

# TOTAL COLLEGE PLANNING

The College Journal

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[www.totalcollegeplanning.com](http://www.totalcollegeplanning.com)

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## May 2010

**1<sup>st</sup> – Common  
reply date for  
college enrollment**

**1<sup>st</sup> – SAT  
Reasoning and  
Subject Tests**

**3<sup>rd</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> – AP  
exams**

Juniors – work on  
resume

Juniors – speak to  
advisor about  
military colleges or  
ROTC programs

Seniors – notify  
colleges that you will  
not attend

Seniors – check out  
loan options if  
needed

## June 2010

**5<sup>h</sup> – SAT  
Reasoning and  
Subject Tests**

**12<sup>th</sup> – ACT and ACT  
plus Writing**

Seniors – thank  
teachers and others  
who helped you

Seniors – thank  
scholarship providers  
for aid

Seniors – have your  
final transcript sent  
to the college you  
will attend

## When it Comes to College, You Probably Can't Have it All

Juniors beginning their college search need to know about tradeoffs. When you're putting together a college list, you will probably find some things you love and some things you're not crazy about at each school. It's like choosing a mate. You might have a wish-list of 37 characteristics, but if you hold out for every single one, you could be alone for a long time. There's not one perfect person, or one perfect college. You may need to make some tradeoffs.

One student will travel anywhere in the country, as long as the college is prestigious. Another student is willing to trade the prestige of attending a highly selective college for a scholarship at a less competitive school, which will leave him debt-free at graduation. Still another is willing to tolerate a cold Midwest winter if it means he'll get to see or play Division I football.

Many students say they want to experience life in a big city, where they'll have access to lots of internship opportunities, nightlife, restaurants and great shopping. After growing up in the suburbs, they love the idea of being able to walk outside their dorm and into the energy of an urban environment. It is true that going to Boston University or NYU can be very exciting, but it's important to understand the tradeoff that comes with a big urban school. There may not be a traditional, grassy campus with a central quadrangle. And with so many attractive options luring students away from campus, you can lose the sense of community that you often find at schools located in college

towns. You're likely to encounter crowds of people as you walk to class every day, and that makes a school feel lively, but the tradeoff is a more impersonal atmosphere.

There are almost always tradeoffs. The goal is to find a school that meets your most important needs. Writing "must have" and "would be nice" lists may help you to evaluate potential colleges. When you know what you must have and what you are willing to give up, you are more likely to be happy with the decisions you make and to have a happy and successful college experience.

This process of establishing priorities doesn't begin or end with college applications. A high school freshman or sophomore who plans to take every available Honors and AP class and become immersed in extracurricular activities needs to be willing to live with intense academic pressure and a lack of free time. For students who genuinely love learning and enjoy being very involved in school, this may not seem like such a sacrifice. For other students, the idea of spending their high school years studying all the time, obsessing over SAT scores, filling every free hour with community service and feeling like they never have a minute to relax isn't worth the possibility of getting into the most competitive college.

In the future, you may need to decide whether it's more important to rise to the top of your profession, or to balance family life with career success. When you are clear about your priorities, you can make more satisfying choices throughout your life.

## Colleges for Musicians

If you're reading this article, you've probably already spent many years of your life studying and playing music. As college approaches, however, you need to decide whether you want to pursue a career as a professional musician or to study music for your own enjoyment. Professional musicians may be headed for careers as performers or teachers—their choice of college music program will probably differ from that of the student who sees music as an avocation. Thus, knowing your goal is primary in selecting your post-secondary educational experience.

Professional music conservatories offer intensive training in music designed to prepare students for careers as musicians. Although many music conservatories are free-standing institutions (such as Julliard or the Berklee College of Music), some universities do have a conservatory-like program associated with the university (such as the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester). At a music conservatory, you'll be surrounded by students with similar goals and who live and breathe music. Music conservatories generally offer the BM (Bachelor of Music) or BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) degree for performers, as well as the BME (Bachelor of Music Education) for students headed to a career teaching music. Students center their studies in their field of interest—typical programs include voice, musicology, piano & keyboarding, winds, brass and percussion, conducting, composition, chamber music, accompanying, jazz studies, and organ as options.

Students at conservatories spend most of their time engaged in the study of music and take relatively few general education courses.

Thus, admission to conservatories is most often based largely on the applicant's audition rather than grades and SAT scores.

Auditions become less important (and are sometimes not even required) for students who choose to major in music and pursue a BA or BS degree at a more comprehensive university. Although some aspiring professional musicians do choose these types of programs, you'll generally find the BA or BS to be less focused on music than the conservatory experience. The music

major at a comprehensive university is more appropriate for students who seek a more typical college atmosphere, complete with such activities as sports, Greek life, and a wide range of academic disciplines.

Whether heading for a music major at a university or seeking to become a conservatory student, you'll want to evaluate the opportunities at each institution carefully. Some points



The Cleveland Institute of Music is associated with Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH

to consider:

- Credentials of the faculty—where did they train, do they still perform?
- Performance opportunities—how often will you get to perform and does the institution have the types of performing ensemble that you want?
- Facilities—when and where can students rehearse?
- Alumni—what happens to students after they graduate from that institution?
- Guest artists—who visits the campus and will you have opportunities for private lessons with them?

