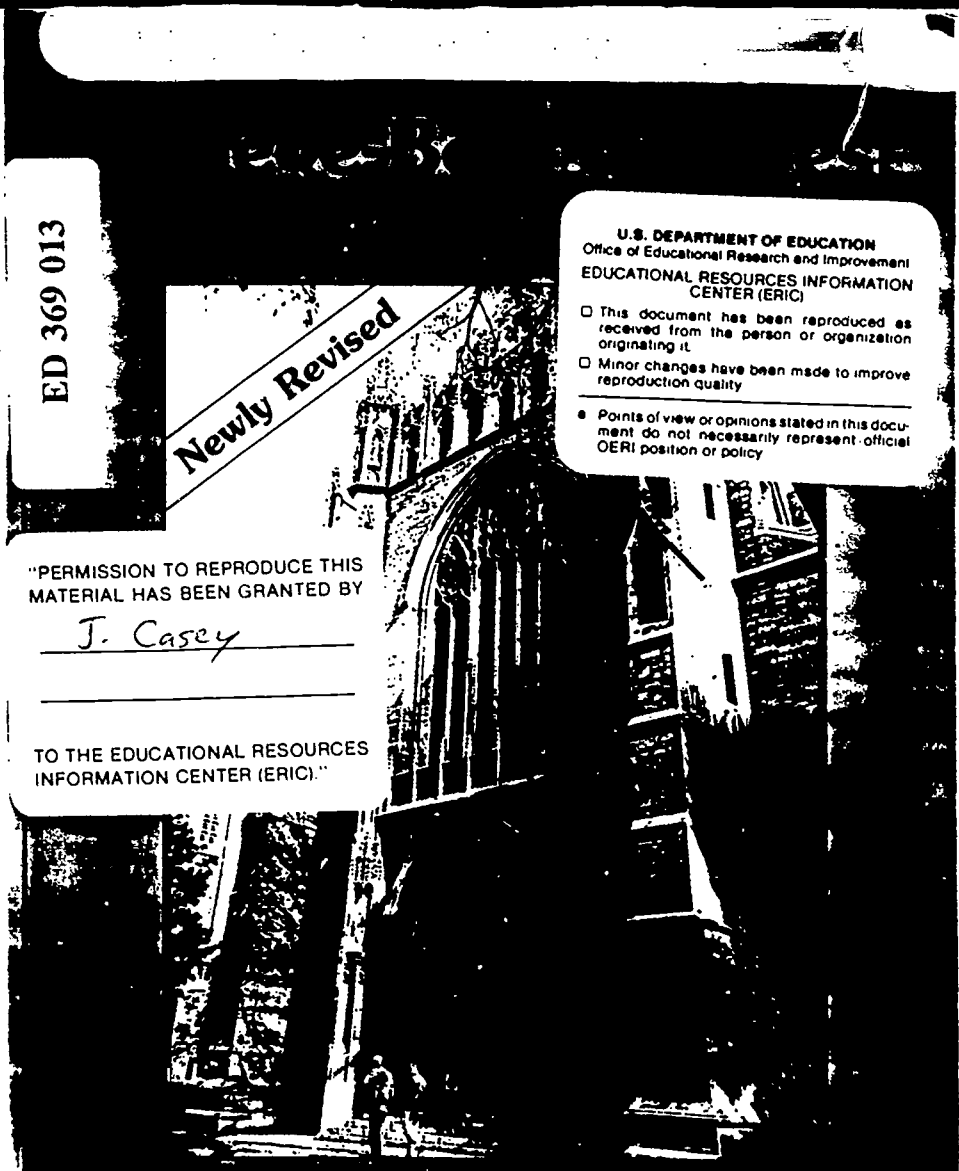
DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 369 013 CG 025 360

TITLE	College-Bound Digest. Valuable Information from Prominent Educators for All College-Bound Students.
INSTITUTION	Who's Who among American High School Students, Lake Forest, IL.
REPORT NO	ISBN-1-56244-053-5
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	57p.; For an earlier edition, see ED 302 128.
AVAILABLE FROM	Educational Communications, Inc., 721 N. McKinley Rd., Lake Forest, IL 60045.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	College Admission; *College Bound Students; *College Choice; College Environment; College Freshmen; *College Preparation; Higher Education; High Schools; Majors (Students); Paying for College

ABSTRACT

Selecting the right college can be frightening, confusing, and overwhelming, sometimes all at the same time. This pamphlet's 21 articles touch upon the choices and options available to college bound students, such as: (1) the different advantages of two-year, public, private, women's, or church-related schools; (2) SAT preparation, testing, and the test's use by colleges; (3) tough questions to ask admissions officers; (4) common mistakes students make in selecting a college; (5) financial aid; (6) choosing the right major; (7) advanced placement credit; (8) campus life styles; (9) surviving the freshman year; (10) liberal arts education; (11) preparing for a career in the arts; and (12) parents' roles. Also included is a list of 20 guides for the college-bound student. (RJM)



Newly Revised

College Scholarships

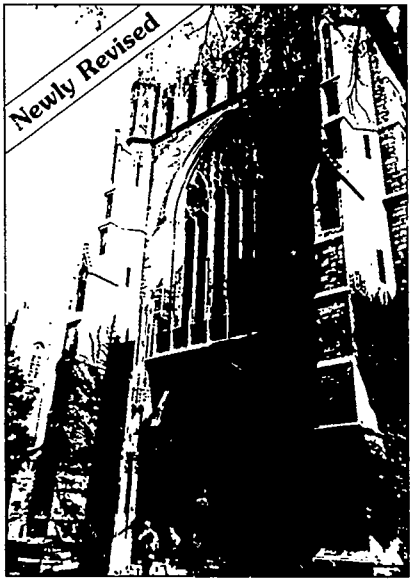
High school students are invited to apply for one of 125 scholarships of $1,000 each which may be used at the college or university of their choice. Award winners are determined on the basis of academic performance, extracurricular activities and financial need. More than $1,575,000 has been awarded to date.

To receive your application, send a note stating your name, address, city, state, zip code, year of high school graduation, and approximate grade point average to:

Educational Communications
Scholarship Foundation
721 N. McKinley Road
P.O. Box 5002
Lake Forest, IL 60045-5002

A not-for-profit organization

College-Bound Digest®



The last edition of *College-Bound Digest* is available through the ERIC System with the number ED302128.

Educational Communications, Inc.
721 N. McKinley Road
Lake Forest, IL 60045

Printed in U.S.A. ISBN #1-56244-053-5

Note to Counselors

This monograph about the college selection process is intended to serve you and your students as a resource to compliment your total guidance efforts. *College Bound Digest*® is offered free to all 22,000 high schools nationwide as a public service to the educational community. Please feel free to "copy" articles or reproduce them to meet your needs. Should you desire additional copies for your department, please use the order form below.

College-Bound Digest®

ORDERING INFORMATION

Please send me _____ copies of the **College-Bound Digest.**
(Quantity discounts listed below.)

Single copy ..... $5.95 each
2-10 copies ..... $4.00 each
11-99 copies ..... $3.50 each
100 or more copies ..... $3.00 each
Please add $2.00 postage & handling for 10 or less ..... _____
Please add $4.00 postage & handling for 11 or more ..... _____
Illinois Residents add 6 1/2% sales tax ..... _____
Total Amount Enclosed ..... _____

SHIP TO:

Name

Title

School or Organization

Address

City State Zip Code

Make checks payable and mail to:

Educational Communications, Inc.
721 N. McKinley Road • Lake Forest, IL 60045
(708) 295-6650

Table of Contents

We wish to acknowledge the special contribution of Robert McLendon, Dean of Admissions, Brevard College, Brevard, North Carolina who was instrumental in selecting appropriate topics and authors for this publication.

Foreword to students

The college admissions process and the college selection process are complex and much debated procedures which confront more than 50% of our nation's graduating high school students. Selecting the right college can be frightening, confusing and overwhelming, sometimes all at the same time. It can also be exciting, informative, challenging and rewarding, generally dependent on how much effort the student expends on the process.

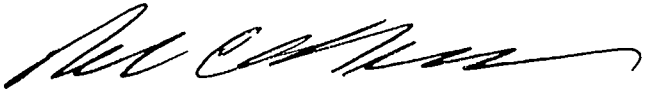
There are numerous fine directories which describe in as much detail as you would ever want the complete facts on each and every one of the more than 3,000 colleges and universities in the United States. Most high school guidance offices and local libraries have these directories for reference.

The purpose of the *College-Bound Digest*® is to help students explore the choices and options available — the advantages of big schools, small schools, public, private, church related; the importance of testing and test preparation; the opportunities for financial aid. We have attempted to provide students with information which will help in the evaluation of the options and opportunities available to most college-bound individuals.

We must emphasize the importance of high school counselors in the entire process. When candor and commitment to the process are displayed by the students, the counselors can generally be effective and helpful in guiding the student to the right choices.

Good luck, relax and enjoy the process.

WHO'S WHO AMONG
AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



Paul C. Krouse
Publisher

Getting the most from your high school counselor

By James Warfield

Your high school counselor's job is to help you. Your job is to get to know your counselor so that he/she can help you in an effective manner. Helping your counselor help you requires open and frank discussions regarding your goals and personal plans. Your high school counselor should:

- know your abilities;
- know your goals;
- recommend academic course selections;
- recommend which college entrance test to take;
- recommend colleges that meet your criteria;
- help you focus your ideas;
- and most importantly, make you think.

Recommendations should be based upon your academic abilities and goals. This is a critical issue because the appropriateness of this advice is determined by the consistency between your aspirations and aptitudes. Verifying the accuracy of your self-perceptions is important in order to avoid sudden surprises caused by false hopes or unrealistic expectations. The reason why your counselor exists is to help you become everything you are capable of within a realistic framework.

For many students, the college selection process begins with the PSAT, taken in the fall of the junior year. Your counselor should advise you which of the college entrance tests to take, SAT, ACT, ACH and AP, and when to take them. The type of college you apply to will determine which tests to take. The quality of the college, the quality of your own academic program, and whether or not you plan to apply Early Decision, will determine when you should take such tests. Many juniors don't know to which schools they'd like to apply, so advance planning is necessary in order to maintain open options.

Finding the right college will require you to know yourself, your likes and dislikes. In what kind of environment do you see yourself being most comfortable? Can you picture yourself at a small college or a mid-size or large university setting? Do you want a school to be in a rural community, a suburb or to be in an urban environment? Do you want to be in a different geographic part of the country, or is being close to home important to you? What are some of your academic areas of interest? What kind of extracurricular offering do you want to participate in? As you answer these questions, the attributes of your ideal college will become more clear. Through discussion with your counselor you'll be able to assess your needs, and more clearly focus your perceptions of yourself and of the schools you will be researching.

Your counselor should help generate a list of colleges that meet your requirements by drawing upon his/her own wealth of knowledge or utilizing the many reference materials available.

Many counselors have access to computers that will provide a list of colleges for you to investigate, once you have determined the characteristics you are looking for. If the guidance office does not have a computer, the same information can be obtained from the commercially published reference books that are available through your counselor or library. After generating a list of perhaps twelve to twenty schools, your research really begins.

Resource books provide a wealth of statistical and narrative descriptions on virtually every college. The counseling office is likely to have college catalogs as well as files on each college containing brochures, view books and leaflets of the various academic and extracurricular offerings available at that particular school. Although college catalogs are boring reading material, information relating to admission procedures and requirements, course offerings and requirements for each of the academic majors are outlined. In addition, course prerequisites and methods of exempting yourself from some prerequisites are also indicated. As your research continues, you'll be able to eliminate schools and determine some colleges in which you are seriously interested.

Many high schools set up procedures whereby students may meet with representatives from colleges to obtain more information or answer individual questions. These representatives may be the Director of Admissions, admissions officers, or personnel hired to represent the college. Of course, the more you know about the college before talking with the college representative the more value they will be to you. Some colleges require an interview either by the representative, an alumnus, or by an admissions officer. Your counselor should help you determine if an interview is necessary in your situation.

Campus visits are the most effective means to determine if the college is right for you. When to visit is a matter of individual taste or need. A school you casually visit during a summer vacation will serve a different purpose, and have different flavor, than a visit made in the fall after you have applied. It is also difficult to compare schools that are on break from those in session. Keep in mind that as you visit more schools your observational skills will become more sophisticated and your reflections of each will be altered. It may be more prudent to visit only those schools to which you have been accepted, after you have received all your admissions decisions.

As you narrow your choice of colleges, your counselor should review with you the possibilities of acceptance or rejection at each. At least one of your choices should be a safety choice, one in which you are almost guaranteed of being admitted.

After the list of colleges to which you are going to apply has been determined, it is your responsibility to obtain the application and meet deadline dates. Many colleges require a counselor's recommendation or a Secondary School Reference. Some require additional recommendations from specific teachers. Establish application procedures with your counselor so that he/she, the teacher, and school have adequate time to do their part in order to meet your deadline dates. If you are required to write an essay or personal statement, discuss this with your counselor. These discussions serve several purposes: help you generate ideas and narrow topics that you wish to write about; provide you with suggestions that will enhance your applications; and provide the counselor with insights that will compliment your application.

It is your responsibility to file your applications on time, see that your test scores are sent to the admissions office, and file the financial aid applications. Your counselor will help you determine which scores to send, which financial aid form is required and how to fulfill these requirements.

Finding, selecting and applying to the colleges that are right for you is a long and studied process. It involves a lot of letter-writing, telephoning, research, weighing alternatives, and just plain old thinking. It's a decision-making process that requires questioning, information gathering, evaluation of the information and more questioning. This cycle is often repeated in order to make effective decisions. The better the decision-making process the more likely your college experience will be successful.

Jim Warfield is Director of Pupil Personnel at Lake Forest High School, Lake Forest, Illinois. Jim is a past President of Suburban Chicago Director of Guidance Association, is involved and active in a number of other professional organizations, and past member of the National Advisory Council for the Educational Records Bureau, Wellesley, Massachusetts.

The use of the SAT at selective colleges

By Dr. Judith T. Bainbridge

For many students the numbers – from 200 to 800 on the verbal and on the quantitative sections of the College Board examination – seem to be the voice of doom; for others, they announce the possibility of admission into the nation's most selective colleges. But just how important, really, are those scores, and how will college admissions committees interpret them?

It is important to remember that the SAT (or ACT) is only one part of your total record. Your rank in your high school class, your grades, extracurricular activities which show leadership potential, and your recommendations are all extremely important. In addition, some colleges will consider your geographic location (it may be easier for the valedictorian of a South Dakota high school to enter Harvard than for the top student in a Connecticut prep school), your relationship with alumni, your religious preference at some denominational colleges, and the success of other graduates from your school at the institution.

Colleges treat scores, grades, rank, activities and recommendations in a variety of ways, but very few use arbitrary cut-off scores to determine acceptance. Every selective college or university attempts to select a class which will be successful (they don't want you to flunk out after your first year). Students who are admitted are those who they can predict will do well; and admissions staff experience with standardized tests suggests that certain levels of achievement can be predicted with a fair

degree of accuracy when used in conjunction with the high school record.

