

Step-By-Step Guide to Creating a Smart College List For Students and Parents

Step 1: Read about what's important to look for in a college, and keep an open mind.

- High Impact Practices: <https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips>

Step 2: Figure out what's important to you in a university

- Take this survey: <http://www.collegecountdown.com/images/docs/Fiskes-Sizing-Yourself-Up-Survey.pdf>

Step 3: Think about what you want to study. Try some assessments

- O*Net's My Next Move: <https://www.mynextmove.org>
- YouScience (costs \$29 for an individual license):
<http://www.youscience.com>
- UT's Wayfinder: <https://wayfinder.utexas.edu>

Step 4: Research colleges for your major (avoid rankings!). Instead use:

- CollegeXpress lists: <https://www.collegexpress.com/lists/explore/>
- Rugg's Recs: <http://www.ruggsrecommendations.com>
- *The College Finder* by Dr. Stephen Antonoff:
<http://www.schoolbuff.com/college-finder.asp>

Step 5: Figure out which colleges you can afford

- EFC Calculator: <http://www.finaid.org/calculators/finaidestimate.phtml>
- Colleges that meet 100% of demonstrated financial need:
<http://www.thecollegesolution.com/list-of-colleges-that-meet-100-of-financial-need/>
- No Loan Colleges: <https://www.edvisors.com/plan-for-college/money-saving-tips/no-loans-colleges/>

Step 6: Make your college list

- 1 or 2 stretch schools
- 2 target schools
- 3 likely schools

Step 7: Apply for outside scholarships

- Outside scholarships are rarely large enough to cut costs significantly, but they do help and are worth your time if you are willing to put in the hours to apply for them
- Try the directory at Unigo: <https://www.unigo.com/scholarships>