

Middlebury

Middlebury Admissions
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How to Enjoy the College Application Process

10. Visit, if possible, at least some of the colleges that you are considering. Nothing will help you more to define the ideal learning environment for you, and to help you see for yourself whether the labels and stereotypes that get attached to some colleges really are valid.
9. Feel free to schedule an interview if you are going to be visiting, if the college offers individual interviews, and if it is a college that you are seriously considering. But don't worry if you can't have or don't want one. Interviews are virtually never a required part of the process, and they may or may not even be what is considered "evaluative." But having one could help you learn more about the institution, and it could help the college learn more about you. Once you've had an interview or two, you'll find them amazingly enjoyable.
8. Share your reactions about the colleges you visit with your parents and others. Sure, it's sometimes a pain that they want to be so involved with what ultimately will be your decision, but since they are frequently the ones who are going to be helping you pay for this experience, it's important that they are on the same page with you.
7. Be thoughtful in your choices so that you don't feel as if you need to apply to 15-20 colleges just because some of your friends are. If you are diligent enough with the steps above, you ought to be able to narrow it down to 6-8 attractive options fairly easily, and if those cover a range of competitiveness for you, you will be fine next spring. It will also be nice to save money on those application fees...
6. Apply Early Decision only if you felt like "lightning struck" during your college search and it is your clear first choice. Too many students apply ED for the wrong reasons (i.e., because of whatever strategic advantage they think it may give them in being admitted), but applying early can take you out of the "driver's seat" of a very important decision. This is especially true for anyone for whom financial considerations are going to be important in their decision about where to attend. You and your family may wish to be able to compare different financial aid/scholarship awards.
5. Be aware that your SAT/ACT scores will probably play less of a role in your admissions decision than you may think. Most selective colleges do not have "cut off" scores below which applicants are not admitted, and most have a fairly wide range of scores represented among their admitted students. That's because test scores only provide colleges with the roughest possible measure of your potential for success academically in college; your high school grades are a much better predictor of that. Higher scores are better than lower scores, of course, but even the highest scores are by no means a guarantee of admission to the most selective colleges. At most colleges to which you apply, it is likely that your scores will look quite similar to those of other applicants, which means it is unlikely that they will be a deciding factor in your candidacy.
4. Relax when it comes time to writing your personal essay and let it come from your heart. Yes, the essay is important enough to be required by most colleges, but please know that very seldom is the essay reason enough by itself to admit or reject anyone. We just want to get to know you a little better, and your grades and scores only paint part of your picture. Your essay can do that, but don't forget to proofread and use your spell check . . .

3. Choose the teachers who write letters of recommendation for you carefully. Since those letters are another way for us to get to know you better, they should come from teachers who know you well, maybe even teachers who have had contact with you outside of their classrooms such as through clubs, teams, etc. And don't forget that some of the teachers who challenged you the most may be able to write an even more meaningful letter for us than the ones from whom you got easy "A's."

2. Submit additional letters of recommendation only if they are from people who know you really well and can add things about you that others couldn't. Letters from friends of your parents who happen to be alumni of the college to which you are applying, for example, don't usually shed much additional light for us.

And the Number One way to enjoy the college admissions process is:

1. Breathe deeply and always remember that a year from now you will very likely be attending some truly excellent college where you will get a first-rate education and have a wonderful experience. The great thing about higher education in the United States is that there are so many terrific options that almost everyone ends up having a really positive college experience. And don't forget that the quality of your educational experience is far more up to you than it is up to the institution that you attend.

CTCL^{•ORG} COLLEGES THAT CHANGE LIVES

The Turning the Tide initiative has lots of people in higher education and high schools talking about helping students maximize their high school experience - in all kinds of ways, not just with a plethora of AP classes. This is a good thing.

Ironically, however, the roughly 90 schools that have signed onto the Tide-initiative include some of the most selective (and perhaps stress-inducing) schools in the nation. As has been the case with college rankings, when the focus is on such a narrow band of schools (in this case, approximately 3 percent of the not-for-profit colleges and universities), it's easy to lose sight of the reality that there are, and always have been, many wonderful opportunities for students at the majority of U.S. colleges and universities.

So, here's another idea: Let's encourage students to consider the "other" 2500+ colleges - large and small, urban and rural, public and private - that are *inclusive*, rather than *selective* in their admission policies.

Colleges That Change Lives has long encouraged students to consider their high school years as a valid life experience, not just a stepping stone to college. CTCL schools review applications with an eye towards admission and admit students who have spent their high school years living an authentic experience - taking courses that challenged and intrigued them intellectually, while also balancing a schedule that includes time for family, friends, activities, and even sleep. This focus recognizes that students who do what they genuinely enjoy are happier and that, by learning to balance their strengths and weaknesses, students are more prepared not just for college but for life.

