Resources

This section includes sources of information on selected topics covered in *Admission Matters.* We’ve chosen websites and some books that we find especially helpful, although there are many more we could have included. URLs are not provided since they are subject to change and may be easily found by searching the web.

MULTITOPIC INFORMATION SOURCES

*Web*

The College Board: Includes information about all aspects of college search and selection, as well as test preparation and financial aid.

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC): Contains a wealth of detailed information on a wide range of topics in college admissions.

*Books*

*College Admission Essentials: A Step-by-Step Guide to Showing Colleges Who You Are and What Matters to You* by Ethan Sawyer (Sourcebooks, 2020): Advice and insight provided by a team of counselors, advisors, and deans of admission.

*The Truth about College Admission* by Brennan Barnard and Rick Clark (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019): Advice, strategies, and direction for students and families in the college admissions process.

CHOOSING COLLEGES

*Web*

BigFuture®: A search engine and more contained within the College Board website (see the Multitopic Information Sources section).

College Navigator: Federal database allowing college search by location, program, and degree offerings; also provides additional information on financial aid and Spanish-language resources.

CollegeData, College Raptor, College Scorecard, Cappex*:* Popular college search engines.

*U.S. News and World Report* (USNWR): Free limited access to thedatabase used to generate college rankings (although we do not favor the use of these rankings, the data used to generate them can be helpful).

Colleges That Change Lives*:* Contains lots of good information about college selection.

Niche, Unigo, CampusReel: Websites providing student-generated information about colleges.

Campus Tours, YouVisit, eCampusTours: Websites containing links to virtual campus tours and videos at hundreds of campuses.

*A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College: Questions to Ask on Your College Visits*. Short guide based on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), provided on the Indiana University website.

Occupational Outlook Handbook:Website maintained by the Bureau of Labor Statistics providing detailed information on various occupations and occupational groups.

Campus Safety and Security*:* Website maintained by the U.S. Department of Education providing tools for campus safety and security analysis.

*Books*

*Breaking Ranks: How the Rankings Industry Rules Higher Education and What to do about It* by Colin Diver (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2022): Describes the impact of rankings on aspects of the college admissions process and suggests other ways to evaluate colleges.

*College Match: A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School* *for You* by Steven R. Antonoff (EDU Consulting Media, 2022): Provides tools to help students find best-fit colleges.

*Fiske Guide to Colleges* by Edward Fiske (Sourcebooks, updated annually) and *Princeton Review’s Best Colleges* by Robert Franek (Princeton Review, updated annually): Contain profiles of hundreds of popular four-year colleges and universities.

*Where You Go Is Not Who You’ll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania* by Frank Bruni (Hachette Book Group, 2015): Broadens the view of what makes a good college experience.

INSIDER ACCOUNTS

These books are best viewed as windows into the admissions process at highly selective institutions rather than as how-to guides to gain admission to them.

*Books*

*The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College* by Jacques Steinberg (New York: Penguin, 2003): Describes the author’s experience observing an admissions cycle at Wesleyan University.

*Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites* by Mitchell Stevens (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009): The author’s experience observing the admissions process at Hamilton College.

*Who Gets In and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions* by Jeffrey Selingo (Scribner, 2020): The author’s experience observing the admissions processes at Emory University, University of Washington, and Davidson College.

SPECIAL FOCUS GUIDES

*Web*

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities: Includes information about member Jesuit colleges.

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU): Contains information about Catholic higher education in general.

Hillel International: Includes a guide and comparison tool for colleges that enroll a high percentage of Jewish students.

Women’s Colleges Coalition: Provides information about women’s colleges; includes a college search tool.

The Hundred Seven: Includes information about all 107 HBCUs, along with a searchable database of academic programs.

Common Black College Application: Students may apply to manymember HBCUs for a single application fee.

American Indian Higher Education Consortium: Provides information about tribal colleges and links to TCUs by name, major, and degree.

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities: Contains a directory of Hispanic-serving institutions.

