

College searches: find the right college for you

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After you pass sophomore year, there is one thing on everyone's mind: college. Seniors spend their last year of high school applying and juniors spend their year preparing academically and visiting campuses. And there are three questions every student wants answered. First—what colleges should I apply to? Second—what are these colleges looking for? And finally—can I actually be accepted? The first question is answered by yourself. Helpful resources like the official College Board website provide college “matchmakers,” where after a questionnaire is answered; the colleges that best suit that description appear.

Another helpful resource is the national college ranking books, which list the best colleges in the United States. These give facts about the campus, as well as admissions statistics. Moreover, the official College Board website provides information as to what each college is looking for in its applicants. This usually includes academics, extracurricular activities, and ACT or SAT scores. However, the most popular statistic is the college's acceptance rate.

Most students will rule out a college due to a ridiculously low acceptance rate, however, students should think twice before doing so. Not all acceptance rates apply to everyone. A vast majority of students who are denied to a college—especially prestigious ones—view that school as a “reach.” So whether you are planning on going to your local community college or at Harvard, the best thing to do before you apply is research. Trying to find the right college for you may be a lengthy and stressful process, but getting accepted to dream school will make it all worth it.

And just like the saying goes—college may just be the best years of your life.