



COLLEGE ADMISSIONS NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025



IN THE NEWS:

- SUNY Free Weeks: you can apply to up to five SUNY schools with no application fee from **October 20 – November 3**.
- Jeffrey Selingo has a new book out: "Dream School: Finding the College That's Right For You." He focuses on why elite colleges matter less than you think, why it's better to choose value over prestige, and how to find colleges that emphasize teaching and community. Just please try not to focus on one "dream school"! Find 10-12 colleges where you'll thrive!

KEY CONCEPT: FAFSA AND CSS PROFILE

The FAFSA and CSS Profile are open! Take a look at this very thorough guide as you fill out these forms: [Big J's Brief Guide to the FAFSA and CSS Profile](#)

Please check this website to see if your colleges require the CSS Profile:

<https://profile.collegeboard.org/profile/ppi/participatingInstitutions.aspx>

Most are expecting that--this cycle at least--fullpay students will be prioritized. If you're in that category, please plan to submit the FAFSA once your student decides where they'll enroll; if your financial situation were to change, many colleges will not consider giving financial aid to enrolled students if a FAFSA is not already on file.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

- Location: Clemson, SC
- # of Undergrads: 22,400
- Acceptance Rate: 38%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 16:1
- Returning Freshmen: 92%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 39%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- More focused on undergraduates than most public universities
- Tight knit campus in a small town location with lots of spirit
- 1,400 acre campus surrounded by another 17,000 acres of farms and woodlands
- Known for biology, computer engineering (especially robotics), veterinary sciences; great direct admit nursing program
- Big on undergraduate teaching and undergraduate research (54% take part)
- 53% of classes have fewer than 20 students
- 16% of men and 31% of women participate in Greek life
- Blue Ridge Mountains close by for hiking and camping
- Friendly students who love big-time sports!

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

- Location: Harrisonburg, VA
- # of Undergrads: 18,772
- Acceptance Rate: 76%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 17:1
- Returning Freshmen: 89%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 2%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Public university with a focus on undergraduate teaching and close student/faculty interaction; classes feel relaxed and supportive
- 75% of students are in-state
- Strong in pre-professional programs in business, health professions, and education. Nursing program is not direct admit; students apply at the end of their first year (200 apply for 130 slots)
- Student support services get high ratings; strong counseling center with a range of offerings
- Honors College for those looking for a more intense experience
- Freshmen required to live on campus; meal plan gets rave reviews
- Lots of school spirit and minimal Greek life.

THOUGHTS FOR SENIORS:

Most seniors I know are hard at work on their college applications. Many have realized just how tough the fall of senior year can be; academics have ramped up, and they're often busy leading extra-curriculars or sports teams. And many regret not getting more done over the summer (take note, Juniors!)? But, if they **work slowly and steadily**--instead of waiting last minute to write supplemental essays--they **still have time** to put together solid applications.

Students should let their guidance counselors know if they plan to apply Early Decision or Early Action. Most schools and counselors have deadlines around this; please be considerate of their time!

THOUGHTS FOR JUNIORS:

Juniors and their parents should do their best to get on several college campuses this fall. Visiting when college students are on campus is best; it's very hard to get a sense of the vibe of colleges when they're not. Don't worry yet about visiting colleges that you might apply to. Instead, focus on visiting a mix of sizes (from huge to small) and locations (from urban to rural). Without making these visits, it is VERY HARD for students to figure out what they are looking for in a college. And when you're visiting, be sure to drive around the perimeter of the campus, and listen for laughter (a sign that kids are happy and interacting with each other!). AND ask whether anyone can join clubs (at far too many colleges, there is an application process to join clubs, and it can be quite competitive).

**PLEASE FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO OTHER FAMILIES WHO WOULD
BENEFIT FROM MY APPROACH AND PERSPECTIVE!**
(They can subscribe on my website)

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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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