



Ashland High School College Connection Newsletter

Provided by Donnley Fenn and AHS Counseling Office



October 2017

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 2

FINDING YOUR ELEMENT

Ken Robinson, author of “Finding Your Element: How to Discover Your Talents and Transform Your Life”, has written: “Life is not linear; it is organic. We create our lives symbiotically as we explore our talents in relation to the circumstances which help to create us. It’s about passion and what excites our spirit and our energy. Everyday our children spread their dreams under our feet and we should tread softly.” As a high school senior, you are now in a position to control the manner in which your immediate future unfolds. Resist the temptation then, to put things off or go into cruise control. Now is the time to accelerate! You must make that commitment, though. Circumstances to explore your talents are waiting around the corner to help create the person you will become. The time for thinking about choosing your next set of circumstances is fading fast. The time for acting upon your dreams of the past years is now at hand. The greatest challenge will be to find a realistic balance between your capabilities and your fondest dreams. Use the information in this newsletter as a guide in helping you navigate the winding road which lies before you.

Net Price Calculator for Low-income Students

Many colleges are confusing or discouraging low-income students with overly complicated net price calculators, said a recent report issued by the *Jack Kent Cooke Foundation*. The report praised simple tools that perform some or all of the functions of net price calculators, which federal law requires colleges to provide as a means for prospective students to figure out their aid eligibility. The report noted that 30-plus elite colleges block collegeabacus.org, one simple tool, instead insisting that students use the colleges’ own aid calculators. One tool that the report did praise was a calculator used at **Wellesley College** that turns out to have much in common with *College Abacus* and that is now being used by other colleges as well: <https://myintuition.org> This tool will help you to anticipate college cost and to assist in your planning efforts. It asks six basic financial questions and gives you an early estimate of the amount your family will need to contribute for one year at **Wellesley** (or any other college). Your financial information is secure. The site does not retain personally identifying information you provide. The estimator’s result is based on the information you enter. It provides a good estimate, a starting point, but it is not a guarantee of financial aid.

Admission Questions about Unfavorable Social Media Content

(“College Spotlight”, Sept. 2017)

35% of college admissions officers (CAOs) visited an applicant’s social media pages in 2016, according to Kaplan Test Prep’s survey of more than 350 CAOs at top U.S. colleges and universities. 42% of college admissions officers who visited applicants’ sites said that what they found negatively impacted a student’s chances of being accepted to college. Before admissions interviews, prepare responses to potential questions admissions officers may ask about your unfavorable social media content. We all make mistakes and taking responsibility for your actions from your wild high school years will impress admissions officers with your honesty. It shows that you’re mature, a strong communicator, and willing to address negative issues head on. Not every college reviews the social media posts of applicants, but why take a chance when it comes to your future?

Financial Aid and Early Decision Applicants

(“bestcollegefit.com” Planning Blog)

If a student applies ED, that applicant gives up the right/opportunity to compare financial aid awards. While he/she might appeal the financial aid award at the ED school, at the end of the appeal process the applicant will need to withdraw all other active applications and commit to the ED school. The time to reconcile the financial aid situation is before the ED application is submitted. By applying ED, it is agreed that any contingent matters that could stand in the way of enrollment had been fully resolved. By trying to play one school against another while committed ED, the student risks losing all potential offers of admission. Many of these schools compare ED acceptance lists, and applicants cannot be seen as failing to honor their ED commitments.

Most Affordable Out-of-state Public Universities

(“Money Magazine”, Sept. 2017)

Some top public universities seek to attract out-of-staters by offering merit scholarships, typically to those in the top 25% of their high school classes, and a few elite public universities provide need-based grants. *Money Magazine* recently identified the top 10 most-affordable state universities for non-residents. Here is the list: (**Fargo** is even less for Western Undergrad Exchange ((WUE)) students -\$18.5K): <http://wiche.edu/info/wue/WUEsavingsChart.pdf>
 - Costs include board and room.