Often the total score on the SAT is less important than the individual score on either the verbal or the quantitative aptitude section. While colleges and universities may publish their average SAT as a combination, many liberal arts colleges believe that the verbal score is a particularly good indicator of ability, and many technically-oriented engineering programs will be impressed with a very good quantitative score. A pre-engineering student with an 1150 SAT may be a very good candidate if his scores are 450 on the verbal section and 700 in the quantitative area; he might be substantially less impressive with 650/500.

One of the problems that many students confront when they first look at their scores is a sinking feeling that their numbers do not match their high school achievement level. The 'A' student who is third in her class and barely makes a 450/450 on the SAT is disappointed for days afterwards. It is important, however, to understand what your scores mean. The national average on the verbal section of the SAT is 427; on the mathematics section it is 467. Clearly, many college-bound students will have a total score under 900. Many colleges and most state universities have average scores at this level or below it; more selective institutions will have average scores that are substantially higher, but even among these colleges there will be a number of students whose scores range from 900 to 1,000, but whose grades and rank indicate a strong chance of success.

But how can you explain or understand an average score when you have been an excellent student? It may be that you had a bad day (or a bad night before); a headache, too little sleep, a testing environment that is too hot or too cold may cause your scores to be less than your best. It may be that the scores are an accurate indicator of your aptitude and that you are a high achiever. Or it may mean that your grades have been inflated and that you have not been challenged by teachers or peers. One way that you can determine if it was just the specific test day is to compare your scores on the SAT with your PSAT. If you scored, for example, 48/50 on the PSAT and have a combined total on the SAT of from 970 to 1020 your test is probably valid. If, on the other hand, your PSAT was 55/58 and you scored 1020 on the SAT, you probably should plan to retake the examination to see if the second time might show real improvement.

In addition to the "bad day" low score there are other reasons that good students do not do well on standardized tests. It may be that they panic under time pressure, that they are unfamiliar with national tests and the testing environment, or that their skills and abilities cannot be shown on such tests. Really creative students, those with talents in the arts, and those who work very slowly through a problem, analyzing as they go, are sometimes at a disadvantage. If you fall in one of these categories, it is especially useful for a teacher whose recommendation you have requested be asked to discuss your other strengths in an admissions letter.

Some students retake the SAT two or three times to see if they can improve their overall scores, and it is important to realize that scores will vary slightly every time you take a Scholastic Aptitude Test. A variation of 30 points in either direction is normal; more than 50 points, unusual. How worthwhile is it to retake the SAT if your scores are under the average published by the college of your choice? Some schools, like Furman, accept your best scores from each section. Others may average your test results. It is probably true that you can improve your quantitative score with tutoring over several months; improving verbal scores is more difficult. You should remember, however, that while selective

colleges have many high-scoring students, their *average* SAT is just that; there have been many others whose scores are under the average but who have the proven achievement to be admitted.

Suppose, however, that you are very interested in an institution which indicates an average SAT of 1275, your score is 1050, but your parents are alumni, you graduated in the top 10% of your class, and you have been an outstanding high school leader. Academically you would be in the bottom quarter of your class, yet you may well be admitted because of your parents and your activities. Should you attend such a college? Will you be able to compete at a level comfortable for you with students whose high school backgrounds may be substantially superior? Are you ready to make a number of "C's" or to study harder and longer than your roommates?

You should consider, too, that very high scores do not necessarily mean admission to the college of your choice. Several years ago a young man with an SAT score of 1440 applied to a selective Southeastern liberal arts college. He had graduated in the lower half of his high school class and although he had been involved in some extracurricular activities, he also had been a discipline problem in high school. After substantial discussion, he was not admitted, but the college admissions office was interested enough to trace his career several years later. He had flunked out of two other colleges. SAT scores indicate aptitude – the ability to learn – not achievement. They do not show the desire to learn, the ambition to succeed or the perseverance necessary for academic excellence. College admissions officers are aware of these facts and they will read your entire application with an awareness that you are more than a score on a computer printout.

Dr. Judith T. Bainbridge is the Director of Educational Services at Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina. She works with students competing for national scholarships and applying to graduate and professional schools.

It's time to take the SAT

By Lisa K. Bartl

You've approached the brink of that critical rite of passage into the echelon of higher learning: It's time to take the SAT.

Before the butterflies in your stomach cause you to break the pencil point when you press it to the answer sheet, take a few minutes to learn how this alleged foe can become your friend.

Not By the SAT Alone

First of all, although the SAT measures what you have learned both in and out of the classroom over the past 12 years, failing to ace the test will not necessarily block access to the college of your choice.

For the most part colleges and universities take the academic record

very seriously, as they do your grade-point average, academic courses taken in high school, application essays, teacher recommendations, and extracurricular and athletic activities — in other words, it's the whole package they're interested in.

Although there is no "quick fix" if you got a late start on academics, remember that higher education is not out of your reach. It is never to late to improve yourself. Begin preparing now. Your best short-term strategy in both cases is to learn as much as you can about the test and do the best you can. Here's what to expect.

Introducing the New SAT

The SAT, which has been around since 1926, is evolving. New forms of the test will appear in March 1994 and May 1994. The changes reflect recent education reform movements in the United States.

Antonyms have been dropped from the new test, but analogies (e.g. "minister is to pulpit as judge is to bench") will remain, because they assess your **reasoning** abilities, rather than finding out if you've tried to memorize the dictionary.

In addition to the analogies, half of the questions in the new SAT will assess your ability to read and think critically. After reading and comparing longer, more engaging passages, you will be asked to define vocabulary words **in the context of the passage** through inference, rather than through memorization. Finally, your verbal reasoning skills will be probed through sentence completion questions.

This focus on your ability to reason is why the first part of the test is called SAT I: Reasoning Test, which is composed of both verbal and a math section.

In the math section of SAT I: Reasoning Test, you will have to produce your own answers to some of the questions, instead of choosing random from a series of multiple-choice questions. You will be allowed — and in fact encouraged — to take a calculator to the test, since you're probably already using one to solve math problems in the classroom, or in your day-to-day activities outside the classroom.

The second part of the SAT is **SAT II: Subject Tests**, which will be introduced in May 1994. These one-hour tests in subjects such as Writing, Literature, History, Science, and Foreign Languages, are optional: you will have to take one or more of them if the colleges to which you're applying ask you to. Some of the Foreign Language Tests have listening components, and the Writing Test involves writing a sample essay.

Also in the works is a computerized version of the SAT, which is expected to be available sometime in the near future. Who knows? That could even turn out to be fun!

The Big Picture

Analyzed together or individually, SAT I and SAT II results will demonstrate more fully to yourself, your high school, and to the colleges you want to attend what you know and what you are able to do. This will help not only in admitting you, but in placing you and guiding your program planning as well.

You Are in Control

Several exciting new services designed to "put you in the driver's seat" when it comes to your SAT II scores will be available beginning in March 1994.

If you want to know how you did on the SAT, new score reports will tell you how you compared to other state and national test takers. In addition, the reports give you **customized** answers to questions about your particular score that will help you analyze your performance and prepare for more testing.

SAT II Score Choice is a great new service that allows you to decide which SAT II: Subject Test scores you want colleges to see, and when, by electing to put various scores on and off hold.

With SAT II Score Choice, you can be a bit more daring about taking SAT II tests because Score Choice will help you assess your academic progress without fear of displaying a low score for the world to see. You'll suffer no penalty for a less-than-dazzling performance.

You can assess your strengths and weaknesses, plan and take additional coursework in high school, then retake the tests and score higher. Taking SAT II tests earlier in your program also sharpens your test-taking skills and could help reduce test anxiety as you prepare to take SAT I your senior year.

The Student Answer Service (SAS) will give you a computer-produced report telling you how you answered each of the questions on the SAT by type (e.g. sentence completion, analogy) and difficulty.

Also enhanced is the Question-and-Answer Service (QAS), which will provide a computer-generated report similar to the SAS report along with a booklet of the test questions.

If you take the SAT II: Writing Test, the Writing Sample Copy Service will send copies of your essay to *you*, and let you decide if you want to share the sample with your teacher, guidance counselor, and/or admissions officer.

What Else Can I Do to Prepare?

By all means, practice! Practice taking the test ahead of time. Test-taking in itself is a highly valuable skill for succeeding in college. Hone that skill, just as you would rehearse giving a speech.

There are several ways to approach this. The best way to prepare for the new SAT is to take the new PSAT/NMSQT in October 1993.

You now have the valuable opportunity to practice for the SAT II Writing Test through the College Board Writing Service. The essay topics, method of scoring, and scores offered by this new service will be similar to those of an actual SAT II Writing Test. Since the College Board Writing Service is administered conveniently at your school, ask your guidance counselor if your school can participate.

In addition, ask your guidance counselor for a copy of **Taking the SAT I** and practice on the full sample test that's inside. Two other booklets will help you: **Verbal Practice Questions** and **Mathematics Practice Questions for the New PSAT/NMSQT and SAT I: Reasoning Test.** Finally, look for two new books at your local bookstore: **Introducing the New SAT: The College Board's Official Guide**, which includes one complete SAT I along with more than 80 practice questions, is available now; and **The Official Guide to SAT II: Subject Tests** will appear in January 1994. Or write to the College Board's Promotional Services Office at 45 Columbus Avenue, New York, NY 10023, for information on ordering these test-preparation materials.

You Can Do IT!

On a final note, as testing day approaches and you're biting your lip getting ready to go for it, remember that this isn't your last chance at academic success. It isn't a one-shot deal! As you're now aware, you can take the SAT several times over the course of your high school career. And to broaden your perspective, know that there are many options and several paths to a rewarding career in your future. Many opportunities await you. Just keep trying, and know that there is a college out there for you.

Lisa K. Bartl is the Associate Director of the New SAT Project in the New York City office of the College Board.

Can you prepare for the SAT?

By Stanley H. Kaplan

Can you prepare for the SAT? Of course you can. In 1979, a study of the Stanley H. Kaplan program by the Federal Trade Commission concluded that the right kind of preparation could and did indeed significantly improve SAT scores. Other studies have since reconfirmed this conclusion. In fact, over the years thousands of students have scored improvements of 200, 250, 300 points or more after completing our program.

The question you and your parents are asking today is not WHETHER, but HOW and WHEN you should prepare for the SAT. The answer depends on your individual temperament and needs. Kaplan has been in the business of test preparation for more than a half century, but I'd be the last one to suggest that everyone needs a formal SAT review course. However, a good review program will certainly help you to do your best. Some students do very well with self-study. If you decide to "go it alone", there are available at bookstores practice tests and other information produced by the College Board or similar material found in commercial SAT review texts. Taking many practice tests and familiarizing yourself with basic question types can certainly help "de-mystify" the SAT.

Some students do very well with self-study. If you decide to "go it alone," there are many materials available at book stores, including practice tests released by the College Board and simulated exams in SAT review texts. There's no denying that taking these tests and familiarizing yourself with basic question types can help "de-mystify" the SAT.

But most students want more. Commitment to a regular class schedule and the reassurance provided by a skilled, enthusiastic, fun teacher go a long way toward easing test anxiety. It's a big help to know that you can ask questions and get individual help, even an encouraging word, when you need it! Thus it's no surprise that school-sponsored and commercial preparation courses have become so popular. The Kaplan program not only provides a thorough review of the math, verbal, and reasoning skills tested by the SAT, but also a solid grounding in what I call "testmanship." You are test-wise when you have learned to apply the strategies that help you to think the SAT way – the kind of critical reasoning you'll be using in all of your college courses.

The SAT is a different kind of test. It is not – and never has been – an aptitude test It is not a test of innate ability. The word aptitude is out; the word assessment is in. So welcome to the new SAT, the scholastic Assessment Tests. It does measure or assess what you've learned in and out of school – how well you've developed your math, verbal and reasoning skills.

The new PSAT and SAT have now much more than a new name! There are major changes in both the verbal and math sections — the most dramatic in 50 years. The new PSAT will surface in October 1993; the new SAT in March 1994. In the math section, the use of calculators will be permitted and encouraged. Also, ten math questions will be student-produced "grid-ins" rather than the standard multiple choice. The verbal section has longer reading passages and paired reading passages that require you to analyze the ideas presented in both. The antonym section has been eliminated (as has the half-hour Test of Standard Written English). Vocabulary will now be tested by questions on specific words as they're used in the reading passages. You can obtain information and materials about the new PSAT and SAT from your college advisor or from Kaplan by calling its toll free number: 1-800-KAP-TEST.

If you feel the need for a structured preparation program for the SAT, the following guidelines should help you select a program that will maximize your test potential:

1. A cram course of just a few sessions is of little value. A program over a period of many weeks will give you time to study and practice what's been learned in class.
2. Classes should be small; 10 to 15 students is the optimum size. Individual help should be available if you need it.
3. There must be an opportunity to make up missed lessons. Certainly, you shouldn't have to give up studying for an important exam at school to attend an SAT class. Nor should illness prevent you from getting the full benefit of a class session.
4. Any program you choose should have a permanent location where you can get additional SAT training or talk with someone knowledgeable and supportive. Beware of fly-by-night courses that advertise box numbers, hold classes in rented rooms and then silently steal away when the program ends!
5. You should have the opportunity to continue your SAT studies if you choose to take the test a second time. (Remember, you can retake the SAT as often as you want. Most schools accept the highest reported score.)
6. The better programs offer scholarship assistance if you cannot afford to pay the full tuition.
7. You should be suspicious of fast talk designed to entice you to enroll. Inflated, undocumented score claims, for example, have little bearing on whether a particular course will benefit you. "Guarantees" with lots of small print may make it impossible for you to qualify are of little value. (At Kaplan Centers, students can retake or extend their studies for any reason whatsoever, regardless of their score.)
8. Most important, you should check out a program with previous enrollees of that program. Their experience can speak volumes about the quality of teaching, the adequacy of study materials, and the range of score improvement achieved.

You can start reviewing for the PSAT and SAT long before you enroll in a prep course. In fact, you can start working on your verbal skills by reading as much as you can — newspapers, magazines, best sellers — anything that catches your eye and holds your interest! The more you read, the more your vocabulary and your ability to integrate ideas will improve. And what about your math review? Review the basic concepts in arithmetic, algebra and geometry. Don't just memorize; it's not only the what but the why. It will make you a more effective thinker and problem solver — one who thinks as the test-master thinks.

If you are armed with the knowledge and the strategies that a well-structured preparation program can provide you, you are sure to have a competitive edge in reaching your admission goals. And I'm sure that when you open up the test booklet on Test-Day, you'll feel as if you're meeting and old friend!

