

Timetable for College Planning

9th Grade

- Course planning (a to g) and do your best
- Settle in, learn how to ask for help
- Explore interests

10th Grade:

- Course planning (a to g) and do your best
- PSAT 10 practice in April if you want to
- SAT subject tests in May or June if applicable
- Develop interests and explore careers

11th Grade:

- PSAT in Oct
- Decide if you are applying for summer programs
- SAT and ACT in winter/spring (or combo free at test prep co) then decide which to pursue
- SAT subject tests in May or June (AP or fluent language)
- Keep excellent work for portfolio for any test optional apps
- Research and develop college list, request information from all colleges of interest, attend college fairs
- Deepen interest in activities, explore careers/majors
- Visit colleges in Feb and spring breaks
- Ask teachers (max 2) if they will write letters of recommendation for applications in the fall
- Draft UC responses and Common app essay in summer
- Refine list to Safety, Target and Reach
- Decide on Early Action (EA is non binding early notification), Early Decision (ED is a binding contract with early notification and must attend) with Nov application deadlines

12th Grade:

- UC app opens August 1, submission Nov 1 to 30
- Common Application may be opened before 12th grade to fill general sections, but submitted only after August 1. Deadlines vary by college
- Coalition app opens August
- Write all supplementary essays for Common App
- Oct 1: Student (with parents) complete Student FAFSA (and CSS Profile if required)
- CSU apps open Oct 1 to Nov 30
- Nov 1, Nov 15 and Dec 1 are deadlines often used by private colleges for Early Action and Early Decision, or to be eligible for merit aid (scholarships based on academics and/or service), and for arts with portfolio
- Community College registration early spring
- Acceptances sent by March - April
- Visit colleges before making final decision
- Notify chosen college by May 1

What parents can control:

- Conversation topics and timing
- College visits during junior year (5)
- Your own social media posts
- Keep test results private
- Remember what your children were drawn to and see what majors and colleges may appeal; not every student has a passion, but help your students to understand themselves
- arrange for any diagnostic testing for suspected learning disabilities before 18

The Launchpad

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Prospect High Special Issue:
College Planning Reference

Books:

- **College Admission** by Hamlet and Vandeveld
- **Fiske Guide to Colleges** – current year
- **Colleges that Change Lives** by Loren Pope
- **Cool Colleges** by Donald Asher
- **K & W Guide** to Colleges for students with Learning Differences
- **The Academic Athlete** by Luther Dickson and Packard Laughrea
- **Creative Colleges** by Elaine Loveland
- **The College Finder** by Steven R Antonoff

Websites:

- **Collegeboard.org** – SAT, SAT subject tests, AP tests, CSS financial profile, **Big Future** for college search, majors, financial info
- **Actstudent.org** – register for ACT, test prep
- **Naviance** Family Connection college and career research, scattergrams, application log8
- High School courses A-G: articulation.ucop.edu/agcourselist#/list/search/all
- **School website**
- UC: admission.universityofcalifornia.edu
- CSUs: Calstateapply
- CA Community Colleges: ccco.edu
- WUE – Western Undergraduate Exchange: wiche.edu/wue
- Colleges that change lives: ctcl.org
- **Collegexpress.com** for additional college searches based on Antonoff book
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): Fafsa.ed.gov
- What to do with a major: myplan.com/majors/what-to-do-with-a-major.php
- **Cappex.com** – scattergrams on college acceptance nationwide
- Virtual campus tours: **You tube**, college websites, ecampustours.com
- Scholarships Chegg: chegg.com and fastweb.com
- **Test optional colleges: Fairtest.org**
- Student athletes: ncaa.org/student-athletes
- College and Career research: Linked In
- Learning and attention issues - understood.org
- National Center for Education Statistics: nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/
- Government college score card - collegescorecard.ed.gov
- **Professional organizations: nacac.org, wacac.org, heca.org, ieca.org**
- **Jeff Levy on <http://www.personalcollegeadmissions.com>** for EA/ED and Merit aid stats
- **Lynn O'Shaughnessy of thecollegesolution.com**
- Google 'College name Common Data set 'to get detailed info for each college

College Search – Finding the Right Fit:

