



PRIMARY GAPS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

GAP 1: THE WORKING RESUME STILL CONTAINS UNCONFIRMED INFORMATION

Missing information includes:

- Diploma type
- Class rank
- Complete honors, AP, and dual-enrollment course lists
- Official Engineering Academy name and description
- Dates for activities and organizations
- Exact award and certification names
- Employment details
- Service projects and hours
- Cheer competition information
- Specific project descriptions
- Recommended action:
- Complete the additional-question set in Product 4.
- Replace every question mark and placeholder in the working resume with verified information.
- Use month and year dates wherever possible.
- Add hours per week and weeks per year for major commitments.
- Add outcomes, responsibilities, selection criteria, and measurable results.

GAP 2: CLAIRE'S ARCHITECTURE PORTFOLIO IS NOT YET ORGANIZED

Claire has enough creative material to begin a strong portfolio, but her work has not yet been inventoried, photographed, explained, or organized.

This is urgent because Mississippi State requires two observational drawings and a portfolio of six to twelve creative or artistic works. The portfolio can include drawings, built work, photography, sewing, writing, performance, and other creative pieces.

Recommended master portfolio:

Create a master collection of approximately twelve to fifteen strong pieces that can be customized for different colleges.

Possible pieces include:

- CAD designs
- 3D-printed objects
- NASA TechRise work, when permitted
- Architecture camp projects
- Cardboard constructions
- Interactive gifts with moving elements
- LEGO structures or models

- Room plans or interior concepts
- Home-design sketches
- Hand sewing or textile projects
- Origami or paper engineering
- Drawing and painting
- Photography or photo editing
- A redesigned household tool or object
- A new residential-design project completed during senior year

For every piece, document:

- Project title
- Date completed
- Reason for creating it
- Problem or goal
- Materials and software
- Initial sketches
- Experiments or failed attempts
- Revisions
- Final result
- Claire's individual contribution
- What she learned

Recommended immediate portfolio projects:

- Complete a careful pencil drawing of a tennis shoe or set of keys.
- Complete a pen drawing of a tennis shoe or hand.
- Design one room or small residence based on a real client brief.
- Create a floor plan, exterior concept, model, and short design explanation.
- Photograph existing three-dimensional work using a clean background and good lighting.
- Preserve process sketches instead of showing only finished pieces.

GAP 3: HER CURRENT COLLEGE LIST IS TOO NARROW

Claire currently identifies only Auburn and Mississippi State in her ranked list.

That is risky because:

- Auburn has a competitive progression process after students begin Pre-Architecture.
- Mississippi State requires separate competitive architecture admission.
- Other B.Arch programs also use portfolio reviews, capacity limits, or progression requirements.

Recommended action:

- Build a balanced six- to eight-school list containing:
- At least two strong-fit primary options
- At least two financially promising options
- At least one program with a less complicated initial admission path
- One or two reaches
- At least one school she would gladly attend if Auburn does not work out

GAP 4: CLAIRE NEEDS MORE DIRECT EXPOSURE TO ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE

Claire has strong design instincts, but her documents do not yet show sustained exposure to the daily work of an architect.

Recommended action:

- Shadow an architect for at least one full or partial workday.
- Interview at least two architects.
- Visit an architecture firm.
- Ask to observe a client meeting, design review, site visit, or construction-document process when appropriate.
- Learn how architects divide time among design, codes, budgets, client communication, software, revisions, construction documents, and project administration.
- Ask residential architects what skills new graduates often lack.
- Document these experiences for use in essays and interviews.

GAP 5: THE AUBURN ARCHITECTURE CAMP EXPERIENCE IS MISSING FROM HER MATERIALS

Auburn camp may be one of Claire's most important indicators of demonstrated interest and informed career choice, but her questionnaire does not explain:

- What she created
- What she learned
- How she responded to critique
- What surprised her about studio
- What made Auburn feel right
- Whether any part of the experience made her question architecture

Recommended action:

- Write a detailed Auburn camp reflection while the experience is still memorable.
- Save photographs, drawings, models, schedules, feedback, and project descriptions.
- Use the experience in Auburn-specific essays and conversations with architecture representatives.

GAP 6: HER CENTRAL APPLICATION STORY NEEDS TO BE SELECTED

Claire has several compelling stories, but the application should not become a list of unrelated accomplishments.

Possible central themes:

- Practical creativity
- Designing convenience into everyday life
- Seeing solutions that others overlook
- Making ideas tangible
- Building thoughtful spaces for families
- Balancing beauty and function
- Turning ordinary materials into useful objects

Recommended action:

- Choose one central story that can guide the personal essay, activities descriptions, architecture essays, and scholarship applications.

