Navigating the College Search Process

The Case for College, Outlook

Change in Number of Jobs By Education Level, 2007 to 2011

- High school dropouts: -2.2
- High school graduates: -3.1
- College graduates: +1.6

Regional Share of Women High-Wage Earners in Metro Area, 2010
- Women High-Wage Earners: 37%
- Share of Women, Age 25 and Older, Holding Bachelor’s Degree or Higher: 20%

Source: US Department of Labor Statistics

The Case for College; Earnings

Poverty Rate for US Adult Population (Age 25 and Above) By Educational Attainment, 2008
- Less than high school: 24%
- High school graduate: 12%
- Some college or associate degree: 8%
- Bachelor’s degree: 6%
- Professional degree: 3%

Weekly Wage Earnings of Young Adults Age 21–24 By Education Level
- Bachelor’s Degree: $6655
- Associate degree: $4803
- High school diploma: $425

The Case for College; Lifestyle

Voting Rates for Citizens Age 18 and Over
By Educational Attainment
2012 Presidential Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>US Total (%)</th>
<th>University System of Ohio</th>
<th>Independent Colleges &amp; Universities</th>
<th>Out-of-State Colleges &amp; Universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College/Associations</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th to 12th Grade</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than 9th Grade</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau on Educational Attainment

Options for Higher Education

- University System of Ohio
- Independent Colleges & Universities
- Out-of-State Colleges & Universities

The University System of Ohio

Includes:
- 14 universities
- 24 regional branch campuses associated with 8 of the universities
- 23 community colleges
- Over 120 adult workforce education and training centers

Source: http://students.ohiohighered.org/applying/campuses/map
Ohio’s Independent Colleges

Includes:
- 49 institutions in all regions of the state, including:
  - Research universities;
  - Liberal arts colleges;
  - Comprehensive universities;
  - Single purpose institutions;
  - Religious-affiliated institutions;
  - 1 HBCU;
  - 1 women’s college
  - Etc., Etc., Etc.

Share of Student Enrollment

Undergraduates at 4-year Institutions

- Ohio Public: 67%
- Ohio Private: 33%

Bachelor’s Degrees

- Ohio Public: 66%
- Ohio Private: 34%

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

Public vs. Independent

• Understand institutional mission.
  - Research vs teaching focus.
  - Institutional sizes vary.
  - Religious or secular missions.

• Understand differences in cost structure.
  - Tuition costs range from $6,990 to $13,067/year on university main campuses.
  - Net tuition range from
  - $1.03 Billion spent in institutional aid at Ohio’s independent colleges and universities.

• Understand differences in logistics.
  - Both generally accept transfer credit from community colleges and regionally accredited colleges and universities. See Transfer Assurance Guides for publics; See individual Independent colleges and universities for institutional policies.
  - Graduation and retention rates.
Baccalaureate Graduation Rates

*Cohort Entering Fall, 2005

Community Colleges & Branches

• Provide a low-cost pathway.
  - Many open-enrollment access points
  - Easy credit transfer allows students to start and finish anywhere in the system or at private colleges and universities.
  - Average value of a bachelor's degree obtained through a low-cost pathway is just over $23,000.

• Provide remedial classes.

• Offer partnership programs and dual enrollment options.

Researching Campuses

- Determine the type of campus environment you are looking for (Location, size, selectivity, etc.)
  - University System of Ohio profiles: opuac.org
  - Independent profiles: ohioprivatecolleges.com
- Determine which campuses offer the program(s) you are looking for.
  - ohiohigherered.org/program-guide
  - aicu.org/ResourcesandResearch.aspx
- Understand the numbers, rankings, and sources:
  - College Scorecard: college.scorecard.ed.gov
  - US News
  - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) nasser.indiana.edu
  - Economic Value Rankings (in: The Economist)
Visit Campuses

- Schedule campus tours directly via phone or college/university websites.
- Visit, if possible, each institution you are considering.
- Visit Days vs. Individual Visits
  - Ohio Independent College Visit Days, Summer 2016
- Tips:
  - Meet with the people best equipped to inform your experience on campus (professors, coaches, current students, etc).
  - Be engaged and ask questions.
  - Understand "Demonstrated Interest".
  - Stay focused on what matters.
  - Make second visits to your top schools.