<u>College</u>	<u>Cost With Aid 2016-17</u>	<u>Cost Without Aid 2016-17</u>	<u>% of Students Who Get Aid</u>
1. Iowa State University (Ames)	\$25,855	\$33,360	83 percent
2. University of Kansas (Lawrence)	\$27,863	\$39,951	68 percent
3. <u>North Dakota State Univ. (Fargo)</u>	\$28,223	\$32,000	38 percent
4. Ohio State University (Columbus)	\$28,885	\$44,000	65 percent
5. Oklahoma State Univ. (Stillwater)	\$30,002	\$38,330	45 percent
6. Univ. of South Carolina (Columbia)	\$30,387	\$45,387	66 percent
7. University of Iowa (Ames)	\$32,936	\$42,112	50 percent
8. Pennsylvania State University (University Park)	\$34,478	\$48,900	26 percent
9. Miami University (Oxford, Ohio)	\$34,500	\$49,000	62 percent
10. University of Michigan (Ann Arbor)	\$34,579	\$59,784	42 percent

The Problem with HS Transcripts Submitted by Homeschoolers

(“insidehighered.com”, by Scott Jaschik, 9/11/17)

A revoked admissions offer by **University of Rochester** (NY) has raised questions about lack of oversight of transcripts from homeschooled students. Experts see the real risk is lack of information about curriculum, not fraud. When word spread that the **University of Rochester** revoked an admissions offer from a student who lied about her high school background, many were stunned by the story. The student had attended a private high school, but she submitted a transcript that said she had been homeschooled. Many admissions officers — including those at Rochester — said the incident made them fear that they have limited ways to tell if a transcript from a homeschooled student reflects reality. Comments on the Rochester article suggested that anyone could create a homeschooler transcript, for a student real or imaginary and with grades real or imaginary. So I tested that, creating a transcript for my childhood pet, a cat named Thomas. I paid \$19 to an online service, which got me not only the transcript but a water mark for my faux home school. I followed standard courses for the first three years of high school and added activities that reflected Thomas’s interests. No verification of any kind was required. I wrote to Transcript Maker, the service I used, to ask about authentication, and the company wrote back to say that some parents take the transcript to be notarized, but the company provided no information on actual authentication and asked no questions as I created the transcript. The issue matters, as the number of children being homeschooled has been going up. An Education Department report in 2012 found that the number of homeschooled students was about 1.8 million and increasing. Most homeschooled applicants admitted to colleges seem to be as well prepared to succeed in college as their public school counterparts. However, for a homeschooler, an admissions officer might ask for much more detail about the curriculum — what textbooks were used, what material was covered and so forth.

Udacity Offers New Intro to Self-Driving Car Program

The for-profit online education provider **Udacity** has announced a new *Introduction to Self-Driving Cars nanodegree*, to complement Udacity’s existing Self-Driving Car Engineer program. The founder of Google’s self-driving car team said that the program will be accessible to anyone with minimal programming experience. He stated, “Self-driving cars is a field of vastly growing opportunities but with an alarming shortage of talent.” To this end, transportation company *Lyft* has partnered with **Udacity** to offer 400 scholarships for the *Intro to Self-Driving Cars* program for underrepresented students.

Purdue University Buys Kaplan University

Purdue University's Board of Trustees has voted to buy the for-profit **Kaplan University**. Kaplan will become a "nonprofit, public-benefit corporation" that "will operate as a new Indiana public university, as authorized by the Indiana legislature, affiliated with Purdue University and focused on expanding access to education for nontraditional adult learners." Some 32,000 current Kaplan students, according to the filing, will transfer to the new university, along with current Kaplan faculty and staff members, a total of about 3,000 employees. Kaplan will essentially run the new university, providing the administrative backbone. The new university will be governed by a separate board, the members of which will be appointed by Purdue. The deal has a 30-year term, which will be automatically renewed every five years.

