

HOW TO CHOOSE A COLLEGE THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

CTCL
COLLEGES THAT CHANGE LIVES

STUDENT CENTERED. LIBERAL ARTS. DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT.

WHO ARE YOU, AND WHY ARE YOU GOING TO COLLEGE?

Start by examining your reasons for going to college. Why, really, are you going? What are your abilities and strengths? In what ways would you like to grow? What do you want out of life? How well do you self-advocate? What kind of support do you lean into from your family? Talk with your family, friends, and high school counselors as you ask these questions. The people who know you best will be able to help you the most with these important issues.

Ask yourself:

- What kind of student am I?
- What kind of community do I want to be in?
- Where will I thrive academically and personally?
- Where will I be challenged and supported?
- Who do I want to live and learn with?
- What type of campus location will help expand my experiences beyond the classroom in ways that make sense for me?
- What type of classroom experience works best for me?

EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS

College is a time to explore, and many students find a smaller community is a fantastic environment for exploring ideas, identity, interests, and involvement in academics and a wide variety of activities. What really matters, however, is not the number of people but the people themselves and the kind of community in which you will learn. Many large universities have established smaller “honors colleges” for these reasons. Think about the people in your life who are happy and successful; find out whether they went to college and, if so, where they attended. Often you'll find that success in life has less to do with your college choice and more to do with your personal qualities and traits coupled with the experiences and opportunities you will have in college. Employers and graduate schools are looking for outstanding skills and experience, not college pedigree. As you search for colleges, ask about student outcomes.

Visit the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) website for more information and as an alternative to popular rankings and media lists.

FINANCING AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT

If you assume that you can't afford college based on the “sticker price,” you will miss out. It may be difficult for you to talk about money, but if you investigate all the options and ask for help and advice, you will find affordable choices. Online resources as well as financial aid workshops sponsored by high schools in your community are widely available to get you started. College and university financial aid websites offer useful information and links as well. Investigate early and ask for help. Over a lifetime, it is likely a college graduate will earn close to \$1 million more than a high school graduate.

THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IS FIT

Choosing a college because your friends are going there or because of where it ranks on a list does not take into account who you are and who you will become. College is a match to be made, not a prize to be won. Finding a good fit requires time and introspection. Visiting a college's website, learning about campus events and guest speakers, and getting in touch with current students and faculty are good ways to supplement a campus visit—or to decide if you even want to spend the time and money on a visit. Check college websites to identify the admission officer assigned to your region of the country and email them. Ask if you can get in touch with students from your area or students with interests similar to yours. When you do visit, take the time to sit in on classes, eat in the dining hall, and hang around in the student center or other high-traffic areas. Imagine yourself as part of the community. Talk to students. Ask if they would make the same college choice if they were going through the selection process again.

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QUESTIONS TO ASK TO FIND A GOOD COLLEGE FIT

Start with these questions when you meet with or reach out to college admission representatives.

THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

- What is the average class size for first-year classes versus upper-level courses, and who teaches those courses (professors vs. grad students)?
- Can you describe hands-on learning opportunities on campus?
- What opportunities do students have to do research with faculty or alone?
- What internships have students in my major of interest done in the past?
- What study abroad programs are offered?
- What is the percentage of first-year students who return for their sophomore year?

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY CULTURE

- Where are your students from geographically? In-state vs. out-of-state vs. outside the U.S.?
- What does diversity look like on your campus?
- What percentage of students live on campus? Is it required?
- What gets students excited on campus? What are the most well-known traditions?
- What student organizations and community service opportunities exist on campus?
- What percentage of students are involved in athletics? What sports do you offer?
- What kind of student would NOT be happy on your campus?

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

- How does advising work? How often do I meet with my advisors?
- What safety services are available on campus?
- What level of counseling services are available?
- What academic accommodations and support are available for students who need it?
- What career planning services are available on campus?

ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID

- What do you look at when reading applications? What is most important?
- Do you require the SAT or ACT?
- Do you offer merit scholarships and financial aid? How do I qualify?

Colleges That Change Lives, Inc. (CTCL) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement and support of a student-centered college search process. Our goal is to help each student find a college that cultivates a lifelong love of learning and provides the foundation for a successful and fulfilling life beyond college. CTCL was founded as a result of a book of the same name, *Colleges That Change Lives*, researched and written by former *New York Times* education editor Loren Pope.

