

# Forming the College List

*and other college knowledge...*

Terri Devine

Dean of College Counseling

Francis Parker School, San Diego, CA

Past President, Western Association for College Admission Counseling

# Agenda

- Forming the College List (reach, target, likely)
- Finding the Match/Fit (academic, social, financial)
- Helpful Resources
- Tips
- Current Trends
- Q and A

# Snapshot of Francis Parker School



- Private, Independent School (NO religious affiliation, NO religion classes)– 535 students in the high school and 135 in the senior class. Academic class size is 16.
- All students are required to take five academic courses (English, math, science, history and world language) each year of high school – most take six academic courses and double-up in an academic subject area.
- 106 years old – oldest co-ed independent school in San Diego.
- Students come from 80+ zip codes around San Diego County and we have many students and staff that cross the international border each day. (DACA, Dreamers and undocumented students are all at Parker.)
- 38% identify as students of color. Full-time Diversity and Inclusion Director that develops curriculum and programming for the community K-12.
- More than 50% receive financial aid and many students receive 100% scholarships that include tuition, books, tutoring, laptops, uniforms, international trips, SAT/ACT prep, transportation, and more.
- Four full-time **college** counselors (on 12 month contracts), three full-time **personal** counselors and a registrar/college counseling assistant. All college counselors have worked in college admission – none have a credential.
- 100% of students are admitted to four-year colleges and 99% attend four-year colleges.
- 180 college reps visit each fall and we host many college interview days, info sessions, accepted student events.

# 9th-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Programming

- Individual College Meetings with all Families
- Individual Academic Planning Meetings 9-12
- College Classes with 10th, 11th, and 12th Grades
- College Application Camp for Juniors
- College Application Workshops for Seniors
- Practice SAT/ACT Exams
- In-House Test Preparation
- College Funding Night
- College Night for the Arts
- Gap Year Fair
- College 101 programming for all grade levels
- College Fairs
- Athletic Recruitment Night
- College Essay Writing Workshops
- Four Year Plan Programming for 9<sup>th</sup> graders
- Looking Ahead Night with 10<sup>th</sup> Grade
- College Night for Juniors
- College Night for Seniors
- Application Case Study Program for Juniors
- Parent Coffees for Each Grade Level
- College Admission Panel for Parents
- College Interview Days & Info Nights
- 175+ Meetings with College Reps in the Fall
- Recommendation Writing Workshop for Faculty
- Programs for Grandparents and Alumni
- Programming for 1st Generation College Students
- College Counseling programming in Spanish and English
- College Tour for 1<sup>st</sup> Gen College Students

# A strong college list begins with good research...

## Helpful Research Tools for Students and Parents:

- Visiting colleges is the best way for students to begin to see what type of college will suit them best.
- Encourage students (beginning in 9<sup>th</sup> grade) to look locally for small, medium, and larger colleges to visit. (UCR, University of Redlands, Claremont Colleges, CSU's, etc.)
  - Open House Events
  - College Tours
  - Any Random Saturday!
- Look for student fly-in programs that are offered by colleges outside your local area.
- College Fairs.
- Look for opportunities for group college tours.
- College websites, and college planning programs (CCGI, Naviance, Maia, College Navigator.)

A strong college list begins with good research...

**Helpful Research Tools for Counselors:**

**Books:** Rugg's Recommendations, College Finder, Wintergreen College Atlas, Colleges That Change Lives

**Websites:** CCGI, Naviance, College Navigator, Maia Learning, Wiki College Lists (*life-changing!*), Common Data Set, Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), RACC (Regional Admission Counselors) UC/CSU

**In-Person Visits:** Visit local colleges and also tour campuses anytime you travel, college fairs, WACAC, NACAC, counselor fly-in programs.

**College Admission Officers/Representatives:** Relationship building is KEY!

# Following the research comes reflection....

**Ask students, “*What does college look like to YOU?*”**

A good college match happens when students know themselves well.

- Students need to spend time considering the academic, social and financial fit of each college:
  - How do you learn best? (class size, college size)
  - What environment suits you best (location/setting, distance from home)
  - What is the overall cost? (Grad rates, tuition/room&board, scholarships)

**Track college completion data to see if the match worked! Use surveys or Student Tracker to track college graduation rates.**

# Research and reflection lead to a balanced college List

Determining Reach, Target, and Likely Colleges that **fit** the student academically, socially, and financially.

*REACH*

- 1-3 applications
- Student's academic record is below the profile of accepted students, but (hopefully) other attributes are compelling

*TARGET*

- 2-3 applications
- Student's academic record **is at or slightly above** the profile of accepted students

*Likely*

- 1-3 applications
- Student's academic record is well above last year's profile of accepted students



# College Reps are your friends!

*(You might even marry one if you're not careful...)*

- Best resource for “real” information (did they over or under enroll last year? Are there new programs/majors? New scholarships? New admission requirements?)  
Call/email/meet in person.
  - Meet them at WACAC, NACAC, or College Board conferences and build relationships. **YOU CAN CALL THEM** to touch base about your applicants.
- Offer to host college events on your campus – interviews, accepted student events, info sessions.
- Invite them to visit your campus (fall or spring) and make sure that students can miss class for these visits. **NO** “lunch time only” visits. Meet with each rep, explain your school and any special programs, give them a copy of your School Profile, water and a list of fun things to do in the area! Use student ambassadors if necessary.

# College Counseling tips...

- “Likely” category is the most important one for scholarship money.
  - Private colleges have endowment money to use for scholarships and many will meet the full financial need of students – especially students they want!
  - “Demonstrated Interest” will also be important at the “likely” colleges.
- Consider graduation rates in determining cost (5-6 years to graduate means more years of paying tuition and not earning an income or starting grad school.)
- STEM majors have seen huge increases in applications – beware of the changing data!
- Go to the source -- use your college reps for info.
- Engage your Junior Year English and Math faculty (essays and sample problem sets for SAT/ACT preparation.)
- No need to choose a major when applying -- colleges generally don't admit by major (except engineering and business.)
  - Nearly 90% of students change their major at least once!

# Current trends in college admission that can impact admission decisions:

- Increased interest in engineering, business and all things STEM – colleges need humanities majors!
- Colleges continue to increase the number of students admitted under an Early Decision (binding admission) plan. This can impact “reach, possible and likely” colleges.
- Demonstrated interest/likelihood to enroll often used to determine admission.
- Increased use of wait list option.
- College Board’s new Adversity Index Dashboard.
- Committee based admission review.