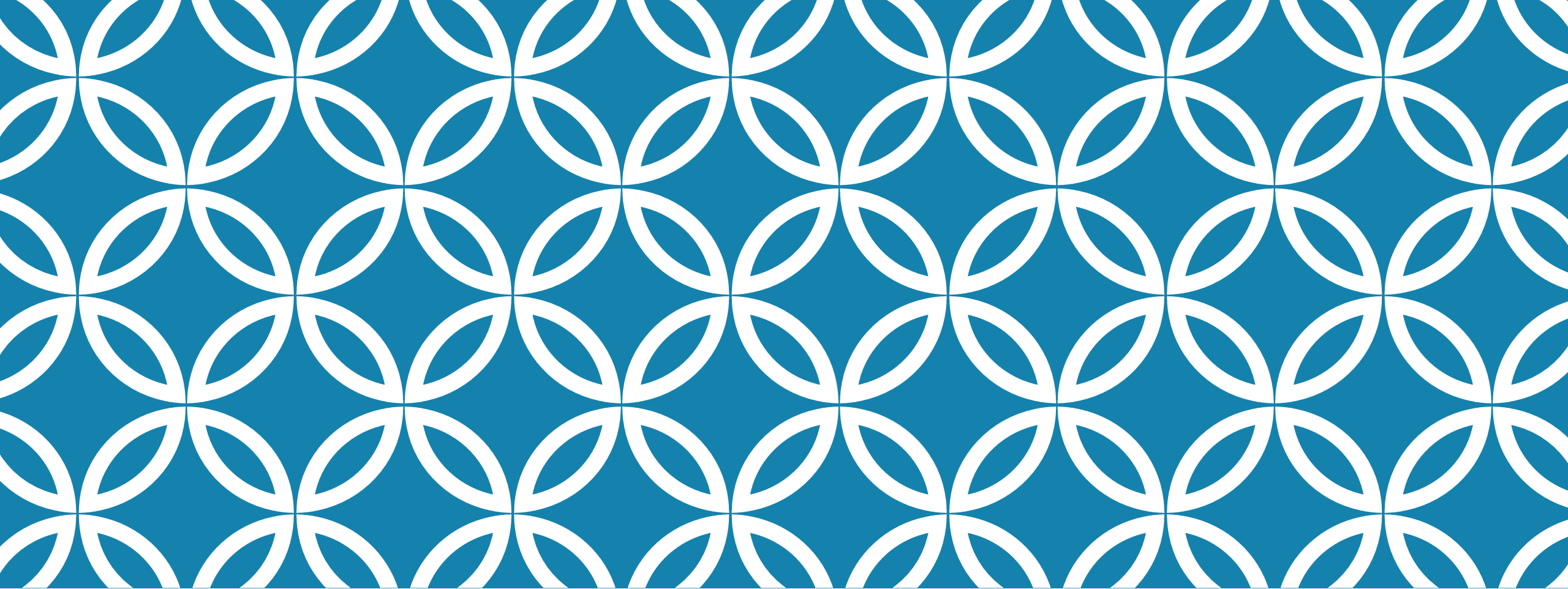




ELLY PAGE'S COLLEGE LIST STRATEGY

A2 Achieve

STUDENT PROFILE/PRIORITIES — ELLY PAGE

- Elly is interested in Occupational Therapy.
- She wants a school with a strong campus life.
- She hopes to participate in sorority recruitment.
- She and her family would like to stay within a reasonable drive of either Huntsville, Alabama, or Bowling Green, Kentucky, where her family will be relocating.

Her current favorites are:

- University of North Alabama
- The University of Alabama

RECOMMENDED COLLEGE LIST FOR ELLY PAGE

Priority Applications

University of North Alabama

The University of Alabama

Western Kentucky University

Ole Miss

University of Memphis

Mississippi State University

Add If She Likes the Visit / Cost Works

Samford University

Belmont University

Murray State University

Optional Reach

Vanderbilt University

REMOVED FROM CONSIDERATION

UAB

Academically, UAB makes sense for healthcare. Elly and her family have already expressed that they personally do not like the idea of UAB. Since fit matters, I removed UAB from consideration, but I can re-add it to the list if she changes her mind.

MTSU / UTC

These can remain backup options if Elly and her family want a longer list, but with Memphis, WKU, Ole Miss, Mississippi State, Samford, Belmont, and Murray State in the mix, I do not think MTSU or UTC need to be priorities unless Elly specifically likes them.

1. THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

Category: Top fit / likely value school / family legacy school

UNA should remain one of Elly's strongest options. Her parents are UNA alumni, the campus is a manageable distance from Huntsville, and the school offers a more personal college environment than a large SEC campus.

UNA is especially relevant because it has a Pre-Occupational Therapy track, and UNA's Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant program is anticipated to launch in Spring 2026, with a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy anticipated to launch in Fall 2026. UNA also automatically awards Academic or Presidential scholarships based on unweighted GPA and ACT Superscore for students admitted by the priority deadline.

