Our Agenda For Today:

1. How to Build a Strong College Application List (and Why it Matters)
2. Preparing for Application Season Now
3. Tools for Your Success
First, an activity...

Find a piece of paper and writing device

-OR-

Open up the “Notes” feature in your phone

College List Activity:

**STEP 1**
Write the name of every college you can think of.

**STEP 2**
Cross off the following:
- Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Stanford
- Any college a family member or friend attended
- Any college in your town

**STEP 3**
Reflect on what you have left on your list.
You want to apply to the right colleges for you,

BUT DO YOU KNOW HOW TO FIND THEM?
Considering College, Seek:

**MATCH**
How does the academic profile, expectations, and format of the college mirror your academic experience and achievement in high school?

**FIT**
How do the social components of the college campus meet your needs and expectations of your college years?
Here are the components to consider:

**PERSONAL**
- What are your values and preferences?
- What drives you to attend college?

**INSTITUTIONAL**
- What are the graduation rates at the college?
- How are students like you supported?

**ACADEMIC**
- What are the career interests you have?
- What are your “numbers”?

**AFFORDABILITY**
- How do you make a smart investment in yourself?
- How do you plan to pay for college?

“College is a match to be made, not a prize to be won.”
First, know what you need and want

**NEEDS**

What are your non-negotiables? What support services, majors, etc. must be on campus?

**PREFERENCES**

What atmosphere do you want? What size, location, faith, culture, etc. do you want to be reflected?

**HOPES**

What do you expect from college? How does this path (and the campus choice) support that?

**NUMBER S**

How do your finances and personal profile align to the step after high school?

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**PRIMARY RESEARCH**

SORT: LIKELY, TARGET, REACH

NARROW AND BALANCE
Don’t forget!

Talk to your champions. Your family, educators, mentors, and more often want to be part of this process.

Prepare for Application Season
Start Now To Save Stress Later
Senior Year Application Timeline

- College applications typically open by August 1 of your Senior Year
- College Application Deadlines can vary and be as early as mid-October.
- Typically in early Spring, you will receive admission decisions and financial aid packages.
- Summer is spent getting ready for college and typically includes a required Orientation program.
- Some states and institutions have FAFSA deadlines and these can be as early at November.
- The FAFSA opens on October 1 of your Senior Year.
- May 1 is considered College Decision Day. Your college may require a commitment by this date.

Steps you can take before Senior Year:

1. VISITING AND TOURING COLLEGE CAMPUSES
2. STARTING ON APPLICATION MATERIALS, INCLUDING YOUR ESSAY
3. CREATING BRAG SHEET AND/OR RESUME
4. PREPARING TO ASK FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION
5. RESEARCHING APPLICATION DEADLINES AND EXPECTATIONS
6. CREATING AN FSA ID FOR YOURSELF (AND GETTING PARENT / GUARDIAN(S) TO CREATE ONE TOO!)
Admission Offices Want You To Know

1. Take initiative! Ask the college / university about fee waivers, and call and tour for questions.

2. Remember to include what makes you unique in your essay!

3. Once accepted...
   - Visit the campuses again
   - Compare costs of attendance
   - Sense of Belonging

4. We want you to attend the college that is best for you! It is okay if it is not the college we work for.

5. We’re a team! Admission offices, families, counselors, and other champions are here to work in concert together.

DON’T FORGET:

We want to hear from you, so please call and email!
Encourage

**PREPARE**
Build skills you will carry with you to graduation and beyond

**EXPLORE**
Discover opportunities based on the future you want

**APPLY**
Be informed and organized as you complete your college applications

**DECIDE**
Stay on track for your next step after high school

**FINANCE**
Learn how to make college affordable
Important Platforms and Websites:

**CommonApp.org**
Apply to many colleges from one place. More than 900 colleges accept the Common App!

**CollegeScorecard.ed.gov**
Recently updated, compare colleges, their features and costs, and find other support resources.

**FAFSA.gov**
Create FSA IDs and complete the FAFSA (on or after October 1) here.

**EncourageMe.com**
Download the app, find support articles, and more to help you on your journey.