

As students further their high school education, getting accepted into a good college becomes a constant thought. Here are a few tips to increase a student's ability to get accepted into the college of his or her dreams.

Grades and GPA

As the nation expands into a more diverse society, competition is growing throughout colleges in the U.S. Being sure to maintain competitive grades, a high GPA, and class rank throughout high school are very important aspects to consider prior to looking for a college which suits you.

year is the most important year. It is the one that colleges really look at." Junior year is a very important year from the college perspective in looking for students they want to attend their school. The junior transcript is the most current proof of grades and class rank that they will have as a student applies first semester of their senior year.

Maintaining an above-average GPA increases a student's chance of getting into college. It shows the college that these students are not afraid to work hard and can achieve a goal when setting their mind to it.

Many teachers offer tutoring for students who need extra help with their studies, and provides students with means to head off potentially spiraling GPAs.

"I took honors pre-calculus this year," said Lauren Huffman, ACHS senior. "I went to tutoring two to three times a week. It really does make a difference."

Another way students can avoid a GPA drop-off is not to procrastinate on projects, assignments, or study time.

"I always told myself I worked best under pressure," said Mike Blackowicz, ACHS senior. "Until I did a project a week before it was due. It was definitely a lot less stressful, and I felt more confident when it was my turn to present my work."

ACT prep course

Students are faced with taking several standardized tests during their high school careers. Some of

these tests determine college admission or potential college credit. The American College Test (ACT) is the standard college admissions test for universities in the Midwest.

The ACT prep course specializes in general test-taking skill, test day tips, calculator tips, and tips for the writing portion. It covers all facets of the ACT including English, reading, math, and science, along with incorporating test-taking strategies.

"If people are really serious about doing good on this test then I believe it will really help," said guidance counselor Jennifer Stennett. "You can't just take the class and not do the work, it would not be worth it."

The class costs about \$175 and is six weeks long and is offered through most high schools in the Midwest and

is the second step students should consider in making it to college or thereafter.

"I am taking the class right now," said junior Bridget Haley. "I think it's really going to help."

College visits

When the time comes to start narrowing down a student's college choice options, college visits are essential.

A student may have his or her heart set on a school, without ever visiting them. When they actually see the college, they may realize that it just was not the right school for them.

Every college is different, just as every student is different, and that is why it is so important to find the college that is right for you. Attending a col-

lege that you feel most comfortable in can help you succeed in college.

"I was planning on going to Loyola for their nursing program," said Kelsey Dent, ACHS senior. "I liked the campus, but the school does not have cheerleading or football. Knowing that completely changed my mind of where I wanted to go to school next year. I found that Illinois State University has a great program for nursing, and they also have football and cheerleading. I found the school that met all my future college needs."



In state or out of state Major university or small college

With the end of high school approaching quicker than students may think, it is never too early to start thinking about the college scene. There are a lot of decisions to be made about post high school life including the biggest, what college are you going to attend?

College, along with being one of the most important decisions in a person's life, is also one of the most personal. No person, teacher or coach should have the final say on where you should attend.

While they are good for influence and information, only you can tell whether or not you feel at home.

The main things to think about are to:

- know yourself and your goals
- know what you're capable of
- know your best work habits

With so many opportunities to choose from, it is important to know what you want to get out of the college experience. Whether you're looking for engineering, business, fine arts, communications, or if your not sure, the liberal arts.

Another major aspect to think about is the size of a college. College campus' can range from 500 to 50,000 students and class sizes 10 to 1,000. In order to make that decision, you need to know the manner in which you work the best.

Finally, think about how far you want to be from home. Going to a school on the coasts, plane tickets home will become pricey. If homesickness is something that comes over your body quickly, travelling far from home is probably not the best place for you.

Big Schools

While major universities offer superb instruction, familiarity with the professors in your general studies is

hard to come by. If you're a person who works well in a group-like environment and don't mind sitting in a lecture class of 500, then a big school may suit you.

If you are not sure what it is that you want to do, a big school may benefit you. Switching majors will not be that difficult with the hundreds of programs and degrees offered.

Prospective athletes may want to go to a Division I school in order to be recognized by professional teams.