The NCAA Process

- Understand the differences between NCAA divisions I, II, and III
- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.
- Understand the strict compliance rules about when coaches can be in contact with you.
- Understand academic requirements for eligibility.
- See ncaa.org for more details.

Deadlines & Selectivity

**Deadlines**

- **Rolling Admission**
  - Review is ongoing; applicants are notified throughout the cycle.
  - Caveat: priority deadlines.
- **Regular Decision**
  - Applicants are notified after the deadline has passed.
- **Early Action (EA)**
  - Application is reviewed with smaller pool; Not binding.
- **Early Decision**
  - Application is reviewed with smaller pool; Binding.

**Selectivity**

- **Open Admission**
  - High school diploma required for admission.
- **Selective Admission**
  - Minimum GPAs, ACT/SAT scores are required and holistic application review may be practiced. Students meeting basic criteria will be admitted.
- **Competitive Admission**
  - Space is limited and application review is usually holistic. Many more qualified students are turned away than are admitted.
- **Caveat: Competitive majors**
Application Types

• Online applications
• The Common Application commonapp.org
• New for: The Coalition Application
  – New for HS freshmen, sophomores and juniors in 2016
  – Learn more at coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/
  – 80+ institutions in US; In Ohio, only Miami University, Oberlin College, & The Ohio State University

Recommended Curriculum

– English: 4 years
– Social Studies/History: 3 or 4 years
– Mathematics: 4 years through Calculus (or at least 3 years through Algebra II)
– Science: at least 3 years (with 2 or more including labs)
– Foreign Language: 2 years of the same language
– Fine Arts: at least 1 year

Transcript Evaluation Factors

– AP/CCP/Honors Courses
– Special interest courses/programs
– 12th grade grades and course selection
– Grade trajectory
– Your high school
ACT and SAT Testing

ACT
- Multiple choice tests in English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning
- Optional writing test

SAT
- Tests in Critical Reading, Writing, and Math

SAT II
- Tests cover specific subjects such as biology, world history, and foreign language
- Tests are often required by competitive colleges in addition to the SAT or ACT

Improving Your Test Scores

- Take a rigorous high school curriculum
- Use test preparation resources at collegeboard.org or act.org
- Free test prep classes at Cuyahoga County Library branches. See cuyahogalibrary.org

Remember:
- Test scores are only ONE factor used for college admission and scholarship decisions.
- Many colleges and universities “Superscore” SAT/ACT optional colleges and universities: fairtest.org

Other Application Components

- Recommendation Letters
  - Ask someone who knows you well and can speak to your specific strengths.

- Essay
  - Go beyond what is already evident on your application and transcript.
  - Should be concise (usually 200-500 words)
  - Creativity is encouraged.
  - Be as specific and narrowly focused as possible.
  - Writing should be flawless.

- Resumes
  - Sometimes required, sometimes included on application as an activity list.

- Interviews
  - On campus, or with an alumni. Be sure to polish your elevator pitch.
Paying for College

• Is this the right school for you?
• Can you afford it?
• Is this too much debt?
• Is it worth it?
• Will you earn enough to repay these loans?

Saving for College

• College Advantage Program, Ohio’s 529 College Savings Plan
  - collegeadvantage.com
  - Earnings are tax-free, if used for college
  - Contributions are deductible from Ohio taxable income
  - Use your savings at any college in the country
  - Two types of investments:
    - Age-based options (investments change to a more conservative mix as your child nears college)
    - Individual investments (you manage and create your strategy)
  - Anyone can own or contribute to an account.
  - You may transfer the account at any time to an eligible family member of the original beneficiary.
  - Funds invested in a 529 plan are an asset of the account owner. If the parent is the account owner, on average, about 5.64% of the value of the account is considered in determining federal financial aid.

Scholarships & Aid

• Federal & State Government
  - File the FAFSA after January 1 at fafsa.ed.gov
  - New in 2016: October 1 launch and Prior Prior Year filing
  - Grants, Student Loans, Work-Study
  - College Goal Sunday ohio collegenow sundays.org
• Private scholarships
  - Information available from College Now Greater Cleveland
• College and University Scholarships
  - Academic, leadership, athletic, fine arts scholarships
  - Each school distributes scholarships in a unique way
How to Stay in Touch

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