11 Research Universities Start Aid Initiative

A consortium of research universities the University Innovation Alliance, announced in August that it is starting a new initiative to provide completion grants to students facing financial pressure in their last semester. Early data shows that about 4,000 Pell-eligible college seniors who are in good academic standing are at risk of being dropped from their classes or not allowed to graduate because they owe less than \$1,000 to their institutions. The emergency aid will be available to students this fall through funding from the *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*. The *UIA* member universities include **Arizona State, Georgia State, Iowa State, Michigan State, Oregon State, Purdue and Ohio State Universities and the Universities of California, Riverside; Central Florida; Kansas and Texas at Austin.**

Beware of Private Student Loans

(*NY Times*, 7/07/17)

Many people with private student loans end up shouldering debt that they never earn enough to repay. Borrowing to finance higher education is an economic decision that often pays off, but federal student loans — a much larger market, totaling \$1.3 trillion — are directly funded by the government and come with consumer protections like income-based repayment options. Private loans lack that flexibility, and they often carry interest rates that can reach double digits. Because of those steep rates, the size of the loans can quickly balloon, leaving borrowers to pay hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of dollars each month.

COLLEGE RELATED NEWS

++ Turnout among registered college students increased by more than 3% in 2016 compared to 2012: 68.5% compared to 65.3%. Women voted more than men. Students majoring in social sciences voted at higher rates, 53.2% than STEM majors, 43.6%.

++ **Harvard University** (MA) has ended the 2017 fiscal year having had a return of 8.1%, with the endowment's total value reaching \$37.1 billion, the largest of any U.S. college or university.

++ **Brigham Young University** (UT) will start to sell caffeinated soft drinks on campus. Many in the Mormon Church, of which Brigham Young is a part, avoid all caffeine. Brigham Young will still not sell coffee or highly caffeinated energy drinks.

++ **Lynn University** (FL) has reached a deal to buy **Digital Media Arts College**, located about a mile away from Lynn's main campus in Boca Raton. Lynn, a 3,000-student non-profit university is acquiring the for-profit College, which has about 300 students. It will become The College of Communication and Design.

++ **Wheaton College** (IL) has punished five football players by assigning them to write essays and complete community service for their role in a 2016 hazing episode. They also now face felony charges for aggravated battery, mob action and unlawful restraint.

++ After a black **Cornell University** (NY) student was attacked in mid-Sept, the president directed the Greek system on campus to develop new diversity training and will set up a new task force to address campus prejudices. A 19-year-old white student was charged with one count of third-degree assault.

++ **Kenyon College** (OH) has received an anonymous \$75 million gift, the largest in the history of the college. The funds will be used for a new library and academic quadrangle.

++ **Birmingham-Southern College** (AL) with 1300 students has announced that it will cut tuition and mandatory fees by more than half, from \$35,840 this year to \$17,650 starting in the fall of 2018. <http://www.bsc.edu>

++ According to a report released in August by the *Consumer Financial Protection Bureau*, loan borrowers owe \$20,000 or more when they leave college. That's up by 20% from 2002. The portion of borrowers owing \$50,000 or more spiked from 5% to 16% during the same period.

++ In May, all women **Mills College** declared a "financial emergency" that will lead to layoffs of faculty and staff members and a new approach to the curriculum. The college's annual operating deficit has grown to more than \$9 million.

What Is the CLA+ Exam?

(“Wall Street Journal”, by Douglas Belkin, 6/05/17)

As prospective college freshmen, it is advisable to ask colleges about the CLA+, whether they use it, how much gain is made in test scores over 4 years, and how their curriculum encourages the development of critical-reasoning skills. Asking about this test will also help score points with admissions counselors. It helps identify you as a serious student. *The Collegiate Learning Assessment*, or CLA+, is a voluntary, 90 minute exam which has been gaining significant attention lately for its goal of providing college graduates a way to showcase their skills and strengths to job interviewers with an objective test score. Freshmen and seniors at about 200 U.S. colleges take this little-known test every year to measure how much better they get at learning to think. The exam measures critical thinking, analytical reasoning, problem solving and writing, and requires students to make cohesive arguments, assess the quality of evidence in a document or interpret data in a table. The largest gains seem to occur at smaller colleges where students are less accomplished at arrival but soak up a rigorous, interdisciplinary curriculum. A *PayScale Inc.* survey has showed that the No. 1 complaint of employers is poor critical-reasoning skills.