UNA also has a College Panhellenic Council, with primary recruitment held each fall, which gives Elly a sorority option without the overwhelming intensity of Alabama or Ole Miss recruitment.

A2 Achieve read: This is probably her best “whole picture” school: family connection, affordability potential, OT pathway, campus life, and manageable transition.

2. THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

Category: Big-campus favorite / strongest traditional college experience

Alabama should absolutely stay on the list. It gives Elly the big-campus experience, SEC traditions, school spirit, and one of the strongest sorority cultures in the country.

Alabama has a Pre-Occupational Therapy track through its pre-health advising structure, and UA also has a Pre-Occupational Therapy Society for students interested in the OT profession.

For merit aid, Alabama's in-state freshman automatic merit chart currently shows awards beginning at qualifying GPA/ACT levels, with higher awards available for stronger test scores. UA also lists October 1 as the automatic merit and competitive scholarship deadline for admitted students.

Alabama's Panhellenic community is very large, with more than 7,900 women across 18 NPC chapters and one affiliate chapter. Primary recruitment is held before the fall semester begins.

A2 Achieve read: Excellent campus-life and sorority fit. Strong emotional favorite. The key will be applying early and watching scholarship timing closely.

3. WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Category: Family-transition school / Bowling Green option

WKU should stay on the list because of the family's move to Bowling Green. Even if it is not Elly's current emotional favorite, it could become very practical once her family is living there.

WKU has a Pre-Occupational Therapy advising pathway and explains that students must eventually earn either an MSOT or OTD to become licensed occupational therapists. WKU also notes that pre-OT students may consider Psychological Sciences as a major.

WKU offers academic scholarships for students with a minimum 3.0 unweighted GPA, with listed awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$7,500 per year for 2026–2027. WKU's Panhellenic Council includes nine NPC sororities, plus Sigma Alpha and Omega Phi Alpha.

A2 Achieve read: This is the most important “strategic” school on the list because it connects directly to the family's next home base.

4. UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

Category: Regional city option / practical OT pathway

Memphis is worth adding, especially if Elly is open to a city campus and wants another school within range of both Huntsville and Bowling Green. The drive from Huntsville to Memphis is roughly 3.5 to 4 hours, and Memphis to Bowling Green is roughly 4 to 4.5 hours, depending on route and traffic.

The University of Memphis has a Pre-Occupational Therapy advising page, and its College of Health Sciences lists occupational therapy among the health career paths students may pursue.

For scholarships, Memphis says students should apply before November 1 if they believe they may be scholarship eligible, because the scholarship consideration deadline is December 1 for admitted students. Memphis also states that academic scholarship consideration generally requires at least a 3.0 GPA and 25 ACT/1130 SAT.

Memphis has a Panhellenic Council with six sororities.

A2 Achieve read: Good practical add, especially for OT and location. Campus feel will matter, so I would recommend a visit before ranking it too high.

5. THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI (OLE MISS)

Category: Strong campus-life and sorority option / regional Southern fit

Ole Miss is very much worth considering because it gives Elly the traditional Southern college experience, strong campus life, and a major sorority culture. It is also very manageable from Huntsville, with the Huntsville-to-Oxford drive listed around 3.5 hours, though it is farther from Bowling Green at roughly 5.5 hours.

Ole Miss has a Pre-Occupational Therapy advising pathway. The university notes that OT school requires a bachelor's degree, specific prerequisite courses, OT setting experience such as shadowing, letters of evaluation, leadership/community involvement, and other application pieces.

Ole Miss also has a Pre-Occupational Therapy Association for undergraduate students interested in the field.

For campus life, Ole Miss College Panhellenic is home to 11 NPC sororities.

For merit aid, Ole Miss lists non-resident freshman merit and achievement-based scholarships based on GPA, ACT/SAT scores, and activities, and its admissions page notes that students must first apply and gain admission, then submit the Freshman Scholarship Application by January 10.

A2 Achieve read: Very strong fit for campus life and sorority interest. This may be one of the best additions if the family is comfortable with the distance from Bowling Green.

6. MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Category: Solid regional public / less intense than Ole Miss or Alabama

Mississippi State is also worth adding, especially if Elly wants another large public university with strong school spirit and a somewhat different campus feel than Alabama or Ole Miss.

Mississippi State has a Pre-Occupational Therapy pathway through its Healthcare Pathways Resource Center and also has a Pre-OT student organization.

MSU's Panhellenic community includes nine values-based sororities, and its 2026 recruitment schedule shows recruitment occurring before the first day of class.

For merit aid, Mississippi State lists automatic academic scholarships for freshmen with a minimum 9th–11th grade GPA of 3.0 and a qualifying ACT or SAT score, with award amounts increasing at higher GPA/test score combinations.

Distance is the main caution. Starkville is about 4 hours from Huntsville, but closer to 6–7 hours from Bowling Green.

A2 Achieve read: Good school to consider, but I would rank it below Ole Miss unless Elly prefers the feel after visiting.

