

Student Opportunity and Access Program

California

**SOAP**

Serving Students Since 1979

SAN DIEGO & IMPERIAL COUNTIES

# Choosing a College that is Right for You

Presented by Cal-SOAP

Information gathered/quoted from: Randall S. Hansen's "Choosing a College that's Right for You" and  
[www.CollegeBoard.org](http://www.CollegeBoard.org)

# Subjects to be discussed

- Why is College Important?
- How Do I Prepare a Student for College?
- When Should I Start the Conversation About College with my child?
- How Do I Select the Right College for me?

# Why College Is Important

- College graduates have a higher yearly income and greater lifetime earnings.
- • According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average income for a Bachelor's Degree holder was \$59,000 versus an income of \$26,000 for a high school graduate.
- • A Bachelor's Degree holder earns (on average) about twice as much in a lifetime as a high school graduate.

# Why College is Important

- College graduates have better career options, greater chance of landing a job, and a better chance for progress in their career.
- • It is estimated that in 2028 there will be 19 million more jobs for educated workers than there are qualified people to fill them. (Source: KnowHow2Go)
- • The more education you have, the more likely it is that you will have a job. College gives you more choices in careers and more flexibility to change jobs.

# Defining College

- 4-year university
- 2-year college and transfer to 4-year university
- 2-year college (Associates)
- Certificate: Vocational/Trade skills that leads to employment

Four  
years at  
university

OR

Two years  
community  
college +  
two years at  
university



Bachelor's  
Degree

# Start the Conversation About College

- Start Conversations early, experts recommend-Cradle to College
- “IF” vs. “WHEN”theory
- Teachable Moments: on-line information, college visits, campus tours, college fairs.
- Talk about your own experience
- Inquire about career dreams and professional aspirations
- Encourage your child to talk with teachers and mentors about their own academic journeys
- Start saving for college now.

# Preparing for College Options?

- Know your role in the college process—student vs parents
- Understand what colleges and university look for in students
- Research early
- Do campus tours
- Create a college team

# Student's Role

1. Strive for strong grades and a competitive GPA
2. Set your goals
3. Make a plan
4. Do your research
5. Stay motivated
6. Talk to your parents

# Parent's Role

1. Prioritize your child's education
2. Provide motivation
3. Celebrate achievements
4. Be involved

# The College Talk

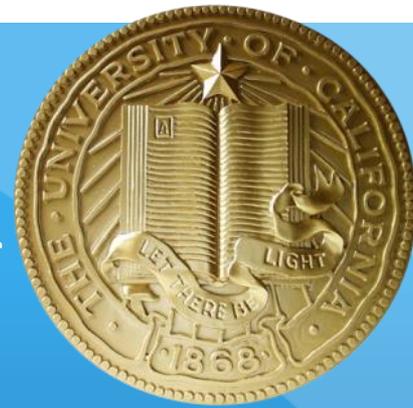
- We will now take a 2-minute break...
- PARENTS/GUARDIANS: Turn to your students and ask them one or all of the following questions:
- Where do you want to go to college (i.e. possible campuses, cities, states)?
- What do we need to do to prepare you?
- What careers are you interested in?
- What are your strongest and weakest subjects in school?

# **CHOOSING A COLLEGE THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU...**

**COLLEGE EXPLORATION BEGINS TODAY**

**UNDERSTANDING THE  
5 SYSTEMS OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION IN  
CALIFORNIA  
AND THEIR REQUIREMENTS**

# University of California



- Stats:
  - 10 campuses
  - Research-based
  - Tuition \$14,000 per year
  - Total cost: \$33,000-\$36,000 if you add books, health insurance, food, rent, transportation, etc.
- Basic admission requirements:
  - A-G coursework
  - 3.0 GPA
  - SAT with Essay or ACT with Writing
    - SAT Subject Update: not required, but recommended at certain campuses for certain majors. It could add value to the application, just like an AP Test Score could add value.
    - “Comprehensive/Holistic Review”
    - Points assigned for extracurricular activities, leadership roles, community service, etc.
  - Transfer Agreement Guarantee for CA Community College students