Advice from College Admission Directors

*** “What if my school forms, recommendations, or transcript don’t arrive ontime?”

You are only responsible for pieces over which you have control and send (like the application and supplement). We know there are blizzards and that teachers go on maternity leave. Any number of things can happen. If you are missing something, we will let you know in a few weeks (after we open all the mail) and give you an opportunity to complete your application. No problem.

*** “I still don’t know what I want to do in College.”

That’s just fine. You don’t even have to tell us in your application—that’s part of the experience at the University of Chicago. In fact, we joke that Undecided tends to be one of our most popular majors. As long as you are eager to learn, you will find a welcoming college home.

COLLEGE RELATED NEWS

++ The **California Community Colleges** has announced that the Board of Governors need-based Fee Waiver program, which provides nearly half of the system’s 2.1 million students with free tuition, is to be renamed the *California College Promise Grant*. The grant covers tuition first before any other financial aid awarded to the student. That allows students to use other financial aid to offset the cost of textbooks, transportation and other expenses.

++ **Rider University** (NJ) has a potential buyer for **Westminster Choir College** that would keep the college on its campus in Princeton. **Rider’s** plans to sell the college — with or without its campus — have alarmed many supporters of **Westminster**, a distinguished music school.

++ Legacies are admitted at much higher rates than other applicants. But the vast majority also fit or exceed the academic profile of colleges to which they are admitted. The Naviance database had data on 15,402 legacy applications from the high school classes of 2014-17, considering only the 64 colleges with 100 or more legacy applicants.

++ The **University of California, Irvine** has received a \$200 million gift, the largest ever to the university, from Susan and Henry Samuelli, longtime supporters of the university. The funds will be used for a health sciences college that the university says will be “focused on interdisciplinary integrative health.”

++ Male students are still in the majority at engineering and technologically oriented institutions. However, at **Worcester Polytechnic Institute** (MA), women applicants are making real gains. Of entering freshmen, 43% are women. The key change was that \$1 million previously used for appeals of non-need-based aid was re-allocated for top female candidates.

Management Engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (MA) Management Engineering is an undergraduate business degree granted by Worcester Polytechnic Institute’s Foisie Business School, one of only a few U. S. universities in the to offer such a degree. WPI’s management engineering (MGE) major provides students with the knowledge in both management principles and one technical subject, typically in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Students take the required management courses and select six others in one technical area as a concentration that fits with their career objectives. Currently a total of seven concentration areas are available: biomedical engineering, chemistry, civil engineering, electrical and computer engineering, manufacturing engineering, mechanical engineering, and operations management. <https://www.wpi.edu/academics/study/management-engineering-bs>

SCHOLARSHIPS & CONTEST PROGRAMS

11th ANNUAL CREATE-A-GREETING-CARD SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST – Offers a one-time \$10,000 scholarship for a card design featuring original art work or photography. Contest is open to all students 14 years of age or older at the time of entry. A panel of judges will select approximately 100 designs per month that will be posted to *The Gallery Collection's* Facebook page for voting. The top ten designs with the most votes will automatically move onto the finalist round. **Contest Deadline: March 1, 2018** <https://www.gallerycollection.com/ScholarshipOfficialRules.pdf>

JACK KENT COOKE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP – Offers high school seniors up to 40 scholarships, worth up to \$40,000 per year to attend a four-year, accredited undergraduate school. Highly competitive, based on exceptional academic ability and achievement, financial need, persistence, a desire to help others, and leadership. **Application Deadline: November 14, 2017.** <http://www.jkcf.org/scholarship-programs/college-scholarship>

BURGER KING SCHOLARS PROGRAM – Application opens on October 15. When first 50,000 applications are received, the application will no longer be available. **Application Deadline: December 15, 2017.** Application and guidelines now available at: <http://www.bkmclamorefoundation.org>. Grants range from \$1,000 to \$50,000.