Stanley H. Kaplan is Founder and Chairman of the Stanley H. Kaplan Educational Center Ltd., the nation's largest test preparation specialist. Over the years more than 500,000 students have taken a Kaplan prep course for the PSAT and SAT. Kaplan has been featured in numerous publications, including Time, Newsweek, The New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal, and has guested on many radio and television programs. He has been invited to speak at meetings of the College Board and high school advisory organizations, as well as to testify at federal and state legislative hearings as an acknowledged expert on test preparation.

How to find financial aid

By Debra M. Kirby

Did you know that approximately 24 billion dollars in education-related financial aid are awarded each year? This aid comes in many forms, including scholarships, fellowships, grants, loans, awards, prizes, work study, and internships. These awards are given through a variety of public and private sources, from federal and state government organizations to local associations. In addition, colleges and universities offer many forms of aid for their students. As the cost of education continues to rise, and the competition for available funds increases, it becomes increasingly important for students and their parents to conduct a thorough search for financial aid.

The key to increasing the likelihood of meeting your aid-related financial goals is to plan ahead. This means allowing enough time to carefully assess your particular needs and preferences, consider any special circumstances or conditions that might qualify you for aid, and thoroughly research available aid programs.

Following are some guidelines to help you maximize your chances of finding financial aid.

1. Start Your Research Early

Any search for financial aid is likely to be more successful if it is started early. Allow enough time to complete all of the necessary steps and you will be more likely to identify and meet application deadlines for a wide variety of awards for which you may qualify. This in turn will increase your chances of obtaining aid.

You should begin this process as early as possible preferably at least **two years** before you think you will need financial assistance. While you may obtain some support if you allow less time, you might overlook or, worse yet, run out of time for other important opportunities. Many awards are given on a first-come, first-served basis, which means if you

don't file your application early enough, the aid will already have been distributed. In many cases, if your application is late, you will not be considered, even if you meet all the criteria. An early start may also allow you to identify organizations that offer scholarships to members or participants, such as scouting groups or 4-H clubs, in time to establish membership or otherwise meet their qualifying criteria.

Don't worry, though, if college is fast approaching or if you've already enrolled. Along with widely varying eligibility criteria, many awards carry application deadlines that come up throughout the year. Even if you miss the deadline for a particular award, you may still be eligible for the same award the following year. In fact, many awards are specifically designed for undergraduate students at the sophomore, junior, and/or senior levels.

2. Assess You Needs and Goals

The intended recipients for financial aid programs, and the purposes for which these awards were established, can vary greatly. Some programs are open to almost anyone; others are restricted to very specific categories of recipients. The majority of awards fall somewhere in between.

Your first step in seeking financial aid should be to establish your basic qualifications as a potential recipient. To help you do this, ask yourself these general questions to help define your educational and financial needs and goals:

- What kinds of colleges or universities interest me?
- What careers or fields of study interest me?
- Do I plan to earn a degree?
- Am I only interested in financial aid that is a gift, or am I willing to consider a loan or exchanging work for assistance?
- In what parts of the country am I willing to live and study?

3. Compile a List of Potential Qualifying Factors

Once you have defined your goals, the next step is to identify any special factors that would qualify you for aid programs that are offered only to a restricted group. Examine this area carefully, and remember that even slight or unlikely connections may be worth checking out.

The most common qualifications involve gender, race or ethnic heritage, place of residence, citizenship, employer, membership in an organization (such as a union, association, or a fraternal group), religious affiliation, military or veteran status, financial need, merit or academic achievement, creative or professional accomplishment, and community involvement or volunteer work.

Some of these qualifiers may also apply to your parents, step-parents guardians and/or spouse. If your parents are divorced, you should be aware of both parents' affiliations – even of you don't live with one (or both) of them. If your parents are deceased, you may be eligible for some awards based on their status of affiliations. And given enough lead time, it may be possible for you (or your parents) to join a particular organization, or establish residence, in time for you to be eligible for certain funds. You should contact any organization with which you or your parent may be affiliated for financial aid information, since many associations, unions, and employers do not make this information available to the public.

4. Contact the Financial Aid Office of the Schools and Other Educational Institutions That You Are Considering

Most colleges, and universities, and other educational institutions offer their own, institution-specific financial aid programs. Their financial aid offices may also have information on privately sponsored awards

that are specifically designated for students at those institutions. Contact the financial aid offices at all institutions in which you have an interest and request applications and detailed information on all aid programs that they sponsor.

5. Use Every Available Resource

Thoroughly search the various directories and guides available through high school counseling offices and career resource centers, college financial aid offices, and libraries. These references provide a wealth of information on all types of financial aid and are generally the best source for privately-funded programs. *Scholarships, Fellowships and Loans*, and *Fund Your Way Through College*, published by Gale Research Inc., are just two of many sources available.

Some directories contain information on Federal and state-administered aid. In addition, you may contact the **U.S. Department of Education** at **400 Maryland Ave., S.W. Washing ton, DC 20202**, for up-to-date information on U.S. Government award programs. Similarly, you should contact your state department of education for details on what is offered in your particular state. Your high school counselor or public or school librarian should be able to provide you with contact information for various government organizations.

Keep in mind that a large number of financial aid programs are sponsored by small or local organizations. High school counselors are often aware of local programs, and can usually tell you how to get in touch with the sponsoring or administrating organizations. Local newspapers are also a rich source of information on financial aid programs.

6. Allow Enough Time for the Application Process

The amount of time needed to complete the application process for individual awards can vary, so pay close attention to application details and deadlines. Some awards have deadlines that require you to apply more than a year before study will actually begin. In general, allow plenty of time to write for official applications (you won't be considered for some awards unless you apply using the correct forms.)

Carefully read and follow all instructions when you fill out the application forms. If you fail to answer certain questions, you may be disqualified even though you are a worthy candidate. Be sure to accurately and completely file all required supporting material, such as essays and resumes. Additionally, you will need to give your references enough time to submit their recommendations. Teachers, in particular, get many requests for letters of recommendation and should be given as much advance notice as possible.

7. Don't Apply Unless You Are Sure You Qualify

Finally, don't submerge yourself under needless paperwork. If you find you don't qualify for a particular award, don't apply for it. Instead, use your time and energy to unearth and apply for more likely sources of aid.

A Word of Encouragement

By doing your homework, you'll greatly increase your chances of finding funding for your education. The personal labor involved in securing financial support for school is much like the resume shuffling and door knocking that occurs during a job hunt. Success is likely to come to those who make themselves aware of the opportunities available, and who pursue those opportunities in a dedicated, continuous, and organized manner. And last but not least, don't get discouraged. Frustration is part of the game and should not bring your search to a halt. In the quest for funding, as in most of life's endeavors, your most valuable resource is you.

Debra M. Kirby is editor of Scholarships, Fellowships and Loans, and Fund Your Way Through College.

Tough questions to ask any admissions officer

By Robert G. McLendon

As a college admissions officer for the past eighteen years, it is clear to me that today's prospective students are carefully comparing colleges and striving to learn all they can about the colleges to which they apply. The age group of 18 to 24 year olds is declining in the United States, and this is creating a type of "buyer's market" in the market place of higher education.

In order to assure yourself that your expectations of a college are met, you, the student consumer, need not hesitate to ask admissions officers some "tough questions." This article will offer you a few suggestions of some tough questions that I hope will help you make the right choice when selecting a college.

Academic Questions

1. How many students in last year's freshman class returned for their sophomore year?
2. What percent of the freshman class obtained a 2.00 (C) average or above last year?
3. If accepted, will you tell me my predicted freshman grade-point average? Many colleges use a mathematical formula based on studies of currently enrolled students to predict an applicant's freshman grade average.
4. What is the college's procedure for class placement? This is especially important in the areas of English and mathematics because freshmen often vary significantly in their ability to handle these important academic skills.
5. What procedure is used to assign a faculty advisor when the student is undecided as to the major area of study?
6. What type of additional academic services does your college offer at no additional cost to the student (e.g., tutoring, career or personal counseling, study-skills workshops, improving reading speed, etc.)?
7. How effective is your college's honor code? What is the penalty for cheating?

Social Questions

1. What is the average age of your student body and what percent re-sides on campus? Many colleges today have a large and inercasing population of commuting part-time adult students and a dwindling enrollment of 17 to 18 year old full-time, degree-seeking students residing on campus.
2. Is your college a "suitcase college" on the weekends? If not, what are some typical weekend activities for students on your campus?
3. What procedure is used to select roommates if no preference is listed?

4. What are some of the causes of students being suspended or dismissed from your college? Is there a system of appeal for those who have been dismissed?
5. How can a prospective student arrange a campus visit? Clearly the best possible way to evaluate a college socially is to plan a visit to the campus. When you visit, try not to be shy. After your talk and tour with the admissions officer, walk around by yourself and informally ask students their opinions. A good place to chat with students is in the college's student center or at the dining hall.
6. What are some of the rules and regulations that govern residence hall life? Are there coeducational residence halls?

Financial Questions

1. What percent of your students received financial aid based on financial need?
2. What percent of your students received scholarships based on academic ability?
3. What percent of a typical financial aid offer is in the form of a loan?
4. How much did your college increase cost (room, board, tuition, and fees) from last year to current year?
5. If an accepted student must submit a room deposit, when is the deposit due, and when is it refundable? The deposit should be refundable in full up to May 1, if the college or university is a member of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors.
6. If my family demonstrates a financial need on the FAF or FFS forms, what percent of the established need will typically be awarded? When can I expect to receive an official financial aid award letter?

The distinguishing quality of any person is the quality of the mind, and the college you select will have a long-lasting impact on your career and life. I realize that you are painfully aware of the need to make the right college choice because most high school students realize that the college years are often the most productive stage of life. Knowing what questions to ask an admissions officer is an important part of this decision-making process. Most admissions officers want you to ask "tough questions" because if you make the wrong choice we, too, have failed in our job.

Bob McLendon is Dean of Admissions at Brevard College, Brevard, North Carolina. He served on the Admissions Practices Committee of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors and has been Chairman of the Admissions Practices Committee of the Southern Association of College Admissions Counselors. He is a past member of the Executive Board of SACAC and past President of the Carolinas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. He has worked in college admissions for 21 years.

Common mistakes students make in selecting a college

By William B. Stephens, Jr.

The process of choosing a college can be a rewarding, worthwhile experience or it can be an endless, frustrating series of mistakes. Those mistakes are common and are usually the result of inadequate research and preparation — both characteristics you will need as a successful college student. The selection of a college is a good place to begin developing those virtues.

Begin the process with a series of questions. Am I most interested in a small, medium, or large college? Do I want to stay close to home or go away? What will be my major? Does the college have a broad curriculum if my major is undecided? How academically competitive do I want my college to be? What are the costs? Is financial aid available? Which extracurricular activities are the most important to me? When these questions are satisfactorily answered, it is time to begin the next stage.

Research is of primary importance in selecting a college. Do not make the mistake of choosing a college simply because your friends go there. List priorities. Be willing to invest time and effort in investigating colleges which share these priorities.

In writing to colleges for information, be neat, concise, and accurate in providing information about yourself. Many students forget to include the address to which the college should send material. Also include your high school graduation date, the high school you attend, your anticipated major (if that has been decided), and any pertinent information regarding grades and test scores. Decisions are made about students on the basis of their initial contact with the college. Do not be careless in this important decision.

There are numerous publications which are helpful in gathering information. These publications may be located in school and public libraries, bookstores, and guidance offices. Many are cross-referenced according to majors offered, geographic locations, costs, and sizes. Once familiar with college publications, the task of choosing a college becomes an easier one. Do not make the mistake of floundering with too many college options.

Your school guidance office can offer an abundance of information. Among the many contributions of guidance counselors is the provision of data concerning financial aid, college representatives scheduled to visit the school and/or vicinity, College Fairs, and testing for college entrance. In addition, most schools provide counseling to help students choose colleges compatible with their scholastic aptitudes, personality, financial means, and extracurricular interests. Often these guidance resources are not tapped, yet they can be among the most beneficial that you could explore.

Do not neglect the value of contacting alumni, college representatives, and currently enrolled students. Alumni can provide firsthand accounts of life at college while representatives will have the current facts about admissions requirements, new majors offered, scholarships, sports, and campus activities. Students who are currently enrolled in a particular college can provide additional insight into the actual experiences you can expect at the institution.

It is important that you visit the colleges which are your first preferences. Never will catalogs, counseling, or recommendations from alumni replace an actual visit to the campus. Much can be learned from sitting in on a few classes, walking through dormitories, and talking to faculty and staff. It is extremely risky to choose a college without personal observation.

Many colleges have orientation programs to acquaint students and their parents with the facilities and various aspects of student and faculty involvement. Investigate the colleges being considered to discover their plans for orientation programs. Do not fail to be present at the programs in which you are most interested.

Since the cost of attending college can be one of the greatest factors determining your choice, the possibility of obtaining financial aid is to be taken into careful consideration. Watch for the deadlines in applying for financial assistance, and have the appropriate forms completed well in advance. If financial aid is offered, be certain to compare the amount of aid offered and the total cost of attending that particular college. Remember that the matter of final importance is in determining the amount which has to be paid by you and your family.

College preparations should begin in the ninth grade. Solid academic courses (usually beyond the minimum required for high school graduation) should be completed each year. Four years of English is normally expected. Most colleges expect a student to complete at least three years of math, including two years of algebra and one of geometry. Although requirements vary from college to college, it is generally advantageous to have a sound background in biology, chemistry, physics, history, and a foreign language.

High schools administer PSAT, SAT, and ACT exams to juniors and seniors. It is wise to plan to take a College Board exam more than once. As these exams take four to six weeks to be graded, you should allow plenty of time so as not to delay the application process. Your score on a college board exam will further indicate the type of college to attend. Colleges vary considerably in their College Board score requirements.

By October of your senior year, choices should be narrowed to two or three prospective colleges. You should be aware of all admission requirements for each institution considered. Do not delay the application process until after Christmas. Many colleges begin waiting lists very soon after the beginning of each new year. Your application and all required documents should be on file by November 1 at each college considered. Do not expect high schools to send transcripts or teachers to send recommendations the day the request is made. Allow a couple of weeks for these items to be completed and mailed to the college.

Incomplete or illegible applications will greatly diminish the opportunity for rapid processing. These types of delays can mean the difference between being able to attend your first choice of colleges and having to wait another full academic year to enroll.

College-bound students should never hesitate to ask questions. Begin early and be organized. Parental involvement is essential in choosing a college that will meet the need of you and your family. Diligent research and careful planning are the keys to the prevention of the most common mistakes made by college applicants today.

Bill Stephens is Director of Admissions at Florida Southern College, Lakeland, Florida and has worked in the Admissions field for twenty years. Stephens is a member of the National Association of Admissions Counselors, the Southern Association of Admissions Counselors, the American Association of Collegiate Admissions and Registrar Officers, and the Southern and Florida Associations of Collegiate Admissions and Registrars Officers.

The advantages and pitfalls of advanced placement and credit by examination for the freshman year of college

By Carl D. Lockman

I think we all agree that gifted young people need help in order to recognize their potential role in society. Through advanced placement and credit by examination programs, secondary school systems and universities alike are making a bona fide effort to encourage the development of academic talent, thus helping students to better understand their contributions to society and self.