Turning the Tide merely repeats what CTCL has advocated for years: Colleges should recognize the value students bring to campus, rather than requiring a "more is always better" mentality for applications. CTCL (and schools like them) are pleased to have everyone on the same page now.

- Maria Furtado, Executive Director

Chris Teare Contributor

I write about education, especially the college application process. full bio →

I am an educator who also writes and broadcasts. A graduate of Amherst College (BA, English), Columbia University (MS, Journalism) and St. John's College (MA, Liberal Arts), I have taught, coached, counseled and been an administrator in independent, international and public secondary schools for more than 30 years and am now in college admissions. My writing has appeared in The New York Times blog "The Choice," The Chronicle of Higher Education, Education Week, Independent School magazine, and on the education website Noodle. I have written a weekly column entitled "Finding A College That Fits" for the Pulitzer Prize-winning Virgin Islands Daily News, created and hosted a weekly radio program called "Making the College Choice" and—once upon a time—worked as a desk assistant at WCBS-TV News and as the 10 o'clock anchorman at WSAW-TV News.

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Need Options? Consider Colleges That Change Lives

If you or someone you love is looking for great places to apply, Colleges That Change Lives (www.ctcl.org) might include institutions that could be the right fit, especially for those seeking more personal experiences with challenging academics in undergraduate environments that are more collaborative than competitive. I visited many CTCL institutions during my years in college counseling and 10 years ago wrote a column about the book in my weekly series "Finding A College That Fits" for the Virgin Islands Daily News; CTCL's Founder, the late Loren Pope, was pleased with the piece. In that context, I reached out to current CTCL Executive Director Maria Furtado to learn and share more:

1. As an organization, what is Colleges That Change Lives?

Our main goal is to help students, families and counselors remember that the college search is first and foremost about students. It should be a student-centered process. As a culture, we tend to quickly gravitate towards that which we know, whether it's clothing, sneakers, cars, or education. The college search should be a personal and introspective process for each student, allowing him/her the chance to think about the type of next step that makes the most sense. Busy students and parents often want to jump directly to "making a list".

CTCL is an advocate for liberal arts education, and each of the member schools offers a quality liberal arts education. Part of our message is to remind students and parents that STEM is intrinsically part of the liberal arts, not separate from the liberal arts.

CTCL tries to be a voice of reason among the stress-filled lives of students and parents. We try to remind families that there are many quality schools across the country that will offer students a strong liberal arts education, personal opportunities for study abroad, leadership and community, and strong outcomes (graduate, medical and law school admission, career opportunities, alumni networks, scholarships programs like Rhodes, Gilmans, Fulbrights, Marshalls, etc.)

2. How were the colleges selected?

We established the non-profit as a way to keep Loren Pope's message alive. Loren worked in higher education, was education editor for The New York Times, and worked with students and parents to help create a college list. He loved the small, residential, liberal arts experience, and he believed it was the ideal way for 18 to 22 year olds to learn. About 20 years ago, he published the book, "Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think About College". In that book, he profiled 40 schools in depth. The colleges began working together as a group of like-minded schools, then about 10 years ago, the then-Advisory Board created our non-profit organization. Loren fully approved and supported the colleges' plan to make their work together more official.

The schools profiled in the 2006 version of the book, the last that Loren revised, are our founding colleges and universities. In 2012, Penguin Publishing and Loren's family hired Hilary Masell Oswald to revise the book again. She identified four more schools, and the organization invited them to join CTCL. They did, which brings the membership to 44.

3. Which students and parents should most consider CTCL member institutions?

Students who hope to have a college experience that includes small classes and extensive faculty interaction will be best served by CTCL schools and schools like them. Students hoping to spend their college experience unnoticed will not be well served by a CTCL schools. The classes are small, and the faculty are mentors, not just advisers.

Small schools, especially residential communities, create a distinctive intellectual space in which students live and learn. Students are challenged and supported. The schools are typically diverse in many ways — domestic and international students, US geographic diversity, socio-economic diversity, religious diversity, political diversity and racial diversity. Not all schools are all of the above, but they are all welcoming communities.

4. "Changing lives" is a lot to claim; how do you know you do such things? Are there regular re-visits, surveys and/or evaluations done?

When Loren researched the first version of the book, he began working with no title. As he talked with students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff and administration, he found the theme he heard was "this place changed my life". Thus, the title... It's a big title. The experience that students have is often life-changing because of faculty connections and unexpected experiences. Almost all the schools have high percentages of students who study abroad — an often life-changing experience. More often, it's the day-to-day education and life on campus that shows students who they can be...and that person is sometimes not who they expected. They learn to think better and more broadly; they learn to better understand and appreciate the perspective and experience of others. They are often able to dig more deeply into research (in all academic areas) because they have such easy access to faculty.

