

The College Planning Workbook: A Valuable Tool

“*The College Planning Workbook* is a great resource for students and parents! By providing each of our juniors with a workbook, we are now better able to assist them in managing the process successfully and helping them to ask and answer those necessary questions in regards to finding the "best fit college". I make college "homework" assignments and require students to bring their workbook to every meeting. The college process is just as time consuming and complex as an AP class. The workbook is a necessary part of 'AP College Search!'”

Laurén B. Carter

*Director of College Counseling, Albany Academy for Girls
Former Director of College Admissions at New York University*

“*The College Planning Workbook* gives our students access to information they would never have otherwise and lets them know that college is indeed possible despite their circumstances.”

Karen Campbell

Program Director, White-Williams Scholars

Inside The College Planning Workbook

One of the greatest handicaps to young people as they compete for admission is their inability to fully grasp the process itself. They see themselves as responding to seemingly arbitrary requirements in what is presumed to be a merit-based process. As a result, their approaches often lack the confidence and creativity that come from self-reflection and a contextual awareness of the decision-making that will affect the outcomes of their applications.

The College Planning Workbook is a compilation of exercises designed to prepare students to compete for admission. In terms, both straightforward and relevant, the *Workbook*:

- **Demystifies** college admission and reveals the strategic agendas of the decision-makers.
- **Guides** students into a deeper level of understanding and awareness of themselves.
- **Challenges** students to examine their motivations within the context of their every day choices.
- **Focuses** students on their own educational goals.
- **Motivates** students to set and achieve appropriate goals educationally and in life.

Through engagement with the *Workbook*, students become more confident in their understanding of the process and see how they can *affect* outcomes by *taking responsibility* for what is under *their control*. In the process, they sharpen their decision-making skills and feel empowered to make good choices that can be applied to their college educations and their lives beyond college.

How To Use The College Planning Workbook With Your Students

- Classroom resource for college planning
- Primer for students working independently in the college search/selection process
- Read-along activity guide to content of ***Best College Fit™*** webcasts

The next three pages offer a preview of what you will find in *The College Planning Workbook*. See the Workbook Order Form on page 5.

THE COLLEGE PLANNING WORKBOOK

The newly revised *College Planning Workbook* (2009, Third Edition) reflects recent changes that have taken place in the application process.

Its new format provides to-do lists, planning calendars, key interpretations of the process and more reflective exercises for students (with plenty of space for note-taking and record keeping) as they look for and compete for admission to colleges that fit them well.

As an interactive guide, *The College Planning Workbook* takes students in grades 9-12 from the earliest stages of thinking about college to an evaluation of admission decisions and financial aid offers.

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The College Planning Workbook is an easy read loaded with information from an insider's perspective. It breaks down the complexities of college admission in terms that are real to students, thereby providing greater transparency while guiding them step-by-step through each stage of college planning.

Teachers/Counselors

The most reliable sources of advice are the people who know you well. They watched you grow. They understand what you like and how you learn. They are familiar with your intellectual abilities and your academic skill set. They have seen you respond to adversity and appreciate your passion for learning new things. They are your teachers, counselors and advisors—the people who you will eventually turn to for letters of recommendation. They are your champions. Let them help you.

Start now. In order to take advantage of the guidance these folks have to offer, you need to take the initiative. Find time to meet with a teacher when you can focus on your future. Share your dreams and ambitions. Reflect on strengths, weaknesses and factors that may have limited your ability to achieve. While this teacher knows you well from extensive in-class experiences, give him/her the “rest of your story” so s/he can be an effective mentor to you.

By starting early (before the senior year), you allow time for a truly expansive conversation. You also give your counselor and teachers the courtesy of time to think about and prepare a letter of

Chapter Five

The View From 30,000 Feet

Before you actually begin to fill out your application, let's take a quick look at the form and the process from “30,000 feet”—a vantage point that will give you a sense of the big picture. In searching for colleges and arriving at a short list, you identified priorities and focused on defining a good fit. You also learned how colleges define a good fit and have come to understand some of the complexities of the decision-making process.

Now, you need to compete. You need to put your best foot forward as a candidate at colleges where, presumably, you should be competitive. Your credentials—when compared with the profiles of each college—tell you this much. In order to win in this competition, though, you need to pull everything together into a compelling statement on your behalf.

Indeed, your application must be your personal statement, a statement that thoughtfully and carefully weaves together each element of your life experience. Representing all parts of you, it should say: “Here I am. Take me!”

Action Steps engage students in critical thinking about how the process works and, more importantly, how they can work within the process.

Professor TAG editorializes on key points and provides timely tips throughout the book.



Professor TAG:

“Quality options rarely materialize out of thin air. Wherever you are in life, know that your options—your opportunities to do the things

ACTION STEP: Establish Your Priorities

List three to four things you want to have accomplished by the time you graduate from college. What do you want to make sure you get out of your experience? These will be your priorities going forward. Identifying institutions that possess these characteristics will be your objective as you focus on making good decisions that result in quality options.

1. _____

2. _____

Worksheets promote self-reflection and, ultimately, inspires ownership in a student-centered college selection process.

The Best College for Me Worksheet

How well do you know yourself? As you respond to each of the questions below, you will develop a guide for college selection that is rooted in your personal values system. A good college fit for you is one that will match your responses.

Make a copy of this page and give it to your parents. Ask them to respond on their own. Then, compare your answers. They might be surprised by what they learn about you. And you might be surprised by the insights they have into you!

1. What are your academic interests and/or program needs?

Workbook Order Form



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