# California State University

- Stats:
  - 23 campuses
  - Traditional university setting
  - Tuition \$7,500 per year
  - Total cost: \$18,000-\$28,000 if you add books, health insurance, food, rent, transportation, etc.
- Basic admission requirements:
  - A-G coursework
  - Meet minimum eligibility index (a number derived from an equation that considers both GPA and SAT/ACT scores)
  - SAT or ACT (no Essay)
  - Transfer Agreement Guarantee for CA Community College students



# California Community College

- Stats:
  - 110 campuses
  - Transfer, Associate's Degree, vocational, and certificate programs available
  - Tuition: \$2,000 per year (or free with the Promise)
  - Total cost: \$9,000-\$17,000 if you add books, health insurance, food, rent, transportation, etc.
- Basic admission requirements:
  - High school diploma or GED or
  - 18 years old
  - (Note: High school students can enroll in community college classes with principal approval.)



# Private Colleges

- Stats:
  - Many, many campuses (i.e. University of San Diego, Point Loma Nazarene University, Stanford University, National University)
  - Campus settings/foci vary widely
  - Costs vary widely
- Basic admission requirements:
  - Vary, but *generally* accept courses covered by the A-G curriculum
  - GPA varies, but *generally* selective
  - Testing requirements vary, but *generally* require SAT or ACT
    - (SAT Subject exams may be required or recommended, depending on campus and major)
  - Transfer requirements and programs vary
  - *Generally* practice Holistic Review
    - Extracurricular activities, leadership roles, and community service considered



# Vocational/Technical Institutions

- Stats:
  - Many campuses, depending on field of study (i.e. Art Institute of San Diego, FIDM, Paul Mitchell School, Universal Technical Institute, Concorde Career Institute)
  - Degrees and/or certificates available
  - Costs vary widely
- Basic admission requirements:
  - Admission requirements vary widely. Research application procedures at each program of interest.
  - (Note: Many vocational programs are available at community colleges for a much lesser cost.)



- What should you consider when choosing a college?

# Step 1: Thinking About Your Major

- Tips for choosing possible majors: Here are a few questions you should ask yourselves...
  - What are my favorite classes?
  - What are my favorite hobbies/extracurricular activities?
  - What do career/personality assessment tests usually suggest for me? ([collegeboard.com](http://collegeboard.com); [princetonreview.com](http://princetonreview.com))
  - What am I good at?
  - What do I love doing?
  - *Where* do I see myself for the rest of my life?
  - *What* do I see myself doing for the rest of my life?

# Step 2: Make-or-Break Criteria

- Institution type:
  - Public
  - Private
  - Vocational/specialized
  - 4-year
  - 2-year
- Degrees offered:
  - A.A., B.A., B.S., M.A., M.S., Ph.D., Certificates, etc.



# Step 2: Make-or-Break Criteria

- Majors and minors offered:
  - Do the majors offered match *your* interests?
- Academic focus of campus:
  - Theoretical vs. practical
  - Popular majors (and percentage of students in each major)
- General education and major curricula:
  - Structured vs. individualized
- Graduation rate/time:
  - Past student performances

