience and problem-solving skills to be successful. Students will also become proficient communicators in order to understand a client's needs and issues. Through application, they will gain a strong attention to detail.

While most programs hone all of these abilities, the focus of the major differs greatly from college to college. Some schools concentrate on software and programming while others have a core in website design. Some colleges structure their programs so that students emerge with industry-approved certificates. Others focus on applications or networking.

Because simple programming jobs are moving overseas, students pursuing this major in the United States may benefit from also gaining knowledge in a scientific or business field of their choosing. That way, they have a specialized ability to use programming to meet a specific, industry-related goal.

For students looking to become computer programmers, there are two main types: application programmers and system pro-

grammers. System programmers develop operating software systems such as Windows, as well as programs that help preserve networks or databases. Application programmers develop programs to address specific needs in specific environments. An application programmer might create a program designed to calculate and store students' grades, for example.

Students may become computer system analysts. Analysts work to improve the efficiency of existing systems.

Students more interested in website creation can go into web development. Web developers use coding and programming to create websites that are both aesthetically pleasing and functional. Web developers are different than web designers. Web designers focus on the graphic elements of a website while developers create the code that makes a website work. However, designers and developers often work together to build a website.

Computer support specialists work closely with computer-users in their organizations. They troubleshoot programs, fix technical issues, suggest updates, and perform routine checks on networks to prevent problems before they occur.

Database administrators specialize in data tracking and storing software. Administrators keep databases secure, check for errors or needed updates, and create software so that users can easily search for company data.

Computer programming majors may also become computer and information systems managers. Many managers have graduate degrees, but it is not always necessary. Managers are responsible for finding, testing, and suggesting new software programs for their companies. They often compare the virtues and costs of existing programs necessary for new company projects. It is up to them to present the program options to company executives.

Students who major in computer programming can find their niche in almost any kind of company. Majors graduate with many options and fields to explore.

Financial Matters: Appealing Your Financial Aid Award



If your first choice college offers everything you want but the price tag is making you cringe, don't give up hope; consider appealing your financial aid award. While colleges and universities won't encourage such an appeal, the financial aid officers are empowered to make adjustments, if deemed warranted.

To appeal, do the following:

Do not deposit until you've settled the financial aid discussion. Once they have your money, colleges will be less motivated to offer a better deal.

Be realistic. Show the college that this is a partnership that you want to be part of, but need just a bit more assistance. Know exactly what you CAN afford. If your Expected Family Contri-

bution (EFC) is more than the cost of tuition, then make sure that your request makes sense. Do your homework and negotiate in good faith.

Be informed. Make sure you have researched the specific financial aid policies at each college before entering into a conversation with them. Don't contact a college, touting fabulous grades and awesome SAT scores, only to find out that the school offers only need-based financial aid but gives no merit aid awards.

See if the college offers "preferential packaging" – a practice in which they will meet a larger share of financial need based on the academic stats of the student, i.e., stronger grades and test scores will receive more money. Take a look to see if your test scores are in the "middle 50" or in the "top 25." There will be more money at schools where the student's scores raise the school's profile.

Be prepared. Colleges will generally reconsider awards for just two reasons: 1) the EFC from the FAFSA (Free

Application for Federal Student Aid) was incorrect due to a change in the family's financial situation because of an illness or unemployment, or 2) there is a competing offer from another college. If you plan to mention the competing offer, be prepared to fax a copy of the award letter to the financial aid office.

Ask about "second chance" or conditional aid. See if the college is willing to add any additional aid if you complete senior year with straight A's.

Send a letter. Put all of your reasons down in writing and ask for a follow-up meeting, in person if possible or by phone.

Stay cordial and don't become desperate or melodramatic. Any college that accepted you will now want to do what it can to help you enroll. Respectfully assure the financial aid officer that this is your first choice for college and ask if they can help you to make this a viable option for your family. It never hurts to ask!

Post College Visit Checklist and Summary

After visiting several colleges, it is easy to lose track of each visit experience. A simple way for students and parents to keep track of all the schools that they visit is to keep a Post-College Visit Checklist and Summary. Giving a grade to various campus and classroom facilities along with details helps students differentiate between colleges.

For example give A+ through F grades on the following:

Campus & Grounds
Dorms
Library

Dining Hall
Gym
Classrooms & Labs
Teaching Environment
Size of Classes
Intensity/Rigor of Classes
Meeting w/Professor (name & subject)
Greek Life
Clubs & Activities (which ones)
Diversity
Career Center
Study Abroad Programs
Internships
Research Opportunities
Campus Safety
Campus Transportation
Off-Campus Activities

Include in the College Visit Summary anything noteworthy (positive or negative), about your experience.

And then, give each college an Overall Grade

Then assess if you can see yourself going to this school for at least 4 years. Why or why not?.

College is a significant investment for students and parents. Be sure to take full advantage of your college visits. Identifying which school(s) would be a best fit for the student is the key goal of this checklist and summary.



Your College Navigator

Michael Binder, MS, MBA
President & Founder

Office: 516.357.6625
Mobile: 516.724.0610

125 Michael Drive
Suite 105
Syosset, NY 11791

success@yccnavigator.com

www.yccnavigator.com

Check our website for
upcoming seminars

Selecting High School Classes

Students often struggle when making decisions about which classes to take during their all-important four years of high school. How do you choose?

College admission officers review five parts of an application: standardized test scores, if required; college essays; recommendations; listing of academic honors and extracurricular activities; the high school transcript, covering grades 9-11. *Without question, the most important part of that review is the students' complete academic transcript.* When analyzing the document, the reader may have to first determine that a student has met that college's minimum course requirements - typically 3 years of Math, 4 years of English, 2-3 years of Social Sciences, 2-3 years of Sciences and 2-3 years of a foreign language/ASL. Assuming that the applicant has completed those, the primary focus will be on the strength of the coursework selected. Admission decisions rarely hinge on just one aspect of an application, such as test scores, but the overall trends in performance, challenges of coursework, and grade trajectories are all-important.

When a high school sends an applicant's transcript to a college, it is usually accompanied by the School Report. This document provides the college with detailed information about the applicant's placement within their overall class and the choices of coursework the applicant had available each year. Universities want to see that students have chosen to really engage in their high school ex-

perience, push themselves to take on increasingly rigorous coursework and have been successful in their endeavors. Why? Because that is exactly the type of student who will also excel on a university campus!

The School Report shows whether or not you had the option of taking an AP course or a College Prep course, as opposed to a regular course in any given subject. Admission officers want you to take full advantage of courses that are available to you. But remember, they will never expect to see a class on your transcript that your school does not offer or require - just try very hard to shine within the range of opportunities available.

Make sure your transcript reveals your passions and interests. If you are applying as a foreign language major, have you taken the most advanced options available? If you are applying as a STEM candidate, have you taken the highest level of the Math and Science courses open to you?

Remember that your high school years are your way of preparing yourself for the increased challenge of a college classroom. Take classes that give you a solid foundation so you can be ready for college-level math, writing, and science classes. As you take on those tough classes, are you also engaging in activities? Think about showing consistency in extracurricular choices too. This is the balance that colleges love to see - consistency, rigor, determination, dedication and resilience.