4-year College Application Process

Grade 12 Lesson 2

Time Required:  48 minutes (2 half day class periods)

Objectives (Students Will...):
  • Read and discuss two articles about some of the intricacies of the college application process.
  • Become more informed about school policies and procedures regarding the college application process

Activity Statement:
Students will be split into two equal groups. Each group will be given one of the 2 articles to read (*The 7 Worst College Application Cliches & How to Avoid Them* and *Ten Things College Admissions Won’t Tell You*). The groups will be asked to read their article and report back to the group about what they thought were the important parts of the article. After the discussions, the advisor will distribute the two handouts and the College Quest for students to review.

Materials:
1. *The 7 Worst College Application Cliches & How to Avoid Them*
2. *Ten Things College Admissions Won’t Tell You*
3. Fast Facts Needed for College Applications
4. LMHS College & Scholarship Application Policies & Procedures
5. The College Quest – A Guide for College Planning

Procedures and Discussion:
1. Students will be split into two equal groups.
6. One group will read *The 7 Worst College Application Cliches & How to Avoid Them* and the other group will read *Ten Things College Admissions Won’t Tell You*.
2. Each group will present the information from their article to the other group and the adviser. They should point out the information that they felt was most important, anything they didn’t already know, and anything that surprised them.
3. The adviser will distribute the remaining handouts and give the students a few minutes to look them over.
4. To help facilitate discussion the advisor can direct the students to these pages of the College Quest which are most likely relevant to seniors in this stage of the process.
   a. Page 8 – Requesting Letters of Recommendation
   b. Page 10 – College Application Essay
   c. Page 13 – College Interviews
5. The adviser will ask if they have any questions or if there are any other items they would like to discuss.
The 7 Worst College Application Clichés & How to Avoid Them

By Kate Moriarty in APPLYING TO COLLEGE
Posted Sep 27 2014 - 2:00pm
http://www.hercampus.com/high-school/applying-college/7-worst-college-application-clich-s-how-avoid-them

Now that senior year is underway, only one thing stands between you and your totally awesome collegiette years: college applications. Sure, they may seem scary (Writing about yourself? Easier said than done.), but at the end of the day, the college essay is the best way to show your top schools what you’re all about, so the key is to be unique. Check out the easiest ways to avoid the seven worst college app clichés. With these tips in mind, you’ll be in the clear and decorating your dream dorm in no time!

1. Starting your essay with a famous quote
Let’s pretend for a second that you really do live by one of Shakespeare’s old adages, or that JFK’s patriotic appeals to the people really did inspire you to change your life (color us impressed!). It might seem like a great idea to share their wise words of wisdom—after all, they’re smart people, right?—but college admissions officers want to hear from you, not from famous people.

“Kids are used to trying to doing that [for] a paper for an English class,” says Michelle Podbelsek, co-owner of College Counseling Associates, an independent college counseling service for students and their parents. “In that case, they’re trying to start with something universal and then get into the topic. But for a college essay, it’s sort of the opposite. You want to get really personal at the beginning.” The first voice that the admissions officer reads should be yours!

If you really do feel a strong connection to a quote and want to incorporate it into your essay, Michelle suggests pulling only a single phrase. “Don’t just give us this dead quote and then start talking about it afterwards, though,” she advises. “Try to put in that same sentence with the quote something about why it’s important to you right away.” Link it to a personal experience, like a strong reaction to first hearing the quote or a loved one who used to repeat it to you. Most importantly, choose a decent quote (if you were considering quoting Miley Cyrus, for instance, we really can’t help you.).

2. Writing about volunteer work... and not being the least bit original about it
We get it—your service trip to South America was the best thing that’s ever happened to you. You made the best friends, had the best time, met the most amazing people and learned so, so much (insert more gushing superlatives here). We believe you! And it’s super impressive that you enjoy helping others. The problem is, so do a ton of other awesome applicants, and they’re writing the exact same essay as you are. How the heck is a college admissions officer supposed to tell you all apart? They’re only human, after all!

