

**Marian Baker School**

**COLLEGE GUIDANCE  
FOLDER**

**11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

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## **I. JUNIOR CHECKLIST**

- ( ) Plan a family college discussion
- ( ) Attend college fairs.
- ( ) Prepare a list of questions to ask college reps.
- ( ) Collect college catalogs
- ( ) Prepare for the SAT and/or TOEFL
- ( ) Take the SAT at least once.
- ( ) Take the TOEFL if necessary.
- ( ) Identify characteristics you want in a college.
- ( ) Narrow your college list to a reasonable number.
- ( ) Discuss ways to pay college.
- ( ) Search for scholarships.
- ( ) Compare college requirements with your course load.
- ( ) Check your high school credits and be sure you have all the requirement credits to graduate.
- ( ) Take Advanced Placement (AP) tests, if necessary
- ( ) Plan and make college visits.
- ( ) Write to the colleges on your list and ask them to send you admission packages and college information.
- ( ) Fill out Student Activity Record, included in this folder.

## **II. DURING THE SUMMER**

- ( ) Improve your reading and vocabulary skills
- ( ) Continue searching for scholarships and ways to pay.
- ( ) Combine vacation plans with campus visits.
- ( ) Start working on your application essays.
- ( ) Talk to people in careers you find interesting.
- ( ) Decide who you'll ask to write recommendations.
- ( ) Keep gathering information from colleges.
- ( ) Define at least 7 universities to which you are going to apply.
- ( ) US citizens give to your parents the FAFSA form so they can start looking for the information needed to fill it out.

## **III. CHOOSING A COLLEGE**

### **3.1. Types of Institutions**

There are many different types of institutions represented among the approximately 3000 colleges and universities in the United States. One would do well to choose a “type” of institution before narrowing a choice down to specific institutions.

#### **Liberal Arts College**

A general program of 4-year study wherein the student takes courses in a wide variety of subjects such as history, literature, foreign languages, math, philosophy, social sciences, natural sciences, art, etc., majors in one of these areas and graduates with a Bachelor’s Degree. The curriculum gives the student a sound basic education with the intention of developing general knowledge and reasoning ability, as opposed to training for a career. It does fulfill the requirement for entrance to graduate school, where most liberal arts graduates specialize in a particular area.

#### **University**

An academic organization which grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields and which supports at least two degree-granting professional schools. It is composed of a number of “Schools” or “Colleges”, each of which encompasses a general field of study. Universities generally offer a broad range of both undergraduate and graduate degree programs, are generally larger than other types of colleges, and typically offer more majors and have more research facilities than do other colleges.

#### **Engineering or Technological Colleges**

These are independent professional schools which provide four-year training programs in the fields of engineering and the physical sciences. They are often known as Institutes of Technology or Polytechnic Institutes.

#### **Professional Degree-Granting Schools**

These schools offer a combination of liberal arts training and intensive training in a variety of specialized fields (Eastman School of Music, Rhode Island School of Design, etc).

#### **Community/Junior Colleges**

These colleges award associate degrees at the completion of two years of full-time study. They frequently offer technical programs of study that prepare students for immediate entry into the job market and are said to result in “terminal” degrees. In addition, many of these colleges offer general education programs that are the equivalent of the first two years of a bachelor’s degree program. The majority of two-year public colleges have opened admissions policies.

Schools may be publicly controlled or independent and privately controlled. Usually publicly controlled schools are large, less selective for state residents (but more so for out-of-state residents), and less expensive for state residents than private schools. However, a few state universities are highly selective and competitive (e.g. University of California, Michigan,

Illinois). Independent, privately controlled schools are usually smaller and more expensive than public institutions.

### **3.2. FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE/ UNIVERSITY**

There are no precise consumer guides for higher education as there are, for instance, for cars. And, while you may have the chance to buy a dozen or more cars in your lifetime, shopping for a college is usually a one-time event.

Just a few years ago, the average high school student was applying to three or four schools; today, the average is six to eight applications per student. Colleges and universities, faced with increased competition for a diminishing number of eighteen-year-olds, have developed marketing programs that are turning the college admissions process into a frenzied, promotional activity. The personal letters, brochures and telephone solicitations that many students and their parents receive, plus the likelihood of acceptance at more than one institution, increase both the number of options and the complexity of decisions.

There are ways for parents and students to be good college shoppers – to control the process rather than letting it control them. Students need to know the right questions to ask – of themselves and of the colleges. Here are some:

#### **Step 1: Know yourself**

Ask yourself questions, there is neither right nor wrong answers. It's all about self-discovery.