Visit the schools you're considering, talk to current students, and sit in on classes. For more suggestions, read [Creative Colleges](#) by Elaina Loveland.

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## Focus on Finances: Searching for Scholarships



As the realities of the cost of college hit, many seniors are engaged in a last-minute search for outside scholarships. If you're still in need of additional funds and have the

time to do the work required (applications and often essays), there is still money available. Before searching, however, check out the details of your financial aid package. In some cases, colleges will reduce your financial aid by the amount of the outside scholarship. This is fine if they subtract the amount awarded from the loan portion, but it will not be to your advantage to pursue scholarships if they will reduce grant aid.

Many scholarship deadlines have already passed, but your school's counseling office is the first place to look for local scholarships for which you may be eligible. If you have access to Naviance, you can

### College Consortia

Imagine yourself at a college that pairs the personal qualities of a small-college experience with the facilities and benefits available at a large university. The college consortium, made up of several separate colleges that work together to provide programs and services for their students, can provide a wonderful environment for learning. Although each college consortium has qualities unique to that organization, the consortia share many attributes.

The only U.S. college consortium originally built from the ground up, *The Claremont Colleges* consortium was modeled on the plan of Oxford University. Located in Claremont, California, the group is comprised of five small undergraduate institutions (three co-ed liberal arts colleges, one women's liberal arts college, and one science and engineering college) and two graduate institutions. The colleges are geographically next to each other, making it easy to take courses and use the facilities of all of the institutions. Each college has its own unique qualities and focus, but together they provide a superb educational experience.

The *Five College Consortium* in Massachusetts is one of the oldest and most successful. The colleges are physically linked through a convenient free bus system. Students attending Hampshire, Amherst, Mount Holyoke, Smith, and the University of Massachusetts can take courses at any of the colleges and

do both a local and national scholarship search by using links found on the site. No Naviance? Try some of the scholarship websites such as [fastweb.com](http://fastweb.com) and [scholarships.com](http://scholarships.com). You might want to set up a separate e-mail account to use with these since you're also likely to receive a lot of junk mail from the sites. Another good resource is the scholarship search on [collegeconfidential.com](http://collegeconfidential.com) (provided by SallieMae, the student loan company) as well as their list of scholarship resources.

Still other sources of scholarships are the alumni clubs and fraternal organizations at the college you plan to attend. Check out your college's website to see what may be available.

Many scholarship programs require an essay. In most cases, the topics are pretty similar, and you should be able to tweak a general essay to be used for several scholarship programs.

have access to their eight million library volumes as well as the academic facilities of all five campuses.

The *Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges* is a collaborative association of six regional colleges: Allentown College, Cedar Crest, Lafayette, Lehigh, Moravian, and Muhlenberg. Students can cross-register at the member schools, and faculty from one institution often teach special classes at member institutions. The interlibrary loan program permits students to access the research facilities of all of the colleges.

The *Associated Colleges of the Midwest* includes thirteen colleges in five states. This consortium offers semester and year-long programs abroad, as well as domestic programs such as humanities research, art programs, urban studies, or wilderness programs.

Students may study at one of the twenty public and private institutions that make up the *Atlanta Regional Consortium for Higher Education*. These students may register for approved courses at any of the colleges and also enjoy the benefits of the interlibrary loan program. The *Associated Colleges of the South* consortium was developed to strengthen undergraduate education in the south. It focuses mainly on academic program development.

By working together, the colleges of a consortium can meet nearly all student needs.

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## Internships and Volunteering

Still searching for a meaningful summer experience? With the job market still very weak, you might want to concentrate on obtaining an internship or a volunteer position in a field of interest to you. Although these programs are unlikely to provide you with ready cash, they do offer you that other valuable commodity—*experience*.

Volunteer positions are generally easier to find. For those interested in health sciences, volunteering at a local hospital can provide you with a first-hand look at careers in medicine. Your local veterinarian or animal shelter or pet rescue have good volunteer positions for future Vets. Those considering a career in education might offer to help out at a local nursery, day camp, or community center. Environmental activists might check out opportu-

nities to help at a state or national park or with an environmental organization. To find a volunteer position, think about the type of career that interests you, and look for ways to help in these fields.

Internships may be volunteer or paid positions, but all internships should give you an opportunity to learn. Budding journalists can apply for internships at community newspapers, magazines, or broadcast media, while future scientists might look for opportunities to work with a mentor on a science research project. Use your network of family and friends to obtain an introduction to someone in a position to offer you an internship. Apply as you would for paid employment, submitting a cover letter and resume highlighting your goals, skills, and ways that you could contribute to the work being done. Make this summer the best one ever!

## Website of the Month: [www.Backdoorjobs.com](http://www.Backdoorjobs.com)

[Backdoorjobs.com](http://www.Backdoorjobs.com) was founded to empower young people in finding summer or short time work opportunities. It's often a summer job or school break work experience that provides students with new ideas about the type of career they'd enjoy. At [Backdoorjobs.com](http://www.Backdoorjobs.com), you'll learn about opportunities both in the U.S. and abroad. For example, under the heading of "Meaningful Work" are opportunities to work internationally or with disadvantaged or disabled children and adults. "Jobs in the Great Outdoors" includes conservation corps work and jobs as outdoor leaders. Check it out; you just might discover the right career for you!

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