



APPLICATION NEWS

- The "simplified" FAFSA is now OPEN, and it seems to be working pretty darn well! Phew! Please remember that you'll need to fill out the FAFSA every year of college. And if you are not applying for financial aid, I strongly recommend that families complete the FAFSA for whichever college your child ends up attending (you can submit it in May). If your financial situation changes and you end up needing financial aid, some colleges will only entertain the idea if you already have a FAFSA on file.
- Syracuse University has a Guaranteed Orange program for students who are applying to Arts & Sciences and have taken 6 credits of SUPA by the end of their HS spring semester (which would mean SUPA History and SUPA English for my local families). If you've gotten a 3.0 in those classes and have a 3.7 overall, you'll get in automatically AND receive \$20K a year!
- NY Gov. Hochul has announced a plan that certain SUNYs will offer guaranteed admission to students who are in the top 10% of their class. Participating campuses will include University at Albany, University at Buffalo, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, SUNY Geneseo, SUNY New Paltz, SUNY Oneonta, SUNY Polytechnic Institute, Purchase College, and Stony Brook University. Stay tuned for more info as this program begins to roll out.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

- Location: Bethlehem, PA
- # of Undergrads: 5,557
- Acceptance Rate: 37%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 10:1
- Returning Freshmen: 91%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 23%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Combines the resources of a research institution with the collegial atmosphere of a smaller college. Students are determined to succeed while having fun.
- Consistently strong engineering program and business program with a real emphasis on experiential learning.
- IDEAS: Integrated Design, Engineering, and Science and the Integrated Business and Engineering program are both 4 year honors programs that allow you to get a self-designed bachelors degree. (Lehigh is big on interdisciplinary studies).
- Career services is known for bringing lots of employers to campus.
- First and second years are required to live on campus; students rave about the food.
- Active Greek scene draws 26% of men and 37% of women.
- Div I, known especially for wrestling.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

- Location: Easton, PA
- # of Undergrads: 2,712
- Acceptance Rate: 34%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 10:1
- Returning Freshmen: 90%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 29%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- One of the few liberal arts colleges that offers engineering (the others are Bucknell, Swarthmore, Trinity (CT), and Union).
- Popular majors are economics, mechanical engineering, psychology and biology
- Tight knit and collaborative; nearly half of students major in STEM.
- Ranks among the top colleges for study abroad participation.
- Known for beautiful open learning spaces; Skillman Library has 30k square feet of it!
- Housing is guaranteed all 4 years; 93% live on campus.
- Greek life is prominent; 33% of women and 26% of men participate.
- NYC and Philly are easy to get to, and Easton has many great restaurants and shops; Easton also offers many opportunities for community service.
- One of the smallest colleges to play Div 1 sports. The rivalry with Lehigh is big!

KEY RESOURCES FOR JUNIORS WHO ARE EXPLORING COLLEGES:

Besides the must-have "Fiske Guide to Colleges," there are several other resources that are incredibly helpful for learning more about colleges. They include:

- **College Navigator.** My favorite search engine. Search on majors, geographic areas, selectivity, etc. Find college-level data on such things as net price, popular programs and majors, graduation rates, and campus safety.
- **Collegexpress.** Go to <https://www.collegexpress.com/lists/> to see a multitude of lists of colleges (eg, colleges on the trimester system, large universities that feel small, colleges especially welcoming to freshmen).
- **Common Data Set.** One of the most useful resources on the internet is the Common Data Set (CDS). The Common Data Set is a compilation of standards and data points as defined by the US Department of Education, and most every college posts their Common Data Set data on their website, typically under their Institutional Research page. The easiest way to find the CDS is to Google "Common Data Set + Bard" (or whichever college you're looking at).

The CDS includes a huge amount of data, such as:

- How many students apply and are accepted
 - Test data and GPA data for enrolled students
 - How many of the accepted students applied test optional
 - How many are invited to be on a waitlist and then accepted
 - How important certain admissions criteria are
 - How many receive need-based and merit aid
- **Colleges That Change Lives (www.ctcl.org).** Many students these days are seeking colleges where they can get to know their professors, have meaningful, engaging opportunities, and feel a real sense of community. The 40 Colleges That Change Lives often fit these needs incredibly well. You may not have heard of them, and they may be smaller than you think you want, but they are definitely worth a close look!
 - The **U.S. College and University Reference Map** is a very useful tool to help families plan and schedule college visits. Over 1,400 colleges are plotted on a map. Go to Amazon to purchase.

REMINDERS FOR SENIORS:

Here are a few reminders as you close out the application season:

- If you are applying to colleges that care about **demonstrated interest** (check out this website to remind yourself which ones do: <https://www.collegetransitions.com/dataverse/colleges-that-consider-demonstrated-interest>), make sure that you have shown a healthy amount of interest. Visits and info sessions are key, but you could also reach out to your regional rep and introduce yourself and have an interview! **IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO DO THIS!!**
- If you have applied Early Decision, please keep working on other applications! If you are not accepted to your ED choice, you really don't want to be scrambling to **write those other supplemental essays** during the winter holiday break. Trust me on this. I find that most students lack motivation to work on college apps once ED decisions are out. Get them done now!
- **Keep working at your classes.** This is not the time to slack off. Most colleges want to see mid-year grades, and many could rescind offers after receiving low final year grades. Some of the UCs may rescind offers if you get lower than a C.
- The first rounds of decisions are coming soon. Please try to remember that these **college decisions** are more about colleges and their priorities than about you. If you've applied to a balanced list, you should get into at least 60% of the colleges that you applied to. Remember that you want to end up at a college that wants you!
- Think seriously about a **GAP year**. You have one shot at being a college Freshman. Navigating college successfully requires maturity, and a gap year can help you develop that maturity, as well as authenticity (who are you, really?), problem solving, and focus for college. Taking a gap year is a bold and increasingly more common move. Being on the same path / timeline as everyone else really isn't that important!

MESSAGE TO PARENTS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR ASSISTANCE AND RELIEF!

I will be filling slots for sophomores starting in January. With sophomores, I like to focus on their academics (what classes they are taking currently, and which ones they plan on taking junior and senior year) and their activities and summers. Planning is crucial; I'm finding that kids and families make decisions early on that can have real and very unintended consequences for college admissions down the road.

Please check out my website for more information: www.mgsed.com/services. I'm more than happy to talk with you about what services I provide. My ultimate goal is to reduce the stress on families as they go through this process!



PLEASE FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO OTHER FAMILIES WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM MY APPROACH AND PERSPECTIVE!
(They can subscribe on my website)

FOLLOW ME ON INSTAGRAM @designyourpathtocollege

I help students and their families navigate the college admissions process while decreasing confusion and stress. I empower students to figure out who they are and where they belong, and I provide structure, insight, and enthusiasm as they apply to colleges that are the best fit academically, socially, and financially. Contact me for a 30 minute complimentary session to learn more!



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