

# Tips on Selecting the Right College

(NAPSA)—The first test that college applicants face is selecting schools to apply to. Considering that there are some 3,800 colleges in the USA, narrowing your choices down to the four to eight you want to apply to can be no easy task.

Experts suggest that applicants should concentrate on what feels right for them—not what rankings tell you, where your friends are applying or where other people you know have gone.

“You want to find schools where you’ll be happy,” says Renee Gernand, the senior director of college planning services at the College Board.

“If you find colleges that are right for you academically, socially and geographically, chances are you’ll do well there,” says Gernand.

Here are some questions to ask that may help narrow down your college search:

- Would you prefer to go to college in a large city, midsized college town or on a rural campus?

- Do you want to be on a large campus with lots of students and things to do? Or a smaller campus with a more intimate feel?

- Do you want to go to school close to home or far away? Many Web sites, such as the College Search on [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), allow you to search for colleges in a certain state, or within a given distance of your ZIP code.

- Also think about what type of environment you enjoy—for example, near the ocean, in the mountains or in the desert.

- Do the schools you are researching offer the college majors in which you have an interest? The College Board’s “Book of Majors” or the MyRoad.com Web site can help you research majors and find colleges that offer them.

- Would you rather go to a college where you’ll get a broad, rounded education and meet people who are all studying different subjects—like a university or liberal

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**Experts advise that cost alone should not eliminate a school from your short list. An expensive school may offer an excellent financial aid package.**

arts college? Or would you prefer a college that prepares you for a specific career—such as an engineering institute, music conservatory or health sciences college?

One factor that should not eliminate a school from your list is cost. That’s because “an expensive college might give you a great financial aid package,” says Gernand.

Once you’ve developed a short list of colleges that meet your criteria, you should research those colleges more thoroughly by talking to your school counselor about them, visiting their Web sites, and, if possible, visiting campuses while classes are in session.

Another resource that’s available is the College Board’s “College Handbook.” It’s designed to help applicants develop a short list and learn more about different schools. It has indexes of colleges by type, size and sports offered, as well as detailed information on academic programs offered, how hard it is to get in and extracurricular activities on campus.

To learn more, visit the Web site at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).