The strongest personal-essay possibilities appear to be:

- The storm-door solution as an early example of inventive thinking
- The thyme-leaf tool as evidence that she constantly notices inefficiency
- The interactive gifts she creates for people she loves
- Balancing cheer, academics, activities, work, and caring for her mother
- Overcoming fear while learning her back handspring
- Her growing realization that architecture combines creativity, problem-solving, family life, and practical impact

GAP 7: HER ACTIVITIES NEED GREATER DEPTH AND MEASUREMENT

The documents name many activities, but several entries lack:

- Dates
- Positions
- Hours
- Scope
- Responsibilities
- Accomplishments
- Impact

Recommended action:

For each activity, answer:

- What did Claire actually do?
- How frequently did she participate?
- Did she initiate anything?
- Did she teach, speak, lead, organize, recruit, fundraise, or solve a problem?
- How many people were affected?
- What changed because she participated?
- What did she learn?

This is especially important for:

- Bible study
- First Priority
- National Honor Society
- Key Club
- Mu Alpha Theta
- Technology Student Association
- Spanish Club
- Girls With Glory
- Church choir
- Cheerleading
- Restaurant or café employment
- Babysitting
- Pet sitting
- Service projects

GAP 8: SERVICE HOURS ARE NOT BROKEN DOWN BY PROJECT

“Forty-plus hours of service” is useful, but it does not show the causes Claire cares about or the work she performed.

Recommended action:

Create a service log containing:

- Organization
- Project
- Date
- Hours
- Population served
- Claire’s responsibilities
- Leadership role
- Outcome
- Contact who can verify participation
- Reflection or lesson

GAP 9: FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES NEED TO BE DOCUMENTED APPROPRIATELY

Claire helped her mother during recovery from back and hip surgery while carrying an unusually demanding schedule. This may provide important context for her workload, maturity, resilience, and contribution to her family.

Recommended action:

Determine:

- What responsibilities Claire handled
- How long the recovery period lasted
- Approximately how much time Claire contributed
- Whether her responsibilities affected her schedule or opportunities
- Whether her counselor should reference this context
- How much Claire is comfortable sharing

The information should be described respectfully and without disclosing unnecessary private medical details.

GAP 10: HER SENIOR-YEAR COURSE RIGOR MUST BE CONFIRMED

Architecture programs value academic preparation, but Claire’s senior schedule is not included.

Recommended action:

Confirm whether her schedule includes the strongest reasonable combination of:

- Advanced mathematics, ideally calculus or the next available level
- Physics
- Engineering, drafting, architecture, CAD, or design
- Art or observational drawing
- Strong English or writing preparation
- Dual-enrollment or AP coursework

She should not overload herself merely to add labels, but her schedule should demonstrate continued academic challenge and preparation for a demanding studio program.

GAP 11: RECOMMENDATION PLANNING HAS NOT BEEN DOCUMENTED

Recommended action:

Request recommendations early from teachers who can discuss different dimensions of Claire.

Suggested combination:

- One mathematics, science, or engineering teacher who can describe her intellect and problem-solving
- One English, design, art, leadership, or humanities teacher who can describe her communication, creativity, and character

Provide each recommender with:

- Resume
- College and career goals
- Important deadlines
- A short list of projects or classroom moments
- Qualities Claire hopes the recommendation will illustrate

GAP 12: THE FAMILY DOES NOT YET HAVE A DEFINED FINANCIAL-FIT STANDARD

Claire identifies finances and material costs as major concerns, but no affordable annual amount, borrowing limit, or comparison method is recorded.

Recommended action:

Before applications are submitted, determine:

- The family's preferred annual contribution
- The maximum acceptable annual net cost
- The maximum acceptable total cost over five years
- Whether student loans are acceptable and, if so, how much
- Whether parent borrowing is acceptable
- Whether Claire would choose a lower-ranked school for a significantly better financial offer
- Whether scholarships must be renewable for all five B.Arch years
- Whether Claire plans to work during college

The family should compare five-year costs, not four-year costs. Include:

- Tuition and fees
- Housing and meals
- Architecture program fees
- Laptop and software
- Printing and plotting
- Models and studio supplies
- Field trips
- Transportation home
- Summer requirements
- Possible relocation during the fifth year
- Scholarship renewal requirements

GAP 13: SCHOLARSHIP MATERIALS HAVE NOT BEEN CENTRALIZED

Recommended scholarship bank:

- Final resume
- Transcript
- Test-score report
- Activities list
- Service log
- Awards list
- One 500-word personal essay
- One 500-word architecture and career essay
- One 250-word leadership essay
- One 250-word service essay
- One 250-word faith or values essay
- One 250-word challenge essay
- Two recommendation letters when allowed
- Portfolio photographs
- Short biography
- Family financial information
- List of deadlines

Recommended scholarship categories:

- Institutional merit
- Architecture and design
- STEM
- Women in architecture, design, or STEM
- Leadership
- Community service
- Faith-based
- Local civic and community organizations
- Employer-related scholarships
- Professional architecture organizations
- Construction and building-industry organizations
- Scholarships connected to creativity, technology, or entrepreneurship

Mississippi State's General Scholarship Application opens October 1, 2026, for Fall 2027 students. Auburn requires a complete admission file by December 1 for full scholarship consideration and gives February 16 as its financial-aid and scholarship priority date. Arkansas uses November 15 as its scholarship priority deadline and offers awards that may be renewable through the fifth architecture year.