1. Purpose of college: career prep vs intellectual exploration
2. Door to door travel time
3. Importance of name brand/prestige to your student and to your family
4. Location: Weather, city, rural, suburb, things to do
5. Price considerations, including 4 year completion
6. Availability of your special interest/club eg mock trial, fencing
7. Clarity of Major, or need time to explore options
8. Advising access: ease, specialist (pre med, etc)
9. Professor contact and class size in first years
10. Learning style – lecture, discussion based, hands on learning
11. Support for health, learning disabilities
12. Research opportunities
13. Internships and how easy they are to access; graduation requirement for some
14. Food
15. Dorms and housing
16. Big Sports
17. Greek Life
18. Religion
19. Political climate
20. Safety

Creating the Final List:

- 2 Safety, 5 Target, 3 Reach (Essential to have 1 financial local Safety)
- Naviance scattergrams, Big Future college profiles under Academics
- Careful of Averages, look for middle 50%

Students should be happy to attend any college on their list

Collegeboard.org includes Big Future, which has some of the best college finance calculators and explanations: bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/paying-your-share/expected-family-contribution-calculator

- **EFCC = Expected Family Contribution:** stays the same
- **COA = Cost of Attendance:** varies by college so you could qualify for need based aid at a college with a high COA, and not qualify at one with a lower COA
- **FAFSA** – Free Application for Federal Student Aid (may need to be completed to qualify for scholarships even if you are sure you will not qualify for need based aid); open from October senior year but FAFSA.org has a worksheet and helpful info to use earlier, and you can load info direct from your tax return with the IRS
- **CSS Profile** – on collegeboard.org and may be required for out of state and private colleges; Oct senior year completion
- **Need Based Aid** - Colleges use the FAFSA and/or CSS profile to calculate if you are eligible to receive financial aid based on need, and be careful to check if 100% of need is met – colleges vary
- **Merit Based Aid** - aid awarded for academic, leadership or activity achievement - look to be in top 10-15% of applicants to qualify for academic merit aid
- **Sports and Arts specialist** scholarships vary by college

Every college website must have a Net Price Calculator to help you calculate actual costs - but some are better than others!

Activities and Engagement:

Colleges want to see genuine interests and engagement, not 'packaging' for applications. Students should focus on discovering what they like, and what they are good at. They may explore interests via school, clubs, volunteering, working, self-discovery or any combination of these. And time spent caring for a family member or working in the family business is just as valid as more formal activities or clubs.

Note: CSUs only require info on GPA and SAT/ACT (except Cal Poly SLO which asks for very brief activities info; keep the Naviance resume up to date - counselors and teachers use these for letters of recommendation (UC and CSUs do not require these)

How Colleges Decide

CSUs: GPA and SAT/ACT only (except Cal Poly SLO – add activities very briefly), local area, some by major

UC and many private: comprehensive and holistic reviews looks at students in context, allied to what they will bring to the campus – varies by campus and year:

- GPA
- Test scores in SAT or ACT
- Rigor of coursework and classes chosen beyond a-g minimum, including choices for 12th
- UC approved honors and advanced courses
- UC only - Eligibility in the local context (ELC) for CA students
- Academic opportunities at your high school
- Outstanding performance in one or more academic areas
- Achievements in special projects
- Improvement in academic performance
- Special talents, awards, achievements
- Participation in education prep programs
- Accomplishment in light of life experiences
- Geographic information

Application Essays and Questions

Applications may ask for an Essay, Personal Statement, or Insight resume but they are all looking for the same things: **Who am I? What are my achievements? What makes me unique? What do I love? How will I grow at this college?**

- Draft essays in summer before senior year
- Authentic voice, student written
- Answer the question, check thoroughly
- CSU – no essay
- UC - respond to any 4 of 8 In sight Questions
- Common Application has a single essay to all Common App colleges and each one may ask for supplementary essay(s) relevant to their own college only – if requested these are very high priority for colleges
- Coalition app – allows for students to load a locker with interesting work

Additional Information on Applications:

UC and Common App both have 'extra' boxes if you choose to give additional short background information eg course conflicts at school prevented taking a class; chose a class you thought was a-g but it was not; personal reasons for a poor semester and how you coped successfully, school did not offer AP in a subject so you chose to take it in the summer at Community College