Your College Navigator, LLC

Admissions by design, not chance!

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Seniors

Confirm with each college that all your applications are complete. Send mid-year grades if required. Update colleges with any new information that might influence admission. If deferred, send continued interest letter.

Juniors

Continue your college search utilizing college websites, virtual tours and information sessions

Have well focused college visits including info sessions. Make sure you attend classes and meet with professors, students and other key players. **Get colleges to know you as well as you knowing them.**

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

9th, 10th and 11th grade students

As always, focus on grades and accomplishments in your activities.

Carefully plan next year's curriculum

Make plans for a productive summer.

March 2022

Attend one of our informative webinars on:

"The New Rules of College Admissions in Today's Challenging Environment!"

Next one is on March 2nd

Go to www.ycnavigator.com for more info

Making a Great College Match

One student loves the non-competitive academic atmosphere at Haverford College that made learning much more enjoyable. Another student praises the intense competition at UC San Diego, which motivates her to do her best work.

Two great schools. But not great for every student. Both of these students had done their homework, made good matches and are thriving.

When a student is in an environment where he feels good about himself, he's more likely to be successful academically and socially. It seems so obvious. But in this time of high anxiety about college admission, students and parents often pursue the most popular colleges and lose sight of whether those schools are the best matches for them.

Just like in relationships, there's more than one potential match out there if you remain open to possibilities. There should be several excellent schools for you that offer great opportunities for growth and satisfaction.

Self-assessment is crucial to making a good match. If you don't know what you're looking for, chances are you won't find it. While grades and possibly test scores are major factors in college admission, it's important to use your heart as well as your head to find the right school. This means thinking about what kind of college experience you want.

A student who is more motivated by intellectual curiosity than grades might like Reed College, where students have to ask if they want to know their grades. Or Evergreen State College, where students receive narrative evaluations instead of grades.

Someone who likes to get totally immersed in a subject might like Colorado College or Cornell College (in Iowa), which operate on a block plan, where students take a single subject for three and a half weeks.

For a student who does well when she likes her teacher, but loses motivation if the teacher doesn't inspire her, it might be important to find a college with small classes, where professors and students form close relationships.

There are many non-academic factors that contribute to a student's happiness in college. A green, lush environment can be soothing and lower stress levels. But some students thrive on the excitement of an urban environment. Schools like George Washington University, Boston University and NYU offer all the cultural resources of great cities, as well as opportunities for internships at government agencies, theater companies and corporations. The downside is that all this involvement in the city means there's less sense of community on campus.

Social life is a major part of the college experience, and it's important to find a school where there are people who share some interests and values. A student who likes being around artsy people might be drawn to Bard College. A basketball fanatic might head for Duke University, where students camp out for days to get tickets for games.

These are just some of the factors that go into making a good college match. It takes a little more time and effort, but a student who clarifies his educational goals, values and interests is more likely to find a school that will allow him to grow and realize his potential, as well as enjoy his college years.

Focus on Majors: Film Studies

Career Paths for Film Studies Majors

- Cinematographer, producer or assistant director
- critic, professor, actor/actress, arts journalist
- independent or industrial filmmaker
- press agent, film editor or photographer
- drama coach or drama therapist
- studio merchandizer
- dramaturge or story editor
- film archives or museum studies program researcher
- tourist industry or community arts worker
- casting director or assistant
- theater manager or publicist
- television producer, camera operator, censor or colorizing technician
- screenwriter, animator, script writer or script supervisor
- sound editor, visual effects or prop maker
- costume designer
- lighting technician or sound and special effects technician
- program assistant or personal assistant to the director
- film production instructor or rerecording mixer
- film director or film editor
- talent agent or representative

If you aspire to expose the world's ills through documentaries, have visions of fame, fortune and financial reward, or simply long to get paid for watching movies, Film Studies may be the major of your dreams. Among the most popular and competitive of college majors, film isn't just for those wanting to follow in the footsteps of Meryl Streep, Steven Spielberg, or critic Pauline Kael.

