

## Kelly College Counseling – An Overview of What to Expect

### **My Vision**

Leveraging technology for a perfect college fit.

### **Mission**

Small towns often do not get visits from college representatives or hold college fairs. Many are not even located near a major college or university. Thankfully, with advances in technology, students anywhere on the planet with internet access can now do virtual walk-throughs of campuses, message students currently enrolled there with questions, take free online courses (MOOCs) from professors at colleges of interest, and generate a personalized list of target and dream schools matching their needs and interests.

My goal is to leverage that technology to help students find the best college fit for them. A college at which they will thrive and succeed, not just where they can get in.

### **Objectives**

I do this by:

- Constantly researching the many tools available to evaluate colleges.
- Attending education conferences annually to see products demonstrated.
- Presenting conference papers annually on learning and technology applications.
- Visiting colleges across the country every month to add to our information database.
- Joining professional societies to share information with other independent college consultants.
- Holding quarterly community workshops to create awareness of information, processes, and resources.
- Making this information accessible to all who need it, both in person and through our website. We particularly welcome first-generation students who are new to the process, while understanding that the college application process today is nothing like what our parents experienced, so the methods today are new for all parents – whether they have graduated from college or not.

## The Process

### 1. Consultation

In our initial, complimentary one-hour meeting, I go over the application process with the student and family. I want to be sure I am a good fit for your needs as well; if not, I may refer you to a colleague who specializes in what you are after. After this initial consultation, I recommend services appropriate for your needs, from ACT-SAT prep to essay writing. I will set you up with an account in SCOIR ([www.scoir.com](http://www.scoir.com)), the app we use to organize your college choices, deadlines, and documentation.

### 2. Evaluation: Academics and Non-Academics

One way we evaluate students for academic and non-academic traits is to give them a Mindprint test, which assesses cognitive and non-cognitive skills, which in turn help me understand how to work best with any given student and which kinds of standardized tests they will tend to do better in.

Narrowing it down to college choices, I will work with the student to complete Steve Antonoff's book on college matching to be able to comprehensively assess academic and non-academic interests.

### 3. Career goals

ASVAB is apparently the world's most widely used career aptitude test. For those who may be interested in this test, I will set up an account to be able to have our students take this test in the closest town an hour away, or perhaps come to our town to be administered here. I will then invest the time needed to interpret the ASVAB results so I can discuss them with parents.

I periodically hold workshops for the community to explain the ASVAB and provide information on what can be learned from the test.

I will also investigate different aptitude and other tests to help students identify career opportunities and goals. These may include Strengthsfinders, Kolbe, and others such as YouScience, which is included in SCOIR for student use.

### 4. Financial considerations: aid, grants and scholarships

Karen Hunt is a great local resource who does a great job specializing in aid, grants, and scholarships. Rather than duplicate her efforts, my effort will be to team up with her to do workshops which will include her as a local resource.

## 5. College search and creation of college list

This is the fun part and a core strength of our services, based on my personal knowledge of colleges and making an effort to visit several a year. Assessing student interests and creating a great list of solid potential fits is a key to a successful college fit.

This strategy involves: 1) My attending conferences and reading about new technologies for creating college lists, such as the new SCOIR product this year. 2) Investing the time to learn the pros and cons of the different products by trying each one out. 3) Spending adequate time with families going over the questions in the College Match book to help narrow options and the rationale for each.

## 6. Personal statement and essay editing

I love helping students find their own voice. I look for times when a student will tell a story about unwrapping a telescope for a Christmas present, or shoveling horse manure in grandma's barn, and I will tell them to add that topic to the list of things they can write about for their college essays. The way they come alive telling the story will also come across in the way they tell it on paper, and stand out to admissions officers.

I work with a local English teacher to help students find their voice, which is the only authentic way to write an essay. I will look at the essay if they ask and offer comments, but I don't edit for spelling or grammar or punctuation. The college needs to see the student just as the student wishes to present himself or herself.

## 7. College application preparation

Requesting documentation. Reviewing transcripts. Deadlines. Helping students keep on top of this with a tool like SCOIR is key to reducing student stress and keeping parents in the loop. Strategies here include setting up an account for each student and parent, training them how to use the tool well, understanding each person's unique abilities and limitations, and ensuring all the data entered into the system are correct.

## 8. Interview preparation

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to interview preparation. Most students ask for one of three things according to their learning style: a list of questions they will be asked so they can study it and think about the answers they might

give, or a list of videos showing real or mock interviews, or a chance to do practice interviews. I prepare options for all three.

#### 9. College selection

This strategy includes identifying the student's criteria for college selection – financial aid? sports availability? how the college “feels” on a visit? -- and working with him or her to work through that process. It includes one-on-one time with the student to ensure the student chooses the college that's a good fit for him or her, and not one of parent expectations. The ability to listen carefully is a key skill to cultivate.

Finally, helping the student create his or her own list of pros and cons – whether with me or independently – will be critical in helping the student articulate what college is of interest to them and why. It will be a document they can refer back to often if they want to remind themselves of why they added or deleted a college from the list, or if they have doubts.

#### 10. Transition services – managing the stress of college selection

I research local resources for students' stress management and emotional wellbeing and parent encouragement. I then compile a list of resources, post it to the website, and update as necessary.

Individually, I meet with parents and students to work through these issues according to their needs. I share good articles with students and their parents on subjects such as how to minimize test anxiety and the importance of sleep. Keeping parents apprised through frequent calls and updates to keep them apprised helps them manage the process.