



COLLEGE ADMISSIONS NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2023

MORE NEWS ABOUT THE SIMPLIFIED FAFSA

As many of you are aware, the FAFSA is making several changes for the award year 2024-2025. The "Simplified FAFSA" will have fewer questions but will also have a revised calculation for need. Also, the "Estimated Family Contribution" (EFC) will now be termed the "Student Aid Index" (SAI). One of the most significant changes is that the number of children in college at once will not be factored into the calculation (supposedly, this will be relooked at after this next cycle).

To make things even more challenging, the Department of Education will not be releasing this simplified FAFSA until December, and it is unclear when Net Price Calculators on the College Board website or individual college websites will be updated (which drives me crazy). So, in the meantime, here is an SAI estimator provided by NCAG: <https://www.collegemoneymethod.com/2024-25-student-aid-index-sai-calculator/>

TERM TO UNDERSTAND: DEMONSTRATED INTEREST

Certain colleges care a great deal about the amount of interest that you show them (typically, highly selective colleges don't care about interest because they don't need to). Some colleges simply won't admit students who don't show interest (hello, Tulane and Case Western); they want to know that the students they admit will actually attend. The primary way to show interest is to apply through Early Decision. But there are other ways too: visiting, interviewing, attending info sessions at your school or virtually, emailing your admissions rep, following them on social media. And don't forget to open emails they send and peruse the websites; believe it or not, many colleges track your activity online. Check the Common Data Set to see if your colleges consider interest and keep track of the interest you show!

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: COLGATE UNIVERSITY

- Location: Hamilton, NY
- # of Undergrads: 3,164
- Acceptance Rate: 12%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 9:1
- Returning Freshmen: 93%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 0%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Brings together small liberal arts college with strong athletics of a big university
- Gorgeous campus in quaint Hamilton; complaints there's not much to do outside of campus
- Emphasizes interdisciplinary study. Excellent for natural sciences and social sciences
- Ideal for nature lovers; fully equipped Base Camp on campus lets students rent skis, snowshoes, camping gear
- 85% of faculty live within 10 minutes; small classes = strong relationships with faculty
- Workload is challenging but fulfilling. Core requirement has to be completed by sophomore year; 6 distribution classes required, including PE
- Parties go on throughout the week; frat parties are prominent as are sports team parties
- 92% live on campus. Students live in residential communities called Commons for first 2 yrs
- 2/3 study abroad. 83% get involved with research
- Students are ambitious, driven, and preppy. 4 day orientation and pre-orientation trips.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: HAMILTON COLLEGE

- Location: Clinton, NY
- # of Undergrads: 2,055
- Acceptance Rate: 14%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 9:1
- Returning Freshmen: 94%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 0%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Bucolic setting in upstate New York with 1,000 acres of woodland and fields
- "Open" curriculum with no distribution requirements; just have to take 3 writing intensive classes (offered in all subjects); option to create your own major
- Strong majors in math, public policy, economics, literature
- Rigorous academic life; easy to build relationships with professors; more than 100 classes require oral presentations; senior capstone project required
- Sense of community permeates the college; very collaborative environment; many subcultures that students can fit into; it's cool to be passionate about many things
- 98% live on campus, and many say a car is important; town of Clinton isn't a big draw
- Close-knit athletic teams and service organizations
- New Center for Health and Wellness
- Strong orientation program includes adventure and service trips (65 options)

THOUGHTS FOR JUNIORS...

You're almost done with Junior year--probably the hardest year of high school! I know it's hard when Seniors are no longer at school or in your classes, but please spend time/effort on your classes these last few weeks of school. I promise it will pay off! A few more things to think about...

With grade inflation and our test optional world, it's looking like letters of recommendation are more important than ever. Why? Because they help colleges really understand who you are as a student and as a person. Make sure that you ask two teachers to write letters of recommendation before school lets out (don't just ask them if they can write one; ask them if they can write a great one!). Please do not wait until the fall; many teachers like to get this letter-writing completed during the summer months, and many will agree to write only a set number of letters. Ask teachers--ideally from your junior year and from your core classes (math, ELA, science, social studies, and language)--who can speak about you as a learner. And be sure to give your teachers a resume or brag sheet so that they fully understand who you are outside of class.

Start doing some soul searching and reflection in preparation for the essays you'll be writing later in the summer and in the fall. What are some challenges you've faced and how have you overcome them? Who do you consider to be part of your community? Why do you want to study what you want to study? Being clear on who you are and what you want in college will make your applications authentic and meaningful.

Start doing some work to figure out if the SAT or ACT is better suited to you, and then start prepping. It is a test optional world out there, but I recommend in most cases that you test and have some scores; you can always decide not to submit them later on. And remember, if you're applying to STEM or business programs, they'll want to see test scores! One more thing to note: if you take the paper SAT in the fall and the Digital SAT in the spring, you will not be able to superscore those scores...

THOUGHTS FOR SENIORS...

If you haven't already graduated, you probably will be soon!

Congratulations! Here are a few things to remember during this pretty momentous time:

- Take a moment to thank all of the people who supported you through this process: your parents, your teachers, your coaches, your friends. Especially the teachers who wrote you letters of recommendation! Write them a note and express your gratitude. You'll feel good after doing this, and they will appreciate hearing from you!
- Don't fall into the trap of thinking that you really don't deserve to go to the college where you're headed. I promise you that colleges will not admit students who they think will not be able to handle the work or who won't be able to thrive on campus. Yes, you will have to work hard, and yes, you will face challenges, but you do belong there. Believe it, and face down the imposter syndrome!
- Begin managing your expectations for college. There is no one perfect place for anyone, so expect to be frustrated or disappointed by a few things. The key to a smooth transition is getting involved and engaged from day one!
- Speaking of transitions, I'm gauging interest in a webinar for parents to talk about helping our kids transition to college. Please email me if you'd be interested.

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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