Even so, Hillary, a sophomore at UC Berkeley, says that, like most rules, college essay rules are made to be bent. “It’s a known concept that you’re ‘not supposed’ to write about trips, or community service projects, etc.,” she says. “I didn't follow this advice, because I knew what I had to write for myself. [I] ended up writing about my journey to [San Francisco] for the first time, and how I spent $10 on a luggage cart to maneuver my way to the community service summer program in which I was partaking. It was theoretically breaking the ‘rule,’ but I knew it’s what I needed to write, and it worked.”

Why did it work? Likely because Hillary chose a unique detail about her experience—the luggage cart—and wrote insightfully about its significance to her. “It’s understanding how to write deeply about something so they can really put us in that moment for them and we can see [the applicant’s] perspective,” says Podbelsek. “For every one kid that’s done it in the most boring way, other kids will
take that exact same situation and they’ll find some sort of nuance that truly connects with them more deeply and put it in the essay, and then it works perfectly.”

She says to avoid focusing on ideas like “I went to Guatemala and I helped people and I never realized how great my life was until I did that.” Instead, dive into a particular poignant moment or conversation. When you think about your topic, ask yourself, “Could anyone else but me write this?” If the answer is yes, head back to the drawing board!

3. Over-exaggerating commitments

If you haven’t done a lot of community service, you aren’t the star athlete and your biggest role in the school play was that of the silent elm tree, you shouldn’t try to exaggerate or pretend you’ve played a bigger part than you have. Insincerity will earn you a one-way ticket to the rejection pile! “It’s [the same] for any writer,” says Podbelsek. “Don’t try to write about something that you don’t know intimately, because it’s not going to come off very natural or just really expressive of you.”

Don’t be afraid to talk about something true, even if there wasn’t a trophy involved. “Most people write all about their accomplishments or something great, etc.,” says Shira, a senior at Franklin & Marshall. “Instead, I wrote about coming in last all the time [on] my high school cross country team and the lessons it taught me. It was a cross between being a bit humorous and showing some growth. One college distinctly remembered me based off of my essay about coming in last and said that they loved it because it was so unique.”

Podbelsek suggests reading over your essay and underlining any vague or general phrases like, “It’s so interesting that...” or “I felt so good about myself.” If you find a lot of them, it might be that your topic isn’t allowing you to write in the way that you’re supposed to be writing. Ask yourself: “Do I really have something meaningful to say about this?”

4. Turning in a gimmicky application supplement

We’ve all heard the urban legends. One girl turned in a flip-flop with travel destinations written on the sole! One guy sung his way off the University of Michigan waitlist by posting an ode to the Wolverines on YouTube! There are a million and one crazy ways that high schoolers have worked their way into a college, but in the eternal words of He’s Just Not That Into You, bear in mind: these are the exception, not the rule.

“Anything bizarre like a shoe or a cake or something... that is just highly discouraged,” says Podbelsek. “They’re just not going to take you seriously. They’re going to think you’re some over-the-top person who’s going to start stalking them.” Trust us, the last person a college admissions officer wants to admit to their school is a proven stalker.

Plus, do they really want a bulky flip-flop lying amongst the papers on their desk? Nope, they do not!

5. Writing the “dead dog” essay

Everyone deals with tragedy in his or her own unique way. Whether it was a beloved pet, an old friend or a grandparent who passed away, it’s natural that a death would have a profound impact on you—especially, Podbelsek notes, if it was your first experience with death. Still, that doesn’t necessarily mean it should make up the cornerstone of your essay.

The key, she says, is to make sure you’re not writing about a typical reaction that most other people would have in that same situation. The “dead dog” essay shouldn’t be about learning the truth about life and death, but about learning more from yourself, or how you applied that lesson to your own choices. For instance, “your grandmother died and that’s what motivated you to do such and such, or it made you question deeply something in your life,” Podbelsek suggests. “Something that you can
really get meaty with that’s not just what anybody else could write.” After all, as much as we hate to admit it, the truth is that the admissions officer will read hundreds of stories like it.

6. Writing a super general essay
Word to the wise: if you want to apply to a school, you should probably know a little something about it (location is a good place to start). You’d be shocked how many students miss this basic concept when submitting their supplemental essays, and we can only imagine how many admissions officers have been tempted to write “SMH” in bright red pen across their entire applications.

