

# TOTAL COLLEGE PLANNING

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

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Juniors - Begin your college search

Juniors—Map out dates and prepare for spring SAT and/or ACT exams

Seniors - Contact colleges to be sure your applications are complete. Send mid-year grades if required. Update colleges with any new information that might affect admission

9<sup>th</sup> - ACT and ACT plus Writing (may not be available in NY)

March 2008

1<sup>st</sup> - SAT

Reasoning Exam

Underclassmen—Make plans for a productive summer. Investigate summer programs, jobs, internships, and opportunities to visit college campuses.

Juniors - Create an initial list of colleges

Juniors—Prepare for spring SAT/ACT

## Honors Programs: Shrinking the Large University

One way to have the advantages of a small college while attending a large university is through an honors program. Many public and some private universities offer honors programs that provide great benefits, including preferential class registration, special honors classes, enhanced advising and enrichment programs.

Honors classes attract top professors who enjoy teaching bright, motivated students. In most programs, students are not required to take all honors courses, and often take one or two honors classes each semester along with their other classes. Honors classes are smaller and can pursue a subject in more depth. Some programs require students to complete a senior project to receive an honors designation on their transcript.

Some schools offer separate honors housing. Having a residential community where students take their studies seriously can be especially important at schools that are known for a party atmosphere. Honors students are generally not required to live in honors housing, but it's nice to have the option.

The University of Arizona and Arizona State University, both popular choices for Southern California students, offer honors programs. These are such large universities, each with more than 30,000 students, that an honors program is a great way to create a sense of community and to be assured of having real contact with professors. Arizona State University's Barrett Honors College creates a living-learning community featuring classrooms, advising center, computer room and residence halls. Honors advisors help students to find opportunities for research, internships, and study abroad. Students who are

interested need to apply both to ASU and the Barrett Honors College.

Some honors programs provide financial incentives. Penn State University's Schreyer Honors College offers a renewable scholarship of \$3,500 to all first-year students, and provides grants to students who study abroad. The school offers more than 200 honors courses each year. Like many honors programs, they boast of high placement rates in graduate and professional schools.

While many large public universities have honors programs, some states also offer the option of a separate honors college. St. Mary's College of Maryland may sound like a religious institution, but it is the state's honors college. With about 2,000 students, this liberal arts college offers a private school education, with small classes and lots of faculty interaction, all at public school prices.

Private schools can also have honors programs. At Boston's Northeastern University, students have access to separate honors sections of courses, as well as interdisciplinary honors seminars. They can live with other freshmen honors students, and enjoy excursions to the theater and symphony.

These are just a few examples of the many honors programs available at colleges and universities across the country. While a few require a separate application, most schools will invite applicants with top grades and test scores to join their honors programs. These programs can offer terrific benefits, but as always, it's important to do your research and make sure the school is a good match for you.



## Focus on Careers: Podiatry

As the U.S. population continues to age, the demand for health care workers increases.

Podiatrists (also known as *doctors of podiatric medicine*) are health care specialists who diagnose and treat disorders, diseases, and injuries of the foot and lower leg. The foot is a very complex organ; with 26 bones, plus muscles, ligaments, and tendons, the foot is prone to the wear and tear of age, activity, and the effects of diseases such as diabetes.

It is the podiatrist who treats foot problems including foot and ankle injuries, bone spurs, ingrown toenails, arch irregularities, or the problems that arise as a result of diabetes. Podiatrists may perform surgery, prescribe drugs, order physical therapy, or apply the use of prosthetic devices such as orthotics. The podiatrist must be knowl-

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### Education and Training

Like most other health care specialties, students interested in podiatry must first complete college or have attained at least 90 college credits (generally three years of undergraduate study.) Required undergraduate courses include biology, English, inorganic and organic chemistry, and physics. Admission to schools of podiatry is competitive, and nearly all first year students already have completed a bachelor’s degree. In addition to high grades in required courses, applicants will need to take the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test). Applicants who have had paid or volunteer experience in a health care field will be more competitive in the admissions process.

Podiatry students take a four-year graduate program that is initially very similar to that of other health care specialties. During the first two years of study, students take classes in the basic sciences, including anatomy, chemistry, pathology, and pharmacology. Practical experience comes during the last two years of study, and consists of hospital and clinic rotations designed to provide hands-on experiences. It is during these years that the students learn to take general and podiatric

edgeable about many diseases, since early signs of diabetes, heart disease, or arthritis often show up first in the lower leg or foot.

Although podiatrists often work as solo practitioners, it is becoming more common to see them as part of larger practices with other healthcare specialists. Some podiatrists specialize in surgery, public health or orthopedics, while others focus on a subspecialty area such as pediatric podiatry, diabetic care, geriatrics, or sports medicine.

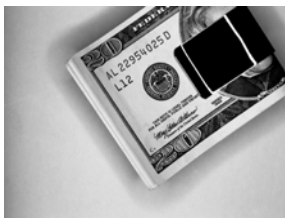
As a group, podiatrists enjoy a high income, the satisfaction that comes from knowing that you are providing a needed health care service, and the ability to direct your own professional life. The profession is best suited to people who genuinely care about others and who have a real interest in the health sciences.

histories, perform routine physical examinations, interpret tests and findings, make diagnoses, and perform therapeutic procedures. Successful completion of the program leads to a DPM degree—Doctor of Podiatric Medicine. The degree is usually followed by a residency lasting one to three years that provides advanced training and experience in areas such as anesthesiology, surgery, pathology, emergency medicine, or orthopedics.