DR. PEPPER TUITION GIVEAWAY – For students between the ages of 18 (by 12/2/17) to 24. Find more information at www.drpeppertuition.com. Must submit your “Goal” to “Tell us how you’ll change the world in 350 characters or less” by **October 17, 2017.** You’ll be eligible to submit a video once you reach 50 votes on FB. Dr. Pepper will select finalists for a chance to compete for up to \$100,000 in college tuition.

MENSA EDUCATION & RESEARCH FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS – Applicants need not be Mensa members. Various scholarships totaling \$70,000 are awarded, based solely on a 550-word essay explaining career, academic and/or vocational goals and how you plan to achieve your goals. **Postmark Application Deadline: January 15, 2018.** <http://www.mensafoundation.org>. Click on U.S. scholarships at bottom of page.

SCHOLARSHIP FOR YOUNG HISPANIC LEADERS – Open to Hispanic students attending or accepted to an accredited undergraduate four-year institution for fall 2018 are eligible for non-renewable, need-based \$1000 scholarships: Denny’s Hungry for Education, MacDonald HACER Scholarship, Dr. Juan Andrade, Jr. Scholarship. <http://www.ushli.org> - phone: (312) 427-8683 **Application Deadlines vary: December 29, 2017 to January 18, 2018**

EDISON SCHOLARS PROGRAM – Offers scholarships for high school students with financial need pursuing studies in STEM fields. Thirty \$40,000 scholarships at \$10,000/year will be awarded. Must live in or attend a public or private high school in areas serviced by Southern California Edison. Applications are accepted from October to February. Info at: <http://www.edison.com>. Click on “Community”.

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS – NFIB’s Young Entrepreneur Foundation awards 100 Young Entrepreneur Award Scholarships to students across the country! Each award is between \$2,000 and \$25,000. Applicants **MUST** be HS seniors **and** own and/or operate their own small business. NFIB’s Young Entrepreneur Foundation awarded \$260,000 to deserving young entrepreneurs last year. **Application deadline: December 17, 2017.** <http://www.nfib.com/foundations/yef>. Click on “YEF Programs” under “Young Entrepreneur Foundation”.

ELKS MOST VALUABLE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP – Open to any high school senior who is a US Citizen. Applicants will be judged on scholarship, leadership, and financial need. 500 renewable scholarships ranging from \$1,000 per year to \$12,500 per year will be awarded. This year, the application is due to be submitted online (not to a local Lodge) by **November 27, 2017.** <http://www.elks.org/enf/scholars/mvs.cfm>

AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HS ORATORICAL CONTEST – 53 awards offered annually. Amounts vary from \$1,500 to \$18,000, non-renewable. Must compose a prepared oration on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States. Details at: <http://www.legion.org/scholarships/oratorical>. Local deadlines vary, so ACT NOW!

SCHOLARSHIPS & CONTEST PROGRAMS

STOKES EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM – Open to 2017 seniors who *plan to major in Computer or Electrical Engineering, Computer Science*. Pays tuition & fees up to \$30K per yr. at the college of your choice. If selected as a program participant, you are required to work in your area of study for NSA after your college graduation. **Application deadline online or postmarked October 31, 2017.** Phone: 410-854-4725. Guidelines at: <https://www.intelligencecareers.gov/icstudents.html?Agency=NSA>

AXA ACHIEVEMENT SCHOLARSHIP – Offers non-renewable college scholarships of \$2,500, \$10,000 and \$25,000 to high school seniors who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in their activities in school, the community or the workplace. Applicants must be high school seniors graduating in spring 2018. **Applications will be received until December 15, 2017 or until 10,000 applications are submitted, whichever occurs first. APPLY NOW!** For all details on how to apply: www.axa-achievement.com

