READY, SET
SO YOU CAN GO:
BUILDING YOUR COLLEGE LIST
Today's Agenda:

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 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.
MORE THAN 4,000 Postsecondary Institutions in the United States
You want to apply to the right colleges for you, but do you know how to find them?
BUILDING YOUR COLLEGE LIST
Find your College Match and Fit

**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?
**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 your career interests?  
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?

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

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

NUMBERS
How do your finances and personal profile align with college?
PRIMARY RESEARCH

SORT: LIKELY, TARGET, REACH

NARROW AND BALANCE
Don’t forget!

Talk to your champions.
You have family, teachers, counselors, and mentors who 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 vary and can be as early as mid-October.

You should receive admission decisions and financial aid packages by early spring.

Spend your summer preparing for college and attending your school’s orientation program.

The FAFSA opens on October 1 of your senior year.

Some states and institutions have FAFSA deadlines as early as November.

May 1 is College Decision Day, the day many schools require you to commit to attending.
Steps to take before senior year:

1. VISIT AND TOUR COLLEGE CAMPUSES.
2. START YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS, INCLUDING YOUR ESSAY.
3. CREATE A BRAG SHEET/RESUME.
4. PREPARE TO ASK FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION.
5. RESEARCH APPLICATION DEADLINES AND EXPECTATIONS.
6. CREATE AN FSA ID FOR YOURSELF. GET YOUR PARENT/GUARDIAN(S) TO CREATE ONE TOO!
Admission Offices Want You To Know

1. Take initiative! Ask the college/university about fee waivers. Tour the school and ask questions!

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

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

4. You should attend the college that’s best for you! It’s ok if it’s not our college.

5. We're a team! Admission offices, families, counselors, and other champions are here to help you succeed.
DON’T FORGET:

We want to hear from you, so please call and email!
Tools to support
Your Process
Work Smarter, Not Harder
Encourage

PREPARE
Build skills you’ll 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.

& TRANSITION

Access online: EncourageMe.com
Important Platforms and Websites:

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

**CollegeScorecard.ed.gov**
Compare colleges, features, and costs. Find lots of support resources!

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

**EncourageMe.com**
Get the Encourage app on mobile or web, and learn about colleges, majors, and careers. Read support articles to help you on your journey.