Are these the only 44 schools that change lives? Absolutely not. But, they are great examples of the ways in which a small, residential, liberal arts campus can help a student grow to be his/her best self.

5. Do you ever add or drop colleges? Why or why not?

No schools have been removed from the organization. Were a school to no longer deliver a strong liberal arts education or change their admission process and educational system to be less student-centered, they would no longer be a good fit for our organization and message.

6. If I want to learn more about CTCL, where do I go to do so?

Our website is a great resource (www.ctcl.org) and you can follow us on Facebook or Twitter (#CTCLColleges). We will soon be posting our 2016 Tours with events for students and parents in

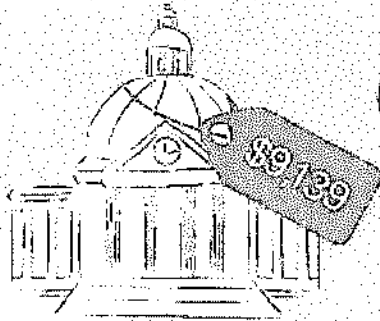
25 cities across the country. There are also smaller events at which I, as CTCL's executive director, will talk about the college search and CTCL. Those are listed on our website as well.

On further reflection, two final notes: My eldest daughter graduated with honors from CTCL member Agnes Scott College, which she selected after finding all the characteristics described above and in Loren Pope's original published account; moreover, I joined the admissions staff here at Drew University after finding similar attributes of excellent liberal arts delivered by superb faculty who care equally about their disciplines and the students in their care, setting a tone of challenge, collaboration and nurture that truly does change lives.

After three decades in secondary education in the United States, Caribbean and Europe, Chris Teare is now Senior Associate Director of Admissions at Drew University in Madison, NJ.

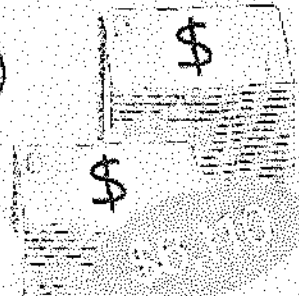
Focus on Net Price, Not Sticker Price (www.CollegeBoard.org)

Four-year public college



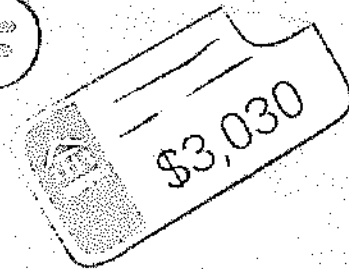
Sticker Price

The college's published tuition and fees



Gift Aid & Tax Benefits

Grants and scholarships (free money you don't have to work for or pay back) plus education tax benefits



Net Price

The difference between the two — the real amount your family pays (typically with loans, savings and income)

Note: Figures shown are averages for four-year public colleges and their in-state, full-time students for the 2014-15 school year. Real amounts will vary.

College may seem expensive. But the truth is that most students pay less than their college's sticker price, or published price, thanks to financial aid. So instead of looking at the published price, concentrate on your net price — the real price you'll pay for a college.

What Is Net Price?

Your net price is a college's sticker price for tuition and fees minus the grants and scholarships and education tax benefits you receive. The net price you pay for a particular college is specific to you because it's based on your personal circumstances and the college's financial aid policies.

The net price, on average, is considerably lower than the published price. For example, the average published in-state price for tuition and fees for four-year public colleges is \$9,139 per year. But the average net price — what the average family really pays — is just \$3,030 per year. For private nonprofit four-year colleges, the average published price is \$31,230 per year, but the average family pays just \$12,360 annually.

Colleges you thought were out of your reach may turn out to be affordable.

What Is a Net Price Calculator?

A net price calculator is a free online tool that gives you a personalized estimate of net price. The federal government now requires most colleges and universities to have a net price calculator on their websites.

How Do Net Price Calculators Work?

A college's net price calculator asks you questions about your family's finances and may also ask you questions about your GPA, test scores, activities and other things that may qualify you for financial aid. It uses your answers to figure out how much money in grants and scholarships the college is likely to award you. It then subtracts that number from the full cost of attendance to estimate how much the college might really cost you.

Many net price calculators also provide information about other kinds of financial aid you might be offered. These include loans and work-study jobs.

Why Are Net Price Calculators Important?

By providing personalized estimates, net price calculators offer a more informed way of deciding which colleges you can afford. Knowing your net price:

- Gives you the best idea of what you'll pay for a particular college
- Makes comparing colleges easier
- Widens your choice of colleges

When you look at the net price instead of the published price, colleges you thought were out of your reach may turn out to be affordable. A college with a high published price might offer its students a lot of financial aid — so it might actually be cheaper than a college with a low published price.