“There some people, when they do their first draft of a supplement that asks, ‘Why Boston University?’ are just like, ‘It’s so pretty,’” Podbelsek says. “That’s just so cheesy. The colleges don’t want to hear something that they already know about themselves. You’re just not going to impress them whatsoever; you’re not going to show them that you’re somebody who took it seriously.”

Before you write your essays—even if they’re for your safety schools—learn as much as you can about the school. How many students go there? What majors or classes do they offer? Are there any awesome clubs that you’d love to join? If you aren’t a fan of anything they have to offer, you shouldn’t be applying there in the first place!

7. Submitting an essay with errors
What’s the easiest way to tick off a college admissions officer? Not proofreading your paper! Consider typos like payment for postage of a rejection letter—you’ll never let one slip by again!

“Even if [you’re] a brilliant writer, you always should have somebody else read it,” advises Podbelsek. “There might just be a typo. You always want to have another pair of eyes read it—also for perspective. When I work on an essay with a student for a while, we sometimes get so immersed in it and we’re so close to it that maybe we can’t see other holes or problems with it.”

Podbelsek suggests reading your essay out loud to yourself and others—even if you aren’t a limelight-loving girl. A phrase may sound perfect on paper, but when you speak the words out loud, you might find that you’re way off base.

Don’t let college applications drag down the mood of your senior year! The essay is easy once you start looking at the big picture—and using your own perspective. By avoiding these app clichés, you’ll get that much closer to earning yourself a “YES” from your favorite school’s admissions office.
College Admissions Won’t Tell You

BY DANIEL J. GOELSTEIN

What would be students need to know about the high-stakes world of the college admissions office.

1. ‘Not all grades are created equal’

For the more than two million high-school seniors who intend to go to college next year, the anxious slog of filling out applications is in full swing. And whether they’ll get a thick package announcing their admission or a thin, dream-dashing one-page letter may well depend on their grade-point average. Grades account for about 75% of the typical admissions decision, according to the National Association for College Admission Counseling.

But not all good grades are created equal. In recent years, admissions offices have given more weight to grades from designated college-prep courses—and the more exclusive the college, the more weight those grades get.

One reason colleges are getting choosier: Grade inflation. Research by the College Board, the organization that administers the SAT, shows that the average GPA for high school seniors rose from 2.64 in 1996 to 2.9 in 2006—even as SAT scores remained essentially flat. The researchers saw this as evidence that some teachers were using grades...to reward good efforts rather than achievement.

2. ‘We don’t trust your essay.’

Many colleges rely on the application essay to create a fuller picture of the applicant. But in an era of helicopter parenting, college increasingly worry that these essays aren’t written by the student.

‘To rule out ghostwriting, many colleges now require applicants to supply pieces of school writing that have been graded by a teacher. ‘If the application essay looks like it was written by Maya Angelou and the schoolwork looks like Willy Loman’s, it will raise some eyebrows,’ says William Hiss, a retired dean of admissions at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine.

3. ‘We’re having second thoughts about the SAT.’

For decades, the SAT has been the primary benchmark for students’ ability to handle college-level work. But many critics argue that the SAT gives an unfair advantage to wealthier students who can afford test-prep classes. About 800 of the country’s 2,800 four-year colleges now make the SAT optional.

A recent study endorsed by the NACAC looked at the performance of 133,000 students admitted to college between 2003 and 2010, about 30% of whom hadn’t taken the SAT or its counterpart, the ACT. The study found no significant differences in college GPAs or graduation rates between those who took either test and those who didn’t.

4. ‘Assessing over class ranking? That’s admissible.’

In 1993, more than 40% of admissions counselors viewed class rank as “considerably important,” according to the NACAC. By 2006, that figure was under 20%. These days, rank is more likely to come into play at larger colleges, where detailed “holistic” reviews of applicants aren’t always possible.

5. ‘It pays to make nice with your teachers.’

Skepticism over GPAs and test scores, some admissions officers are giving more weight to recommendations from high-school teachers and counselors. Angel Perez, dean of admissions for Pitzer College in Claremont, Calif., says the most useful recommendations show that the student is intellectually curious and contributes to class discussions. How does the student respond to setbacks, how does the student interact in teams?” Mr. Perez says.

6. ‘We only sound exclusive.’

