

College Access For All

WebQuest Description: This is a webquest designed by Revere High School Guidance Counselor Heidi Cushing in order to assist high school students with college planning.

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum: Professional Skills

Keywords: College planning, college access, college readiness, financial aid for college, tuition costs, college cost analysis, college admission criteria

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Introduction

Have you ever thought about going to college? Learning about colleges is very exciting! There are so many colleges to choose from especially when you live in the United States. Each college represents many different variables that are important to consider when thinking about which colleges you want to apply to. Some important factors to consider include: admission requirements, location, campus size, majors offered, degrees offered, deadlines, scholarship opportunities, and financial aid availability. Finding colleges that are great matches for your interests and expectations is a complex process. The College Access for All webquest will provide you with some great resources to navigate this process and will help you identify critical factors in the college decision making process. Presumably one of the most important factors that will impact your choice of college is the amount of tuition you will be expected to pay in order to attend that college. College costs vary greatly. Not all colleges provide financial aid equally either. It is important to do some research into all the different factors that impact college costs. Often times, the cost of tuition cannot solely be relied upon when calculating the total cost of attending college. Students and their parents, at times, are pleasantly surprised when they realize that a college they thought would be a financial impossibility actually turns out to be quite affordable for them. In these types of situations, the financial aid packages a college offers as well as scholarship opportunities, can significantly impact the overall tuition cost for a student. Let's research some colleges of your choice and evaluate some of the critical factors to consider when making college decisions.

Tasks

You will be conducting research on different types of colleges via the use of the internet. Your research will focus on identifying information that is critical to the college decision making process. You will read about the different types of colleges that exist and you will compare different colleges according to their admissions criteria and tuition costs. You will also utilize a college cost analysis spreadsheet to analyze the varying costs among colleges. After completing your research, you will generate a list of the top five criteria you are looking for in a college. Lastly, you will use the Princeton Review's Counselor-O-Matic Best Fit School Search to identify at least six colleges you would consider applying to.

Process

First you will read about the different types of colleges that exist on the internet at the United States Department of Education's website: <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/> Next you will select five colleges of your choice to research. One college must be a four-year Massachusetts state college or university, one college must be a four-year private school or university located outside of Massachusetts, one college must be a four-year private school or university located within Massachusetts, one college must be a Massachusetts community college, and the other college you may select based on your own criteria. The following websites will assist you in selecting your colleges and gathering research data. Title: Institute of Education Science of the United States Department of Education; College Navigator URL: <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/> Title: CollegeBoard College Matchmaker URL: http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/adv_typeofschool.jsp Title: Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; Public Higher Education Campuses URL: <http://www.mass.edu/campuses/phecampuses.asp> You will complete a College Admission and Cost Comparison spreadsheet for each of these five colleges. It is attached below. You will read about college costs at: <http://www.edupass.org/finaid/costs.phtml>. You will use this information to approximate the costs you will incur by attending the five colleges you have previously selected. Use the college cost data you have inserted into your College Admission and Cost Comparison spreadsheet to complete this task. I have attached a College Cost Analysis spreadsheet for you to complete. You will use the information you have gathered for the College Admission and Cost Comparison spreadsheet as well as information you have gathered from the resource websites, to generate a list of the top five criteria you are looking for in a college. Please list these criteria in order of most important to least important. I have attached a worksheet entitled the 5 College Criteria Most Important to Me. You will create a free login account on the Princeton Review website: <http://www.princetonreview.com/Login3.aspx?uidbadge=%07> After you create your free account, you will use the Princeton Review's Counselor-O-Matic Best Fit School Search to generate a list of good college matches for you based on various criteria you select. You will print out the list of your best fit matches and identify at least six colleges you would consider applying to.

Evaluation

Category and Score	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Very Good 3	Exemplary 4	Score
Student accurately completes the College Admission and Cost Comparison spreadsheet.	Student accurately completes less than 60% of the College Admission and Cost Comparison spreadsheet	Student accurately completes 60-74% of the College Admission and Cost Comparison spreadsheet	Student accurately completes 75-89% of the College Admission and Cost Comparison spreadsheet	Student accurately completes 90-100% of the College Admission and Cost Comparison spreadsheet.	%25
Student accurately completes the College Cost Analysis spreadsheet.	Student accurately completes less than 60% of the College Cost Analysis spreadsheet.	Student accurately completes 60-74% of the College Cost Analysis spreadsheet.	Student accurately completes 75-89% the College Cost Analysis spreadsheet.	Student accurately completes 90-100% of the College Cost Analysis spreadsheet.	%25
Student accurately completes the Five College Criteria Most Important to Me worksheet.	Student accurately completes less than 60% of the Five College Criteria Most Important to Me worksheet.	Student accurately completes 60-74% of the Five College Criteria Most Important to Me worksheet.	Student accurately completes 75-89% of the Five College Criteria Most Important to Me worksheet.	Student accurately completes 90-100% of the Five College Criteria Most Important to Me worksheet.	%25
Student successfully registers with the Princeton Review and completes the Counselor-O-Matic Best Fit School Search.	Student furnishes a list of 3 or less schools that the student is interested in applying to.	Student furnishes a list of 4 schools that the student is interested in applying to.	Student furnishes a list of 5 schools that the student is interested in applying to.	Student furnishes a list of 6 or more schools that the student is interested in applying to.	%25
				Total Score	%100

Conclusion

The process of researching and applying to colleges can be quite overwhelming especially when you have little data to inform your decisions. By using the internet as a resource to guide your college planning decisions, you are able to access a wide range of information from various sources. By accessing various college data simultaneously on the internet, you can quickly and quite easily compare colleges across numerous criteria. The more knowledge you have about particular subjects, the more informed decisions you will be able to make about those subjects. Furthermore, by increasing the quantity of your information sources while also controlling for the quality of your information sources, you are able to decrease the impact of bias in the information you gather. In an age of automated phone systems and dated college guide books, you are able to access updated information directly from the source that produces it. Most importantly, you are able to do conduct your research at little to no cost and quite efficiently with respect to time. By linking directly to college websites, you are able to find out everything you need to know to successfully apply to that particular college. Congratulations on successfully completing this webquest. You have demonstrated your ability to work independently using the internet to gather and analyze various data related to college admissions and costs. You have developed a greater understanding of the many different aspects of financing a college education. You now have a list of colleges you are interested in applying to that match your interests and college selection criteria. It is time to get ready for college applications. You deserve kudos for a job superbly done. The fun for you has just begun. Good Luck!!!

Teacher Page

American School Counselor Association National Standards For Students:
 A:B1.2 Learn and apply critical-thinking skills
 A:B1.5 Organize and apply academic information from a variety of sources
 A:B1.7 Become a self-directed and independent learner
 A:B2.4 Apply knowledge of aptitudes and interests to goal setting
 A:B2.7 Identify post-secondary options consistent with interests, achievement, aptitude and abilities

Standards

Credits

Other