COMCAST LEADERS AND ACHIEVERS SCHOLARSHIPS – Offers one-time \$1,000 awards not based on financial need. Must be high school senior, demonstrate a strong commitment to community service and display leadership abilities in school activities or through work experience. All nominations must be made by the Principal or Guidance Counselor. They can email Comcast@applyists.com or call (855) 670-4787 for eligibility and nomination information and materials. **Application deadline: November 30, 2017**

DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION SCHOLARSHIPS – Each year the DAR awards more than \$150,000 through more than 25 different type scholarships. The renewable Richard and Elizabeth Dean Scholarship award for graduating HS seniors is \$5,000 for each year of college. Some scholarships require separate applications. Although financial need is not stated as a requirement, a Financial Need Form is part of the application procedure. **Postmark Application Deadline: February 15, 2018.** To access the application and a list of scholarships: <http://www.dar.org/national-society/scholarships>

THE PRUDENTIAL SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARDS – Recognizes high school students who have demonstrated exemplary, self-initiated community service. Schools and designated organizations such as *Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross Chapters, YMCAs* may select one honoree for every 1,000 students. State finalists receive \$1,000 and an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. From the State Honorees, ten National Honorees are chosen and receive an additional \$5,000. **Student Application Deadline: November 7, 2017. Deadline for Schools: November 17, 2017.** <https://spirit.prudential.com>

GATES MILLENNIUM SCHOLARS PROGRAM – Students are eligible to be considered for a GMS scholarship if they: Are *African American, Asian Pacific Islander American or Hispanic American*; Must be a citizen/legal permanent resident or national of the U.S. and have attained a cumulative 3.3 GPA. Must meet the Federal Pell Grant eligibility criteria. All forms and information are available at website: <http://www.gmsp.org>. **Deadline for Submission of Nomination Materials: January 11, 2018.**

Questions to ask about campus security

Campus security is important issue to cover during your visit. Try to obtain answers to these and other questions to assess the safety of colleges that are on your short list:

- ? What are the crime statistics for the school? (Are the statistics readily available upon request? Compare the statistics received from the school to those on record with the US Department of Education. Are there any discrepancies?)
- ? What are the crime statistics for the city/nearby areas?
- ? What security measures are in place on campus?
- ? What security measures are in place for student residences?
- ? Is the issue of campus crime addressed and discussed throughout the year?
- ? What kind of mental health services are available on campus?
- ? What is the protocol for students in need of mental health intervention beyond what the school can provide?
- ? What protocol is in place when a student has trouble with other students?

VALUABLE WEBSITES

<https://www.nacacfairs.org> – For list of National College Fairs (57) & Performing and Visual Arts College Fairs (23). National College Fairs in western cities are in October and April. When you register, your information will be provided exclusively to those colleges and/or universities that you choose to visit at the College Fair.

<http://www.fairtest.org> – Here is a full list of more than 900 schools now giving applicants the option of submitting standardized test scores or choosing not to include SAT I or ACT test results as part of their application credentials. Seven western private schools are now included: **Lewis & Clark** and **Willamette** (OR); **Mills, Whittier**, and **Pitzer** (CA); **University of Puget Sound** and **Whitworth** (WA).

<https://www.higheradmission.com> - Spend one minute entering test score(s) and GPA to learn your unique merit aid award amounts from 100 (less competitive) Higher Admission colleges and universities. Schools appear in order of lowest to highest cost, including board & room.

NCAA 2017-18 Guide for High School Counselors: Here is an updated Guide for High School Counselors, which is now available for download. This resource helps explain the role of the high school counselor in the initial-eligibility process, and what requirements your students need to meet if they want to compete in NCAA Division I or II athletics. <http://www.ncaapublications.com>

The College that “Fits” You Best Is One that Will:

- Offer a program of study to match your interests and needs.
- Provide a style of instruction to match the way you like to learn.
- Provide a level of academic rigor to match your aptitude and preparation.
- Offer a community that feels like home to you.
- Value you for what you have to offer.