Small Schools

Smaller colleges still provide a great education, the difference being involvement in a one-on-one community. Students get a chance to know each other as well as their professors better.

Smaller schools have the tendency to be more specific on the areas in which they offer majors. Class size is much smaller, giving professors an opportunity to teach individuals rather than groups.

Schools like Beloit College in Wisconsin are, in terms of population, no larger than ACHS. Class size can be about 30 students, which is very comparable to the class size here.

Aspects like that can make a transition into college easier, and smaller class sizes can make for a more comfortable learning environment.

If you're interested in becoming a college athlete, unless you are an all conference, a smaller college can give the opportunity to pursue athletics to the next level. Even if you are a superb athlete and can't get recognized by a big school, a Division II or III school can help get you noticed.

Because of a scaled down enrollment, small schools can lead to a better chance to stand out in your area of expertise.



What to bring

More than three quarters of all incoming freshman end up living in dorm room on campus. The dorm rooms of today's college attendees are equipped with cable and direct Ethernet computer connection.

An alarm clock is a necessity for college as it is not the teachers responsibility to make sure you get to class on time.

TV's can be found in dorms of some colleges but if a student wants to have a personal TV, it will need to be brought from home.

Students should bring items for their personal entertainment. Items such as video games and dart boards are relatively common in dorm rooms. Stereo systems become a must for music lovers and anyone who wants to drown out the noise around them. With enrollment in major universities close to 40,000, it can be very noisy and crowded at times.



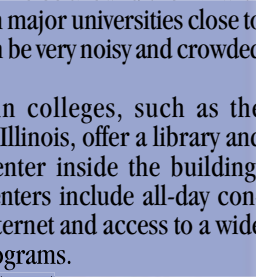
Housing in colleges, such as the University of Illinois, offer a library and computer center inside the building. Computer centers include all-day connection to internet and access to a wide variety of programs.

If you're looking for more privacy to get work done, bringing your own computer may be a better option. Also, computers at major universities total over 1,000, access to them at libraries and study halls.

Transportation can be a problem in many colleges, especially the major universities. U of I, for instance, has almost 1500 acres containing over 250 major buildings and 40,000 students, which makes parking a real squeeze.



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What to hide

Many colleges have limited parking and grant it only to those with seniority very similar to the system here at ACHS. It is sometimes a good idea to leave cars behind during their first couple of years of college.

Surplus population at colleges affects many aspects of college life. Dorm rooms can be small and crowded in attempts to put a lot of people in as little room as possible.

With such little space, many of the luxuries we value might have to be left behind. There is not a whole lot of space to put items one brings from home especially with the furniture that comes with the room already inside.

It is important to know your roommate before you bring too much to your dorm. Stealing can be a common offense in college so it might be smart to wait and get to know the people around you before you bring items in that you feel are too valuable. Compromising on items to bring like televisions, lamps, mini-fridges, etc., is a smart idea so that each person only has half as many items to bring.

Alternate Housing

For those who chose to live outside the dorms and don't mind paying extra most of the time, some colleges offer privately owned houses and apartments of single or multi-occupancy style. Large rooms and private baths are some of the advantages.

Some establishments require you to follow a specified meal plan, while others allow you to cook your own food. These areas allow more room and more privacy, but also does not provide the convenience of dorm cafeterias.

While many dorms have computer centers, cafeterias, and libraries right inside, an independent house may require a commute to get to such facilities. Nonetheless, if you're someone who requires a little more room and has the discipline, an independent home might be the right choice.



The College DECISION

SEARCH • COMPARE • VISIT • APPLY • DECIDE

WHAT YOU MAY BE MISSING WHEN IT COMES TO MOVING ON WITH YOUR LIFE



Written and Designed by: Tim Racette and Ben Henning
Katy Lukaszewski (above) listens in on a college visit from the University of Southern Illinois in the guidance office. College visits like this one give students the opportunity to get a feel for the school and speak with a representative from the college one-on-one. Representatives from different colleges (left) and military branches visit the school's guidance office and commons frequently trying to recruit prospective students and soldiers for their programs.
Photos by Tim Racette