



ADMISSIONS NEWS!

- The Common Application is now open for the 2025–2026 season! You'll notice that it's had a bit of a revamp. I'm crossing my fingers that it is more intuitive and user-friendly to students!
- It remains to be seen how fewer international students (oh, the worrisome visa backlogs!), new limitations with financial aid, reductions in grant funding, increased endowment taxes, and new pronouncements on DEI will affect colleges and universities. Several have been in the news lately regarding their cost-cutting measures; I imagine we'll see more of that. I've strapped on my seatbelt, and I suggest you do too!
- One recent, positive educational policy change revolves around 529 Plans. In particular, 529 funds can now be used to cover tutoring and testing (eg, SAT/ACT and AP exams) expenses. Read more here: <https://thecrunch.co/newsletter/529-plan-changes/>
- I'm proud to announce that I have received the Certified Educational Planner (CEP) distinction! I have passed a board-certified exam, provided several professional references, and pledged to adhere to stringent ethical practices. There is no higher mark of distinction in my profession as an Independent Educational Consultant. I'm one of 26 CEPs in NY and one of 251 in the US! Thanks to my colleagues who have supported me along the way and to my students who commiserated with me as we were studying for big, scary exams!

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY

- Location: Fairfield, CT
- # of Undergrads: 4,600
- Acceptance Rate: 33%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 12:1
- Returning Freshmen: 91%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 85%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Jesuit university with strong nursing, business, and pre-med programs.
- Bucolic campus seven minutes away from the beach.
- Biz school has a data analytics lab, a gaming lab, and a trading floor simulation.
- Engineering program (ABET accredited) is growing. Has Engineering Without Borders pgm.
- Extensive core curriculum comprises 1/3 of courseload.
- 69% of students perform community service, mainly in Bridgeport.
- No Greek life, but parties abound.
- Housing is guaranteed all 4 years; new townhomes for upperclassmen are popular.
- Div 1 sports with brand new basketball arena.
- Most students are from the northeast, but other areas like Chicago and CA are growing.
- Working to increase diversity of student body and faculty.

COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

- Location: Storrs, CT
- # of Undergrads: 24,076
- Acceptance Rate: 54%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 16:1
- Returning Freshmen: 92%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 38%

INTERESTING FACTS:

- Has one of the highest retention and graduation rates among public universities.
- Only public university in New England with its own law school, med school, dental school, and social work school, and undergrads benefit from these resources.
- New 5 story engineering and science building. New recreation center.
- Real emphasis on environment and ecology, with a strong program in coastal studies.
- GREAT 1st year experience program + great learning support programs.
- Two teams of finance majors run the \$1 million student-managed investment fund.
- Special programs in medicine and dentistry give you guaranteed admission to med or dental school.
- 65% live in university housing. 8 dining halls. Super safe campus.
- Active social life with Greek life (10-14% participate) and sports scene. Men's and women's basketball teams have won national Div 1 titles recently.

RIISING JUNIORS: START VISITING SOME COLLEGES!

Getting on a few college campuses at the end of the summer or in early fall (ideally when students are there so that you can get a good read on the vibe) is probably the most important thing you can do. It is very challenging to make a wise college list without having some context. So try to visit a mix of colleges (large public universities, medium-sized colleges, smaller liberal arts colleges) in a variety of locations (urban, suburban, rural). Don't worry at this point about which colleges might end up on your list. Just start with size and location. And then start doing some real soul-searching about what you might want in a college. Do you want a contained campus with a green quad? Do you want a great college town? How well do you want to know your profs? I find that too many students and families build their college lists based off of what colleges their friends are applying to, rather than thinking about what they want.

RIISING SENIORS: MAKE SOME REAL HEADWAY THIS SUMMER!

Most of you have a month or so before school starts again. I can't impress upon you enough how worthwhile it is to get a ton of college admissions work done before you head back for your senior year. Remember: you're probably going to be taking the most rigorous courseload you've taken so far, AND you'll have one more AP class on your schedule: AP College Applications! I'm only sort of kidding. The fall of senior year is A LOT! Students are amazed each year when their teachers schedule tests right when apps are due!

Here are the key things that you should do before school starts:

- Finalize that college list. Follow the colleges on your list on Instagram; you can learn a ton from Insta Stories about how colleges welcome students back in the fall, and you can get a close look at the students who attend and how they spend their time.
- Contemplate your admissions strategy. Will you decide to apply Early Decision? (That's the one where if you get in, you're going). ED is great for colleges because they get to fill their seats early and often; it's not great for teens who change their minds constantly. But the bump in acceptance rates is real, so for families who don't have much financial pressure, it's a good thing to consider.
- Keep working on your personal statement. Tell a great, compelling story, and then explain why it matters. Finalize it before your summer ends.
- Keep working on your activities list (use a spreadsheet to lay it all out--ensuring you're within the miniscule character count--and then copy&paste it into the Common App).
- Get to work on any supplemental essays you have. Double check on the Common App that you're working on the latest essays.
- Will you be submitting a creative supplement (eg, a music supplement or an art portfolio)? Get that done before school starts too!

Don't underestimate how busy you'll be in the fall! What's more: you'll do better work this summer when you're not distracted by all of that challenging fall schoolwork!

RIISING COLLEGE FIRST-YEARS: MAKING THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

Many of you will be HEADING TO COLLEGE this month! Woohoo! It probably feels a little daunting, scary, and exciting! Let yourself feel all the feels, and work to manage your expectations. There will be hard times, but they will pass. You may feel lonely and overwhelmed at times, but know that you're not the only one. Have patience during this transition. It can take time!

Here are a few things I recommend that you do when you get to campus:

- Try to meet someone new every day. You should stay in touch with old friends, but be sure to make room and time for new ones.
- Go to the activities fair, and join clubs and organizations. Getting engaged and tied to groups from the get-go can make a huge difference!
- Go to faculty office hours regularly. Get to know your professors or TAs. DO NOT WAIT until you are struggling! Don't be shy. They want to help you!
- Find 3 places on campus that make you happy and visit them regularly.
- Find 3 people on campus who you enjoy and who make you feel comfortable. Grab meals with them. Head to the library with them.
- Resist the urge to text your parents with every problem you face. See if you can figure things out first.
- If you do reach out to your parents with a problem or issue, please remember to circle back and tell them how things resolved and how you are. We parents keep on worrying until we know we can stop!

One more thing... The book "College Success Guaranteed: 5 Rules to Make It Happen" by Malcolm Gauld has very wise advice:

- Go To Class (you'd be amazed by how many college kids think they can get away with this)
- Study At Least 3 Hours a Day For 5 Days a Week
- Commit To Something
- Get a Mentor
- Procrastination Kills.
- I'll add a few others: Get Engaged & Invested and Be Open to New Friendships!

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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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