

For Seniors:



How to choose which college is the best for you to attend

There are several important factors that you should consider when deciding what college is the best for you to attend.

1. Do you feel at home?

Many students who visit a campus have a feeling of “home.” If you have not yet visited the colleges you have been accepted to, you should do that as soon as possible

2. Do they have the programs, clubs, or opportunities that you are interested in?

If you want to play a specific sport, study abroad, or any other activities, it is important to make sure that the college you pick has those options available.

3. Does the college match with your academic abilities?

It is important to find a college that will challenge your academics and allow you to grow intellectually, but be careful not to choose a school that is academically below your standards.

4. Is it affordable?

Look over the financial aid offerings and see what is the best pricing option for you and your family.

5. Is this college what YOU want?

Remember that YOU are the one who will be going to the college, so do not let someone else make the decision for you.

COMPARING FINANCIAL AID PACKAGES



When looking at the financial aid packages from different colleges, it can be hard to compare them on paper. Watch the video to the left and use [this spreadsheet](#) to compare and contrast how much financial aid your family is getting and how much they will be expected to pay.

By using this spreadsheet, you can get an accurate comparison that will help illustrate which college is the best financial option for you. In case you missed it, last month’s issue of the College Corner also broke down how to understand your financial aid letters from each college.

The most important piece of advice is that if you are ever unsure about your financial aid package or have a question, you should call the college’s financial aid office immediately. They will be happy to assist you with anything you may need.

Follow Pennsylvania Goes to College on Social Media



For Juniors:



Preparing for the SAT

with College Board and Khan Academy

There are now several free resources available from the College Board and Khan Academy to help you prepare for the SATs.

Personalized SAT Practice with Khan Academy

Khan Academy now has an entire section devoted purely to the SAT. If you have taken the PSATs, you are now able to link your College Board and Khan Academy accounts. After doing so, Khan Academy will provide you with personalized practice based on the sections or type of question that you struggled with on the PSAT. This new practice will help you develop new test taking strategies that will assist you when you are taking the SAT. There are also full length practice tests available on Khan Academy.

Daily Practice for the New SAT App

The College Board recently released [this new app](#) for iPhone and Android users. This app has the traditional "question of the day" format seen in previous preparation apps, but now includes a new score scanning feature. If you print out and complete a practice test from the College Board website, you are able to scan your score sheet with your phone and you will get a score breakdown and analysis of how you did. This is a good way to figure out what sections you need to improve on in real time.

Changes to the SAT

Keep in mind that the SAT has been recently changed. Here are some of the most important changes: no penalty for wrong answers, the essay section is now optional, and there is a shift away from vocabulary to understanding words in context.

CHANGES TO THE SAT



Words in Context

The redesigned assessments will focus on relevant words, not obscure vocabulary, that students will use in college and beyond.



Math That Matters Most

The tests will focus on three essential areas of math: Problem Solving and Data Analysis; the Heart of Algebra; and Passport to Advanced Math.



U.S. Founding Documents and the Great Global Conversation

Every time students take one of the redesigned assessments, they will encounter a passage from a founding document or a text from the ongoing global conversation about freedom, justice, and human dignity.



Command of Evidence

The redesigned assessments will ask students to demonstrate their ability to interpret, synthesize, and use evidence found in a wide range of sources.



Problems Grounded in Real-World Contexts

Throughout the redesigned assessments, students will engage with questions grounded in the real world and directly related to the work performed in college and career.



No Penalty for Guessing

The redesigned assessments will remove the penalty for wrong answers. Students will earn points for the questions they answer correctly.



Essay Analyzing a Source

The redesigned SAT essay section, which will be optional, will more closely mirror college writing assignments. Students will read a passage and explain how the author builds an argument to persuade an audience.



Analysis in Science and in History/Social Studies

Students will apply their reading, writing, language, and math skills to solve problems in a broad array of contexts.

From the 2015–16 Counselor Resource Guide to the Redesigned Assessments

For Juniors:



Questions to ask on a college visit

About Academics

- 1) What factors go into the admissions process (test scores, class rank, interviews, etc.), and how important are these factors?
- 2) What percentage of students graduate in 4 years?
- 3) Which academic programs are most popular?
- 4) Does the school have a major that I am interested in?
- 5) How easy is it to change majors?
- 6) Will my York College credits transfer?
- 7) Who teaches the first year classes (TAs, grad students, or the professor)?
- 8) Is there an honor code?
- 9) Is there an honors program?
- 10) What career planning services are available?
- 11) What percentage of students have a job or are in grad school within 6 months of graduation?

