Finding the Fit
Personalizing the College Search/Selection Process
Bellevue School District
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Don’t Be Scared By The Stories!

- The majority of colleges admit more students than they deny but you have to be willing to open yourself up to possibilities beyond a narrow band of colleges. You will be pleasantly surprised.

- What really is the admissions rate for a college? What about the retention rate & 4 year graduation rate? Harder to manipulate.

- Compare your academic profile to those of recently admitted & enrolled students. Scattergrams! Be realistic.
Adolescence & Admissions
Keeping perspective

- Erickson- Identity vs. Role Confusion
  - Who Am I? Am I competent? Capable?
    - Internalized recordings of external messages/judgements from family, friends, school, community, social media. (Am I resilient or dependent?)
    - The DANGER of whatdjaget—STOP DOING THIS!
  - Swings between independence & dependence-input from parents as supporters & guides, not shaming authorities

So, how is the college process like learning how to ride a bike?
READ THE BOOK: HOW TO RAISE AN ADULT
Students, own your process

- Talk with your parents. What are their hopes & dreams for you? What parameters do they have for you?
- Be patient with your parents. They want the best for you & you can help them understand. It’s very normal to not know exactly what you want to do.
- Show them what you are doing/learning.
- Making sound decisions will lead to satisfying & successful experiences.
- Student is the author of applications & essays!
Students, please don’t:

- listen to people who are judgmental, condescending or are trying to build themselves up by putting you down.
- determine your worth & value by your GPA or test scores.
- share your scores or college list with other people. (What jaget?)
- base your college list off of some rankings list.
- believe that the harder a school is to get into, the better the education will be.
Points for Parents to Consider

- Listen to your child...be patience with the process. What are their hopes & dreams?
- Empower them! Put your ego to the side.
- Don’t micromanage the process. Check in but don’t nag. Ask counselor for help to get your child moving.
- Establish college check-in/update time
- Don’t get caught up in the frenzy: test prep, summer programs, resume builders.
- Don’t “package” your child. Encourage their true sense of self. DO NOT TOUCH THEIR APPS!
Anger and irritability are your child’s covers for fear and worry. (and their budding autonomy!)

Most people change their majors when they are in college. It’s okay not to have a clear plan for the rest of your life, or even the next 4 years when you’re 17 years old.

Where is the stress of the college process coming from? How are you framing this exciting time for your child? Own your worries & don’t project them onto your child. Be a safe haven for your child’s friends, too.
How Do You Pick Colleges?

How do you pick your friends?

- Spending time together learning about each other & the interests you share - takes time

- Judging a friend’s value based on their name? GPA? Zip Code? Circumference of their head?
  - Admission Statistics of incoming class → Value of hospital based on who is sitting in the ER

- Substance vs. reputation & status
The Bumper Sticker Conundrum

- Pride in your school is one thing, but is your priority your own education-or what other people will THINK of your education?

- What is a “good” school? (does old mean good? Does highly selective mean good? Expensive?) Subjective

- What about schools that are right for the student?
“You can slice it & dice it any way you like, but this isn’t like Consumer Reports, which tests something to see if it does or doesn’t work,” he (Dix) said. “The interaction between a student and an institution is not the same as the interaction between a student and a refrigerator.”

– NYT

* Methodologies:
https://www.nacacnet.org/knowledge-center/college-rankings/methodology/
Beginning Your Search

- Sizing Yourself Up Survey (handout & can also be found in the Fiske Guide to Colleges)
- Naviance SuperMatch tool. Good one as you can select multiple colleges and search for schools that have all of those majors. College Navigator Website-Use Search Tool on the LH side. Be sure to click on “More Search Options.”

- https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/
- http://www.ucan-network.org/
- https://www.collegexpress.com/lists/
Consider College Characteristics

- Majors & Educational Programs (undecided-ok)
- Accessibility of faculty & advising
- Location & Size (don’t use high school size as the comparison)
- Mission statement of the college. (values)
- Costs (COA) & Financial Aid & 4 Year Grad Rate
- Accreditation of school & of selected programs
- Campus Activities/Student Life
- Support Services
- Retention Rates (Admission Rates?)
Campus Visits

- Plan ahead
- Reserve your spot on the info session & campus tour. Get out of the car! Students, ask questions on the tour. Give your parents some questions to ask too.
- Attend meet with a professor from a department in which you have some interest; attend a class.
- Walk the halls & read the walls...snoop politely
- Talk with students & faculty. How about the lunch lady?
- Career services...of more interest to parents than students, but very important! Getting in/Getting out.
- Meet with an admissions counselor (transcript & resume)
- Send a thank you note to people who helped you.
Marketing

- The underbelly of college admissions...
- Beware of “priority applications.”
- Doctoring of data (apps completed vs started; student to faculty ratio, scores)
- Does the school participate in NSSE? What have they learned about their student’s experiences?
- Contact professors (strengths of program, description of students, faculty retention)
- Text Messaging - be polite & clear
- Follow the college on Instagram
- Set up college only email address
Thoughts

- College planning is not a perfect science.
- Be mindful of the teenage years. Anxiety, anger are covers for fear & uncertainty. Breathe.
- Don’t play “whadjaget.” (grades, scores, college list)
- Open yourself up for discovery
- Keep your sense of humor!
- The key question is not, “Is college X a good college?” Rather, the question is, “Is X a good college for ME?”
- What you do in college is a better predictor of future happiness & success than where you go to college. Motivation, determination, grit!
- Be kind. Be grateful.
Resources

- Sizing Yourself Up Survey
- Red Flags for Parents (Making Caring Common)
- NSSE Pocket Guide
- Spring College Fair April 25th 12noon-2:30pm held at Seattle U’s Connelly Center
- CTCL Fair-July 30, 7pm-Westin Seattle
- Fall Fairs- Visual & Performing Arts & National Fair
- College Reps visiting high schools
Resources

Books:
- Excellent Sheep-Deresiewicz
- Where You Go Is Not Who You’ll Be-Bruni
- How To Raise An Adult-Lythcott-Haims
- The Self-Driven Child-Johnson & Stixrud
- Colleges that Change Lives-Pope
- College Match: A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School for You-Antonoff & Friedemann
- The Fiske Guide-Fiske
- The College Finder-Antonoff
- Choosing College-Horn & Moesta
- The Stressed Years of Their Lives-Hibbs & Rostain
- The Truth About College Admission-Barnard & Clark
Websites

- http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/
- www.ucan-network.org
- www.hecaonline.org (click on “Families” & “Find A Consultant”)
- www.ctcl.org
- www.ncaa.org
- www.google.com (fisheries.edu)
- www.collegeplanninghelp.com (see Useful Links)
Do we need to hire an Independent Educational Consultant (IEC)?

- Become familiar with the resources at your high school first. Talk with your counselor and take time to explore Naviance.
- IEC should belong to a professional organization with ethics (HECA, IECA, NACAC, PNACAC) and show a commitment to working collaboratively with the high school counselor.
- Beware of false promises/marketing.
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

MYSELF.
Congratulations!

Best wishes as you embark on this exciting adventure!

Questions? Comments?

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