Programs in Film, sometimes called Media Studies or Cinema Studies, vary widely, and may or may not include instruction in film production. Some are theoretical in nature, appealing to students considering careers in entertainment journalism and film criticism. Pitzer College's program is "not oriented toward traditional narrative film or television, or toward commercial models of new media; rather, this major stresses independent narrative forms, documentary, video and digital art and community-based media practice…".

Other programs focus almost entirely on the technical aspects of film and other visual media. Columbia College of Chicago, which specializes in media education, has a more "artsy" approach and offers concentrations in Animation, Post-Production, and Sound. NYU's Tisch School of the Arts requires students to incorporate courses in film history and criticism, film production and script writing to obtain their degrees. Alternatively, Chapman University's Dodge College requires applicants to select from among degree options including both BA and BFA programs in such specialized areas as film studies, film production, digital arts, producing, screen writing, acting, and television and broadcast journalism.

Because film programs vary tremendously, carefully doing your research becomes even more important. Before looking at colleges, think about which aspects of film interest you and how you'd like to use your education. Once you understand your motivation, you'll be ready to look at what's out there.

Film curricula include courses such as The History of Film, Music for Film & Television, The Documentary, Introduction to Animation, Television Production, Cinematography, Set Design, Special Effects, Makeup, Introduction to Editing, Film Marketing, and Legal Aspects of the Entertainment Industry. Classes in specific genres might include Silent Film Classics, Film Noir, and The Films of Woody Allen.

What careers are open to film graduates? Production careers include cinematographer, director, producer, independent or industrial filmmaker, film editor, location manager, photographer, camera operator, screenwriter, animator, script writer, sound editor, visual effects or prop maker, lighting technician, or costume designer. Less technical options include arts journalist, critic, professor, film archivist, talent agent, festival manager or even entertainment lawyer (though, of course, law school would be required for this).

Jobs in the entertainment industry will continue to be fiercely competitive, as growth will be slower than average over the next seven to ten years. However, if you're truly interested in studying film, take heart. In a New York Times article, Loyola Marymount's former dean of the School of Film and Television, Stephen Ujlaki, expressed his belief that although film students may not land jobs in the film industry, studying film provides them "with a knowledge of the arts and a business savvy that will get them through lives that are bound to move in unexpected directions." As with most undergraduate majors, competing in the job market depends on how well you put your coursework to use.

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Financial Matters: Consider Your Return on Investment

There are so many moving parts to a student's search for the 'right' college – location, academic options, student services, clubs and organizations, career preparations – but none of them matters if a family is unable to afford that wonderful education. Attending college is a privilege and one that costs a great deal of money. For the most part, when we enter into a costly venture such as purchasing a new car, a house, or stock investments, the pros and cons of that purchase must be weighed heavily against the anticipated return on our investment, or ROI. How will the costs of that purchase compare to the benefits of making that purchase? In other words, how will the net cost measure up against both potential debt and potential earnings?

Many young people graduate with thousands of dollars of debt and enter into an employment placement that typically provides an annual salary far below that level of debt. This puts new graduates into a very dangerous financial situation and impacts their ability to start their career and purchase a car. Students pursuing graduate degrees may often find themselves in debt for many years.

In order to come up with a realistic and honest assessment of the costs for each college under consideration, it is important to first calculate the true total cost of attendance – tuition, room, board, fees, transportation, entertainment and general living expenses such as cell phone bills and travelling home for the holidays. Expect that tuition will rise, as well as fees and living costs. Once you have a complete picture of the total cost, then it's time to review the potential outcomes. Research career opportunities and the job placement support your college offers; review annual salaries in your chosen field; analyze the industry overall and be aware of any growth or cutbacks in your area of likely employment. If you have to move to another part of the country, what costs of living are associated with that location – compare across all your possible geographic locations. Finally, analyze overall growth of salaries in your field, alongside cost of living adjustments and inflation. Be honest with your analysis: there is no point in entering into debt for an industry that is on the decline. Consider what happened to video stores, printing, photo finishing and telephone apparatus manufacturing as a guide to declining industry.