Perhaps an explanation of the main difference between advanced placement and credit by examination is appropriate at this point. Both programs serve the purpose of awarding the student college course credit for acceptable scores on examinations. However, the Advanced Placement Program is a function of the College Entrance Examination Board. It is a formally structured program of instruction culminating in an examination. Institutions also may give departmental examinations which may be referred to as advanced placement. Credit by examination may or may not be a formally structured program. The College Level Examination Program (CLEP) is an example of the former, through which a student can receive credit for non-traditional (learning outside the classroom) educational experiences by presenting satisfactory scores on examinations.

All programs designed to award credit at the university level have advantages that are worth the student's consideration. Credit programs complement conventional instruction by allowing students to begin academic study at a level appropriate to their experience. They require students to demonstrate that they have achieved at a level equal to college experience. By being given this opportunity, the student can save both time and money.

A second advantage is that studies indicate that advanced placement continues throughout the undergraduate years. Quantitatively and qualitatively the student benefits. Course credit granted through advanced

placement generally allows for increased hours to be completed in a four-year program, much of which may be completed at the junior level and above. This certainly allows for greater flexibility and versatility in designing one's curriculum. Somewhat the opposite has shown up in the early studies of CLEP credit. Students with CLEP credit tend to graduate earlier. However, this still permits the student the advantages of having saved money and time and allows the opportunity to move into graduate studies at an earlier date. The challenge for the student is brought to the front when he/she is placed into courses recognizing achievement when his/her ability surpasses basic proficiency level courses.

Another advantage to the participation in and the receiving of credit through these programs is the quality of instruction associated with advanced placement. Generally speaking, it is safe to say that some of the best secondary instructors are asked to conduct the advanced courses. These instructors will stretch to stay ahead of these bright students who comprise the classes. Also, students in these programs not only benefit from the quality of instruction, but from the fact that most schools set up programs by drawing on the experiences of other school systems. In effect, students are being exposed to highly researched programs that have been trial tested for years by many systems.

A closer look at these programs reveals additional advantages. Many advanced placement programs borrow lectures, lab facilities, and equipment from local businesses and universities to accelerate their programs. Schools sometimes pool courses to give a wider curriculum offering. Credit programs allow secondary schools and colleges to articulate their programs, thus helping to bridge the curriculum gap that has been prevalent for years. In bridging this gap the student with an outstanding background can be recognized.

The advantages far outweigh the disadvantages when studying advanced placement and credit by examination programs. Two negative comments might be made at this point. There is always the possibility that students entering these programs do not have a thorough understanding of the extra demands that will be placed on them. Remember that the courses offered in the secondary schools are rigorous college-level courses, which in turn will demand more effort on the student's part. It is not a bad idea either that parents be made aware of what is to be expected of students involved in advanced placement programs and of those having received credit by examination.

Secondly, uninformed secondary and college personnel cause very definite problems. After a student has participated in an advanced placement program or has the experience to achieve credit through examination, it is imperative that the secondary counselors advise students and their parents of colleges that have established policies that would meet the needs of the student. I can think of few things more disappointing than for a student to miss the opportunity to have more flexibility in his courses and to avoid repetition. The other fears are that the college officials may not have required faculty members in the subject areas covered by the tests to review the examinations and that the procedures and practices of the college regarding credit have not been carefully studied. As you can see, such omissions by the institution in establishing policies could lead to improper credit and, even worse, improper placement in courses "over the head" of the student.

In conclusion, whether a student goes through the CEEB Advanced Placement Program, participates in the institution's own advanced placement program by taking department examinations, or receives

credit for life experiences, the importance of the programs is that there are attempts to equate classroom and/or non-classroom experience to college-level learning. The programs are models of learning closely conforming with college courses. Placement and credit programs are relatively new opportunities which each year seem to become more and more accepted by the academic communities. These are ways to recognize the individual differences in students, an attempt to confront the age-long problems of recognizing the variety of experiences students bring to college, and a breaking from the tradition that all students need to enroll in core curricula.

For students with exceptional learning experiences and/or intellectual talents, advanced placement and credit by examination programs are recommended. The rewards for such accomplishments are great.

Carl D. Lockman is Director of Admissions at Anderson College, Anderson, SC. Lockman served on the Admissions Practices Committee of the Southern Association for College Admissions Counselors and is a member of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. He was appointed to the Governor's committee to study recruitment techniques and a charter consultant for Probe Choice in the state of Georgia. He was a current member of the Carolinas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and is an appointed delegate to the College Entrance Examination Board.

The academic and social benefits of large American universities

By James C. Blackburn

There is no type of collegiate experience which is most appropriate for all students. The purpose(s) of this essay are to identify and discuss the academic and social benefits of large universities. In almost every state in the union, there is at least one large university whose enrollment exceeds 10,000 persons. More than a score of states have within their borders, universities enrolling more than 35,000 students. There are several community colleges whose enrollments meet the criterion of having 10,000+ enrollments. Those institutions are not included within the scope of this essay.

A substantial number of large universities are state-supported. However, more than a few large universities are private institutions of high education. Such universities are more common in the more populous regions of the nation, e.g., the East Coast, upper Midwest, and California. The tuition prices of large universities vary from nominal charges to $15,000 per year. It is, therefore, possible to select a large university from any price range. Some of America's most expensive and least costly institutions can be classified as large universities.

Large universities are located in large cities such as New York, Boston, and Los Angeles, as well as in much smaller cities, e.g., Bloomington, Indiana and Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The selectivity of admission to large universities is also quite varied. Some universities admit as few as one in five of its applicants. Other moderately large institutions offer admission to more than 90% of their applicant pools.

In short, the diversity between and among large universities makes it possible for almost every student who desires to attend such an institution. Enrollment at a large university is not the private privilege of any socioeconomic or intellectual sub-segment of American society. That being the case, there must be some good reasons for matriculation at and graduation from a large university.

There are academic benefits which apply to each size and type of college or university. The academic benefits of enrolling at a large university are especially striking.

Few freshmen actually complete the academic major which they begin. At a large university, the available academic majors often number in the hundreds, not dozens. If a student changes his or her major or career choice, the large university is most likely to be able to accommodate that change.

As a result of the "knowledge explosion," many undergraduate curricula now require extensive equipment and large library resources. Because of their graduate and professional schools, large universities tend to offer more sophisticated laboratory equipment and libraries of considerable size. So called "economics of scale" seem likely to perpetuate this circumstance. At a large university, undergraduates often compete with others for these resources. The point is that the equipment and libraries are available.

For most students, postgraduate employment is a major reason for college enrollment. Large universities typically offer a multiplicity of services designed to help students in the identification and pursuit of career options. Selecting a career and finding a job are not often easy; it may be well to get as much help as possible.

There is an additional "job search" benefit to holding a degree from a large university. Most such institutions are well known on at least a regional basis. Assuming the reputation of a given institution is good, the employer or graduate school may be more impressed if they are familiar with an applicant's university.

Each type and size of college and university has academic benefits to offer. Only a few of the academic benefits of the large university have been addressed here. There are other benefits related to the academic learning environment of each large university. Academic learning is clearly the primary reason for the existence of colleges and universities. It would be foolish to suggest that all of the benefits of college attendance happen inside the classroom, laboratory, and library. Many of the nonacademic benefits of college attendance are social in nature. It is well that those benefits be discussed.

The typical ages of college attendance (18-22) constitute an important period of intellectual and social development. It is important that these changes take place in the most nearly appropriate environment possible. Intellectual development is obviously an academic enterprise. Social development, which is more than just dating, parties, and football games, happens throughout the campus environment. As with the academic areas, each type of college or university has social benefits to offer prospective students. The social benefits of large universities are significant; those benefits should be considered carefully by aspiring freshmen.

It is reasonable to state that larger universities offer more student activities and more varied opportunities to associate with other students. In fact, many freshmen who enroll at the largest university find themselves inundated with opportunities for social involvement, community service, etc. It may be difficult to select the activities, clubs and personal associations which are most appropriate for individual students.

The variety of opportunities for student involvement at a large university are often more impressive than the sheer number of such involvements, activities, clubs, etc. Many larger universities offer organizations which cater to a plethora of interests ranging from handicrafts to hang gliding. There are often religious organizations for many faiths and denominations. The opportunities for political involvement are often wide ranging. From the most serious of religious or political convictions to the desire for big or small parties, large universities can frequently provide activities which meet the needs of all their students.

As universities grow, the size of the student services staffs also grow. With regard to career choice, this growth in student services results in improved opportunities for career identification and job seeking. In the arena of social development, this growth means more opportunities for personal counseling and other activities which are designed to help a person to improve their social awareness and skills.

A final social benefit of large universities has to do with one's classmates. Because of their size, large universities often enroll students whose backgrounds present a wide variety of experiences, values, and perspectives. Exceptions to this rule do exist, but it is generally true that one's classmates at a large university will be less homogeneous than might be the case at smaller colleges and universities.

There is an important social benefit in this lack of sameness among a student's classmates. Most students will study, work, and live out their lives in a world composed of a huge variety of persons. Our society has become more pluralistic in recent years. It seems, therefore, likely that there is a good in being able to live and work with a wide variety of persons. College is an excellent place to gain experience in dealing with people whose backgrounds and perspectives may be different from your own. Large universities offer many opportunities for such experiences.

By way of the above, it is hoped that the nature(s) and benefits of large universities may be better understood by qualified prospective students. The more important points of this essay are that American higher education is quite varied and that no type of colleges or universities is inherently superior to any other type or types. Each student must make his or her own decisions about the appropriateness of small colleges, community colleges, church affiliated colleges, and large universities. This writer's bias for large universities should be obvious. Huge varieties of academic and social opportunities are available at large universities. Those varieties serve to make such institutions an excellent choice for many aspiring freshmen. Large universities, although varied themselves, are not for everyone. They do present very appropriate choices for many prospective students.

Jim Blackburn is Director of Admissions and Records at California State University, Fullerton, California, and has been involved in the college admissions process for over 20 years. He has published several papers and over 30 book reviews concerning admissions issues. Blackburn is a frequent speaker on topics relating to college admissions and higher education in general.

Advantages of a church-related college or university

By Neil K. Clark

Making the decision about which college to attend is often your first, major, independent decision and it can be an exciting, challenging, occasionally stressful event. Before you put together your list of finalists, take time to consider not just which college you wish to attend, but which type of institution will be best for you. Let's take a moment to explore how the characteristics of the church-related institution may fulfill your needs and expectations for higher education.

A wide array of choices is the first discovery you will make when examining the many church-related institutions. You may desire to attend a small, specialized school with a few hundred students; you may want to enroll in a comprehensive university with professional programs and several thousand students. These two poles and all the range of options in between are available to church-related colleges and universities. Students wanting professional preparation in engineering, for example, assume they must set aside their desire to attend a church-related school. Yet there are comprehensive, church-related universities that offer engineering as well as other professional programs such as business, nursing, accounting and others.

Church-related schools are committed to education based on the deepest possible exploration of the human condition. To investigate these ideas to the fullest extent requires that religious questions become the foundation of each student's learning. State supported institutions, limited by the separation of church and state, necessarily omit this religious dimension or treat it as simply one idea of philosophy. Church-related colleges and universities, on the other hand, not only encourage but insist on this deeper inquiry, a vision of educating the whole person– spiritually as well as intellectually – while thinking through all of life's problems and all of nature's possibilities from the widest and broadest perspectives. This experience will broaden your horizons and open up new worlds of knowledge and ideas. During your professional career, you will find that this broader view of the world will give you a greater sense of satisfaction with life. It will provide a clearer picture of how your vocation fits into society as a whole. It will help you maintain balance and perspective in all aspects of your life and develop in you the habit of curiosity and lifelong learning.

Whether you choose a comprehensive university or a liberal arts college, a very important component of your study at a church-related institution will be the imperative to explore the values inherent in the ideas and behaviors presented in its curriculum. Early adulthood is a time of idealism and hopefulness. The values-based education featured

at church-related colleges or universities challenges you to examine the moral and empirical assumptions inherent in your viewpoints and actions. You will explore values as they relate to your personal life and to the world at large. Ethics and philosophy will not be separate classes; they will become a part of your learning throughout the curriculum. As with the liberal arts in general, values-based education will help you attain a broader view about the role ethics plays in our society. It also will help you develop and maintain your personal perspective as a moral being in the workplace and at home.

Church-related institutions offer a wide variety of spiritual growth opportunities. You need not limit yourself to considering only colleges of your religious affiliation since many schools attract students with a diversity of religious backgrounds. Instead, look for a school with a level of spiritual commitment that matches your needs and expectations. There you will explore with professors and peers a wide range of religious thought, as well as your personal values and beliefs. While rarely required, you will be able to take advantage of worship and service opportunities that can often provide a tangible expression of your spiritual commitment.

A private, church-related college or university usually considers education to be its primary reason for existence. To fulfill this mission, teaching is the centrally important campus activity. This sense of teaching as the primary mission translates into several advantages for each student. In these institutions, students are taught by highly qualified faculty who relate personally with students, often in small group settings. Since classes are usually smaller, you will usually experience a lower student/teacher ratio, and often classes are taught as a discussion rather than solely one-way lectures. You will be encouraged and expected to contribute your ideas as you are challenged by the notions of your peers and professors. While teaching is the main focus for professors at the church-related institution, many members of the faculty will also be involved in significant research as a means of professional improvement. This academic research offers opportunities for student involvement and even the opportunity for professor-student collaboration on important research topics or presentations.

There are a myriad of opportunities to grow and learn outside the classroom as well, through involvement in a wide variety of extracurricular activities. Service clubs with programs ranging from environmental awareness to working with children have prominent roles on the campuses of church-related schools. There are also many options for social interaction available as well: athletics — intramural and varsity, fraternities and sororities, interest groups and honor clubs, and media activities such as the campus newspaper, radio or television station.

Because there are many choices for involvement, there are enhanced opportunities to take leadership roles on campus. Such responsibilities help students develop broadened perspectives as well as organizational and communication skills that will be of great importance in their professional and personal lives.

All these elements work together at a private, church-related institution to offer you a meaningful and lasting experience plus a sense of community. As a member of such a community you will participate in something larger and more significant than any one person, while at the same time knowing that as an individual you have played an important role in defining your own education.

Neil K. Clark is director of College Counseling and Guidance at The Walker School in Marietta, Georgia. He has seventeen years of experience in admissions and financial aid, a B.A. degree from Hope College and a Master's in Guidance and Counseling from Florida Atlantic University. He is co-founder of the Small College Admissions Services firm.

Advantage of attending a state university

By Stanley Z. Koplik

For most students and their families, the cost of a four-year college education is an important consideration, and for this reason alone, many choose state colleges and universities. These institutions are usually considerably less expensive than private institutions and in many cases provide students with the option of living at home while pursuing a degree.

