**Students**

**Assessing your list of colleges**

As you develop a list of colleges that interest you, be sure you can answer these questions about them.

**The basics**

* Where is the college? Can you locate it on a map? Is it too close to home? Is it too far? Is it too cold or too hot there?
* Have you taken the course work the college requires for admission?
* What size is the college? How many students are undergraduates?
* What is the college’s selectivity ratio (what proportion of applicants were admitted last year)?
* Does the college offer majors that interest you?
* Is the college coed or single sex?
* What percentage of students live off campus?
* How many of the students graduate in four years? Five years? Six years?
* How many first-year students return for their sophomore year?
* How much does the program cost? What is the total per-year expense?
* What type of financial aid is available?

**Where would you fit in?**

* What are the admission test scores at the colleges that interest you? Where does that place you?
* What were the high school GPAs of most of the freshmen last year?
* Are freshmen guaranteed on-campus housing? If not, where do they live?
* Are there extracurricular activities that interest you?

**Visit the colleges’ websites, read the guidebooks and look at their literature**

* What are their strong academic programs? (Ask a college representative, students, graduates and teachers.)
* What courses are required for graduation?
* Are the courses you need/want available each semester? At convenient times?

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**Assessing your list of colleges (page 2)**

* Are there special programs that interest you (study abroad, internships, etc.)?
* What is the social life like? What percentage of students join fraternities or sororities?
* Do the pictures and the language the college uses to describe itself attract you?
* What is your general impression of the college?
* Is the school accredited?
* If professional certification is required for employment in the field that interests you, how many students enrolled in the school’s program pass the certification exam?

**Admission process**

* When are applications due?
* Does the college accept the Common Application? If so, does it require supplemental forms?
* What does the application contain? Are essays required?
* Is an interview suggested or required? Is an interview available from staff or alumni?
* When may you visit the college? What is its policy regarding campus visits?
* What are the financial aid deadlines? What financial aid forms are required?

**Now answer these questions**

* Am I a strong candidate for admission to this college?
* If I am not a strong candidate, what are my chances?
* Do I want to visit this college?
* What additional information do I need?

***Source:*** *Susan Staggers, Cary Academy, North Carolina*

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