7. VANDERBILT

Category: Aspirational reach / excellent location / not a merit-aid safety

Vanderbilt could be added as a reach school if Elly wants one highly selective option close to her future family base. Nashville is extremely convenient to Bowling Green and still very manageable from Huntsville.

Vanderbilt's Health Professions Advisory Office supports students pursuing a wide range of health professions, and its resource sheet says the office supports tracks from Pre-Athletic Training to Pre-Veterinary Medicine.

Vanderbilt also has a Panhellenic community with eight NPC chapters, and formal sorority recruitment occurs in the spring semester rather than before freshman year.

The caution is merit aid. Vanderbilt states that its merit scholarship recipients represent the top 1% of first-year applicants, and it awards about 300 merit-based scholarships each year.

A2 Achieve read: Vanderbilt is not a practical merit-aid school. It is a reach/adventure option if Elly wants one, but I would not build the list around it.

8. SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

Category: Private Christian campus / strong health professions / sorority fit

Samford remains a strong “possible fit” if the family is open to private-school pricing after scholarships. Samford’s College of Health Sciences offers prehealth pathways, including preparation for occupational therapy, and its Health Sciences major notes that graduates pursue paths including occupational therapy.

Samford also has a strong Greek life culture within a Christian university environment. The university says Greek Life is committed to service, leadership, scholarship, and personal development within a Christian university.

Samford merit awards are guaranteed for eight semesters for eligible freshmen, and Samford notes scholarship deadlines of December 1 and February 15.

A2 Achieve read: Great campus and values fit if cost works. Definitely worth visiting if she likes smaller/private schools.

9. BELMONT UNIVERSITY

Category: Nashville private / strong OT connection / cost-sensitive

Belmont is worth keeping as an optional private-school choice because it has a specific Pre-Occupational Therapy program and graduate OT options. Belmont's Pre-OT page emphasizes preparation for graduate health programs and access to pre-health advising.

Belmont could be appealing because of Nashville and its polished campus feel, but the family would need to compare final net cost carefully.

A2 Achieve read: Good OT/campus option, but probably not essential unless Elly loves Nashville/private-school feel.

10. MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Category: Kentucky regional option / OT graduate pathway

Murray State is worth considering because it has a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy program at its Paducah Regional Campus. The program uses OTCAS and has competitive admission, with a maximum of 24 students accepted each year.

Murray also offers academic scholarships for first-year students, with listed awards based on GPA and, for some higher awards, ACT/SAT scores.

A2 Achieve read: Good practical Kentucky-area option, especially if Elly wants a smaller regional school. I would include it only if she is open to visiting.

WANT TO EXPAND YOUR LIST?

Searching for a college to consider in your list is one of the few times I recommend that families use AI.

On the next slide you will find a prompt that you can copy and paste into the AI bot of your choice.

Do NOT use your last name and do not input sensitive information such as your birthdate, social security number, address, phone number, etc.

Simply fill in the brackets with any information you'd like to provide for your search and delete any qualifiers you want to exclude.

AI PROMPT FOR PARENTS

I am helping my student build a college list. Please recommend colleges and universities that could be a strong fit based on the following information:

Student Information: Current grade: [junior/senior]; Home city/state: [city, state]; Intended major or career interest: [major/career interest]; GPA: [weighted and/or unweighted GPA]; Test scores: [ACT/SAT, if available]; Preferred distance from home: [example: within 3–4 hours]; Preferred school size: [small, medium, large, no preference]; Preferred location: [city, college town, rural, close to home, no preference]; Campus life preferences: [Greek life, football, faith-based community, honors college, research, service, clubs, etc.]; Financial priorities: [needs merit aid, needs need-based aid, looking for in-state tuition, open to private schools if aid is strong]; Family considerations: [relocation, siblings in college, legacy schools, medical needs, travel limitations, etc.]

Current Favorite Schools: The student is already interested in: [School 1], [School 2], [School 3]

Please create a balanced college list that includes: **Likely-fit schools** where admission and affordability may be realistic; **Target schools** that are a strong academic and social match; **Reach or stretch schools** if appropriate; **Strong merit aid options**; **Schools with good preparation for [intended major/career]**; **Schools with the campus culture my student wants**

For each school, please include: Why it may be a good fit; Academic programs or majors to consider; Merit aid or scholarship potential; Campus life strengths; Distance from [home city]; Any concerns or questions we should research further; Whether this school should be considered a likely, target, or reach option

Please prioritize schools that are a good fit academically, socially, geographically, and financially. Do not just recommend the most famous schools. Focus on schools where my student could realistically thrive.

At the end, please give me a recommended final list of [number of] schools and a shorter “must-visit” list.

NEXT STEPS

Talk about your list openly and honestly. When you've developed your final list, let me know. At any time during this process of discussion and consideration, please feel free to reach out to me with questions. I can help connect you to alumni, tell you my own personal experiences with each school, and help you find the answers you need to make the best possible decision for YOU.