State scholarship programs are frequently available providing monetary incentives even to those who attend state institutions. Some families appreciate the opportunity of utilizing a system they continue to support with their tax dollars. But state universities are a wise choice for the college bound for many reasons other than simply economics. For young people growing toward independence, the proximity of the state college or university to parents, friends and home community can provide the firm base of support students need as they adjust to the academic, social and emotional pressures of a more demanding way of life.

High school graduates seeking to continue their education in an atmosphere of intellectual challenge and academic diversity should also look to the state universities and colleges. With a wide range of courses and curricula from which to choose, state institutions of high education provide a solid grounding in most fields from vocational and technical training to liberal arts and professional education. No longer stereotyped as teacher training schools, state colleges and universities now emphasize engineering, computer technology, business, and science as well as teacher education and the humanities.

As a first step for those seeking professional careers, state institutions offer programs in such fields as medicine, dentistry, law and architecture. Virtually, any area of academic interest can be satisfied through state college programs. At the University of Kansas, for example, there are 112 degree programs offered; the University of Missouri offers approximately 125. Other states offer an equally broad array of programs. With outstanding faculties in many disciplines, and national reputations in many areas, state institutions have developed into comprehensive universities where intellectual inquiry and academic excellence flourish.

A large number of state colleges and universities are equipped with fine research facilities and outstanding libraries providing unlimited opportunities for questioning and stimulating creative minds. In some areas the most complete and comprehensive library in the state thrives on the campus of the state university, while inter-library loan systems enhance access of all state residents to study and research materials.

For those who are concerned about "being lost in the crowd," state higher education systems usually provide a variety of campus sizes

ranging from the very small school with 1-2,000 students to the "mega-campus" with a student population of 25,000 or more. Attendance at a small campus does not imply inferior educational quality or diminished services. Excellent instruction, stimulating classroom discussion and challenging extracurricular activities can be found on all state college campuses regardless of size.

Providing an integrated educational program with a maximum of flexibility is the goal of many state systems. To facilitate student choice, states such as Kansas and Missouri have developed clear articulation or transfer agreements with junior college for a senior institution. Many junior college graduates enter four-year institutions as juniors with legitimate class standing.

Continuous attendance at college or university is ideal for those pursuing a degree but it is not always possible. When attendance must be interrupted many state universities provide cooperative extension programs and programs of continuing education for those who cannot attend classes full-time on campus. State higher education institutions also use sophisticated telecommunications systems to bring the university and its courses to the most outlying areas of the state.

The college years are, for many, a time to develop relationships which will provide a source of friendships and professional contacts for a lifetime. Attending college in one's home state increases opportunities to establish such long-lasting relationships and to be woven more fully into the fabric of state life.

Young people are increasingly aware of significant roles they will play in the social, political and economic life of this country. A college education in the state in which they are most likely to live can provide students with early involvement in the complexities of state activity. Increasingly, states are encouraging participation by student government groups in legislative activities. Some states, including Kansas, have authorized the appointment of a Student Advisory Committee to the Board of Regents, thus ensuring direct student participation in the decision making process.

State universities have long been known for athletic as well as academic excellence, and this continues to be true. On many campuses, intramural sports along with intercollegiate sports enable large numbers of students to develop athletic prowess. As early responders to the growing need for quality in women's athletics, state universities provide equal opportunity in such sports as basketball, volleyball, swimming and tennis. Large multi-purpose buildings springing up on many campuses indicate a dedication of state institutions to physical development and the cultural development of both campus and community. In some areas, the state college campus is the site of important cultural events, bringing lecturers, exhibits and the performing arts to an entire region. Attention must be given to the academic interest, the scholastic ability and the social and emotional maturity of the student as well as to the range of curricula, quality of instruction and extracurricular activities of the institution. A close examination of state university systems in the United States will indicate that there is virtually around every corner a quality institution of high education solidly grounded in academics and attuned to the social and cultural needs of both students and community. State colleges and universities are a vital link in the network of public educational services and as such, merit serious consideration by the college bound.

Stanley Z. Koplik is Executive Director of the Kansas Board of Regents, the governing body of public higher education in Kansas. Prior to assuming his current duties, Koplik served as Commissioner of Higher Education for the State of Missouri, where he directed activities of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education.

The advantages of attending a college for women

By Dr. Anita M. Pampusch

One of the options available for young women who are making the college choice is the possibility of attending a college for women. The nearly 100 women's colleges in the United States are generally smaller (under 2,500 students), liberal arts institutions. They are located primarily in the Northeast and the Southeast, although several are located in the Midwest and a few on the West Coast. About half of them have a church relationship and the other half are independent. The unique education available at these colleges is not meant for all students. Indeed, women's colleges enroll a small but select portion of the college-going population. You may want to choose a women's college if:

You Want to Develop Your Leadership Skills

Studies show that leadership skills are very well developed in women's colleges since women hold all the leadership positions. In addition, many women's colleges offer special programs in leadership development which focus on activities in and out of the classroom. There is a national organization, the Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN), which sponsors programs and internships in public leadership for students from women's colleges.

This leadership extends into the working world. When Business Week, in June of 1987, listed the 50 highest ranking women in corporate America, 30% of them had received their baccalaureate degrees from women's colleges. We also know that about 40% of the female members of Congress and a third of the women board members of Fortune 1000 companies are graduates of women's colleges. These are impressive statistics.

You Have Graduate or Professional School in Mind

Studies show that graduates of women's colleges are more than twice as likely as graduates of coeducational colleges to receive doctorate degrees; furthermore, women's colleges produce a higher percentage of graduates who go on to medical school and study in the sciences. A Brown University study, "Men and Women Learning Together," concluded that: "Higher than average proportions of women's college graduates felt they had gained confidence, that they were well-prepared for graduate studies. So too, higher than average proportions of women at single sex colleges planned to go on for doctoral studies and intended to begin graduate work immediately after receiving the baccalaureate." Nearly half of the graduates of women's colleges have earned advanced degrees and 81% have continued their education beyond college, according to a recent study of the Women's College Coalition (WCC).

You Are Interested in Science, Math or Economics

Women's colleges produce a disproportionate share of women who enroll in fields such as science, math or economics. In a 1990 study the

Women's College Coalition's figures revealed that women from women's colleges are two to three times more likely than women at coeducational colleges to major in science, math or economics. These figures, in fact, exceeded the percentages of men at coeducational colleges in most cases.

You Want to Pursue a Career Which is Non-Traditional for Women

An alumnae study done by the WCC shows that about 50% of the working women who graduate from women's colleges are in non-traditional jobs, for example, law, medicine, business management and computer science. They report that their aspirations increased while they were in their college environment. While their aspirations increase, the opposite is sometimes true for women who choose a coeducational setting. A study done by the Association of American Colleges (AAC) entitled, "The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?," pointed out that, despite women's gains in higher education, they continued to be overtly or inadvertently singled out or ignored because of their sex and that this treatment may leave women students feeling less confident than their male classmates about their abilities and their place in the college community. As a result, aspirations decline and several studies of self-esteem in girls bear this out.

This does not mean that women's colleges are all work and no play. The variety of activities on the campuses – social and otherwise – results from campus-originated activities and consortial relationships with neighboring colleges. Graduates of women's colleges are just as likely as graduates of coeducational colleges to be married and have children.

It may be that you fit the profile of the women's college enrollee. If so, it would be important to contact some women's colleges as you develop your portfolio of possibilities.

Dr. Anita Pampusch is President of the College of St. Catherine, a women's college in St. Paul, Minnesota. President Pampusch received her master's and doctoral degrees in philosophy from the University of Notre Dame. She is immediate past chair of the Women's College Coalition and is currently chair of The Council of Independent Colleges, Washington, DC.

Opportunities at independent research universities

By F. Gregory Campbell

The diversity in American higher education is one of the greatest glories of our culture. No where else in the world does a prospective student enjoy such a wide range of choice. Public or private, large or small, urban or rural, secular or religiously oriented – American universities and colleges vary so greatly that any student should be able to find an institution seemingly tailor-made for that individual.

The major independent research universities constitute an important segment of American higher education. Frequently, they are considered primarily graduate or professional centers, and it is true that many students would be well advised to spend their undergraduate years elsewhere. But those universities typically possess vital undergraduate colleges offering a highly stimulating intellectual and extracurricular environment. For the right kind of student there is no better place.

In academic circles, the independent research universities enjoy an extraordinary reputation. That image depends on the quality of the faculty, and research is normally the means by which a scholar is evaluated. No one has yet devised a reliable method of measuring, comparing, and publicizing good teachers across the country. Good researchers are easy to spot, however, for they publish their discoveries for their colleagues around the world to evaluate. The research universities boast outstanding faculties containing highly innovative scholars with world-wide reputations.

But do they – or can they – teach? In ideal circumstances, the answer is yes. A standard view is that teachers are best when they continue to discover knowledge in their respective fields of scholarship. Conversely, the challenge of sharing their discoveries with critical young minds makes researchers better as a result of their also being teachers. Clearly, this ideal is not always realized. No university can guarantee that its most recent Nobel-prize winner will be teaching freshman chemistry, but such does happen.

The hope of learning from such scholars lures top-notch students to the research universities. Indeed, those institutions would have to do very little in order to produce outstanding graduates. Most college students quickly discover that they learn as much, or more, from their fellow students as from their professors. In as much as the research universities serve as a meeting point for many bright young people, much of the intellectual stimulation on the campuses is provided by the students themselves. Compatibility with others who take their studies seriously is an essential prerequisite for prospective students.

But college life cannot be all work and pressure. There have been persistent efforts over the past fifteen years or so to reduce intellectual competition among students. Professorial complaints about "grade inflation" reflect the fact that it is much easier for a student to stay in the universities than to get into them to begin with. The dropout rate is low, the failure rate even lower.

The learning experience extends beyond classrooms, libraries, and laboratories, and cannot be measured by grades alone. Extracurricular opportunities for learning and growth are central to a college experience. Most of the independent research universities seek to encourage informal association between professors and students. Professors may be encouraged to eat meals regularly with students in the dining halls. Leaders in public affairs or the arts and sciences may be invited to the campuses in order to engage in informal meetings with students. How does one measure the worth to a pre-law student of a breakfast conversation with a Supreme Court justice?

The independent research universities almost never appear on the list of major NCAA powers in football or basketball. Their teams normally compete at a lower level. But their programs do offer opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics to many young men and women who could not make the teams of the major powers. In addition, the intramural programs typically attract the vast majority of students on campus. The schools do not figure prominently in the sports pages, but the student communities are active and vigorous.

The undergraduate colleges within the independent research universities are normally quite small. Whereas they enroll more students than a typical liberal arts college, they have many fewer students than the state universities. That size both provides a critical mass for a wide variety of activities and allows for a sense of community and personal identity in a manageable environment.

The student bodies themselves are quite diverse. Admissions officers try hard to insure a nationally representative student body – including students from various regions of the country, diverse ethnic groups, and economic levels. There is also a significant number of foreign students. This intimate exposure to differences among people is a key element in the growth to adulthood.

The kind of education that is offered in the independent research universities is expensive, and tuition levels are high. Yet, since the 1960's, those institutions have tried to provide sufficient amounts of aid to enable students to matriculate regardless of financial need. It is an open question whether that policy can be maintained, even formally, in a more difficult economic environment.

The concept of a "University College" is the most apt way of thinking about undergraduate programs in an independent research university. Students find a relatively small college with a distinct identity of its own. Yet that colleges lives within a much larger institution possessing resources available for undergraduates to exploit. Those "University Colleges" are not appropriate for everyone, and there are many other excellent institutions from which to choose. But, when the match is right, a "University College" can offer gifted and serious young people opportunities seldom found elsewhere.

Formerly at the University of Chicago, Mr. Campbell is now the President of Carthage College. He is an historian specializing in international relations and Central and Eastern European History. Mr. Campbell is President of Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin and Chairman of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Major decisions: choosing the right college major

By Dr. Donald Quirk

Under the best of circumstances, choosing a college major is not easy, and a number of conditions often complicate the task. First of all, most freshmen are surprised to learn that college is significantly different from their previous school experience and that the nature of most major fields differs considerably from courses offered in high school. So, to major in history because you are good at memorizing dates, names and battles or to choose accountancy because you enjoyed a high school bookkeeping or "accounting" course is likely to lead to dissatisfaction.

Secondly, well-intentioned but naive "advisors," often as not, ignore *your* interests, skills or ambitions. Blindly following Dad's suggestion to "study law so you can get rich like Uncle Zeke" nearly guarantees a mismatch. Finally, many young people find themselves in the midst of personal change and discovery. Making a commitment that may affect the rest of your life at a time when your dreams change more often than the blue-light special at K mart can leave the hardiest person paralyzed by fear.

Adding to the pressure felt by many students are the expectations of those around them that everyone beginning college should have already decided what he or she intends to study. Even colleges – often unintentionally – add to the pressure: applications usually require a student to select from a list of intended majors. Typically, a college will list 30 to 100 major choices; in the list – usually appearing last – comes the choice, "undecided". It comes as little surprise that many students feel that they are somehow defective if they have not yet made up their minds.

Now, there are some students who "always wanted to study medicine" and a good number of others who have given a great deal of time to their selection of a major, but the hard truth of the matter is that many students – including those who have declared a major – really don't know what they want to study. This is evidenced by a national statistic showing that nearly four out of five college students eventually change their major at least once. *So what's a person to do?*

Don't Worry

If you're beginning college and you're unsure about what you want to study, you probably don't have to make a choice quite yet. While a few technical and scientific fields have highly structured curricula that require that beginning courses be taken immediately, most students can delay major decisions for one or even two years without disastrous consequences. For colleges – unlike trade schools – require students to study subjects that provide a breadth of knowledge outside the major. Usually described as general education courses, these courses include selections in the arts, the natural and social sciences and the humanities. Typically, they represent a third to a half of the total course requirement for graduation and they provide an opportunity to experiment, to get a taste of a range of fields.

"Know Thyself"

Get to know more about what fits you. Remember, you are not choosing a major for Uncle Zeke; you're choosing one for yourself, so the place to begin is with yourself, your personality, your interests, your abilities, your values and your goals. Choosing a major – like any significant personal decision – requires you to think through some important questions about yourself. What has my previous experience prepared me to do? How can I connect the knowledge and skills that I've already developed with a course of study? What areas that I've studied in the past were interesting to me? What college majors capitalize on that interest? How do my personal and career goals connect with my selection of a major?

Avoid Career Planning "Tunnel Vision"

Be broad-minded when thinking about a major that matches your career plan. Many students recognize that choosing a major is closely linked to choosing a career but are confused into believing that only management majors can hope to become business executives or only "pre-law" students can hope to become lawyers. The fact of the matter is that there are many majors that lead to these or a number of other career goals. Increasingly, firms have shown that they value the analytical thinking, communication and research skills developed by students in the liberal arts by hiring graduates from philosophy, English, sociology and a variety of other non-vocational majors.

