

# Building a College List

---

The best way to start your college search is NOT to start with rankings, colleges that your parents or friends attended or what magazines and college directories deem “the best,” but to think about **who YOU are and what you want from your college experience**.

- Start by assessing your strengths, weaknesses, passions, leaning style and comfort level with different social and academic settings.
- Make some basic decisions about the type, location, size and living options that most appeal to you for college. Visiting several college campuses can help with this task.
- Then look for schools that offer majors and programs of study that interest you, along with activities and sports.
- Finally, with the help of your counselor and information sources such as *Naviance*, assess where your academic record and test scores place you in the admissions pool. This step helps you to build a list that has a combination of reach, match and likely schools.
- Once you find a college that “fits” you can use online search engines such as the ones in *Naviance* and *Counselor-O-Matic* to find schools with similar attributes.

*See the reverse for some things to consider >>>*

## Things to consider as you begin the college search process:

You should research and consider **small schools** if:

- You like being with people who share your interests and/or have a lot in common with you.
- You are seeking smaller classes where there is lots of discussion and the opportunity to know and interact closely with your professors.
- You enjoy knowing a lot of people in your community and the feeling of being “a big fish in a small pond.”
- You want a place where everything is within easy access (classrooms, dorms, cafeteria, library).

You should research and consider **larger schools** if:

- You like getting lost in a crowd.
- You are seeking diversity and like being around many types of people.
- You prefer listening to lectures rather than participating in class.
- You are independent and able to negotiate your way without a lot of handholding and support.
- You want a place where there is lots of school spirit and sporting events that attract a high percentage of the student body.

You should research and consider **schools that are close to home** if:

- You want to see your family every few weeks and be within a few hours’ drive from home.
- Your parents want you to be near.
- You enjoy the climate of New England – four distinct seasons, cold winters and warm summers.
- You want to live at home and commute to school during your college years, either for personal reasons or to save money.

You should research and consider **schools that are further away from home** if:

- You want to experience life in another part of the country (or the world).
- You are comfortable seeing your family only two or three times a year.
- You want an environment where the weather is more consistent throughout the year – a place where you can swim and play tennis year round or one where the ski season runs from October to May.
- You have sufficient funds to pay for getting to and from school.

You should research and consider **suburban or more rural schools** if:

- You are seeking a school with a distinct campus and/or quad area where people hang out during their free time.
- You enjoy being outdoors and have access to activities like hiking, rock climbing, skiing, etc.
- You are satisfied with the facilities and activities available on campus and do not need frequent access to a variety of services like shopping centers, restaurants, theaters, etc.

You should research and consider **urban schools** if:

- You thrive on a busy lifestyle and want to explore beyond the campus.
- You enjoy being in the city and having access to shopping, museums, theater, clubs, restaurants, etc.
- You are seeking a variety of internship opportunities.
- You want to be involved in service activities geared toward urban populations.