Amid skepticism over GPAs and test scores, some admissions offices are giving more weight to recommendations from high-school teachers and counselors. Angel Perez, dean of admissions for Pitzer College in Claremont, Calif., says the most useful recommendations show that the student is intellectually curious and contributes to class discussions. How does the student respond to setbacks, how does the student interact in teams?” Mr. Perez says.

7. ‘Politics may determine whether you get in.’

The role of race and ethnicity has been a polarizing issue in admissions. The NACAC says that about one third of colleges and universities consider an applicant’s race as a factor. At some public universities, racial admissions preferences are banned by state law, though critics have accused some schools of working around those bans.

One practice that’s generally legal: “Legacy” admissions, where children of wealthy alumni or powerful lawmakers get special consideration in the admissions process.

8. ‘We’d rather admit someone who’s paying full price.’

According to the College Board, 10% of college freshmen in 2013 were from outside the U.S. One reason colleges woo these international scholars: Many of them can afford to pay full tuition. At publicly funded state universities, higher tuition for out-of-state students often helps subsidize education for state residents. For example, at an in-state graduate at the University of California at Berkeley, in-state tuition is about $23,000 a year; for an out-of-state or foreign student, tuition is about $83,000 a year.

9. ‘We need you more than you need us.’

After 15 years of steady growth, the number of U.S. high-school graduates leveled off this year at 3.2 million. It’s expected to stay at that level until 2020, when it is expected to rise, according to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. That means more colleges will be chasing after fewer students.

As a result, students who get into more than one school may be able to do some horse-trading, notes Matthew Pittinsky, CEO of Parchment.com, an online college-admissions credentials-management website. “It’s just like going to the dealer and negotiating a better rate for your new car,” he says.

10. ‘Just because you’ve admitted doesn’t mean you’ll stay admitted.’

About 22% of colleges revoked at least one offer of admission in 2009 (the most recent year studied), according to the NACAC. The most common cited reasons were seniors’-impaired final grades (65%), disciplinary issues (35%) and falsification of application information (29%).

In recent years, student postings on social media have prompted some schools to reconsider their offers. Mr. Perez of Pitzer College recalls an incident in which a student Pitzer had decided to admit was found to be harassing a high-school teacher on Facebook. “It was a difficult situation, but I pulled the admissions letter before it was printed,” Mr. Perez says.
Fast Facts Needed for College Applications
For the Class of 2015

The following is a list of information you will likely need for most college applications (especially the Common App).

High School CEEB Code: 221-145

Lee Middle and High School
300 Greylock Street
Lee, MA 01238
Phone: (413) 243-2780
Fax: (413) 243-4105

Dan Korte Counselor (10-12) ext.2010 dkorte@leepublicschools.net

Senior Class Size: 50

We do NOT rank (just leave blank or check “we do not rank”)

GPA: unless otherwise specified, report your WEIGHTED GPA and check appropriate box.
GPA Scale: 100

Entry Date: August 2011
Graduation date: June 2015

Credits:
Year-long courses – 1
Semester courses/ PE – 0.5

Naviance: www.connection.naviance.com/leemhs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Type</th>
<th>LMHS Recommended Request Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transcripts</td>
<td>10 days before college deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Recommendation</td>
<td>3-4 weeks before college deadline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lee Middle and High School – Lee, MA
LMHS College & Scholarship Application
Policies & Procedures 2013-2014

College Application (school specific or Common App) – sent by student
Applications typically have an optional or required essay component. It is recommended that you include an essay even if it is optional. It is also highly recommended that you submit the application before requesting transcripts.

SAT and ACT scores – sent by student
These should be sent as soon as possible using www.Collegeboard.org or www.ACT.org. Lee Middle and High School is NOT responsible for sending any scores. (Note: AP Scores are not typically considered in the application process. Instead, they are usually sent to schools once the student is enrolled)

Linking Common App and Naviance – completed by student
First, setup your Common App account. Then login to Naviance and click “Colleges” and then “colleges I’m applying to.” Follow the instructions and enter your Common App email address.