Knowing how much aid you will receive from a college is a critical piece of information in calculating return on investment. Submit your FAFSA as early as possible, and read about options for institutional aid – are there separate scholarship applications to complete? Know about the CSS Profile – does your college require this in order to be considered for institutional aid? Review your financial aid package very carefully. Understanding exactly the amount of financial assistance you may receive will be a big part of your calculations. As you educate yourself on your future employment possibilities, be guided by the rule that says: never borrow more than your anticipated first year's salary. If you find yourself outside of those parameters, look into ways of reducing your costs. Would accelerating your studies save you more money? Many high school students are able to gain college credit by successfully passing AP and CLEP exams, or by taking classes at a community college while still in high school. This will reduce the time you have to spend in college to obtain your degree. Can you get a job during your college years? Would an in-state college meet your needs and keep you within your budget? Will the "name" college yield a post-graduate income higher than a similar degree from a less prestigious institution? For some people, money does not necessarily represent success, and immediate financial success may not mean as much as long-term satisfaction for graduates such as entrepreneurs and academics.

There are some helpful resources online for you to investigate the US News Best Value Listings 2022 Best Value Colleges - National Universities | US News Rankings and the Princeton Review Best Value Colleges, Best Value Colleges 2021 Rankings | 200 Best Value Colleges | The Princeton Review.

At the end of the day, the benefits of a college degree far outweigh the burden of taking on some debt. The degree represents a sound investment in your professional future and financial well-being. College graduates earn over 80% more over a lifetime than a high school graduate, and employees without degrees may find themselves unable to advance in their fields and earn more money. So is college worth it? Absolutely, 100% yes! Just do your research and learn as much as you can about your investment.

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Check our website for upcoming webinars and seminars.

Should You Take AP Tests?

During early May, high school students around the world sit for Advanced Placement (AP) exams. The College Board runs the AP program, and provides teachers with curriculum guides so that they can cover the material students will be required to know for the exams. At some schools, students enrolled in AP classes are required to take the AP exams, but it makes sense to take them, even if not required. You may do better than you think, and after working hard in an AP class all year, why miss out on the opportunity to receive college credit?

AP exams include a free response section, which will be either problem-solving or essay writing, as well as a multiple choice section. The only exception is the Studio Art exam, which consists of a portfolio review.

Raw scores on the exams are converted to a scaled score of one to five. Each college sets its own policy for granting credit, but most will award credit for scores of four or five. Some schools grant credit for a score of three. The score required for credit can vary by subject as well as by college. Some of the most selective schools have more restrictive policies for awarding AP credit.

Some college applications, including the Common Application, ask you to self-report scores, though they are not officially part of the admission process and may be used only for placement. You need to send official scores only the summer before you will be enrolling, so that the registrar can evaluate the scores for credit at that school. AP scores may be considered in the admission process at some test-optional colleges. Students applying to the UK may be required to submit AP scores for direct entry.

If you have earned an AP Scholar award, it is certainly worth noting in your application. Being designated a National AP Scholar is most impressive, as it requires an average score of at least four on all AP exams taken, and scores of four or higher on eight or more exams.

Students who have taken a full load of AP courses in high school often start college with at least a semester's worth of credits. Some students even enter college with sophomore standing. They may decide to graduate early, saving tens of thousands of dollars in tuition. Even if they plan to spend four years in college, by placing out of introductory courses they have the flexibility to double-major or take a lighter class schedule while doing an internship.

Students who have not taken an AP course can still take an AP exam, so if you are homeschooled or attend a high school that does not offer AP courses, or if you have studied a subject in depth on your own, it is still possible to earn AP credit. If you are thinking about taking an AP exam and have not taken the course, it would be helpful to read a description of the exam, including questions and sample answers from previous years, available on the College Board website: http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/prep_free.html. Tutoring for the AP tests can be found on YouTube.