Also, different students get different amounts of gift aid. That's where a net price calculator comes in — it figures out what gift aid you might be eligible for.

DID YOU KNOW?

40%

Students received a total of \$122.7 billion in scholarships and grants in 2013-14. About 40% of this free money comes from the federal government and, to qualify, you need to fill out the FAFSA. Here's a breakdown of where grant money comes from.

- 40% Federal
- 39% College
- 13% Private
- 8% State

Tips

As you use net price calculators:

- Answer each question as accurately as possible. The more accurate the numbers you provide are, the more accurate the result.
- Remember that they provide estimates only. The actual price you pay to go to a particular college may be higher or lower than the estimate its net price calculator provides

Other resources:

- *The College Solution* – Lynn O'Shaughnessy

- *Debt Free U* – Zac Bissonnette

- DIY College Rankings 50-50 Lists - <http://diycollegerankings.com/>

- Lists of colleges regarding cost (from those that meet full need to those that offer money to students without need): http://www.collegexpress.com/lists/explore/?chapter_id=103

- Financial Aid Overview http://www.paly.net/college/financial_aid

- Scholarship Resources http://www.paly.net/college/scholarship_resources

Net Price Calculator

A Guide for Students and Families

A net price calculator (NPC) is an online tool that provides estimates of college costs for prospective students, based on a set of inputs, such as family income, size and assets. The NPC calculates estimated grant and scholarship aid and subtracts that total from a college's cost of attendance, resulting in an **estimated net price**. Most NPCs go the next step and subtract a prospective student's estimated "self-help" (i.e., loans and work), resulting in a figure called **estimated remaining cost**.

For many years, there have been calculators online that allow families to calculate their expected family contribution. With an NPC, the difference is that the other half of the equation — how colleges distribute their financial aid and scholarship money — is now available. Families can estimate bottom-line college costs and plan accordingly.

The results of NPCs can vary. These tips should help students and their families interpret and understand NPC results.

1. **Not all NPCs will deliver the same results.** Colleges and universities have three options when choosing an NPC: using a federal NPC, developing their own NPC or subscribing to one from a third-party provider. Depending on the number and type of questions asked, the results will vary in accuracy. Typically, the fewer the questions, the less accurate the results.
2. **Timing is a factor.** The closer the student is to actually enrolling in college, the more accurate the results will be — because the financial information inputted will be most current.
3. There is no uniform way that colleges and universities are required to display results, so **use caution when comparing results to make sure that "apples-to-apples" comparisons are being made.** (See "Compare Your Net Prices" on the back for an example.)
4. If loans are subtracted from the net price, **be aware that loans vary in pricing, terms and conditions.**
5. **Colleges and universities have different funding levels, types of funds and criteria for distributing their funds.** A student may receive a scholarship at one institution and not at another for a variety of reasons.
6. **The amount of time and effort required to complete each NPC will vary,** based on the number and types of questions asked.
7. **Do not only look at what it will cost to attend college.** Students should not "race to the bottom" and only focus on what it will cost them to attend a specific college. To be successful, it is more important that the institution is the best educational fit.
8. After completing an NPC, **always keep a copy for your records.**
9. **Input the most accurate information when completing an NPC.** The results of the NPC are only as valid as the accuracy of the data entered.
10. **It is not necessary to enter personal identifying information while using an NPC.** Some colleges may prompt students to enter personal identifying information. By law, that is not required. A student can remain anonymous to the NPC to protect his or her privacy.

For further information on how to use NPCs, see the next page of this document.

For more information on using the College Board's Net Price Calculator, please visit netpricecalculator.collegeboard.org.

A Guide to Compare Net Prices

Net price calculators vary from institution to institution. Using the guide below can help ensure that valid comparisons are made, no matter what NPC is being used.

Compare Your Net Prices
Enter the student's cost and aid information in the blank fields.

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Costs and Financial Aid				
College or University Name				
Cost of Attendance				
Tuition and Fees				
Room and Board				
Books and Supplies				
Transportation				
Personal Expenses				
Estimated Total Cost of Attendance				
Gift Aid				
Grants and Scholarships				
Other Gift Aid				
Estimated Total Gift Aid				
ESTIMATED NET PRICE (Estimated Total Cost of Attendance minus Estimated Total Gift Aid)				
Self-Help Aid				
Student Loans				
Federal Stafford Loans				
Federal Perkins Loan				
Other Student or Parent Loans				
Work				
Work-Study/Job Offer				
Estimated Total Self-Help				
ESTIMATED REMAINING COST (Estimated Net Price minus Estimated Total Self-Help)				