Narrowly focused media stories about college admissions have led the public and even the high school counseling community to believe that college choices are severely limited. CTCL aims to correct this misconception by presenting accurate information about college accessibility at sessions around the country and providing college counseling information and resources through the CTCL website (CTCL.org) and other outreach efforts.

Colleges That Change Lives is recognized by the IRS as a non-profit, charitable 501(c)(3) organization and your donations are tax-deductible. Contact us at CTCL.org for information on how to contribute and support our mission.

Carnegie is proud to support the mission of Colleges That Change Lives. For over 35 years, Carnegie has played a valuable role in the college search process by providing relevant resources for college-bound students and their families. Through its leading college search website CollegeXpress.com, Carnegie offers extensive college and university profiles, scholarship search tools, and helpful editorial content covering everything from the admission process and test prep to career advice.

Carnegie is committed to supporting students' academic dreams and has awarded over one million dollars in scholarship aid to deserving students. For your chance to win one of the many CollegeXpress scholarships, visit CollegeXpress.com/CTCL.

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The goal of the college search should be connecting individual students with a school in which they will thrive. Many students and their families start the search with rankings and name-brand colleges. They frequently underestimate the importance of the student's ambitions, strengths, challenges, style, hopes, and dreams before creating a personal, individualized list of schools. We believe that creating a meaningful list of colleges begins with the student finding the answers to important, introspective questions.

Colleges That Change Lives (CTCL) is dedicated to the advancement and support of a student-centered college search process, which includes helping students find schools where they will be challenged and supported.

MEMBER COLLEGE HIGHLIGHTS

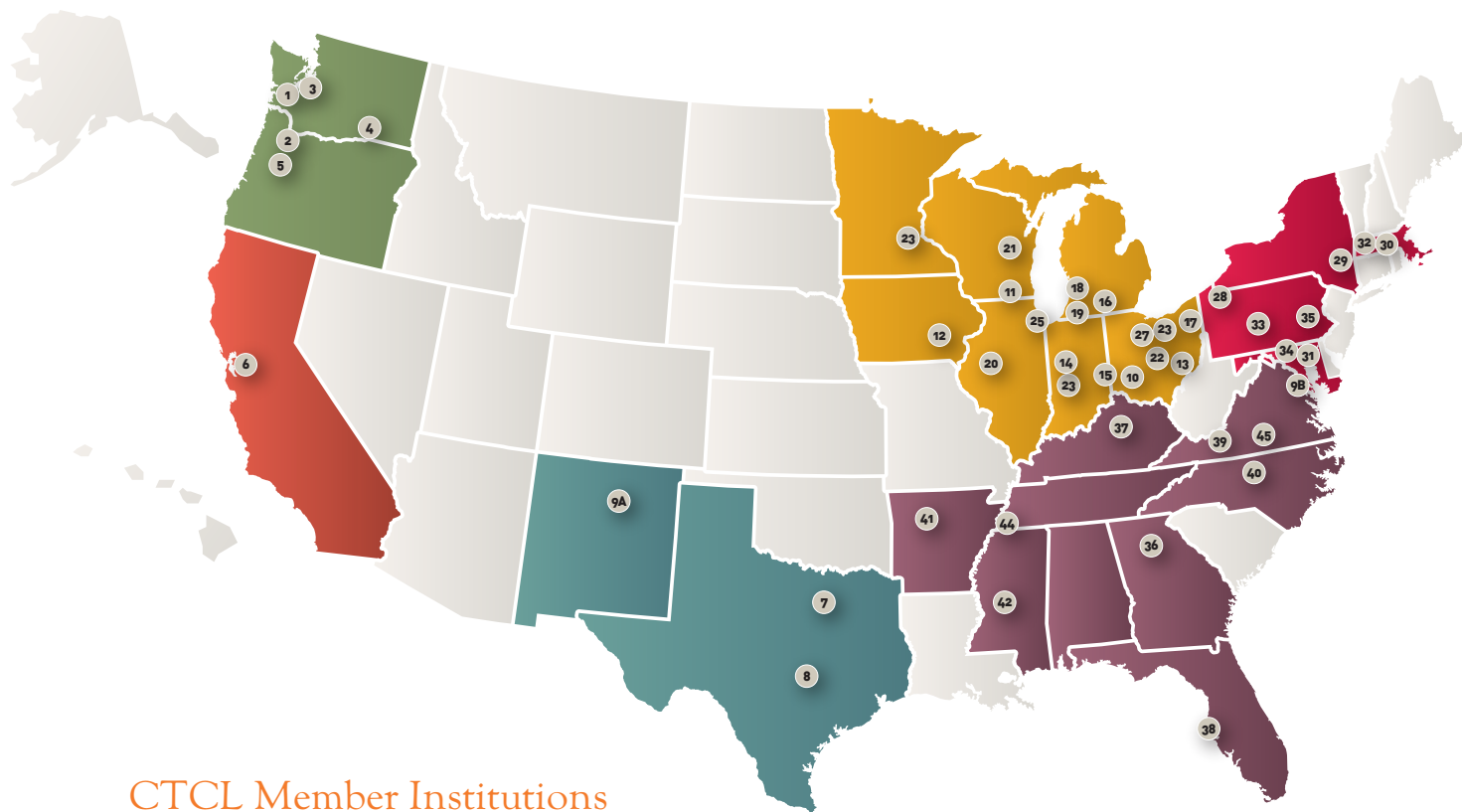
- All member institutions are small liberal arts colleges and universities.
- Admission processes are personal, thoughtful, holistic, and student centered.
- Faculty teach classes and labs, lead discussions, mentor students, and involve students in research.
- The primary academic focus is on educating undergraduate students.
- All member institutions are residential communities offering access to a variety of co-curricular opportunities and personal connections.
- All member institutions are committed to helping families afford a high-quality liberal arts education through merit-based aid, need-based aid, or both.

