College Action Plan

1. Why go?
   1. To have more job opportunities.
   2. More and more jobs require education beyond high school. Many jobs rely on new technology and “brainpower.” Some jobs require a specific educational preparation.
   3. To gain more knowledge that will be helpful throughout your lives, to broaden perspectives – to meet new people from diverse backgrounds; to learn to be independent.
   4. To increase your earning potential.
2. Types of colleges: Technical College, 2-year College, 4-year College, University
   1. Technical Colleges: Awards Associates degrees, diplomas, and certificates in career-specific programs: Auto repair, Computer technology, Medical Assistant, Bookkeeping or Accounting; Lowest cost; Can transfer the degree core classes to a 2- or 4-year college
   2. Two-year Colleges: Awards the “Associates” degree; Prepares students for transferring to a 4-year college or university; Still has admissions requirements, requiring a high school diploma and testing; Most are nonresidential, students live off-campus; Students can attend part-time or full-time; They are less expensive than 4-year colleges.
   3. Four-year College: Award four-year (bachelors) degrees; Some also award master’s degrees; Emphasis is on undergraduate education (the bachelor’s degree); Smaller enrollment and class size, offering greater individual attention; Emphasis is on teaching rather than research; There are both public and private 4-year colleges.
   4. Universities: Award Bachelor’s degrees and graduate/professional degrees (Master’s, Ph.D., Law, and Medical degrees); Strong emphasis on research: many professors are doing research in addition to teaching, students can do research, large campuses with many labs; Tend to have larger enrollments and larger class sizes than 4-year colleges; Can be public or private.
3. Factors to consider:
   1. Size - What is the total student population? How big are the typical freshman classes? Can I live in that environment?
   2. Location - How far is the college from home? Is it in a rural, urban, suburban setting? What is the area surrounding the campus like? Can I live there?
   3. People - Who are the students and where do they come from?
   4. Academics- What majors are available? Who teaches the courses? What is the academic reputation of the college? Can I make it there?
   5. Social Opportunities: What clubs and teams are available? Are there fraternities and sororities? What kind of lifestyle do you want? Will I fit in?
   6. Cost : What is the total cost of attendance, including tuition, room and board, books? What kind of financial aid is available? Can I (we) afford it?
4. What do you have to do to APPLY?
   1. Will most likely apply online through the website or Gacollege411.
   2. Terms: EARLY ACTION means you get an admission decision early. You need to be a strong candidate for that college to do so. ROLLING ADMISSIONS means you can apply whenever and they will give you an answer. Pay attention to admission deadlines.
   3. 4-year colleges require 3-4 requirements for admission: a college entrance test (the SAT or ACT), a certain GPA, good grades in college bound-type classes. The more SELECTIVE a college you want to go to, the higher everything has to be.
5. What TEST do you have to take?
   1. For a two or four-year college: SAT/ACT
   2. For a technical or two-year college: Compass
   3. Need a minimum of CR430/Math400 for admission to a 4-year college
   4. Need a minimum of CR330/Math 310 for two-year college
   5. Selective colleges: GSU—need a minimum of 1010 (CR/Math)—25th—75th % is 1020—1170; UGA—25th—75th % is 1130—1330; GT—25th—75th% is 1230—1430.
6. How much does college COST?
   1. Tuition is $2,000-7,000 per year at a state college/university.
   2. Housing is $5—7,000 per year;
   3. Meal plans are $3—4,000/year.
   4. Books can be up to $1200/semester.
   5. So, in addition to tuition, you’re looking at $8—12,000/year at a public 4-year college. Without Hope, it would be $20—25,000/year.
   6. PRIVATE college tuition and fees can be up to $50k/year.
   7. “OUT OF STATE” tuition is up to 4x in-state. Unless your parent owns property and pays property taxes in another state, you are “out-of-state”.
7. How are you going to pay for it? Are your parents comfortable enough that you don’t have to worry about it? Do you have to consider some means to pay yourself?
   1. Terms: the FAFSA is the application for PELL, a federal GRANT, based on “need”. Pell can pay up to $5500/year, based on your household size and need.
   2. GSFC grants HOPE, a scholarship based on “merit”. HOPE pays 90 or 100% of tuition only based on your GPA/test scores in a PUBLIC college (only $4k in a private).
   3. Many students/parents take out LOANS to help pay.
8. Do I have a strong sense of a major?
   1. Explore: Ask people who know you what you might be good at, research careers, talk to people about their jobs; spend some time thinking about a career.
   2. For math people: Business, Engineering;
   3. for Science people: a science degree (Biology, etc.), or Pre-Med;
   4. English people sometimes major in English, writing, communications, a language.
   5. Social studies people major in History, Geography, Psychology, etc.
   6. Then there are skilled majors: Physical Therapy, Nursing, Radiologic Tech, you can get 2-year and 4-year degrees in those.
   7. Many go in “Undeclared”.
9. What can you do now during FIRST SEMESTER of your senior year?
   1. Look at some college websites, even if only their sports teams. Google any college, or use these websites to help you keep a record of things you see: The College Board, [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org/); ACT/College Net, [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org/); GA College 411, [www.gacollege411.org](http://www.gacollege411.org/).
   2. Go to the website of at least one college you have an interest in, and check for the “application deadlines”, check out the Majors page (usually found under a heading like Academic Programs, or Colleges and Majors. Think about the considerations for a college (number 3 on this list).
   3. Talk to your parents about paying for college. Can they afford to send you to college? Or are you on your own to pay for college?
10. Points to remember:
    1. The U.S. has 3,500 colleges; one (or more) is right for you.
    2. It’s never too early or too late to prepare for college.
    3. The more you read, the more you know.
    4. Check for application deadlines.
    5. Apply for financial aid.
    6. Colleges try to do everything they can to make it easy to go…but it’s still a difficult task and you will have to work at it.