

Building your College List: Fit and Match

Dear Students and Parents,

Does this sound familiar? “I’m (or my child is) in high school and college is ahead. Which ones should I (or my student) apply to for admission?”

A good list should have a nice mix of “easy” schools (i.e. easy to get accepted), “likely” schools, and “reaches” (acceptance is selective and competitive with no guarantee of acceptance even if you meet the criteria for admission).

Another helpful way of thinking about your list: colleges on the list should both FIT and MATCH. By “fit and match,” what do I mean?

Match means that the college meets most or all of the criteria you listed for where you want to/should go: location, affordability, big school, small school, strong engineering program, etc. are some of the things all students think about with their parents and counselors.

Fit can be more subtle but it's just as important. This means how well the college suits you on a deeper level that makes you happy and motivated to be there, to study, and to stay on track to move on. Fit can mean a lot of things and is most suited to your personality and your core values, whether they are how you were brought up and/or what makes you unique in your family and friend group. And fit means that you feel happy to be a student there, even when the work for classes (or for paying for them) is hard).

Imagine you're at a large Thanksgiving party. Where would you find yourself most comfortable/happy? In a big room with lots of people watching the game?, laughing ? dancing? or just listening to others? In a corner talking with one or a few people? Outside, staring at the trees and the stars? Or in the kitchen baking or prepping snacks?

This is what I mean about fit, and fit is really really important in college. When you visit colleges (and you should) go to a variety of schools and notice where YOU COULD SEE YOURSELF. You might love a particular coffee shop on campus or in a nearby neighborhood, the big football game or the tennis courts, a quiet library corner or a study session in a busy cafeteria.

TAKE PICTURES of those spots you like when you tour campuses, so you remember them after your visit and write about how it would make you feel if you were there. You can even use those pictures and notes for one of your application essays or interviews. And match that memory of what you experienced with your personality. Colleges love to know if they are a good fit for you because they are hoping you actually go there!

In the end, college is expensive, hard work, and the decision is a big life choice: a good fit will make sure that you get the most of your experience. Make your choice both match your needs and fit your personality.

Let me help you build your list. Book your free consultation [here](#).