About Student and Social Life

- 1) What activities or clubs are there to join?
- 2) Does the school have a Greek

- program (sororities and fraternities) and how many students participate in this program?
- 3) What are the most popular extracurricular activities?
- 4) Can first year students have cars on campus?
- 5) How easy is it to get around campus?
- 6) What emergency services are available?
- 7) Is there an on-campus security force?
- 8) Are tutoring services available?
- 9) Is there wifi across campus?
- 10) What laundry facilities are available?

About Housing and Dining

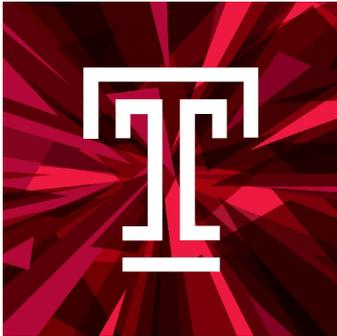
- 1) What percentage of students live on campus?
- 2) Is housing guaranteed all four years?
- 3) What meal plans are available?
- 4) Are first years required to have a specific meal plan?
- 5) What are the different dining options on campus?

- 6) What are the hours of the dining facilities?
- 7) How is my roommate assigned?
- 8) How hard is it to find off-campus housing if housing is not guaranteed?
- 9) How much does housing cost?

About Costs and Paying

- 1) What is the all-inclusive cost?
- 2) Is your admissions process need-blind?
- 3) Which financial aid forms are required?
- 4) Is there a separate application for financial aid through the school?
- 5) What is the average financial aid package?
- 6) What percentage of students receive financial aid?
- 7) Does the school meet 100% of demonstrated need?
- 8) Will outside scholarships affect the amount of aid given by the school?
- 9) Are work study programs available and how can I find a job on campus?

College Profiles



Temple University

Temple University is a large public university with around 28,000 undergraduate students located in the heart of Philadelphia. Despite the large student body size, the average class size is still only 27 students. There are around 130 different majors and programs to study, and some of the most popular majors are Architecture, Biology/Neuroscience, Marketing, Communications, Education, Engineering, the Health Professions, Criminal Justice, Exercise Science, Political Science, and Drama/Film. Temple has 19 Division I sports teams.

California University of Pennsylvania



Cal U is another of the PA state schools located about an hour south of Pittsburgh. There are about 6,500 students on campus, plus around 1,000 graduate students. Cal U takes full advantage of the close proximity to Pittsburgh. Sports Management is one of the most popular majors, and students in this program get to work with the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Penguins. This hands on experience is typical of all majors at Cal U. Some of the other popular majors are Business, Education, Engineering, Health Professions, Criminal Justice, and Psychology

Goucher College



Goucher College is a small private school of around 1,500 undergraduate students located in Baltimore, Maryland. This small student body size equates to a class size average of 17. Goucher emphasizes international education and thus around 20% of first year students are international students, and 100% of students spend time abroad. Most students will also do internships, volunteer in the community, and all are required to take a course on sustainability. Goucher emphasizes that you are not just part of the world, but you are the world. Goucher also boasts facts such as being the #1 nationally ranked Equestrian team, 3 on campus robots, 2 labyrinths, plus a wide range of DIII sports.

Pennsylvania College of Health Sciences



Pennsylvania College of Health Sciences is a private health sciences college located in downtown Lancaster, PA. There are around 1,400 students in the 14 different degree programs. Degree offerings range from certificates, to 2-year associates, to 4-year bachelors degrees. The college of Health Sciences is attached to Lancaster General Hospital, so almost all students will complete their clinicals at that hospital. The college itself has many state of the art simulation labs and research facilities on site.

Checklists to help you through the end of the year

For Seniors:

- ▶ Submit the FAFSA and PHEAA applications
- ▶ BRING IN ALL ACCEPTANCE LETTERS – even for college you do not plan to attend
- ▶ Make a spreadsheet to keep track of the schools you have applied to, their deadlines, financial aid information, and any other important pieces of information
- ▶ Keep visiting schools – if you are on the fence about a school, a visit will significantly help in your decision process
- ▶ Search and apply for scholarships
- ▶ Do not be afraid to ask questions – call admissions or financial aid with any questions you may have
- ▶ Schedule a meeting with the college adviser if you have questions or need assistance

For Juniors:

- ▶ Start visiting colleges – it will help you get an idea of what type of school you are looking for
- ▶ Make a spreadsheet of schools you are interested in, what their application deadlines are, average financial aid package, and other important information
- ▶ Create your Common Application account – go to commonapp.org to create your account
- ▶ Register to take the SAT or ACT during the spring of your junior year
- ▶ Keep working on your graduation project – presentations are coming up at the end of this month!
- ▶ Talk to friends and family in college and see if they would be willing to show you around campus
- ▶ Schedule a meeting with the college adviser

SEAL OF APPROVAL