Find Help

There are a large number of tools — books, interest inventories, aptitude tests, values and goals assessments — that can help you find a major that fits. A number of self-help books, like Richard Bolles' *What Color is Your Parachute*, provide a guided tour through the process of choosing a field of study and a career. Interest inventories, like the Kuder or the Strong-Campbell, help you match your interests with those of people in a variety of professions. Computerized self-assessments like Discover, developed by ACT, or SIGI, from the College Board, lead your through a systematic process of self-exploration that leads to some potential matches. High school counselors or college advising or career planning offices can help you put these and a number of other resources to work for you.

In addition, a growing number of colleges have programs and services to help students develop an academic plan. Some of these include academic advising programs, special courses for undecided students, and career planning workshops and counseling services to name a few. In recent years, more and more colleges have also developed freshman seminars. Designed to help new students make the transition to college life, these seminars often include the related topics of choosing a major field and choosing a career.

But probably the most effective resources are people. Find someone you can trust — a good high school guidance counselor, a sympathetic college advisor, an accessible faculty member, or a knowledgeable career planning counselor in your college. They can help you begin the process. With a little help and some persistence, you'll find that major decisions do not have to be major problems.

Donald Quirk, Ph.D., former Director of Assessment and Advisement at DePaul University, is now Director of Assessment at Northeastern Illinois University. He has had extensive experience directing advising programs for new freshmen and has developed programs and courses to help new freshmen make the difficult transition to college. He holds degrees in English and English Education from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Campus lifestyle: an important consideration in choosing a college

By Dr. Neill Sanders

What do meal plans, student organizations, fraternities and sororities, and residence halls have to do with choosing a college? A great deal. From late August through May the campus is a student's home and typically three-quarters of your time will be spent outside of the classroom. Therefore campus lifestyle, the sum of what you can expect to experience when not in class, is a very important component of college life worthy of careful attention.

Because each college or university has its own distinctive lifestyle, a set of social and cultural characteristics which define its personality, it is important that you take the time necessary to determine the lifestyle "fit" between you and the colleges you are considering.

Those who have gone through the process offer some good advice. First, don't believe everything you hear about a college! For instance, some may have a party school reputation while others might be known for a student body that cares about nothing but studying. The truth about all campuses lies somewhere in between.

Second, because each college-bound student has unique expectations, you and your family should draw up a list of lifestyle characteristics you think are the most important. What do you want in a dormitory environment? Does the university have the student organizations that interest you? What about security? Keeping a list of those features you believe are most important will allow you to compare the attractiveness of all the colleges you have under consideration.

Third, ask questions! Colleges make a sincere effort to inform prospective students about campus lifestyle. But neither brochures nor campus videos can address all the topics that are important to you. So do not hesitate to ask your friends who attend a certain college about their impressions; call or write the admissions office of a particular institution to get answers to key questions; and carefully review the literature and videos sent to you. Whenever possible, visit the colleges that are highest on your list because there is no better way to learn about an institution than actually being there.

Although each prospective college student's expectations will be somewhat different, there are several lifestyle features that all should investigate. If you elect to live in a residence hall, you will spend more time there (studying, talking with friends, sleeping) than any other place on campus, so it is important to know the facts about university housing policies. Does the college require all freshmen to live on campus? Can you move off campus after the freshmen year? Are the resident halls co-ed and, if so, are men and women distributed throughout the halls? (Some colleges have men and women on the same floors while others reserve certain floors or wings for each sex.) At some universities freshmen can have a single room while at others two or more are required to share a room. If you are to share a room, how is your roommate chosen?

Most colleges have strict regulations regarding alcohol, regardless of the student's age. Many also have "quiet time" policies when stereos, televisions, and radios must be turned down or off. Universities do differ greatly, however, on such issues as allowing freshmen to bring their car to campus, how much furniture (if any) the college provides for your dormitory room, and if you can bring your pet to campus. (Safe bets: goldfish, probably; dogs, no!)

At many campuses fraternities and sororities play a big role in campus life. "Greek" life has many rewards for those who join. It provides members with social and cultural opportunities beyond what the campus typically offers. But keep in mind that not all Greek houses are residential. In some cases only the officers or upperclassmen can live in the house. If "going Greek" fits your lifestyle, you'll need to learn about "rush" and "pledging." Because not all who want to join are permitted to do so, how do you think you would fit into a campus if you could not (or elected not to) join a fraternity or sorority? Keep in mind too that Greek membership will add to your overall college costs.

No matter what living arrangement you choose, food and security will be important factors. Does the college have a meal plan where you purchase

in advance so many meals per week each semester and pay for them whether or not you eat in the dining halls? A few colleges let you pay for each meal. Others issue collegiate credit cards that can be used for meals and other services (such as at sports events or at the bookstore). What about special dietary needs, such as kosher or vegetarian meals?

College campuses are safe. But don't take security for granted. While the door to your dorm room can be locked anytime you want, what about the resident hall's outside doors? Think of a residence hall as a large hotel: is there a worker (often a student working part-time) located in the lobby to monitor when guests come in and when they leave? What are the school's policies regarding guests in the room, especially overnight guests? Most college campuses are large, encompassing hundreds of acres. They can be pretty lonely places if you are walking alone from the library to your dormitory at night. Women should check and see if the college has student volunteers who will escort you to your campus destination during certain evening hours.

For many students a very important part of college life is participation in campus clubs and organizations as well as attending the social, cultural, and athletic events sponsored by the school. Virtually every college has a student government organization, a campus newspaper and yearbook. Campus-based radio and television stations are not uncommon. But before you dream of being elected student body president, or serving as editor or anchorperson, you should inquire about what types of roles freshmen typically play in these organizations.

Student centered clubs and intramural sports activities are great ways to meet new friends, develop new skills, and for short periods to get away from your studies. But do the universities high on your selection list have the activities that interest you the most? Can anyone try out for a varsity team? Can you be part of campus musical or drama productions without being a fine arts major? Does the student recreation center have facilities where you can jog, exercise, swim, or shoot a few baskets on a schedule convenient to you?

Don't expect every institution to have the same types of clubs. For example, if you are interested in sky diving and no club exists, are there established ways (perhaps through the Dean of Student Services office) that you can make your interests known? Attending a concert offered by the college's music faculty, going to a lecture given by a well known guest lecturer, or cheering on the football team at homecoming are all part of the college experience. But make sure to find out in advance if tickets to such events routinely are made available to students and if the tickets are part of the "student fees" most colleges charge all students. If not, you will need to plan ahead and budget for those events of greatest interest to you.

As a college student, you may want to participate in organizations designed to celebrate your religious or ethnic heritage. Do the colleges of your choice have such clubs? What activities do they provide? Unlike your high school environment, you might find fewer students at a college who share your religious beliefs or cultural heritage. Do students currently enrolled at the college with backgrounds similar to yours feel accepted in the college's environment?

Nearly one-half of today's college students do not reside on campus. Some live with other students in apartments near the campus while others live at home with their families. If you plan to commute, you'll still want to know about campus centered activities because living in a dormitory, fraternity or sorority house is not a prerequisite for involvement in campus activities. In almost every instance membership in clubs and organizations, as well as access to other events, is available

to those who live off campus. Several institutions also make available activities designed especially for the non-resident student.

Campus lifestyle should not be restricted simply to the events which take place at the college. Perhaps as a high school student you tutor middle school children with math deficiencies, work with the homeless, or are involved with ecology issues in your community. Such volunteer activities do not have to end once you enroll in college. Will your college encourage such activities; do they have an office that can assist you in locating ways to express your willingness to help others? Does the local community in which your final college choice is located offer the amenities of interest to you?

The choice of the college that best meets your needs is seldom easy, often time consuming, frequently requires family participation, and always should be exciting. As you explore your options, remember that a campus lifestyle is an important feature that makes for a rewarding college experience!

Dr. Sanders served as a history faculty member and admissions officer at universities in the states of Missouri, Washington, and Kansas before he became the Dean of Undergraduate Admissions at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. He holds B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in History from the University of Missouri.

Surviving the freshman year experience

By John N. Gardner

I hope you will read this once you get beyond the first line: it's about a very important yet sort of grim subject, namely, *survival*. This is not necessarily a modern day college freshman version of "survival of the fittest", but nevertheless, your survival. I write to you out of my concern that we lose far too many college freshmen, lose them in the sense that they drop out or flunk out of the first year and many never return. As a matter of fact, from baccalaureate level institutions, we lose about 25% in the first year alone. Our nation cannot continue to afford this unacceptable attrition rate. I write because I want you to survive the freshman year and to graduate.

Why should you listen to me? Because I have been teaching college freshmen for 25 years and because I am what The New York Times has called the Dean of Freshman Happiness (which was a cute term they gave me because of my nearly two decades of work to enhance what has become known as The Freshman Year Experience in American higher education); because I recently had a child of my own graduate from college and I have learned a great deal from him about what it meant to be a freshman in college; and because for almost 20 years I have directed

a special course at my university, a so-called freshman seminar, entitled University 101, the purpose of which is to help freshmen survive the first year. We have been very successful in doing just that: freshmen who take my course are much more likely to become sophomores.

In selecting a college you need to find one that is "freshman friendly." You need to find out to what extent they have devoted significant resources to the care and feeding of freshmen. What about freshman class size and who teaches the freshmen: real faculty or graduate teaching assistants? What kind of emphasis do they place on freshman advisement and career planning? How much time and resources do they devote to freshman orientation? What kind of special activities do they have in freshman residence halls? Many colleges have developed special courses to help freshmen make a successful adjustment to higher education. In fact, over 2,000 of them have done so. Is the college you're considering one of those? If not, I'd think twice before attending.

In this brief essay, it's appropriate for me to share some of the things I have learned that seem to make a difference as to whether or not freshmen are successful in the first year and literally survive it and go on to become sophomores. So I want to offer you some advice. This is based on 18 years of research at my university on what are the characteristics of students who survive the freshman year as compared to those who don't. Based on that type of study, I offer you the following advice:

1. Go to class. In my 25 years of teaching, I have rarely ever failed a student who attended class. As Woody Allen said, "ninety-five percent of success is showing up."
2. In America, there is no free lunch. You have to work hard. Specifically, you have to work harder than you did in high school. For example, you need to spend two to three yours out of class studying for every hour of the week you spend in class. And that's really not as much as it sounds, particularly compared to the real world. Let's say you have a fifteen hour class schedule and you spend two hours a week for every hour inside class. That means you spend 30 hours a week studying and 15 in class. That's 45 hours a week. None of you are going to make it in the big time world after college in only a 45 hour work week.
3. Play hard. College is not meant to be all work. You need to relax and have some kind of balance in your life.
4. Participation. Participate in all the orientation activities that your college offers both for no academic credit and for academic credit. That means if your college offers a freshman seminar/freshman orientation course as an elective, take it. All the evidence across the country suggests that students who participate in these elective courses have a higher probability of becoming sophomores.
5. Live on campus. Years of research has shown that students who live on campus have a higher survival rate.
6. Choose your friends wisely. You are likely to become just like them. Winners select winners. Losers select losers.
7. Get help early. Don't wait until late in the semester. There is no stigma to seeking assistance. Remember, you're paying the salaries of the college employees and you have a right to ask them for help.
8. Develop a relationship with that very special person, your academic advisor. If you don't have one initially who seems to show an interest in you and whom you feel you can relate to comfortably, ask for another one.
9. During the first semester, find a "significant other." This is the phrase coined by the famous psychologist Carl Rogers that

describes a very special adult person and relationship. Research has shown that college students who find at least one significant adult during the freshman year are much more likely to survive.

10. Identify outstanding upper class students after whose behaviors you can pattern your own behaviors.
11. Join a group that is some kind of legitimate group that is sponsored by the college. Research has shown that students who join groups have much higher survival rates. At most colleges, there are a large number of groups consisting of people like you with similar interests that you can join.
12. Get involved. That means, do things on your college campus in addition to going to class. For example, not only join a group but attend plays, concerts, lectures, etc. The research shows that the more time you invest in activities on campus other then simply going to class, the more likely you are to survive the freshman year.
13. Get career planning early. Many freshmen may think they know what they want to major in but have really inappropriately chosen a major for which they are not suited. On the other hand, many freshmen have not decided on a major. Regardless of whether you have or not, visit your campus career planning center; take a battery of vocational aptitude tests; sign up for computer assisted interactive guidance and career planning; and most importantly, see a career planning specialist to discuss your individual needs and characteristics.
14. Most colleges today provide a tremendous array of helping services and resources. Use them. Remember that you pay the salaries of those people who provide them and there is no stigma to accepting assistance. For example, use a personal counseling center. It's free and confidentially trained counseling professionals deal with the normal adjustmental problems of college life. That doesn't mean that you are "sick" if you accept assistance.
15. Learn college study skills. Most high school students have not learned the kind of study skills they need to do well in college. Virtually all colleges have study skills centers where trained professionals are on duty to help you develop the skills you need. Ask your professor in each course what study skills are particularly useful and appropriate for that individual course. As a college freshman once I learned study skills such as lecture note taking, there wasn't hardly a course that I couldn't "smash", i.e. receive a high grade.

There are lots of sources of advice in college, some of it from the least appropriate individuals, so accept advice carefully. In spite of that caveat I hope that you'll give mine more than a moment's consideration. If you have questions or concerns about how to survive the freshman year, I would welcome a letter or a phone call from you. You can write me at the University of South Carolina or call me at (803) 777-7695. You are going to find that whatever college you chose that there are lots of faculty and administrators like me who really have a special interest in college freshman like you. So I bid you a special welcome and best wishes.

John Gardner is the Associate Vice Provost for Regional Campuses and Continuing Education at the University of South Carolina, the Director of University 101, The Freshman Year Experience, and Professor of Library and Information Science. He has a B.A. in social sciences from Marietta College, Marietta, OH and a M.A. in American Studies from Purdue University.

The two-year experience

By Dr. Jacob C. Martinson, Jr.

It is a difficult adjustment for a student to go from a high school, sometimes a small high school at that, directly into a multi-complex university often with thousands and thousands of other students. Are the majority of high school graduates equipped for this kind of transition? The answer, of course, if that some are, and some are not. There is an alternative approach.

There is a wide range of academic programs available among two-year colleges today. There are many accredited institutions which offer outstanding two-year terminal programs in areas such as business arts, computer science, and medical arts. This article, however, will focus on the two-year colleges that are designed to prepare the students for continuation at a four-year college or university. It will address the belief that, in many cases, the pursuit of the baccalaureate degree is greatly enhanced by "The Two-Year Experience."

When it comes to the role of a college education in career performance, an academically recognized two-year college can provide the essential foundations of undergraduate training often better than the best universities. After all, it doesn't take an expert to see that faculty qualifications are not that different from one center of learning to another. For example, a survey of the educational credentials of faculty members at good two-year colleges reveals that they have received their graduate training at the finest colleges and universities in the country.

The advantages of getting a good start at a two-year college are numerous. I will cite some reasons why a two-year college program should be considered.

