

MCNEAL SAMS COLLEGE CONSULTING NEWS AND NOTES

SENIOR CHECKLIST

- Check your email and your portals regularly.
- Check your email and your portals now (yes, it's that important! Every year, students learn that their application is incomplete, which explains why they did not receive an early notification: they'd been moved to the regular pool. Your portal is information central!)
- Schedule a mock interview! If you expect or hope to be offered an interview, we suggest you practice for it! Team member Elizabeth Schnell prepares our students beautifully. Please contact her and note that she books quickly.

JANUARY MEANS IT'S TIME TO PLAN

You have spent so much time applying for college, we get it. You are tired of this whole college choice journey. You are so close to the finish line. Now is not the time to stop. January and February are great opportunities for you to start thinking about making a final choice of where you will enroll next year for college.

How are you going to compare the schools you are admitted to in order to decide what you will gain and what you will potentially lose with each choice? What factors will take precedence? You have grown quite a bit since you began your journey more than a year ago. This is the time when you will have to apply all the self-awareness, research, organization, and decision-making skills you have gained throughout your college process to come up with the best choice for you.

Completely unsure where to begin or just need a little guidance to drive your decision-making? We have developed a set of tools to help guide your decision-making process. Contact your college consultant to begin the ending of your college choice experience.

KINDNESS CORNER: THE HAPPINESS FACTOR

Mom and dad, you have almost weathered the storm called the college choice experience. We know it is a long process and at times has felt like it would never end. We also know that as with most arduous journeys, knowing the finish line is just around the corner can sometimes make it feel like it will never end. You are as ready to be done as your student is ready to be done.

To take your mind off the how slow time progresses between now and the end of March when all decisions arrive, we have some reading suggestions for you to help you prepare for what comes next...the transition to college. We hope you enjoy and find our suggestions helpful. Click on the thumbnail below for more information. And, as always, know your college consultant is here to support you, too.

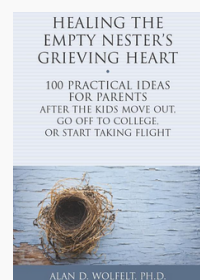
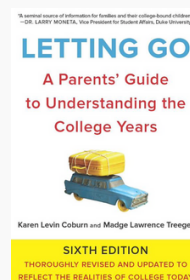
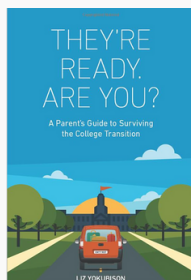
TALK AROUND TOWN

Some items we find interesting::

Article: [Top Ten College Transition Tips](#), by Brennan Brown

Podcast: *College Info Geek: Study Tips and Advice for Students*

Reading Recommendation: *My Freshman Year* by Rebekah Nathan.



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NEWS AND NOTES

FINAL CHOICE CHECKLIST

Are you ready to make a commitment to the college you will attend? There is more to finalizing your enrollment than letting the college know you will come. The most popular first steps are listed below. For a complete list of typical tasks required between now and when you begin college, consult [this guide](#).

- Pay your enrollment deposit.
- Accept your financial offer, including scholarships and need-based aid.
- Register for housing including paying your housing deposit. And, selecting a roommate. It can be fun. Most schools have an online "roommate meet-up" [resource](#).
- Register for an orientation program.

COMPARING COLLEGE COSTS

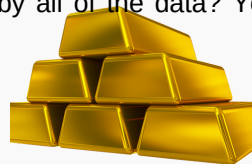
We recognize that college is expensive. Typically, a college education is one of the largest investments a family will make. You have made the choice to invest your time, talent, and resources in finding the right college choices. Now you want, or need, to understand what each choice will cost.

It is not always easy to figure out what the costs might be at a particular school. There is more to college costs than tuition, or even what your family is billed each year. You have to plan for extra expenses like books and travel and personal supplies. You won't be able to open a cabinet in your bathroom to find another tube of toothpaste anymore.

We encourage you to take some time to educate yourself about college costs and to calculate what each school you are considering will cost you and your family. To help you make these calculations we offer these suggestions and tools:

1. [Finaid.org](#) is one of the most informative websites available and is run by former college financial aid officers. They have all kinds of calculators and great general information about college costs.
2. Review the cost information on the websites of the colleges you are considering. **READ CAREFULLY!** Sometimes the fine print can present significant additional charges based on major, residence choices, and more. Search for "cost of attendance" and then start reading.
3. We have designed a tool you can use to calculate your costs at each school and compare them side by side. [You can download a copy of this tool here.](#)

Overwhelmed and confused by all of the data? Your college consultant is happy to assist you. Contact us today.



SPOTLIGHT ON SENIOR SUMMER

You may be feeling the relief of not having to plan your summer for the sake of your application. Yes! Savor that feeling...and then, make some plans:

1. Make an appointment with our resume specialist, Elizabeth Schnell, now or this summer. This is a great time to work on this task, and we can help! Having a resume before college begins means you will be ready for internship applications, job applications, Greek life (sometimes a resume is required in order to rush), and an eventual visit to your career counseling center (more on this in a future newsletter!)
2. Study your course catalogue and the requirements for first year students. More on this in a future newsletter, too!
3. Shore up your financial reserves with a summer job. Plan some fun reading. Continue or begin volunteering in your community.