



# Your College Navigator, LLC

Admissions by design, not chance!

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We have been asked by several PTA's, libraries and community organizations to develop a One-stop Resource Page and to conduct Webinars on

**“How to Prepare for College During Your High School Shutdown”**

Our next Webinar is 7pm Monday, April 27th

Register at

[www.ycnavigator.com](http://www.ycnavigator.com)

and for access to all our important resources and a link to the

Garden City News Article

**“Stay at Home Means Get Going for College-Admissions”**

## What to Do When You Cannot Visit Colleges?

We've long felt that the campus visit was the best way to learn about the colleges you are considering. By visiting, prospective would be able to determine fit, to identify specific areas in which you can contribute and ways in which you will benefit by attending the institution. They could use their visit to make quality contacts with college professors, curriculum advisors, admissions officers, and students.

But now, with campuses closed due to the coronavirus outbreak and with students sent home to complete the semester online, high school juniors need to go to make use of other types of resources. And there are many. Colleges are increasingly offering new ways of communicating with prospective students including: virtual campus and departmental tours, virtual discussions with small groups of students, or even one-on-one chats, student ambassadors, etc. Check on a regular basis with each college as their offerings are frequently changing.

Our advice is to explore the college, almost as if you were there. First, determine your specific areas of importance. Some areas include:

**Core curriculum** - learn of 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?

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

**Clubs/activities** - explore at least two clubs/activities of interest and determine what makes these activities interesting and learn the of the role you can play should you attend. You can do this by arranging to "talk" with student ambassadors by phone, email, FaceTime, or Zoom.

**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, arrange for discussions with the appropriate coach or director. You can also talk with students who participate in the area to learn more about the program from a student's perspective. Look to determine the opportunities for you to participate.

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

And **paying for college** is a huge question for parents. You can still arrange to talk with a financial aid representative, to ask your many important finance questions. (continued on P3)



## Financial Matters: Appealing Financial Aid Awards (Updated)



If your first choice college offers everything you want but the price tag is making you waiver, don't give up hope; consider appealing the award. While colleges and universities won't encourage it, 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 Contribution (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, 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 your child pulls through 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 or Zoom.

Stay cordial and don't become desperate or melodramatic.

For the class entering fall of 2020, the loss of work due to the COVID-19 virus may affect a student's eligibility for need-based aid. Financial aid administrators have the authority to make adjustments to the financial aid package on a case-by-case basis. They will use their professional judgement in cases where an employer may close for a period of time or if a parent was laid off due to the virus. Documentation will be required, but parents should contact the financial aid office at their child's college to present their case. They may want to do this for each of their child's top choices, since each college administrator may present a different package.

## What to Do When You Cannot Visit Colleges? (continued from page 1)

To explore each of these areas and others, explore all relevant areas of the college's website. Once you have done this, go to some of the dozens of independent web sites providing information and/or virtual tours of colleges. It is important that you obtain different perspective on the college.

We recommend utilizing some of the many independent research sites., many of which are located in the Research section on our website. We also recommend that you reach out to your admission officer and ask them for recommendations on how to best get information of interest to you. Be aware, too, that many requirements for

the class of 2021 may change. Make sure that you are on the college's prospective student list so they will keep you informed about changes and or meetings..

Keep in touch with each college as things are changing quickly and with each passing week, many colleges are offering new ways for you to learn more about them.



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**Check our website for**  
**upcoming seminars**

## Make the Most of Your High School Shutdown

In my seminars and webinars, I talk about Newton's First Law – an object in motion stays in motion, and an object at rest stays at rest, unless acted upon by an external force. The better colleges look for students in motion, not students at rest. And while the COVID-19 virus is definitely an external force, a key factor in the college selection process may very well be showing how you remained an object in motion during your high school shut down.

With the extra time available to each student, you have an opportunity to make the most of this time. You can continue to build your resume taking the initiative to bring together other students in one of your current activities.

You can also take advantage of the many new learning opportunities that companies and educational programs are creating. There are courses to take, programs to watch, competitions in which to participate, research opportunities, portfolio improvement suggestions, virtual tours to experience, technology updates to obtain, and languages to learn.

And there are many ways to plan for a productive summer despite all of the challenges. There are a host of new virtual opportunities for you to consider. These include courses to take, competitions in which to participate, research opportunities to explore, and volunteering opportunities. Now is the time for high schoolers to take advantage of all of the opportunities being offered.

And if you are a current junior, there is no better time to research and establish contact with your selected colleges and to start working on your college application and Common App essay. Wouldn't it be great if, by the end of your school year, you selected your targeted colleges and completed most of your applications?

For a list of current opportunities and summer programs to explore, as well as links to help you conduct your college research, go to our website [www.yccnavigator.com](http://www.yccnavigator.com). But, first refer to our P1 article, "What to Do When You Cannot Visit Colleges."