Campus Pride Index: Provides a benchmarking tool for colleges and universities with LGBTQ-friendly campuses.

Poets & Quants: Provides comprehensive information on the nation’s business schools, both undergraduate and graduate.

*Books*

*The Black Family’s Guide to College Admissions: A Conversation About Education, Parenting, and Race* by Timothy L. Fields and Shereem Herndon-Brown (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2022): Comprehensive advice for Black students applying to college. Includes information about HBCUs.

*America’s Best Colleges for B Students* by Tamra Orr (SuperCollege, 2021): Helps identify colleges that don’t emphasize grades in their admissions decisions.

*How to Get Into a Military Service Academy: A Step-by-Step Guide to Getting Qualified, Nominated*, and Appointed by Michael Dobson (Rowman and Littlefield, 2015): Comprehensive advice for students interested in one of the five U.S. military academies.

*Profiles of Engineering &Engineering Technology Colleges* by The American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE Publications, 2020): Provides detailed profiles of U.S. and Canadian school offering undergraduate and graduate engineering.

*The Ultimate Guide to HBCUs* by Braque Talley (Princeton Review, 2022): Provides profiles, stats, and insights into all 101 Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

TESTING AND TEST PREPARATION

*Web*

College Board: Register, prepare, and obtain scores for the PSAT, SAT, and AP; prep specifically for AP tests through AP Classroom.

*Compass Guide to College Admission Testing*: Updated semi-annually by Compass Education Group, this contains detailed information about all standardized tests, including a comprehensive list of colleges allowing self-reported test scores.

Khan Academy: Provides free online personalized practice for the PSAT and SAT.

ACT: Preparation and registration for the ACT, including information about ACT Live test prep.

Bluebook Digital Testing: Located on the College Board website, this tool provides sample digital PSAT and SAT tests.

ETS, IELTS, Duolingo: Information, preparation, and registration for the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), IELTS (International English Language Testing System), and the Duolingo English proficiency exams, respectively. The Duolingo site also contains a TOEFL/ IELTS/Duolingo concordance table.

FairTest: Maintains updated list of colleges and universities providing test-optional or test-free admissions.

National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC): Provides information on scholarship and recognition programs based on 11th-grade PSAT performance.

*Books*

*The Official ACT Prep Guide* by ACT (Wiley, 2022): Contains six ACT tests, along with tips, strategies, and 400+ online flashcards.

*Barrons*, *Kaplan*, and *Princeton Review*: A variety of print guides containing sample questions and full-length sample tests for the ACT, PSAT, SAT, and AP.

ESSAY WRITING

*Books*

*College Essay Essentials: A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing a Successful College Admissions Essay* by Ethan Sawyer (Sourcebooks, 2016): Includes brainstorming activities, personal statement samples, and more.

*On Writing the College Application Essay, 25th Anniversary Edition: The Key to Acceptance at the College of Your Choice* by Henry Bauld (Collins Reference, 2012): A former Ivy League admissions officer provides tough and funny advice on coming up with the best essay possible.

*The College Application Essay, 7th Edition* by Sarah Myers McGinty (McGinty Consulting Group, 2021): Excellent advice on writing effective essays.

ADVICE FOR ARTISTS

*Web*

National Portfolio Day: A group of accredited arts colleges and university art departments that are members of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.

NACAC: A list of Performing and Visual Arts College Fairs may be found under Special Programs.

*Book*

*I GOT IN! The Ultimate College Audition Guide for Acting and Musical Theatre, 2021 Edition* by Mary Anna Dennard (Mary Anna Dennard, Inc., 2021): How to prepare for the highly competitive college audition process.

ADVICE FOR ATHLETES

*Web*

National College Athletic Association: Information about recruiting, eligibility, and more for NCAA sports.

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics: Information about athletic participation at NAIA schools.

*Books*

*The Student Athlete’s Guide to Getting Recruited: How to Win Scholarships, Attract Colleges and Excel as an Athlete* by Stewart Brown (Supercollege, 2018): Guidance on choosing an NCAA division, recruiting, and more.