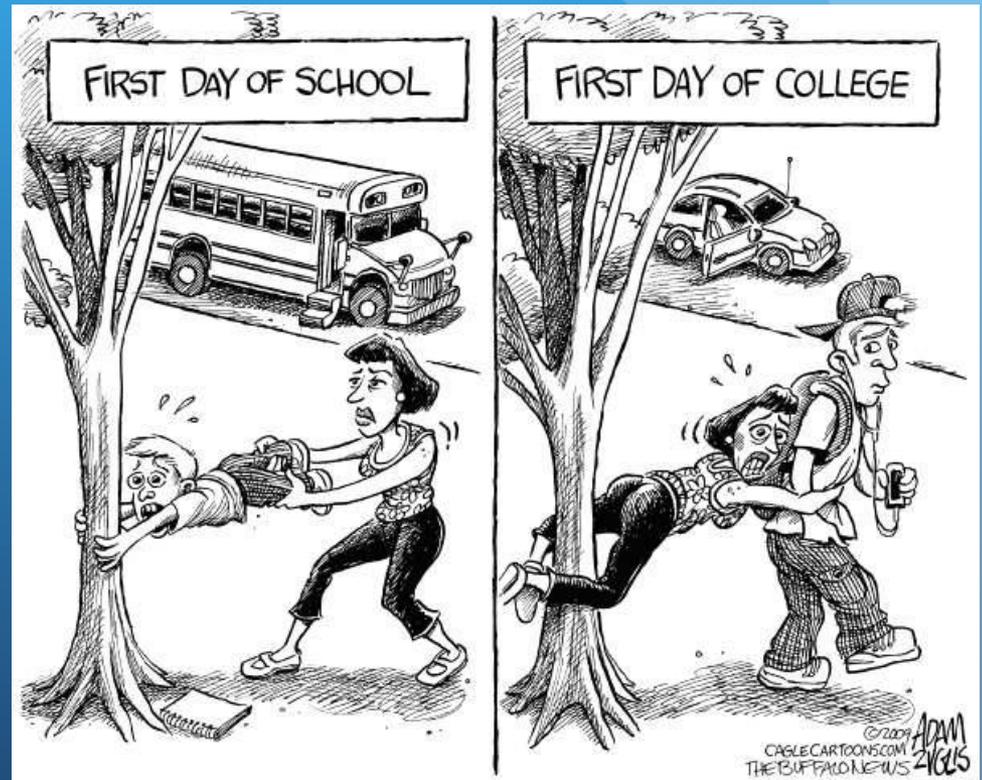
# Step 2: Make-or-Break Criteria

- Campus/enrollment size:
  - Large vs. small classes
- Faculty:
  - Number, background, distribution
- Campus quality/reputation:
  - National rankings
  - Alumni advice
  - *Note of caution: Campus reputation is highly subjective and should not be one's ultimate priority.*



# Step 2: Make-or-Break Criteria

- Geographic location:
  - Distance from home
  - In-state vs. out-of-state
- Campus and community setting:
  - Urban vs. rural
  - Safety
  - Surrounding resources (stores, eateries, residential areas)
- Housing:
  - Availability (Guarantees?)



# Step 2: Make-or-Break Criteria

- Just a few campus characteristics that may be important to you:
  - Religious Affiliation
  - HBCU: Historically Black Colleges and Universities
  - Gender specific vs. coed
  - Student body diversity
- Campus resources available:
  - Libraries
  - Computer labs
  - Food and social quads

# Step 2: Make-or-Break Criteria



- Extracurricular activities offered:
  - Sports (Division I, II, III)
  - Creative and performing arts (theatre, music, dance, art, design, etc.)
  - Clubs and student organizations (i.e. social justice, social networking, environmental conservation, etc.)
- Social life:
  - Sororities and fraternities
  - Student involvement



# Step 2: Make-or-Break Criteria

- Costs:
  - Tuition fees
  - Room and board
  - Books and supplies
  - Basic living costs
- Financial aid offered:
  - Financial aid package (March-June)
  - Federal/state grants (FAFSA)
  - Campus grants (supplementary forms?)
  - Scholarships (campus-based and external)
  - Loans

# Step 3: The Long List

- Begin compiling the long list of colleges that fulfill the criteria that are most important to you from Step 2.
- Time frame: Freshman year till early October of your Senior year
- Remember: This list is *not* final. Make it as long as you want. The more options, the better!



# Step 4: Research, research, research

- Learn more about your long list of campus choices by investigating each. Here are some tools:
  - College catalogs, campus visits, campus websites, third-party websites (like CollegeBoard.org), college fairs, alumni, high school counselors, campus advisors, and Cal-SOAP College Peer Advisors.
    - Especially helpful: CollegeBoard College Profiles and [College MatchMaker](#)
  - Time frame: Sophomore year till early October of your Senior year

# Step 5: The Wish List

- Using the most important criteria from Step 2 and all of the research you have gathered, narrow down your long list of colleges to a manageable number. (This number will vary by student.)
  - Choose as many colleges as you have time and financial resources for which to apply.
  - Don't be afraid to apply to "reach schools"!
  - ALWAYS have a few "back-up" schools.
  - All students should apply to at least one nearby community college in case you decide to take the transfer path OR if you should need to take a general education class that may be impacted at your university
- Time frame: September-October of your Senior year

