College Admissions 101: Your Checklist

*How not to be overwhelmed*

Kenton Pauls
Haven't you started looking at colleges yet?
“Applying to college does not have to be overwhelming!”

The Education Conservancy
Wisdom for Overwhelmed Students...

Remember...
✓ **Your self-worth** is not measured by an admission decision, test score, or GPA
✓ Most students **get admitted** to the colleges they want to attend.

Guidelines...
✓ **Take ownership**: The more you do for yourself, the better the results will be
✓ **Be deliberate!**
  • Conduct thoughtful research about the distinctions among colleges
  • Take care to examine and identify your own interests, learning style, etc.
✓ **Be realistic**
  • Plan to make well-considered applications to the most suitable colleges (~6 should suffice)
  • Choosing a college is an important process, but not a life-or-death decision.
  • You can’t know everything about every college…some educated guessing is ok
✓ **Be open-minded!**
  • Resist the notion that there is one perfect college.
  • Great education happens in many places.
Wisdom for Overwhelmed Students...(cont’d)

Guidelines...

✓ Use a variety of resources
  • One perspective is a limiting perspective
  • Listen to those who know & care about you

✓ Be honest!
  • Do not try to game the system.

✓ Go to class and work hard to the end
  • The best way to prepare for success on the ACT…go to class
  • Academic curiosity and rigorous coursework counts
  • The best way to demonstrate you’re ready for academic success

✓ Be active and serve others
  • Social and emotional qualities and strengths are desirable
  • They correlate with academic success
...what you do in college is better predictor of future success and happiness than where you go to college.

The Education Conservancy
Wisdom for Overwhelmed Family Members...

Remember...
✓ The admission decision is not a measure of your student’s worth

Guidelines...
✓ Financial limitations are real…name and discuss them early in the process…guard rails, not closed doors.
✓ Make this an educational process
  • Gaining admission to college is merely one step in process of student can maximize talents and growth
  • Help student understand the difference between making an educational choice and buying a product
✓ Release control…though stay involved
  • Resist doing for your students what they are capable of doing for themselves.
  • Allow student to take responsibility, even while you stay involved
  • Avoid the word, “we” (as in “we are applying to….”) 
  • Let them demonstrate the independence you have instilled in them
✓ Don’t be misled by rankings and selectivity stats – these should not determine “suitability”
✓ Don’t over-spend…college selection and applying does not have to be expensive
✓ Look beyond the name
  • Don’t get sucked into a disordered preoccupation with status and brand names of schools
  • Work toward developing a healthy, educationally based, and family-specific approach
✓ Gaming the system isn’t worth it and may cost real harm
Keep the process in perspective.

Your student’s skills, self-confidence, curiosity, & desire to learn are most important…

Do not sacrifice these by overemphasizing getting in to the “best” college.

The Education Conservancy
College Financial Aid: Basics
Financial Aid: The Basics

• Filing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is the main way schools understand each student’s ability to pay
  • “Expected Family Contribution” (EFC) now “Student Aid Index” (SAI)
  • SAI is a standard way to compare each student’s financial situation

• Every family should file the FAFSA
  • Billions of money is left unused each year by families who don’t file but could have/should have
  • Many types of institutional aid (scholarships and grants) require FAFSA filing.
    • Filing FAFSA is not an obligation to pay
    • FAFSA privacy is protected by federal law

• FAFSA filing begins Oct 1\textsuperscript{st} each year (formerly Jan 1\textsuperscript{st})
• Institutional deadlines aren’t standard
Sticker Price ≠ Price You Pay
How private college pricing actually works
Sticker Shock

Shocking Discounts

Average Institutional Tuition Discount Rate, by Student Category

Source: NACUBO Tuition Discounting Study, data as of May 2021.
*Preliminary estimates.
What does this mean?