Licensing requirements differ by state. In most cases, DPM holders must pass both written and oral exams, as well as complete a postdoctoral residency. Continuing education is generally required in order to keep licensing current. You’ll want to check licensing requirements for the states in which you may wish to practice.

Students interested in health care professions might also want to check out opportunities in related fields such as dentistry, optometry, physicians, veterinarians, or chiropractics. More information is also available at the website of the American Podiatric Medical Association at [www.apma.org](http://www.apma.org) and at the American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine website at [www.aacpm.org](http://www.aacpm.org).

## Focus on Finances: What's a College Degree Worth?



According to the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, nearly two thirds of all college students graduate with college debt, owing an average of \$19,000 each. Most

of this is in student loans that must be paid back after graduation. Since the debt faced by students can be considerable, it would be wise to consider the monetary value of a college degree.

The U.S. Census Bureau has compiled figures for average earnings based on education completed. Men continue to earn more on average than women, so the numbers differ by gender as well as by educational level. Not surprisingly, high school dropouts had the lowest earnings, with an average of \$23,400/year for men, and \$18,900/year for women. Earning a high school diploma raised those numbers to \$30,400/year for males and \$25,900 for females.

## Reducing Test Anxiety

A little tension is a good thing. Feeling nervous about an upcoming test can help to motivate you to spend more time preparing for the exam, and preparation is the best way to minimize test anxiety. Whether preparing for a class exam or a college admissions test like the SAT, you'll optimize your performance by following these guidelines:

- Avoid cramming. Start your preparation well in advance of test day. Six to ten weeks before an SAT or ACT is appropriate.
- Try to think of questions that might be asked and consider how you'd answer them. Use actual released exams to practice for the SAT or ACT.
- If you don't have time to cover all of the material, select the most important concepts and study them well. This works particularly well when preparing for one of the SAT Subject exams.

To do your best, you also need to take care of yourself both physically and emotionally. That includes eating well and getting adequate exercise. Take study breaks whenever your attention wanes. Get plenty of rest the night before the exam. Eat a good breakfast and avoid

Some college raised the numbers still further, while a two-year associates degree from a community college yielded an average of \$38,200/year for men and \$33,000/year for women. Earn a bachelor's degree and men's earnings continue to climb to \$52,200/year while women's average \$45,400. A professional degree (MD, JD, DDS) increases earnings to an average of \$109,600/year for men and \$99,300/year for women.

Look at lifetime earnings and the monetary value of education becomes even more apparent. High school graduates are expected to earn about \$821,000 over their lifetime; associate degree holders rack up average earnings of \$1,062,000. A bachelor's degree is expected to yield about \$1,421,000; a master's degree about \$1,619,000; a doctorate about \$2,142,000; and a professional degree about \$3,013,000. When considered in terms of lifetime earnings, that \$19,000 educational debt is a very small price to pay for the monetary, as well as quality of life benefits, that are derived from higher education.

caffeine on test day if you're prone to "caffeine jitters." Plan to arrive at the test site early; if waiting causes anxiety, bring a magazine to read before the test.

Follow basic test-taking strategies:

- For multiple choice questions, read all of the options first, eliminate those that are obviously wrong. When trying to select between two responses, rely on your first impression. Watch out for tricky qualifying words like "always", "only", or "might be."
- Wear a watch and practice time management throughout the exam. Do not spend too much time on any one question. You can always return to that question if you have extra time.
- Outline your response before beginning to write an essay. Begin your essay with a summary sentence, and then go on to address all points in that summary.

Reduce anxiety during the exam by taking a couple of slow deep breaths and maintaining a positive attitude. Tense and relax the muscles throughout your body, and think for a moment about a post-exam reward for a job well done!

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## Road Trip

Virtual tours, college viewbooks, attending area meetings, talking with current students—all of these provide a look at life at a particular college. Unfortunately, none, can take the place of a campus visit when you're trying to determine just how well a college fits you. Whether compiling your college list or making your final decision about which college to attend, you need to get a first-hand look at life at that institution.

If you're just beginning the college search process, start your visits close to home. Even if you don't plan on attending a local school, visits to nearby institutions will allow you to more carefully focus on such factors as size, diversity of student body, type of institution, majors and courses of study. Visit both public and private colleges, residential and commuter campuses, universities and liberal arts col-

leges. Once you've determined the characteristics most important to you, you can begin to visit colleges that are further away.

Seniors who have begun receiving admissions decisions will want to pay a second (or third) visit to each campus they are seriously considering. This is the time to go beyond the group tour. If possible, arrange an overnight visit with a stay in the dorms. Attend classes and talk with current students about what they like and don't like. Eat at the dining hall, and check out the library. Picture yourself attending that school, and determine where on your list of acceptances that college falls. If you have received offers of admission from several schools, let those at the bottom of your list know that you will not be attending. Sending notification to those colleges early is the right thing to do—you'll be opening a place for a student for whom it's the perfect fit!

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

Looking for something to do this summer? Perhaps you'd like to take college courses and try out life as a college student, or immerse yourself in another culture while you improve your foreign language skills. What about opportunities to make a difference through community service or to learn more about a possible career area? Other possibilities include study abroad, travel programs, exploring the visual or performing

arts, or working in the laboratory with a practicing scientist. Learn about options for a productive summer through a free search at [www.EnrichmentAlley.com](http://www.EnrichmentAlley.com). You can find programs by subject, location, type of program, or any combination of these. The "review" section allows you to read the opinion of other students who participated in recent years.

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