Be particularly attentive to the last point, especially if you need financial assistance or hope to receive merit scholarship recognition. The places that have seen what you can do—and are prepared to invest in your further success—are the ones that will admit you and give you the support you need to achieve your goals. As you consider colleges, then, start with an understanding of fit from a perspective that is centered on your sense of self:

- How academically curious are you?
- Do you have well established study habits?
- How important is an active social life to you?
- Do you like to speak freely in discussions and work shops?

Do you look at college as first a stepping stone to a career OR as first a way of making you stronger and richer as a student and as a person.

Finding a College that Feels Right

(“bestcollegefit.com”, 8/10/17)

Most college applicants would agree that the best school for them would be a place that includes people with their shared values and interests, a place where people would encourage them on bad days and celebrate with them good days. It would be a community into which they could settle comfortably, a place where they wouldn't be distracted by worries about how to fit in, wondering about what people thought of them, of how they thought or dressed, and not having to prove themselves to anyone. The question is how to find such a place. It's hard to search the Internet for such a fit. Chat room conversations can be deceptive as they tend to reflect only the opinions of those who participate. And the images you see on videos and in printed materials are rarely unattractive. You really need to experience college campuses and, in the process, be sensitive to your “gut” reactions, which basically would tell you when it feels right—like you would be at home. As you think about living apart from the comforts of home, finding your niche is vitally important, so let your gut go to work for you. Look for students who come from similar backgrounds—who share your interests and your loyalties. While they shouldn't be exact clones of your friends from home, it's a good sign if they are people from whom you can learn and around whom you can grow personally. Based on your experience on college campuses, where do you see evidence that interaction with others will help broaden your perspective—get you to take moderate risks and think outside the box on occasion? How will an environment respond if you struggle? Will anyone know? Will anyone care?

Importance of Campus “Atmosphere”

(Excerpted from articles by George Will, Washpost.com & Frank Bruni, NY Times)

During campus visits, in addition to questions about parking and food, the changing atmosphere on many college campuses requires new, essential questions to ask of college counselors or students. 1) What is the controversial topic that students are debating on campus? 2) Are both sides of a contentious issue expressed openly and honestly without violence or discord on campus and in the classroom? 3) What is being done to address “student distress”? 4) What is being done to minimize solitary time and maximize interaction? The trend toward “trigger warnings” and “safe spaces” has led to “re-socialization through altering the norms that undergraduates grew up with, generating self-fulfilling diagnoses of emotionally fragile students. Often students arrive with little moral ballast bequeathed by parents who thought their role was to validate their children’s feeling and attitudes, resulting in a risk-averse regime of child-rearing. This has limited opportunities for the cultivation of independence and extended the phase of dependence into adulthood.” (*Frank Furedi, “What’s Happened to the University?”*) An unanticipated sense of loneliness among arriving college freshmen is becoming more and more common. Since college is sold as a gaudily painted time of their lives, promising all the fun they could wish, the disparity between myth and reality stuns many of them. “Students are arriving on college campuses with all of their high school friends on their phones, and they too easily substitute virtual interactions for physical ones, withdrawing from their immediate circumstances and winding up lonely as a result.” (*Jose Antonio Bowen, president Goucher College, MD*) “The use of *Facebook* and *Instagram* to perform pantomimes of uninterrupted fun and unalloyed fabulousness merely amplify the fact that you’re sitting in your residence hall alone.” (*Elizabeth Gong-Guy, UCLA psychologist*) The technology that keeps students connected to parents and high school friends only reminds them of their physical separation from just about everyone they know best. That estrangement can be a gateway to binge drinking and other self-destructive behavior. What’s often behind all that drinking and eating isn’t celebration but sadness, which is normal, survivable and shared by many of the people around them, no matter how sunny their faces or their *Facebook* posts.