GAP 14: CLAIRE NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND PROGRAM PROGRESSION BEFORE ENROLLING

A school can offer a B.Arch and still require an additional selection process after enrollment.

Recommended action:

For every program, record:

- Is Claire admitted directly to architecture?

- Is she admitted as Pre-Architecture or Undeclared Architecture?
- Is there a later portfolio review?
- Is there a GPA threshold?
- Is studio space limited?
- How many students begin compared with how many progress?
- Can students repeat a studio?
- Could failure to progress delay graduation?
- What alternative majors are available?
- Does the scholarship remain valid if she changes majors?

GAP 15: SHE NEEDS A BACKUP ACADEMIC PLAN

Claire is clear that she wants architecture, but competitive progression makes a backup plan prudent. Possible related fields to investigate (not necessarily select) include:

- Interior architecture
- Interior design
- Industrial design
- Construction management
- Building science
- Real-estate development
- Residential design
- Furniture or product design
- Digital fabrication
- Historic preservation
- Set design
- Architectural visualization

Recommended action:

Claire should identify at least two related fields she could respect and enjoy if a studio-progression decision, injury, cost issue, or change in interest made architecture impractical.

GAP 16: FUTURE LICENSURE PLANNING IS LIMITED

A professional degree is only one part of becoming a licensed architect. Licensure generally also involves documented professional experience through AXP and passage of the ARE.

Recommended action:

- Learn the basic path:
- Complete a professional architecture degree.
- Begin documenting qualifying work experience.
- Complete AXP requirements.
- Pass the required ARE divisions.
- Meet any additional state requirements.

Claire does not need to master this process now, but understanding it will help her compare how colleges support internships, experience reporting, examination preparation, and professional mentorship.

SENIOR-YEAR ACTION TIMELINE

LATE JULY–AUGUST 2026

- Finalize a balanced college list.
- Confirm the professional degree and progression process at every school.
- Complete the full working resume.
- Request the official transcript and verify GPA, courses, and diploma information.
- Create a master activities and honors list.
- Inventory all possible portfolio work.
- Photograph three-dimensional projects.
- Begin the personal essay.
- Draft the architecture career statement.
- Write the Auburn architecture camp reflection.
- Identify recommendation writers.
- Create the application and scholarship tracking system.
- Calculate preliminary five-year costs.
- Schedule architecture-specific visits.

AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 2026

- Begin applications as they open.
- Complete Common Application profile sections carefully.
- Draft activities and honors entries.
- Complete observational drawing practice.
- Develop one new architecture or residential-design project.
- Arrange an architecture job shadow or informational interview.
- Visit or revisit Auburn and Mississippi State with architecture-specific questions.
- Review student work from Tennessee, Arkansas, Virginia Tech, and Cornell before deciding where to apply.
- Ask teachers for recommendations.

SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 2026

- Complete the personal essay.
- Complete school-specific essays.
- Create the one-page Mississippi State resume.
- Select and prepare portfolio pieces.
- Submit strong applications rather than waiting for every final deadline.
- Complete scholarship profiles and reusable essays.
- Run each college's official net-price calculator.
- Confirm whether scholarships extend through all five years.
- Mississippi State's General Scholarship Application opens October 1, and its separate architecture application opens October 15.

NOVEMBER 2026

- Submit Tennessee Early Action by November 1 and complete the file by November 15.
- Complete the University of Arkansas scholarship application by the November 15 priority deadline.
- Submit any honors-college or competitive scholarship applications.
- Confirm that transcripts, recommendations, scores, portfolios, and fees were received.

- Continue outside scholarship applications.

DECEMBER 2026

- Complete Auburn's application file by December 1 for full scholarship consideration.
- Complete Mississippi State's early architecture application by December 1.
- Confirm that all application portals show complete files.
- Organize January and February scholarship deadlines.
- Save copies of every submitted application and essay.

JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2027

- Confirm Auburn receives any scholarship-eligible test scores by January 12.
- Complete Auburn's scholarship and financial-aid requirements by the February priority date.
- Complete remaining institutional and outside scholarship applications.
- Submit financial-aid forms as soon as the appropriate federal and institutional applications become available.
- Review admission decisions carefully to determine whether the offer is for the university, Pre-Architecture, Undeclared Architecture, or direct entry into the professional program.

MARCH–APRIL 2027

- Attend admitted-student events.
- Visit architecture studios while classes are active.
- Speak privately with current first-, third-, and fifth-year students.
- Compare five-year net costs.
- Review scholarship renewal terms.
- Review program-progression risks.
- Ask about job placement, internships, graduation rates, and studio culture.
- Confirm housing, transportation, campus ministry, local churches, and safety.
- Create a final decision matrix.

BY MAY 1, 2027

Select the school based on:

- Professional degree pathway
- Likelihood of successful progression
- Studio environment
- Career preparation
- Five-year affordability
- Scholarship security
- Christian community
- Campus and personal fit
- Distance and transportation
- Claire's willingness to attend, not simply the school's reputation