1. Access to the Faculty

A faculty member ordinarily does not choose to teach at a two-year college unless he/she is specifically dedicated to teaching. Those faculty members who are interested in publishing or research usually go to the multi-complex universities where much of their undergraduate teaching responsibilities are delegated to graduate assistants. Classes in two-year colleges are generally taught by first-line faculty members.

Students have a right to expect some time with their professors who have spent many hours embodying much of the knowledge in which the students are interested. In the small two-year colleges, the opportunity is provided to know professors on a one-to-one basis. It is not uncommon to observe ballgames between faculty and students, or for faculty to invite students to their homes for refreshments.

2. A Good Beginning

The first two years of college are probably the most important of a

student's college career. With the exception of kindergarten and first grade, they are all-important to the pursuance of formal education. Statistics show that when a student does well in an academically sound two-year college, he/she seldom does poorly academically anywhere else. A good start can make the difference.

3. Budget Appropriations

Many multi-complex universities give the "lion's share" of the funds to the upper-level undergraduate courses and to the graduate programs. Two-year colleges, on the other hand, give their entire budget to those critical first two undergraduate years.

4. Less Expense to the Student

One can attend a fine two-year college with a superb academic reputation for less than one can attend most universities. The community colleges are less expensive to the student, but even the private residential two-year colleges are relatively inexpensive. Of course, if commuting is possible, the expense is even less. Since the private college also wants to serve the surrounding community, special scholarships to commuting area residents are offered by some colleges.

5. Opportunities for Leadership and Participation

The freshmen and sophomores at a two-year college will have no juniors and seniors to compete with in extracurricular activities for campus leadership roles, team sport participation, and faculty time. The individual has an opportunity to become involved more quickly and more deeply in the total life of the college. Where else could a student be a representative on the college committees and the Board of Trustees at the age of 18? In short, there is no "sophomore slump" in the two-year college.

6. Vocational Future

The two-year college can enrich one's vocational future. The fact is that too many college graduates today are ignorant of the English language, history, science, and math. Many are deficient in their ability to get along with others and in that all-important skill of communication. One need only watch a nationally televised athletic event to observe the inability of some students from the so-called "prestigious" centers of learning to speak proper English. This is not to imply that the two-year college student will consistently perform any better; however, at good two-year colleges, there is a concerted effort to start wherever a student is academically and teach him/her to read and write effectively. For example, some of the better two-year colleges have three or four different levels of beginning English. The same is true of math. These schools place great emphasis on English and math with the conviction that if one can read and write and add and subtract, one has the educational foundation to function in the world. The hallmark of the best two-year colleges is that of toughness with caring. Such colleges encourage the formulation of long-range educational goals and positive views on how education can assist one in meeting vocational objectives. Obviously, there are some limitations to the depth to which one can pursue objectives in a two-year setting, but the seeds are planted and the incentives aroused.

7. The Best of Both Worlds

A student can have the best of the two-year and the four-year educational systems. During those critical first two years of college, a fine two-year school can provide an excellent academic program and curriculum, caring faculty members, and a concerned college community, all of which prepare the student to transfer to the larger college or university.

There are those in educational circles who would have one believe that transferring is dangerous to one's educational future. In most cases this belief is unfounded. On the contrary, it is sometimes easier to get into the best four-year schools after a two-year Associate of Arts/Science/Fine Arts degree than to apply right out of high school. Academic credits from a good, academically sound, two-year college are accepted by most of the finest universities. In fact, transfer students are not only accepted, they are actively recruited because of the natural attrition in the senior colleges and universities after the first and second years. Also, some students perform better in a two-year college than they did in high school; therefore, these students are more likely to have their application accepted when they leave the two-year college than when they graduated from high school. Further, there are certain rights and responsibilities which are uniquely applicable to the transferring student. A statement of these rights and responsibilities has been approved by the NACAC (National Association of College Admissions Counselors) in 1980 and revised in 1982.

In conclusion, today's two-year college generally offers a university-parallel curriculum. It is nearly always designed for the brilliant as well as the average student. The task is to successfully meet and challenge each student where he/she is academically despite varying aptitudes, dispositions, and outlooks.

The two-year college experience is not for everyone, but it certainly fills a need. It is a good place to start in higher educational pursuits – a good place to begin on the way toward the baccalaureate degree.

Dr. Martinson is President of High Point University located in High Point, North Carolina. Prior to this position, he served as President of Andrew College in Cuthbert, Georgia and Brevard College, Brevard, North Carolina both of which are two year institutions. He holds degrees from Huntingdon College, Duke University, and Vanderbilt University. While at High Point University, he has served as President of the North Carolina Friends of Higher Education, Chairman of the High Point Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of the Piedmont Independent College Association, and since 1976 has served as a Trustee of the Independent College Fund of North Carolina. Born of Norwegian American lineage, he is an honorary member of the American Scandinavian Foundation.

The value of a liberal arts education

By Dr. David Maxwell

We are in the midst of a crisis that threatens the very fabric of higher education in America today, and that endangers the quality of education that we all desire for our children. The crisis centers on the relationship between undergraduate education and the so-called "real world": What are we preparing our students for? The resolution of this crisis has serious implications for the undergraduate curriculum, for the nature of the demands placed on our students by the institutions, by their

parents and by themselves – and profound consequences for the continuing health and vitality of our nation.

A liberal education has always been measured in terms of its relevance to society's needs, and there is no reason that it should not continue to be; the notion of utility is firmly ingrained in our national character. The crisis to which I refer lies in the determination of precisely what those needs are, for it is in those "needs" that we express the relationship between education and the "real world."

I have witnessed a trend in American college students that I find particularly disturbing. An increasingly large number of students are demanding what they term "relevance" in their studies. Clearly, I feel that liberal education has profound relevance to the "real world," but these students have a definition of that term that is different from mine. By "relevance," they often mean professional training, training not just for the future, but for jobs. With an entirely justifiable concern for their future economic well-being, they are making – I am afraid – a terrible and potentially devastating error of logic.

Although few of our students would accept the state of our "reality" as ideal, many are allowing the priorities of that reality – as expressed in economic terms– to dictate the priorities of their education. They are mistaking financial reward, prestige, and excitement for genuine intellectual interest. Many, I fear, view the undergraduate experience as a "credentialling" process, rather than as an education that will make them productive, fulfilled adults. I am not suggesting that our students do not have neither genuine intellectual curiosity nor the thirst for pure knowledge, for they have ample supplies of both. But they are subject to enormous pressure from the outside: the fear that the field in which they are truly interested will not provide them with a comfortable income; the fear that their parents (often professionals themselves) will not approve of their interests; the fear that their ambitions are not sufficiently "prestigious" in the eyes of their peers. These are all very real fears and pressure that must be recognized as valid, but they have two important – and destructive – consequences. It is my sense that many of our students go on to careers in the so-called "professions" with very little idea of what these professions entail and, what is worse, they have tailored their entire undergraduate education to fit what they feel is appropriate preparation for those professions.

We are engaging in the process of creating many unhappy adults as such students grow up to find that they have no real intellectual investment in the occupation toward which they have aspired since they were teenagers. Having focused their education at an early stage, with the mistaken impression that you have to major in economics to go into business, in political science to enter law school, or in biology to be a physician, they will be plagued with the gnawing feeling that they have missed something – but without knowing quite what it was that they have missed.

Furthermore, the misplaced emphasis on grades caused by the intense competition for professional schools discourages many students from their natural inclination to question, to challenge, to experiment, to take risks. Rather than risk the uncharted waters of their own ideas and their own imagination, many students choose the safe route of repeating what they've heard and read as they write their examinations and papers.

Clearly, it is our responsibility to find ways to encourage our students to follow their natural inclinations, to resist the pressures – we must make it clear to them that, as teachers, we will reward initiative, originality, and risk-taking. Perhaps most important is that we must convince them that it is precisely these skills that are the most "pre-

professional," that no business ever grew without developing original ideas, that every physician must take calculated risks daily, and that the practice of law rests on the principle of challenge to ideas.

Most people with professional aspirations hope to advance beyond entry-level positions into managerial or executive roles; positions in which they can assume responsibility, control, and authority and positions in which they can implement their own visions. It is precisely these roles that demand breadth of education — not only in subject matter, but breadth in the range of personal and intellectual skills that the student acquires in his/her studies.

There is growing evidence that the "real world" is taking notice of the correlation between liberal arts skills and the professions. For the past twenty-nine years, AT&T has been conducting longitudinal studies of its managers, correlating field of undergraduate major to career advancement and managerial skills. The AT&T study showed clearly that those with non-technical majors (humanities and the social sciences) were "clearly superior in administrative and interpersonal skills." (Robert E. Beck, The Liberal Arts Major in Bell System Management [Washington, D.C.: 1981], pp. 6, 8). Significantly, "Nearly half of the humanities and social science majors were considered to have potential for middle management, compared to only thirty-one percent of the business majors..." (p.12) Within eight years of employment, the average management level of humanities and social science majors was significantly higher than that of other groups. As the author of the Bell report states: "One overall conclusion from these data is that there is no need for liberal arts majors to lack confidence in approaching business careers." (p.13) It is interesting to note that this affirmation of the professional value of a liberal education comes from the experience of one of the world's largest high-tech corporations!

I am not presenting this evidence to argue that those who genuinely love engineering and the sciences should not pursue them, for their love is the best reason to enter those fields. Rather, the evidence presents a powerful argument for those whose interest lie elsewhere to follow their interest without fearing that their skills and knowledge will not be needed.

Not long ago, I had a meeting with several people who work in admissions at the Harvard Business School. We discussed the criteria for evaluating applicants, and they stressed that the single most important criterion was academic excellence at a respected, selective institution. Certainly, a few courses in economics and a familiarity with mathematics were an advantage, but the field of undergraduate major was not significant. As do the law and medical schools, they stress breadth of excellence and potential ability as reflected in the quality of the student's educational experience. It is significant that at Harvard, like many of the nation's best business schools, ninety-seven percent of their admitted applicants have had at least one year of full-time work experience before applying.

It should be clear from what I've said that liberal education is valued in certain segments of the "real world," and that there is often no correlation between choice of major and choice of career. Therefore we must encourage our students to spend their first year or more exploring, taking courses in a broad range of fields; courses in which they suspect they might be interested because they sound fascinating, courses in subjects that they know nothing about.

They should talk with the teachers, their advisors, their deans, their fellow students, with their parents, with other adults. In this process of exploration — if they are allowed to explore without pressure — they will find something in which they are genuinely fascinated. Pursuit of that

fascination will lead them not only to sophisticated knowledge of a particular field, but to the development of intellectual and personal skills that will enable them to survive, happily and productively, as adults. The fascination will lead them to accept challenges, exercise their creativity, to take risks in the name of learning, to find out what they are good at and what to avoid, to be critical rather than accepting, and to be pathfinders rather than followers. It will also lead them, the evidence suggests, to a career that will allow them to use what they've learned in the broadest sense: one which they will find rewarding, interesting and challenging. To put it simply, they should decide who they want to be when they grow up. not just what they want to be.

David Maxwell is Director of the National Foreign Language Center at the Johns Hopkins University, located in Washington, D.C. Formerly President of Whitman College, and Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Director of the Program in Russian at Tufts University, he has taught Russian language and literature for 22 years. In 1979 he was the recipient of the Lillian Leibner Award for Distinguished Teaching and Advising. A Fulbright Fellow in Moscow in 1970-71, Dr. Maxwell is the author of numerous scholarly articles on Russian literature and has spoken extensively on liberal arts education. He is active in a number of organizations concerned higher education, and is a member of the American Council on Education's Commission on International Education. In 1990, Dr. Maxwell chaired the Soviet-American Human Rights Conference in Seattle, Washington.

Preparing for a career in the arts

By Dr. William H. Banchs

Although the notion that there is no future in a career in the arts is still espoused by many, the number and quality of opportunities in the arts has dramatically increased in the past ten years. Many colleges and universities are responding to this trend, by greatly expanding their programs in the arts (dance, music, theater, visual arts and writing) for developing performers, creative artists, arts educators and arts administrators. In addition, there are many course offerings in the arts for those students less determined to pursue a career in the arts, but who also desire further training and experience.

Many young people are able to combine their artistic and academic skills in preparation for the demands of being an artist. A combination of skills is also necessary for careers in the management of artists or arts organization.

If you are seriously considering further training and education in dance, music, theater, visual arts or writing, you should be aware of a program designed to assist young artists. Arts Recognition and Talents Search (ARTS) of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts is a national program which recognizes and supports excellence in the arts. More than 6,000 high school seniors from every state participate in ARTS each year.

Applications received from aspiring young artists include video tapes of performances in dance and theater, audio tapes of solo music performance,

slide portfolios for visual artists and portfolios of manuscripts by writers.

Each year, high school seniors with ability in the arts register for the ARTS program by these two dates: the regular registration deadline on June 1 (as a junior), and the late registration deadline on October 1 (as a senior).

The decisions of a panel of expert judges in each art field are made solely on the basis of the artistic content of the students' application packets. No other criteria, such as grades or academic standing, have any bearing on their decisions.

As a result of these evaluations, applicants are granted one of five award levels: Level I ($3,000), Level II ($1,500), Level III ($1,000), Level IV ($500), Level V ($100) and Honorable Mention ($100). In addition, through NFAA's Scholarship List Service, all applicants and award winners are recruited by leading colleges, universities and professional arts organization and offered in excess of three million dollars in scholarships and internships.

The Foundation recommends its top artistic talent to the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars each year and twenty are selected as Presidential Scholars in the Arts. These young artists are presented in concert at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and exhibit at a member museum of the Smithsonian Institution. In addition, all the Presidential Scholars are honored by the President of the United States at a White House ceremony. These events are all part of National Recognition Week which takes place in Washington, DC in June of every year.

If you aspire to a creative career, you need to be realistic about your talent, for that is what is most important in getting a job in the arts or establishing a reputation. Practical experience outside of the school environment — with local theaters, music and dance groups, galleries and community newspapers — can give you an extra edge. Even the most talented artists must be willing to spend years of their lives mastering their skills. It is never too early to develop that necessary dedication and commitment to your art.

Dr. William H. Banchs is the President of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts.

Guide to guides for high school students

Reprinted with permission from the "Chronicle of Higher Education"

The Best Buys in College Education, by Edward B. Fiske (Times Books; 393 pages). Mr. Fiske, the education editor of the New York Times, has published his Selective Guide to Colleges since 1982. He recently released Best Buys, which lists 200 colleges — both public and private — that are identified as particularly good values. The institutions range from Pratt Institute ($10,088 tuition) to Cooper Union ($300). Included are statistics (including admissions and financial-aid figures), and essays describing what Mr. Fiske calls "the academic and social climate" of the institutions.

The Insider's Guide to the Colleges, by the staff of the Yale Daily News (St. Martin's Press, 568 pages). "Obviously," the editors say in

their preface, "it's impossible to capture the full scope and breadth of any institution in two or three pages of text." The editors of the Yale Daily News — and student correspondents on more than 150 campuses — offer readers, according to the book's cover, an account of "what...colleges are really like."

