

CHOOSING A COLLEGE

It is recommended that students apply to at least three colleges; five or six should give you all the options you need. As you narrow your choices we suggest you consider the criteria listed below and apply to at least one college from each of the following categories:

Reach Schools – those that are a “reach” for you either academically or financially.

Probable Schools – those that will meet all your needs and will likely accept you.

Safe Schools – those schools that readily meet your financial and academic needs and are sure to accept you; your “back-up” schools

Academic Programs and Curriculum

Does the college have the major you are considering?

Are there co-op programs?

How many courses or credits are needed to earn the degree you want?

Can you finish your program in four years?

Academic Competitiveness

How do your academic credentials compare to the freshmen profile? (Find the freshman profile on the college website.)

Does the college offer credit for high school courses such as AP or IB?

Have you taken an academically challenging program in high school?

What is the average GPA, SAT or ACT score of freshmen entering that college?

Location

Distance from home – how far from family and friends?

Transportation costs?

Rural vs. urban environment?

Climate - Can you survive at a college where the ground turns white in October and you don't see green until May?

Type of School

Public vs. private? Two year vs. four year vs. technical?

Do you want a certain type of college or university? (arts, military, single sex or HBCU)

Do you prefer a small, medium or large enrollment on campus?

Student Body and Student Life

Coed or single sex?

What kind of extracurricular activities are available?

What special services are available – counseling, tutoring, health care, services for students with disabilities, etc?

Do most students live on campus or commute?

What percentage of freshmen return as sophomores?

What percentage of the student body continues on to law, medical or graduate schools?
What percentage secure jobs after graduation?

Cost

What is the “cost of attendance”?

Is financial aid available?

What scholarships are available? What are the requirements?

Are work study programs available?

(**What Colleges Look For** – Taken from Career Connections, Fairfax County Public Schools at:
www.fcps.edu/DSSSE/CareerConnections/JrSrHandbook/mainpage.htm)