Transcripts and Recommendations - requested by student, sent by Guidance
These are sent by the LMHS Guidance Department. Official transcripts and teacher/counselor recommendations need to be requested on Naviance.
(Note: recommendations from people outside LMHS should be directly mailed to each college)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How to Request Recommendations (teacher and counselor)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Ask the teacher(s) who you would like to write you a recommendation in person before making the request electronically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Click “Colleges” tab and then click “add/cancel requests” under “Teacher Recommendations”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Select teacher or counselor and add a note.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Click “Update Requests” at bottom. An email will be sent to them with your note.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How to Request Official Transcripts for Colleges or Scholarships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Login to Naviance and click the “Colleges” tab. On the left-hand side, click “transcripts”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Select one of the options (request transcripts for colleges or scholarships)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Click “lookup” to find each college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Then select the “Type” of application on the left-hand side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Then click “Request Transcripts” at bottom to submit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLEASE REMEMBER!!!
It is your responsibility to be sure that all required information has been forwarded to and received by your college or university. Deadlines for each school are different, do your homework!
The College Quest

A GUIDE FOR COLLEGE PLANNING
For the Class of 2015

Lee Middle and High School
Counseling Department
300 Greylock Street
Lee, MA 01238
(413)243-2781
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Staying Connected....................................................................................................................16
MASSACHUSETTS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AND UMASS MINIMUM ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
http://www.mass.edu/shared/documents/admissions/admissionsstandards.pdf

The admissions standards for the state universities and UMass emphasize a strong academic high school background so that students enter college ready to learn. These standards represent minimum requirements; meeting them does not guarantee admission, since campus officials consider a wide range of factors in admissions decisions. Students shall have fulfilled all requirements for the high school diploma or its equivalent upon enrollment. It is important to note that admissions standards for the state’s community colleges differ. Community colleges may admit any high school graduate or GED recipient.

**Freshman Applicants**
The admissions standards for freshmen applicants have two main parts:
1. 16 required academic courses.
2. A minimum required grade point average (GPA) earned in college preparatory courses completed at the time of application.

Applicants must also submit an SAT or ACT score.

**Academic Course Requirement**
Sixteen* college preparatory courses distributed as follows are required. (A course is equivalent to one full school year of study. Courses count toward the distribution only if passed.)

* Effective with the college freshman class entering fall 2016, the number of required courses will increase to 17 with the additional year of math.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2017 and beyond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3 courses (Algebra I &amp; II and Geometry or Trigonometry or comparable coursework)</td>
<td>4 courses (Algebra I &amp; II and Geometry or Trigonometry, or comparable coursework) including mathematics during the final year of high school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>3 courses (drawn from Natural Science and/or Physical Science and/or Technology/Engineering; including 2 courses with laboratory work); Technology/engineering courses must be designated as science courses (taken for science credit) by the high school</td>
<td>3 courses (drawn from Natural Science and/or Physical Science and/or Technology/Engineering), including 3 courses with laboratory work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>2 courses (including 1 course in U.S. History)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign Languages</td>
<td>2 courses (in a single language)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>2 courses (from the above subjects or from the Arts &amp; Humanities or Computer Sciences)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Minimum Required Grade Point Average (GPA)
The GPA must be achieved based on all college preparatory courses completed at the time of application and should be weighted for accelerated (Honors or Advanced Placement) courses. The required minimum weighted high school GPA is 3.0 for the four-year public campuses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State University GPA</th>
<th>University of Massachusetts GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SAT Scores
Applicants who meet the GPA requirement do not have to use the sliding scale for admission, but still must submit SAT or ACT test scores for consideration if they are applying to a state university or UMass within three years of high school graduation.

Sliding Scale (used when GPA is lower than the minimum required GPA)
If an applicant’s GPA falls below the required minimum, a sliding scale will apply. This scale should be used only when an applicant’s GPA falls below the required 3.0 minimum for admission to the state universities or UMass.

Scores on the new writing section of the SAT will not affect the sliding scale for freshman applicants to the Massachusetts state universities and to the University of Massachusetts at this time. The sliding scale, used in making admissions decisions for students with high school grade point averages falling below the required minimum, will continue to be based upon the combined critical reading (verbal) and math sections of the SAT.

**Sliding Scale for Freshman Applicants to UMass**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weighted High School GPA</th>
<th>Combined SAT-I V&amp;M Must Equal or Exceed (ACT Equivalent in Italics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.51-2.99</td>
<td>950 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.41-2.50</td>
<td>990 (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.31-2.40</td>
<td>1030 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.21-2.30</td>
<td>1070 (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11-2.20</td>
<td>1110 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00-2.10</td>
<td>1150 (25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NO APPLICANT WITH A HIGH SCHOOL GPA BELOW 2.00 MAY BE ADMITTED TO A STATE UNIVERSITY OR UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS CAMPUS.

