



APPLICATION NEWS

- Preliminary data from the Common App show "a sharp increase in applications submitted before November 1, a jump of 41 percent over the 2019-20 application cycle." Applications from minority students "increased 67 percent." It's becoming clear that Early Action has become the new Regular Decision.
- The new "simplified" FAFSA will supposedly be released by December 31st. This delay will make things very challenging for college financial aid offices as they will have to wait for downloaded data from the Department of Education before they can make awards. Apparently, many colleges are planning to use the CSS Profile to award financial aid preliminarily.
- A new report shows that the 6-year completion rate for students who started college in 2017 held steady at only 62%. Ack. When you go to research colleges, please be sure to look at 4 year and 6 year graduation rates.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY (WPI)

- Location: Worcester, MA
- # of Undergrads: 5,273
- Acceptance Rate: 57%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 13:1
- Returning Freshmen: 91%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 94%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Innovative and undergraduate-oriented with a project-based, humanistic view of engineering: "We all want to design, build, and innovate to make the world better."
- Curriculum is remarkably broad and flexible; emphasizes teamwork.
- Has a surprising devotion to music and theater (offered as minors).
- \$49M innovation studio features high-tech classrooms, makerspaces, and labs.
- First years can sign up for a two-term Great Problems Seminar.
- Students required to complete an Interactive Qualifying Project as well as a Major Qualifying Project where they work on professional-level problems.
- Academic year consists of 4 terms, each lasting 7 weeks, with 3 classes per term. Intense & fast paced. Failing grades don't show on transcript; GPA isn't calculated.
- "Extroverted nerds" who have fun on and off-campus: coffeehouses, improv nights, game nights, Greek parties. 62% live on campus.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES

- Location: Golden, CO
- # of Undergrads: 5,774
- Acceptance Rate: 58%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 17:1
- Returning Freshmen: 94%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 76%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Best known for mining-related fields, but strong in many fields of engineering.
- Easy access to mountains. Students spend free time hiking, biking, and skiing.
- Easier to get in, but rigorous academics. But "we're all working together."
- Requirements: Freshman Success Seminar, 2 semester Engineering Practices Intro Course (EPIC), six-week summer fieldwork session.
- Wide variety of majors, known here as "options."
- Most professors have industry experience.
- First years are required to live on campus, but most move off campus after that.
- Active Greek system; livelier partying is 20 minutes away at CU Boulder. 70% do intramural or club sports.
- New student orientation includes hiking up a mountain with a 10-pound rock from home and adding it to an M formation; seniors return to take down the rock.

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.
- **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
 - Cost of attendance
- **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 have 2 slots remaining for juniors who would like to have assistance navigating the college admissions process. I like to start in the fall ideally (or early spring), so please let me know if you'd be interested.

I am also now filling slots for sophomores. 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. 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!



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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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