Help Students With Their College Selection:

Quick Guide and Scorecard

The next several years of a high school student's life are a time of upheaval, change, and shifting paradigms. In addition to feeling the normal pressures of high school, students are being asked to make one of their biggest decisions yet based on imperfect information. This can cause a sense of anxiety or feeling overwhelmed. One such source of anxiety is the college search. There is no rulebook to help students decide what college to go to, so instead they must reflect on their own needs and personalities, research schools to find a good fit, and assess impacts should any of their assumptions turn out to be wrong.

Here are a few steps to help guide students in their college search and a scorecard handout you can share with your students.

1. **Reflect**: Have students spend some time figuring out what is important to them in a school. Instead of starting by looking at schools they've heard of, students should begin by writing out a list of things they would like and wouldn't like.

2. **Prioritize:** Next, have the students weight their lists to decide what is most and least important. Each list item is a category and should have a point value between 0 and 100. The sum of the category scores should equal 100.

3. **Research:** Have students organize their weighted lists into a scorecard and begin assessing different colleges. They should use all the tools at their disposal, such as university websites, official social media pages, and people they know.

4. **Score:** Each student can begin giving a raw score for each school in each category. Points range from -10 to 10. Multiply the school's raw scores by the category weight to get the weighted scores. The sum of the weighted scores will determine which schools best align with the student's preferences.

5. **Analyze**: To remove some uncertainty, students should change any raw scores they are uncertain about and re-calculate the total scores to see if the final results change. If they do not, students can be surer of the results.

COLLEGE CONQUERORS

My College Scorecard

Category	Weight	School A Score		School B Score	
		Raw	Weighted	Raw	Weighted
	Total of 100	*(-/+ 10)*	*Weight x Raw*	*(-/+ 10)*	*Weight x Raw*
Distance from Home					
Location					
Tuition					
Prestige/Reputation					
Sports					
School Size					
Dorms					
Food					
Student Groups					
Alumni Network					
Class Sizes					
Major selections					
Know people there					
Total	100				

Available on Amazon
http://amzn.to/2dc9Qto

CONQUERING
COLLEGE

What colleges are really looking for,
how to write a stellar application,
and must-know college survival tips

Austin Fadely

COLLEGE CONQUERORS

Sample Completed Scorecard

Category	Weight	School A Score		School B Score	
		Raw Score	Weighted	Raw Score	Weighted
Distance from Home	10	5	50	10	100
Location	10	10	100	5	50
Tuition	20	8	160	5	100
Prestige/Reputation	5	7	35	3	15
Sports	3	0	0	-10	-30
School Size	2	-2	-4	-10	-20
Dorms	5	5	25	-10	-50
Food	10	-5	-50	0	0
Student Groups	10	-5	-50	8	80
Alumni Network	5	2	10	2	10
Class Sizes	5	10	50	1	5
Major selections	10	8	80	-5	-50
Know people there	5	0	0	-5	-25
Total	100		406		185

Tips on Using the Scorecard

- The category weight must add up to 100. This forces the student to make decisions about what is most important.
- The raw score can be negative, zero, or positive to allow features to count against a school.
- The sum of the weighted score will help the student quantify why they like one school over another, and it helps the student assess colleges objectively.
- The scorecard is meant as a tool only. If the student feels the results are wrong, they should feel free to adjust the category weights and try again; however, the scorecard loses value if the student is manipulating scores to arrive at the answer they already want.

COLLEGE CONQUERORS

Doing a Sensitivity Analysis

Beneath each score lies an assumption the student has made based on research. Some scores are more certain than others. For example, school size and distance from home can be assessed pretty easily as can tuition costs. Other categories such as alumni network, student groups, and food are harder to assess.

For scores where the student is unsure, have them do a sensitivity analysis by changing the score to the lowest possible value (-10) and see if that changes their end result (i.e. bumps the school down compared to others). If it does, have the student find the lowest possible value of those categories that would allow the college to retain the top total score. This allows students to clarify their decisions because even if the food turns out to be really bad, they may still like the school overall.