



Doing College
And beyond

College Find

Vol. 11, #2 Compliments of Elizabeth LaScala PhD Oct. 2011

Keeping on Track During October

—Calendar for Juniors—

Take the October PSAT.

Meet with college reps at your high school.

Try a college search on www.collegeboard.com.

—Calendar for Seniors—

Access to UC and CSU Apps begins **October 1**.

SAT given on Oct. 1.

Oct. 21—very last date to register for Nov. 5 SAT.

Meet with college reps at your high school.

Narrow down list of schools.

Choose target dates for application and financial aid deadlines.

Request letters of recommendation from teachers and counselors. Allow one month.

COLLEGE ESSAY!

ACT on October 22.

The *College Find Newsletter* is created by Gael Casner and edited by Elizabeth LaScala, PhD.



Great School....But How Much Will It Cost?

by Barbara Manierre

Students and their parents investigating colleges know that their websites contain an amazing amount of information. They can easily find out the hometown of every lacrosse team member or the kinds of cereal offered in the dining hall. But when they try to figure out how much it will actually cost to attend the school, answers are often hard to find. This is about to change.

In response to the opaqueness of the financial aid process and public exasperation about the costs of higher education, Congress included in the Higher Education and Opportunity Act of 2008 a mandate that every college and university participating in Title IV student aid programs must post a **net price calculator** on its website by October 29, 2011. This provision is intended to give families a better sense of how much college costs and to make this information available much earlier in the process. Currently students often don't know how much they will pay until they've

applied, been admitted and had their aid applications evaluated.

A net price calculator is an online tool that uses institutional data to provide estimated net price information to current and prospective students and their families based on a student's *individual circumstances*. The calculator estimates the student's financial aid and then subtracts that from the college's sticker price, giving the amount the family must pay or borrow for the student to enroll. These new tools are meant to be accurate and approachable, taking as little as 15 minutes for families to navigate. Many schools already have their new websites up and running; many are calling them Financial Aid Estimators.

While all of this sounds like good news for students heading into the application process, it remains to be seen whether these new tools will provide the desired transparency and clarity. Several areas of caution have

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Showing Your Interest

by Carolee Gravina

Sara Leininger an admissions rep for American University in Washington, D.C. keeps a special folder for "High Interest" students – students that really know and love American. She says that for qualified students, evidence of genuine interest could make the difference between an admit and a place on the wait list.

Not all schools care that you love their campus and programs, but many do, and some actually give students points for demonstrating that interest. Students may

assume that their application is proof enough that they like a school, but in these days of multiple submissions, many admissions officers look for more tangible proof that you are truly a serious applicant. So, how can you show your interest to the schools on your top choice list?

High school juniors can start by signing up for official tours and making sure their campus visits go on record. And, suggests Sara, American's rep for New Jersey, if you had an especially great visit, "Send me an email and let me know what you loved!" *(See back page)*



School Cost

already been identified. Despite some required uniformity, schools may still use different years' costs in their calculations, may ask for different information using widely different designs, and may frame their results differently. One of the most significant differences emerging is that some schools consider only need-based aid, which is relatively straightforward, while some include merit aid, factoring in things like a student's test scores and grades. And the bottom line that emerges is still not an actual commitment from a school. As it states on the Grinnell website, for example, their tool "is **not** an official application for financial aid and is not a substitute for applying for financial aid."

Given all of these differences, comparison shopping may still be a tricky exercise for students and their families, but the scales are definitely starting to tilt in favor of making them informed consumers in the world of higher education.

The greatest power that a person possesses is the power to choose.

J. Martin Koh

Showing Interest

Amber Rich, Associate Director of Admission for Champlain College in Burlington, VT, agrees, and says that email thank-you's for visits are fine. "They're meaningful and we do pay attention to them." But if you can't visit, Amber says that filling out a card at a college fair table, or showing up for an in-school visit at your high school is also noted. "Even if you can't stay for my presentation," adds Sara, "just stop by the guidance office to say hi when I visit. I understand that you shouldn't miss that Calculus class!"

Another way for a student to show interest is requesting an interview, if they are available, either onsite, by phone or skype, or with an alumni. Sending an email to your area rep, introducing yourself, or asking a specific question about a program can also help establish a relationship. If you send a question, make sure it's not something you could have eas-

ily found on the school website. And, no matter how much you love a school, do not bombard your rep with email. One or two well-written messages are enough to make your case.

Seniors have an opportunity to show their interest when applying. Although Common App essays must not include details about a specific school, many schools add a supplement question to help them identify genuine interest. It's the so-called "Why Us?" question. Here's a great chance for you say that you like the school. Be specific about what you liked and why you want to go there. If you had a great interview or information session, or felt particularly welcomed, mention that. According to Sara, something as simple as 'I walked around campus and really felt like I could fit in' can help bump you into her "High Interest" folder.



School of the Month DePaul University

by Gael Casner

Want a school in a major city but with a neighborhood feel? Are you looking for a large school that has small classes? Does the option of a short study abroad program as a freshman appeal to you? If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, then you owe it to yourself to take a look at DePaul University in Chicago.

DePaul offers two main campuses. The Lincoln Park Campus is in Chicago's Near North Side and occupies 36 acres. This is where The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the College of Science and Health, the College of Education, the School of Music and The Theatre School are based. (Music and Theater are conservatory style and require auditions.) Boutiques, restaurants and beaches are within walking distance to this safe campus.

The Loop Campus rests in the heart of bustling, downtown Chicago, just blocks from the financial district, the Art Institute and Millennium Park. The College of Communication, the College of Commerce (with highly ranked programs), and the College of Computing and Digital Media are located here. Housing is an option at both locations and students are issued a U-pass that allows them unlimited rides between campuses and even to O'Hare Airport.

Because DePaul is on the quarter system, classes move quickly. One perk for out-of-state students is that exams end before Thanksgiving and the second quarter does not begin until after the first of the year. That means no second flight home for the December holidays.

As the largest private, Catholic university in America, DePaul attracts students from a wide range of ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds, and has a well-developed service learning program. DePaul is also among a growing group of test-optional schools.

Public: 16,052 undergrads; 33% diversity; 2% international; 29% from out of state. Mid-SAT: CR 530-650, M 520-620; ACT 22-27. Acceptance rate: 67%. Student/faculty ratio—17/1.