*Understanding Athletic Recruiting: A Comprehensive Guide for the High School Student-Athlete, 2nd Edition* by Jeffrey Durso-Finley and Lewis Stival, (UMI, 2014): Handbook covering all aspects of the college athletic recruiting process.

LEARNING DIFFERENCES

*Web*

Learning Disabilities Association of America: Provides a wide range of information about learning disabilities; for college-specific information, search for “college.”

*Books*

*K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Differences, 16th Edition* by Marybeth Kravets and Imy Wax (Random House, 2023): Profiles the services for learning disabled students at over 350 colleges.

*Life After High School* by Susan Yellin and Christina Cacioppo Bertsch (Kingsley, 2011): Advice and support for students with disabilities and their families.

FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

*Web*

UStrive: Website where first-generation students can sign up for a mentor to assist with the college admissions process.

*Book*

*I’m First! Guide to College*, published annually by Strive for College: Guidebook for first-generation college students.

UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

*Web*

NACAC: Student tab leads to information on a broad range of topics, including information for undocumented students.

National Immigration Law Center: Provides information for students concerned about immigration status.

*College Advising Guide for Undocumented Students:* Illinois ACAC website, under resources; provides a broad range of advice and information.

*Immigrant Rising DACA and Undocumented Resources Handbook:* Support for undocumented students with a focus on California, general scholarship list.

FINANCIAL AID

*Web*

College Board: Contains information on FAFSA, CSS Profile®, net price calculators, and information on grants and scholarships; some Spanish-language resources.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): Access the FAFSA and information about all forms of federal student aid.

College Financing Plan (formerly Financial Aid Shopping Sheet): Located on the U.S. Department of Education website, this tool helps consumers compare financial aid offers.

College Navigator: College profiles include detailed information on cost of attendance and net price.

Fastweb, Finaid, Cappex: Three good sites for information about financial aid and scholarship search tools.

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA): Provides a wealth of information for students and parents on financial aid; includes a full list of state and regional college tuition discounts.

National Association of State Treasurers (NAST) and the College Savings Plans Network (CSPN): Both sites provide information on 529 plans.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): Provides detailed information on educational benefits for veterans, along with tools to calculate post-9/11 GI Bill benefits and compare college costs after benefits are considered.

*College Advising Guide for Undocumented Students:* See entry under Special Circumstances.

*Big J Educational Consulting:* Located under Resources, this site contains databases for financial aid for domestic and international students.

*Book*

*Paying for College: Everything You Need to Maximize Financial Aid and Afford College* by Kalman Chany et al. (The Princeton Review, 2022): Helps students navigate the complexities of financial aid.

*The Price You Pay for College* by Ron Lieber (Harper, 2021): Provides a detailed perspective on who pays what and why.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

*Web*

NAFSA: Association of International Educators with pages for U.S. students studying abroad and international students studying in the United States, including financial aid.

Edupass: Provides information about studying and living in the United States.

EducationUSA: Network of advising centers worldwide, offering support for international students applying to study in the United States.

Institute of International Education (IIE): Database of grants, fellowships, and scholarships for undergraduate and graduate study outside one’s home country.

*Book*

*International Admissions: How to Get Accepted to U.S. Colleges*, by Mandee Heller Adler and Aimée Adler, with Cheree Heller Liebowitz (Biographical Publishing Company, 2018).

STUDYING ABROAD

*Web*

*Guide to International University Admission:* Updated annually and available through the NACAC website, this covers many countries with university degrees taught in English.

UCAS (University and College Application System): Extensive information about British post-secondary education as well as the universal application to U.K. universities and other institutions of higher education.

GAP YEAR

*Web*

American Gap Association: Lists accredited programs and provides information on travel, financial aid, and more.

USA Gap Year Fairs: Lists upcoming gap year fairs.

*Books*

*The Complete Guide to the Gap Year: The Best Things to Do Between High School and College*, by Kristin White (Nota Bene Press, 2019): How a gap year can have a positive impact on a young life.