# Step 5: The Wish List

- A note on “selectivity”: Given budget constraints and overall increased academic performance in recent years, many campuses are enforcing more selective admission requirements.
- What selectivity means for you (application criteria):
  - Less selective campuses
  - More selective campuses
  - Very selective campuses
- Importance of multiple applications
- Renewed importance of community college

# Step 6: Campus Visits

- The best way to really get a feel for a college is to personally visit the campus.
  - Experience your potential home of 4 years by taking a tour, staying in the dorms, talking to students and faculty, eating in the quad, and sitting in on a class.
- If you cannot visit the campus, here are some tips:
  - Visit the campus website- many have “virtual tours”.
  - Research online for campus history, statistics, and interesting facts.
  - Email or call faculty and staff by looking for the Contacts page on the campus website.
  - Acquaint yourself with the classes offered by reading syllabi posted online.
  - Read the campus and community newspapers to get a sense of local issues and activities.

# Step 7: Apply!

- Apply to as many of the schools on your Wish List as realistically possible.
  - Time frame: November to January of your Senior year
  - UC and CSU application deadlines: November 30
  - Private and Independent college deadlines: vary
- Cal-SOAP College Application and Cash4College Workshop: November 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> (for 12<sup>th</sup> graders)  
Time and location: 10:00am-2pm @ Lincoln High School
  - Visit [www.calsoapsandiego.org](http://www.calsoapsandiego.org) for more information

# Step 8: Money, money, money

- While you're waiting to hear back from campuses, apply for as much financial aid as you need.
  - FAFSA deadline: March 2 of senior year
  - CSS Profile deadlines: vary
  - Scholarships: Apply widely!
    - [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
    - [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)
    - [www.maldef.org](http://www.maldef.org)



# Step 9: You've Got Mail!

- Begin sorting through acceptance/rejection letters as well as financial aid packages.
  - Time frame: March-June of your Senior year
  - Make sure each campus sends you a financial aid package in order to better inform your decision process
  - Talk with your family about your choices.



# Step 10: Decision Time!

- Select your campus choice!
  - Submit *one* SIR (Statement of Intent to Register) by the deadline requested (usually May 1) to your college.
  - REMAIN UP-TO-DATE WITH COLLEGE MAIL AND EMAIL
  - Submit all requested paperwork by the deadlines:
    - Housing
    - Orientation
    - Registration
    - Placement exams
    - Supplementary admission forms
    - Campus-based financial aid forms



# Final Tips...

- Always try to visit your campus choices.
- Don't rely on name recognition. Find your best fit!
- Don't accept generalizations about colleges (i.e. "hard to get into," "party school," "too expensive"). Do your own research.
- Don't be afraid to apply to "reach schools." But, always have a few back-up plans.
- Don't pick campuses just because your friends are going there. Make your own decisions!
- Don't rule out colleges because of cost. There is financial aid available. And, remember, college is an *investment* in your future.
- Talk with your family, teachers, counselors, and Cal-SOAP advisors about your choices. We are here to help!



# Helpful Websites

- [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) (California Colleges)
- [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) (Big Futures-college search)
- [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov) (Financial Aid)
- [www.sdcoe.net/news/Pages/2019-student-scholarship-opportunities.aspx](http://www.sdcoe.net/news/Pages/2019-student-scholarship-opportunities.aspx) (scholarships)
- <https://www.sdfoundation.org> (scholarships)

# Cal-SOAP College Fair 2019

- Meet representatives from 100 colleges across the U.S. at Cal-SOAP's annual College Fair!
  - Date: Wednesday, October 23, 2019
  - Time: 6:00pm - 8:00pm
  - Location: Scottish Rite Center  
1895 Camino del Rio South  
San Diego, CA 92108
- To contact Cal-SOAP:
  - (619)295-1468
  - [www.calsoapsandiego.org](http://www.calsoapsandiego.org)

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