You Can Go With This Or You Can Go With That: A New Light on College Search Criteria

Saturday, May 4 @ 9 a.m.

Good morning!!!
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Review exiting college search criteria and determine the importance of it in the current higher ed landscape.

2. Identify meaningful, high impact educational experiences that are a hallmark of a great college education.

3. Provide a framework for college admission and advising professionals when promoting effective educational practices.
Review of traditional criteria:

- Location
- Cost
- Size
- Academic major
- Selectivity
- Athletics
- Religious affiliation
- Diversity
- Co-curriculars (band, choral, newspaper, etc.)
Prestige vs. Fit

• Defining a “good college”
• Growing chasm between highly selectives and everyone else
• Does low acceptance rate = “prestige”? 
• Does “prestige” = better education?
Reframing Expectations

• College admission has changed drastically since parents went through process
  • Acceptance rates 1993 vs. 2018
• Overreach
  • What exactly is a “reach” school
  • Lies, damn lies, and statistics - and how they work
• Do graduates from highly selectives have an inherent advantage?
Focusing on What’s Important

- **Students**: focus on self-discovery and thoughtful college search
- **Parents**: focus on the student-college match, not the name
- **Counselors**: understanding where each party is coming from to frame and guide future discussions
Think Beyond the Obvious

- Before the college search, there should be a vision of the expectations of four years of college.
- Know yourself to better know which colleges might be a good fit for you.
- Student and parent surveys can provide important insight into process.
  - Encourage thorough and thoughtful responses.
What is expendable?

- Create initial college list with built-in flexibility - How far can the boundaries be pushed?
  - Take students and parents a little out of their comfort zone (the Stitch Fix model)
  - Put context around options you suggest
  - Help students see possibilities not limitations
  - Know what is essential and where students/parents can be flexible
College Search with a Purpose

● When criteria are not expendable
  ○ Religious preferences
  ○ Financial considerations - financially practical schools
  ○ Support services
● Seeking a desired outcome
  ○ Honors or other special programs
  ○ Scholarship search
● All about fit
Anticipate the Unexpected

- Changes after summer between junior/senior year
  - Be prepared to recraft the entire college list
- Strategize in advance for early decision applicants to manage expectations
- Have a Plan B - you may need it.
College Search Criteria 2.0

1. Asking better questions
2. College Criteria Project
3. Lessons from poker
Asking better questions...

What do you want to learn more about?

Describe your ideal college/university in detail.

When thinking about the college search process, I am most worried about:

What problems do you want to solve?
High-Impact Educational Practices as recommended by the Association of American Colleges and Universities

https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips
First-Year Seminars and Experiences
Common Intellectual Experiences
Learning Communities
Writing Intensive Courses
Collaborative Assignments and Projects
Diversity/
Global
Learning
Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
Internships
Capstone Courses and Projects
## College Criteria Project

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<th>Learning communities</th>
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Aspects of the CCR

1. Boxes checked: Research, discovery, reading, thinking critically, collaborative, outside of comfort zone, etc.
2. Findings are spot on, somewhat, or n/a.
3. Voluntary or assigned.
Contributions to share with attendees?
What did we miss? What should we add?
Questions?
THANK YOU for attending this session!

We’d love to hear from you!

Please submit a session evaluation via the conference mobile app or from www.pcacacac.org.