• **Public 4 yr colleges and universities**
  - Tuition discounting is not nearly as common
  - The sticker price will be more likely the actual price you’ll pay

• **Private 4 yr colleges and universities**
  - The price you’ll pay will vary (significantly) by institution
  - Your price paid might be very different from the published sticker price
  - Is dependent on personal financial and academic ability factors each student presents
  - Average 2021 tuition at private 4yr: $33,150
    - Average discount rate: 53.9%
    - Net tuition paid by the average enrolled student: $17,868

• **Perception vs. reality:**
  - It might initially appear that the price of private college is ~3.5X @ public
  - In actuality, the differential is often much less pronounced
Understanding Net Price and Comparing Institutions
Free Online Tools
Net Price Calculators

• Required (by law) for every college or university website
• Prospective students enter their specific information
  • Financial questions
  • Could also include non-academic special interest information as well
• Output shows the amount of grants and scholarships were received by like-students who attended the institution in the previous year
• Shows the estimated net price a student is likely to pay
College Navigator

https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/
Search and compare based on data schools report to the US Dept of Ed
## UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS FALL 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of applicants</td>
<td>19,777</td>
<td>8,176</td>
<td>11,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent admitted</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent admitted who enrolled</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ADMISSIONS CONSIDERATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>REQUIRED</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED</th>
<th>CONSIDERED BUT NOT REQUIRED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school GPA</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school rank</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school record</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of college-preparatory program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission test scores (SAT/ACT)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign language)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TEST SCORES: FALL 2020 (ENROLLED FIRST-TIME STUDENTS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENTS SUBMITTING SCORES</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>1,159</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>4,187</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEST SCORES</th>
<th>25TH PERCENTILE</th>
<th>75TH PERCENTILE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT Math</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Composite</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT English</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Math</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:**
* 25% of students scored at or below
** 75% of students scored above

- Data apply to first-time degree/certificate-seeking students.
- Institutions are asked to report test scores only if they are required for admission.
### FINANCIAL AID

#### NET PRICE

**AVERAGE NET PRICE FOR FULL-TIME BEGINNING STUDENTS**

Full-time beginning undergraduate students who paid the in-state or in-district tuition rate and were awarded grant or scholarship aid from federal, state, or local governments, or the institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average net price</td>
<td>$15,781</td>
<td>$15,263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full-time beginning undergraduate students who paid the in-state or in-district tuition rate and were awarded Title IV aid by income.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0 – $30,000</td>
<td>$11,447</td>
<td>$12,094</td>
<td>$12,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,001 – $48,000</td>
<td>$13,273</td>
<td>$13,132</td>
<td>$13,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$48,001 – $75,000</td>
<td>$15,390</td>
<td>$16,336</td>
<td>$10,256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,001 – $110,000</td>
<td>$18,853</td>
<td>$18,927</td>
<td>$19,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$110,001 and more</td>
<td>$19,346</td>
<td>$19,959</td>
<td>$10,897</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Average net price is generated by subtracting the average amount of federal, state/local government, or institutional grant or scholarship aid from the total cost of attendance. Total cost of attendance is the sum of published tuition and required fees (lower of in-district or in-state), books and supplies, and the weighted averages for room and board, and other expenses.
- Beginning students are those who are entering postsecondary education for the first time.
- Title IV aid to students includes grant aid, work study aid, and loan aid. These include Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (National SMART Grant), Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant, Federal Work-Study, Federal Perkins Loan, Subsidized Direct or FFEL Stafford Loan, and Unsubsidized Direct or FFEL Stafford Loan. For those Title IV recipients, net price is reported by income category and includes students who received federal aid even if none of that aid was provided in the form of grants.
- While Title IV status defines the cohort of student for which the data are reported, the definition of net price remains the same – total cost of attendance minus grant aid.

#### NET PRICE CALCULATOR

An institution’s net price calculator allows current and prospective students, families, and other consumers to estimate the net price of attending that institution for a particular student.

Visit this institution’s net price calculator: [finaid.uark.edu/aid-calculator.php](http://finaid.uark.edu/aid-calculator.php)

### ENROLLMENT

### ADMISSIONS

### RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

### OUTCOME MEASURES
QUESTIONS?
Kenton Pauls

National Director, Higher Education
kenton.pauls@act.org
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