The brief descriptive sections tend to give colleges labels, provide a sweeping sense of the atmosphere, and describe campus social life. The book also provides an introduction to college "trends in the Eighties" and includes lists of colleges in categories such as "liberal arts colleges with an emphasis on pre-professionalism," and "colleges de-emphasizing varsity sports."

100 Top Colleges, by John McClintock (John Wiley & Sons, Inc; 225 pages). In addition to its statistical descriptions of what it calls "America's best" institutions, 100 Top Colleges suggests a systematic method for selecting a college. By answering a series of multiple-choice questions and plugging the answers into boxes, students may narrow their choice of institutions to conform to the qualities they value. "Choosing a college may never become a strictly scientific process," writes Mr. McClintock, "but it can be rational." The profiles of institutions rely heavily on statistics of all kinds, including ratings for "personal life," "mix of students," and "student motivation."

Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges, by Frederick E. Rugg (Whitebrook Books; 65 pages). Mr. Rugg, a high-school guidance counselor, organizes his book by academic majors, from agriculture to zoology. In each section, the book recommends several colleges whose departments are felt to be among the best in the country. Within majors, the lists are divided into three categories: "most selective," "very selective," and "selective." Information about the colleges was obtained primarily through random interviews with students and others affiliated with institutions, according to the book.

"I even did weird things like interview the scorer and timer at the halftime of a basketball game at Williams College," Mr. Rugg writes. "We ended up discussing the classics department there (small, but good)." Mr. Rugg rates Williams' classics department among the best in the nation.

Lisa Birnbach's College Book, by Lisa Birnbach (Ballantine Book; 515 pages). Lake Forest College has the best salad bar of any college. The most promiscuous students are at Boston University. Connoisseurs of such information will find plenty of it in Ms. Birnbach's book, which describes student life at 186 colleges. "This is the inside scoop," writes Ms. Birnbach, "the juicy stuff you can only learn by visiting the campuses, by going to school there. This is the real thing." Entries place little emphasis on statistics and list such categories as "best professors," "gay situation," and "best thing about school."

The Public Ivys: A Guide to America's Best Public Undergraduate Colleges and Universities, by Richard Moll (Viking, 289 pages) "Even the parents with ready cash are wondering if Olde Ivy is worth two or three times the price of a thoroughly respectable public institution," Mr. Moll writes. His book contains lengthy narrative and statistical descriptions of 17 public institutions he says are comparable to Ivy League universities. Mr. Moll chose the 17 based on admissions selectivity, "quality" of "undergraduate experience," institutions' financial resources, and prestige.

America's Lowest Cost Colleges, by Nicholas A. Ross (Freundlich Books; 253 pages). North Carolina residents will be delighted to learn that, according to Mr. Ross's book, 13 institutions in their state charge $150 or less for one year's tuition. Californians have more reason to celebrate: 36 colleges are identified here as charging $100.

"This book was written," Mr. Ross writes, "because too many parents

have been forced to sacrifice for their children's education...Worst of all, too many young people have decided not to go to college, because they think they can't afford it." The book includes brief descriptions of more than 700 colleges with annual tuitions of less than $1,500.

The College Handbook, *1985-86* (College Entrance Examination Board; 1,900 pages). The College Board's guide is filled with facts and figures that answer any basic question a prospective student might have about more than 3,000 institutions: number of students, a description of the location ("city," "small town," etc.), major fields of study, and special programs. It also gives a brief "class profile" and statistics on the number of applicants admitted from the most recent pool. The introduction offers students advice on how to choose a college.

Selective Guide to Colleges, by Edward B. Fiske (Times Books; 482 pages). "If you are wondering whether to consider a particular college," Mr. Fiske writes, "it is logical to seek out friends or acquaintances who go there and ask what it's like. What we have done is exactly this..."Mr. Fiske has written brief, general descriptions of what the book calls "the 275 colleges you are most likely to consider." The descriptions tend to emphasize various components of student life, as well as the academic reputations of institutions. In addition to the narrative descriptions, Mr. Fiske rates three qualities — "Academics," "Social Life," and "Quality of Life," on a subjective one-to-five scale.

General Catalogs

Barron's Guide to the Two-Year Colleges (Barron's Education Series, Inc.; volume one: 319 pages; volume two: 282 pages). The first volume of this two-volume set lists facilities, costs, programs and admissions requirements of more than 1,500 two-year institutions. Using charts, the second volume identifies institutions offering programs in five general categories: business and commerce; communications, media, and public services; health services; agricultural and environmental management; engineering and technologies. It also provides a separate list of institutions offering liberal-arts programs.

Barron's Profiles of American Colleges (Barron's Educational Series, Inc.; 1,151 pages). In addition to providing statistical information— including median SAT scores, student-faculty ratio and tuition costs — Barron's ranks each college on a scale from "most competitive" to "non-competitive." The book's introduction says the rankings are determined by a combination of the institution's rate of acceptance and the average high-school grade-point average and median SAT scores of students who are accepted.

Comparative Guide to American Colleges, by James Cass and Max Birnbaum (Harper & Row; 706 pages). While it includes many of the statistical laundry lists of other fact-filled guides, Cass and Birnbaum's book also throws in an introductory paragraph giving a general description of each institution. Each entry also includes sections on "academic environment," "religious orientation," and "campus life" and information on the proportion of degrees conferred in various departments. Like Barron's, the book uses what it calls a "selectivity index," rating institutions with competitive admissions from "selective" to "among the most selective in the country."

Lovejoy's College Guide, edited by Charles Straughn and Barbarasue Lovejoy Straughn (Monarch Press; 604 pages). Listing more than 2,500 colleges and universities, Lovejoy's is concise and informative but offers less statistical material than do some of the other catalogues. Its descriptions are much briefer than those in most of the other guides, such as Barron's and Cass and Birnbaum.

Peterson's Competitive Colleges, Karen C. Hegener, editor (Peterson's Guides; 358 pages). In its fourth edition, it includes one-page profiles of

301 "selective" institutions — those whose students do well on standardized tests and which consistently have more applicants who meet entrance standards than are admitted. The book contains lists of the colleges and universities by cost, size, religious affiliation, and other factors. It also includes one-paragraph profiles of selective arts colleges and conservatories.

Peterson's Four-Year Colleges, Andrea E. Lehman, editor (Peterson's Guides; 2,237 pages). In a volume larger than the Manhattan telephone directory, Peterson's, which is updated annually, provides general information about more than 3,000 institutions. It also includes a section of two-page "messages from the colleges," profiles provided by the institutions that each pay $895 for the space. In addition, the book provides a chart with a state-by-state breakdown of colleges, listing of institutions organized by majors offered, difficulty of admission, and costs.

Lovejoy's Concise College Guide, edited by Charles Straughn and Barbarasue Lovejoy Straughn (Monarch Press; 375 pages). "The criteria used for the selection of the 370 institutions are varied to include the most diverse selection of schools for you to choose from," says the introduction. The book never explains these criteria, but the editors seem to have included the most selective institutions. The descriptions of the colleges are slightly abbreviated selections from the larger Lovejoy's, including information on enrollment, cost, academic majors, and student life.

Specialized Guides

Who Offers Part-Time Degree Programs? edited by Karen C. Hegener (Peterson's Guides, 417 pages). The listings include more than 2,500 institutions offering part-time undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The guide also includes separate directories of colleges with evening, summer, and weekend programs.

The Black Student's Guide to Colleges, edited by Barry Beckham (Beckham House Publishers, 495 pages). Mr. Beckham, a professor of English at Brown University, writes in his introduction that he wishes to provide information "in both objective and subjective terms" to help black students choose among colleges. Each campus profile is based on information supplied by the institutions and by five of its students, whose individual statements are often noted. In narrative form, the book provides details on topics including race relations, support services, cultural opportunities, and black organizations.

Everywoman's Guide to Colleges and Universities, edited by Florence Howe, Suzanne Howard, and Mary Jo Boehm Strauss (Feminist Press; 412 pages). For each of the 600 colleges it evaluates, *Everywoman's Guide* provides a ranking — on a three-star scale — for each of several categories: "students," "faculty," "administrators," "woman and the curriculum," and "woman and athletics." An introduction notes that these are areas of "special importance." In narrative form, each entry provides additional material under such headings as "policies to ensure fairness to women," "women in leadership positions," and "special services and programs for women."

A Guide to Colleges for Learning Disabled Students, edited by Mary Ann Liscio (Academic Press, Inc.; 490 pages). In addition to some basic information about admissions requirements and tuition, each entry lists services for learning disabled students, "modifications to the traditional learning environment" (including such details as tape recorders provided to tape lectures, and "longer time to complete exams"), and a person on campus for learning-disabled students to contact.

Learning a new role . . . for parents

By Paul and Ann Krouse

Most literature directed to parents of college-bound students focuses on financial matters, an area of great interest and concern to most of us. Yet there are other roles besides bankrolls which require attention and involvement. Some are obvious and others more subtle. Having completed the college admissions process four times with our own children, my wife and I would like to share our experiences and views.

Be involved.

Selecting a college is just one more experience in the parenting process with the usual mixture of risks, rewards, joys, and uncertainties. You will find yourself pouring over directories, college catalogs, counselor recommendations, appli-cations, and financial aid forms. The more you do together, the less tedious the tasks and the more enlightening the process becomes. We found ourselves en-gaged in a very productive cycle which started with counselor/student meetings. From this counselor-to-parent shuttle which was repeated several times over a period of a few weeks, our daughter developed a list of six or seven college choices. We visited several of her college choices on a 4-day car trip and ultim-ately she selected a college which happily accepted her. Waiting for the acceptance letter was agonizing, receiving it was joyous. The family celebration which followed was memorable.

Our experiences were undoubtedly quite common. The subtleties merit equal awareness.

Listen to your child.

Most of us have our own preferences of where we would like our children to go to school, but we've had our chance(s) and now it's their turn. Certainly your guidance, opinions, and views are important. You may have some inflexible re-quirements which your child must be responsive to such as financial limitations. Nevertheless, it is imperative that you listen to your child's preferences and to the best of your ability and with your best judgement encourage your child to fulfill his or her dreams, not yours.

Be patient and "tune-in."

The separation between child and family is beginning and it impacts on everyone involved in different ways and at different times. So much of the college admissions process requires that the children initiate action which will cause separation that there is frequently a reluctance to complete a task which can easily be misinterpreted as laziness or irresponsibility. An application may remain untouched, an essay de-layed, a conference postponed. You must "tune-in" to your child's emotions and try to determine when he or she is being lax and when normal anxieties are rising to the surface, slowing down progress. Try to be patient, guide instead of push, and acknowledge your mutual feelings

instead of hiding them. The closer the family is, the more pronounced these experiences may be.

Respect your child's privacy.

Social gatherings will undoubtedly bring you into contact with other parents of college-bound students and the plans and experiences of your children will become timely topics of conversation. Sharing experiences with other parents can be mutually beneficial. But, revealing your child's exact SAT scores, GPA, class rank and similar information is an invasion of privacy. If your child wants to announce this information to friends, relatives or other parents, that's his or her business and choice – not yours. Certainly you wouldn't want your child publicizing your income or other personal information to outsiders. Similarly, your child probably would prefer that some aspect of this process remain within the family. You will be amazed at what remarkably bad taste some parents exhibit in discussing their children's experiences.

Shop carefully.

As adults, you are undoubtedly a more experienced and sophisticated shopper than your child and your experience can be significant as your child shops for a college. Most colleges are very ethical and professional in their recruitment practices, but remember they are "selling." At college fairs, admissions officers can be persuasive, which is not to their discredit. College catalogs can be slick and attractive, which is also understandable and acceptable. But remember, most colleges are selling a package that can cost $5,000 to $15,000 per year or $20,000 to $60,000 over four years. They need from 100 to 1,000 new students each year to keep their doors open. That's not an indictment of their motives, but simply a representation of their realities. Read between the lines and beyond the pretty pictures. Don't hesitate to confer with your child's counselors about the choices and options available – counselors are generally objective and committed to service the student, not a particular institution. When you visit campuses, allow enough time to wander on your own after your formal tour, usually conducted by the admissions office. Walk into the library, dormitories, student union and even classrooms, if possible. Talk to students around the campus and observe as much as you can. Virtually all college admissions officials will encourage such "investigations" on your part since they don't want your child to make a mistake and stay for one year or less any more than you do.

Naturally, each family's experiences will be a little different. The process is not very scientific yet, in spite of computerbanks, search services, video presentations, etc. Like looking for a house, there is more emotion in the process than some are ready to acknowledge. Nevertheless, as we look back, it was another enjoyable family experience where the rewards far outweigh the risks.

Paul and Ann Krouse are the publishers of Who's Who Among American High School Students and the parents of four children: Amy, entered the freshman class at Tufts University class of 1987, Beth followed at the University of Illinois, class of 1989; Joe at the University of Michigan, class of 1993; and Katie at Indiana University, class of 1994. WHEW!

About the Publisher

Since 1967, *Who's Who Among American High School Students*® has provided award recognition for high school students who have demonstrated excellence in academics, athletics or extracurricular activities. More than 15,000 high schools and most of our nation's major youth organizations use the publication to recognize their student leaders.

To assure public awareness of the achievements of listed students, *Who's Who* is distributed free to all high schools who participate in the program and all colleges and libraries interested in student leaders. Up to 15,000 complimentary copies of the book are distributed each year. Further recognition for students is also accomplished through a press relations program in which 2,000 newspapers nationwide publish articles listing their local *Who's Who* award winners.

In addition to recognizing the achievements of students, Who's Who sponsors:

- Scholarship Awards– More than $170,000 in awards each year through three separate programs
- CRS - College Referral Service® – A reference service linking college-bound students with colleges and universities
- Grants – Financial support for educational and youth organizations which provide valuable programs and services for our nation's youth
- Teen Surveys – Opinion polls of student leaders circulated to educators, government officials and the press
- College-Bound Digest®– A booklet distributed free to high school guidance offices with valuable advice and information for college-bound students.

All *Who's Who* policies are reviewed by prominent educators who serve on the Committee on Ethics, Standards and Practices. The involvement of these educators in the administration of all programs guarantees students, parents and school administrators that the *Who's Who* program is compatible with the goals and high standards of existing awards programs in our nation's schools. *Who's Who* is a member of most major educational associations.

The reference and recognition values of the publication and program have been acknowledged by several hundred colleges and universities and the American Library Association.

If your school does not participate in the *Who's Who* program yet, counselors or administrators are invited to write for nomination materials and complete information to the address on this booklet.

ANOTHER PUBLIC SERVICE FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS AND EDUCATORS FROM

® WHO'S WHO
AMONG AMERICAN
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS®

Published by

EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS, INC.
721 N. McKinley Road • Lake Forest, IL 60045 • 708/295-6650