- What are your goals and values? Which values are most important to you? How have these developed and evolved? How do you define success? What unique gifts and strengths do you possess? What kind of person do you aspire to become? Is there any secret desire to choose one particular profession or path in life? What experiences have shaped who you have become and your way of thinking? Which do you value more, people or things, action or reflection?
- What emphasis do you place on education? What are your academic interests? What courses have you enjoyed most? If on your own, what would you choose to learn? How do you best learn? Are particular teaching methods more effective for your learning style? What has been your most stimulating intellectual experience? What is your attitude towards studying? How does your academic record represent you? Have you taken the most challenging courses available? What are your SAT scores? Have there been circumstances that have affected your academic performance?
- On what type of activities have you spent your time outside of the classroom? Which have been the most fulfilling? Is there a pattern of commitment and success? What is your roll in your high school and community? What would others recognize as you're your contributions to your school or community?
- How do you perceive the world around you? Has the school environment encourages your skills, interests and talents? How has your family influenced you outlook on life? Have your interests been nurtured or limited? Have you found a cause for which to stand up? How do you react when faced with people who thought or behaved differently to you?

What issues do you feel strongly about? What is your social style, solitary or comfortable in large groups? How do you make difficult decisions? Who are your confidants? After identifying your own style and desire, it becomes easier to find schools which are a match for you, or more often, those that are not a match!

## **Step 2: Know about the college / university**

The following list is not meant to be only means of evaluating a college / university. Each individual must determine the order of importance or weight each factor carries. The following are simply considerations that should be examined. You will need to review catalogs, handbooks, brochures, on line listings, speak to alumni and college reps and others for specific colleges.

- Type of school
  - public vs. private
  - religious or secular
  - coed or single sex
  - liberal arts or pre-professional
  - conservative or liberal student body
  - traditional or progressive
- Enrollment
  - number of undergraduates
  - male/female ratio
  - % of international students
  - residential or commuting
  - retention rate after one year
- Location and surroundings
  - geographic location
  - weather/climate
  - proximity to family and friends
  - size of town/city
- Curriculum and academic environment
  - degree of competitiveness
  - availability of professors for student conferences
  - quality
  - what are the core curriculum classes which must be taken
  - majors offered
  - academic pressure and workload
  - IB recognized from high school
- Campus life
  - clubs, fraternities, sororities
  - weekend events/activities
  - religious organizations
  - housing: co-ed, single sex, requiring for first year/off campus housing possible
  - meal plans
  - honor system
  - class attendance required

- security
- recreational facilities / extra curricular activities
- Expense
  - cost of tuition, room/board, books and supplies
  - travel expense
  - financial aid available, percent of students receiving aid
  - work study programs
- Entrance requirements
  - course prerequisites
  - application process
  - SAT I and/or SAT II
  - deadlines
  - selectivity; % of applicants admitted
  - average scores of freshman/first year student profile
- Admission policy
  - Some colleges are obviously more selective than others. It is important to understand the admission requirements of the institutions in which you are interested and realistically consider your chances of acceptance. It is usually advisable to apply to more than one institution – the one that is most desirable, others that would be acceptable and to which you have a good chance of being admitted, and a “safety” school – one that is acceptable and to which you are sure that you will be admitted. Normally, six applications are sufficient.
- Reputation
  - A good reputation results from high standards and quality education. The number of students who go on to graduate studies can be an indication of the quality of the program.
- Facilities
  - College campuses and facilities vary greatly from institution to institution. The physical environment can affect a student’s happiness. If at all possible a student should visit the institution to which he might apply. A prospective student should be interested in the size and appearance of the campus, the atmosphere, space and equipment, how well the library is stocked, the appearance and comfort of residence halls and possibilities of student diversions and relaxation in the form of student centers and sports facilities.
- Foreign students
  - Some colleges and universities in the United States make a definite effort to attract non-American students; some have had experience with foreign students and are prepared to meet their special needs with an orientation program, special student advisor, etc.
- Faculty
  - An educational institution is only as good as its teachers. One measure of quality is the number of institutions holding doctorates.
- Balancing your needs with your choice
  - some considerations will be in conflict with others
  - you must prioritize and weigh the importance of these and other considerations that are unique to you.