CTCL member institutions believe that a liberal arts education is an ideal way to prepare curious, caring, capable leaders for the global community in which we live. A liberal arts education teaches students to think critically and creatively, to communicate well in writing and in person, and to approach a question or problem from many perspectives with an open mind. These skills are vital to and transferable across all industries and encourage professional and personal growth. CTCL member institutions (and schools like them) continue to educate our future thinkers, teachers, entrepreneurs, lawyers, community leaders, CEOs, artists, explorers, PhDs, doctors, and individuals who pursue their goals with passion and purpose.

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CTCL Member Institutions

NORTHWEST

- 1 The Evergreen State College / Olympia, Washington
- 2 Reed College / Portland, Oregon
- 3 University of Puget Sound / Tacoma, Washington
- 4 Whitman College / Walla Walla, Washington
- 5 Willamette University / Salem, Oregon

WEST

- 6 Saint Mary's College of California / Moraga, California

SOUTHWEST

- 7 Austin College / Sherman, Texas
- 8 Southwestern University / Georgetown, Texas
- 9A St. John's College / Santa Fe, New Mexico

MIDWEST

- 10 Antioch College / Yellow Springs, Ohio
- 11 Beloit College / Beloit, Wisconsin
- 12 Cornell College / Mount Vernon, Iowa
- 13 Denison University / Granville, Ohio
- 14 DePauw University / Greencastle, Indiana
- 15 Earlham College / Richmond, Indiana
- 16 Hillsdale College / Hillsdale, Michigan
- 17 Hiram College / Hiram, Ohio
- 18 Hope College / Holland, Michigan
- 19 Kalamazoo College / Kalamazoo, Michigan
- 20 Knox College / Galesburg, Illinois
- 21 Lawrence University / Appleton, Wisconsin
- 22 Ohio Wesleyan University / Delaware, Ohio
- 23 Oberlin College / Oberlin, Ohio
- 24 St. Olaf College / Northfield, Minnesota
- 25 Wabash College / Crawfordsville, Indiana

- 26 Wheaton College / Wheaton, Illinois

- 27 College of Wooster / Wooster, Ohio

NORTHEAST

- 28 Allegheny College / Meadville, Pennsylvania
- 29 Bard College / Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
- 30 Clark University / Worcester, Massachusetts
- 31 Goucher College / Towson, Maryland
- 32 Hampshire College / Amherst, Massachusetts
- 33 Juniata College / Huntingdon, Pennsylvania
- 34 McDaniel College / Westminster, Maryland
- 9B St. John's College / Annapolis, Maryland
- 35 Ursinus College / Collegetown, Pennsylvania

SOUTH

- 36 Agnes Scott College / Decatur, Georgia
- 37 Centre College / Danville, Kentucky
- 38 Eckerd College / St. Petersburg, Florida
- 39 Emory & Henry University / Emory, Virginia
- 40 Guilford College / Greensboro, North Carolina
- 41 Hendrix College / Conway, Arkansas
- 42 Millsaps College / Jackson, Mississippi
- 44 Rhodes College / Memphis, Tennessee
- 45 University of Lynchburg / Lynchburg, Virginia

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