### 3.3 Common Errors Made By Parents And Students In Selecting A College

Adapted from playing The Private College Admissions Game by Richard Moll

**Assume that the most expensive and selective colleges are best:** College selection is a consumer activity in a buyer's market. There are bargains in quality schools. The "best school" is really a relative expression; a school can be best for a particular youngster. No school is best for everyone. Schools should be selected in terms of a youngster's interests and needs, NOT for prestige.

**Leave college selection entirely in the student's hands:**

Students and parents each have a responsibility in this choice; each must define an appropriate role and discuss concerns and interests with the other. Parents influence the choice even when they encourage their children toward independent responsible decisions. The parent who remains silently and passively in the background is doing the student a disservice.

**Believe that college choice is an irrevocable career choice and where you begin college will determine your entire professional life:**

Most students today transfer during their undergraduate years, and most adults do not choose their careers based on their undergraduate course of study. Choosing a college is just that; it is an important decision BUT certainly not one that can determine your entire future.

**Choose a college only because of its academic record:**

Most students don't! They want athletic opportunities, social life, a stable environment, lots of activities and fun. These are important reasons for choosing or rejecting a college.

**Consider the local college only if you can't get into better places:**

Public colleges today offer some of the best bargains in education. Faculty, program, quality of life can be better than at private schools. Just because a school is close to home, it should not be overlooked.

**Don't apply for financial aid:**

Families should not assume that they wouldn't qualify for money. The great majority of students enrolled in four-year undergraduate programs receive financial aid.

**Assume liberal arts is dead and will not help you get a job:**

Most employers want students who can think and express themselves clearly and articulately. A liberal arts training will help you get a job and assume advancement in a career.

**Wait for the last minute to make college plans:**

The process of college selection takes many months. The more time you allow yourself, the more likely your ultimate decision will be based on fact and a thoughtful evaluation of your needs and interests.

## **3.4 Questions To Ask About A University**

### **General**

- What sets this school apart from other schools? What makes this school unique?
- Could you describe a typical student who attends your school?
- What are the strengths of your school?
- What are the weaknesses of your school?
- If I could talk with a number of the students who attend your school, what would they say is best about your school?
- I assume many things about your school are good, but if I could talk to students of your school, what might they NOT like; what might they complain about?

### **Questions specific to Education**

- How strong is your department of – biology, mathematics, engineering, pre-med, English, literature, Spanish, international relations, history, psychology, journalism, education, etc, etc (you choose)?
- What kind of SAT score and grade point average does a typical student need to get in?
- Is your university primarily focused on undergraduate or graduate education? What is the ratio or proportion of undergraduate students to graduate students?
- How many undergraduate students attend your university?
- How big will my classes be? (i.e. how many students will be in them?)
- What percentage of my classes will professors teach versus graduate students?
- How easy is it to change majors?
- How many international students attend your school?
- How well does this school handle international students and their special needs?
- What kind of sports programs does your school have? (What Division? Intramural sports?)
- What kind of study-abroad programs does your school have?

### **Questions specific to Environment**

- What is the weather like: summer, fall, winter and spring?
- What are the housing facilities/dorm like? How new are they?
- Do people live on campus all four years? If not, where else do they live?
- What kinds of recreation are available on campus or in the area?
- How big is the campus?

### **Questions specific to Costs**

- What is the yearly tuition?
- With tuition, books, and room and board, what is the price for a year at your school?
- What kind of financial aid does the school offer?
- Is financial aid available to students who are not U.S. citizens (or have a U.S. passport)?
- Are there some merit-based scholarships that I might be qualified for?

### 3.5 Steps To Narrow Your List Of Colleges

1. Do your mull list. Rate which factors are more important for you.

For example:

A Mull List		
Here's an example of a Mull List made by an hypothetical student:		
Item	Rating (A-E)	Comment
States	B+	California,
Size	A	Not giant, not tiny 5000 to 10000 enrollments
Location	A	Small town or suburbs
Major	E	Undecided
Housing	B	Would like dorm
Students	D	Coed Campus
Test Scores	C	Not fussy

2. Go to a College Directory or a College Search in Internet. Make a list of all colleges that have the characteristics you want.

Some college search sites in Internet:

- \* [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)
- \* <http://www.collegenet.com/>
- \* <http://www.collegeview.com/college/>
- \* <http://www.princetonreview.com/college/research/advsearch/match.asp>

3. With that list, get into their web pages, check their catalogs, visit their campus and narrow more your list.
4. At the beginning of your senior year you should have a list of 7 schools to which you would like to apply. Remember you will apply at least to 7 schools. Make sure to include at least 2 back up colleges that you know will accept you in case you were not accepted in your first options.

<b>Your Mull List</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Rating (A- E)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
States		
Size		
Location (setting)		
Major		
Housing		
Students		
Test Scores range		
Campus Life		
Activities/ sports		

## IV. VISITING A COLLEGE CAMPUS

Each college has its own personality. You must decide if your personalities mesh or clash.

The personality check will take some time, so allow at least two days for each school you're checking. But don't think of it in terms of just driving through a campus, looking at pretty elm trees and saying, "This is a nice place." That would be wasted effort.

You'll have to get out of the car and talk to people, even live with them for a while. These are the people with whom you'll spend four years. Are they good guys or jerks?

### 4.1 Things To Do During The Campus Visit:

1. **Take a tour through the campus.**
2. **Plan an interview with an admission officer.** Call the college admission office for an appointment at least two weeks in advance.
3. **Arrange an interview with a financial aid officer.**
4. **Talk to students:** ask about the classes, professors, the social life, the housing conditions. You probably won't have to ask many questions to produce a stream of opinions.
5. As you talk to students, you also can learn a lot about them. And that's important because the key ingredient in a college's personality is its student body. Their collective approach to life determines if a college is a party school or nerd haven, liberal or conservative, clean-cut or grungy. In conversations with students you'll quickly get a feel for which way the campus leans in these and other areas that might be important to you.
6. **Eat in dining halls.**
7. **Talk to professors.**
8. **Sit in on classes.**
9. **Read the student newspaper:** a fine source of campus information available without talking to anyone. It's usually available in the student center, dorm lobbies and other popular campus spots. It can give you a quick briefing on the current hot campus issues and a feel for what students at their college think is important.
10. **If you can manage it, stay overnight, preferably in a dorm.**

## 4.2 Interview With An Admissions Officer

During the interview you have two goals: learning about the college and telling the college about yourself.

### **What to bring:**

Bring to the interview anything you think will help you.

1. A note pad and a pen are probably essential. Feel free to take notes as you talk.
2. Your questions: bring a list of questions to remind yourself what to ask.
  1. High school transcript
  2. High school profile
3. A smile, and use it often. If you smile frequently, an admission officer can't help thinking nice thoughts about you, even if you have a C in Geometry.

### **What to ask:**

Ask about anything that concerns you, interests you, intrigues you or helps you decide if this is a right college.

These are some possible questions:

1. How tough will it be to earn a degree in four years?
2. How secure are the residence halls?
3. How much college credit can you get for Advanced Placement courses in high school?
4. How many freshman courses do graduate students instead of full-fledged professors teach?
5. What's the typical class size?
6. What's important in deciding if an applicant is accepted?
7. How easy is it to get into campus residence halls?
8. Do certain dorms have certain life styles?
9. How big are fraternities or sororities in campus life?
10. What are my chances of being accepted?

## VI. STUDENT ACTIVITY RECORD

This information will help you for the college application process. It will help teachers write recommendation letters for you.

Please be thoughtful, specific and clear when filling this out.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Activities					Participation in Athletic Teams:				
	9	10	11	12		9	10	11	12
Student Council					BASKETBALL				
National Honor Society					VOLLEYBALL				
High School Newspaper					SOCCER				
Hacia Democracy					Other:				
Other:									

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your participation in Artistic Activities (theater, musicals, etc):

9 <sup>th</sup>	
10 <sup>th</sup>	
11 <sup>th</sup>	
12 <sup>th</sup>	

Special Recognition, awards, honors, and scholarships:

9 <sup>th</sup>	
10 <sup>th</sup>	
11 <sup>th</sup>	
12 <sup>th</sup>	

**Community Service and Voluntarism:**

Service Project Description	9	10	11	12

Musical Instruments you play:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Languages you speak:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Other activities (Work Experience, religious activity, etc.):

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

## **VI. School Information**

Counselor's Name: Mariana Harnecker  
Counselor's Email: [mharnecker@mbs.ed.cr](mailto:mharnecker@mbs.ed.cr)  
Phone: (506) 2273 0024  
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School Code (CCBT/ACT): 834252

School Address in Costa Rica:  
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Aerocasillas mailing Address:

Your name SJO 751  
PO Box 025331  
Miami, Fl 33102-5331

Aerocasillas street Address to receive packages:

Your name SJO 751  
7979 NW 21<sup>st</sup> St  
Doral, Fl 33122