**Sliding Scale for Freshman Applicants to a State University**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weighted High School GPA</th>
<th>Combined SAT-I V&amp;M Must Equal or Exceed (ACT Equivalent in Italics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.51-2.99</td>
<td>920 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.41-2.50</td>
<td>960 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.31-2.40</td>
<td>1000 (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.21-2.30</td>
<td>1040 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11-2.20</td>
<td>1080 (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00-2.10</td>
<td>1120 (24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXCEPTION ALLOWANCES

English as a Second Language (ESL) Applicants
English as a Second Language (ESL) applicants must complete the 16 required college preparatory courses with two exceptions:

1. ESL applicants may substitute up to two college preparatory electives for the two required foreign language courses and,

2. ESL applicants may substitute up to two years of college preparatory ESL English courses for college preparatory English courses.

Learning Disabled Applicants
Applicants with professionally diagnosed and documented learning disabilities (documentation must include diagnostic test results) are exempt from taking standardized tests for admission to any public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth. Such students, however, must complete 16** required academic courses with a minimum required GPA of 3.00 or present other evidence of the potential for academic success.

**An applicant may substitute two college preparatory electives for the two required foreign language courses only if the applicant has on file with the high school results of a psycho-educational evaluation completed within the past three years that provides a specific diagnosis of a learning disability and an inability to succeed in a foreign language.

Eligibility for admission is not an entitlement of admission for any applicant, including learning disabled students.

This policy frames minimum standards for admission to Massachusetts state universities and UMass. Institutions are free to set higher standards and/or to impose additional requirements. In any case, meeting minimum standards for admissibility does not guarantee admission for any applicant. The final decision on accepting an applicant rests with the individual campus.
The Common Application (Common App) is one college admissions application that students may use to apply to many different colleges and universities. Many colleges require students to send their application in through the Common Application although some colleges require other forms of electronic submission. The Common Application can also be linked to Naviance to simplify the submission of forms like transcripts and letters of recommendation.

Naviance Family Connection is a school wide, web-based platform that allows students and their families to perform college searches and keep all their college application information in one place. There are many features that both students and families can utilize throughout the students high school career. The features below are specific to the college application process.

As a parent and guardian you can activate and access your own Naviance Family Connection account by going to http://connection.naviance.com/leemhs and enter a personalized registration code you can obtain from your child’s counselor. To set up your Naviance account as a new user you will need to create a password and provide an email address.

### Naviance and Common App in the College Application Process

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<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>How to Access</th>
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| Super Match College Search                   | - Set and edit search criteria to narrow your college search quickly. You can save and modify your search later.  
- Each individual college has its own profile where you can glance at general admissions, financial aid, majors, degrees, etc.  
- Add the colleges you are interested in to My Colleges for future reference. | 1. Click the Colleges Tab  
2. Click the Super Match College Search link under the College Recourses section. |
| Linking Naviance and the Common App          | - Linking your accounts will allow your counselor to submit your transcript and letters of recommendation electronically. | 1. Students link accounts in school as part of a classroom activity. |
| Requesting letters of Recommendation        | Many colleges and universities require letters of recommendation when you apply.  
- Through Naviance you can request letters of recommendations from teachers and counselors.  
- All letters will be uploaded from the teachers through Naviance and sent to the colleges via Naviance. Note: Recommendations can only be sent to colleges in your Colleges I’m Applying To list.  
- Remember to fill out the Student Self-Assessment (see below) so teachers can have a better idea of your High School Career.  
- REMINDER: Teachers are under no obligation to honor late requests. | 1. Click the Colleges Tab  
2. Click Colleges I’m Applying To Link  
3. Click add/cancel requests under the Teacher Recommendation heading. |
### Requesting Transcripts

Almost all colleges and universities require a transcript when you apply. They also might require you to send transcripts throughout your senior year (i.e. first quarter grades, second quarter grades etc.)

- Through Naviance you can request for your counselor to send your transcript to all or some of the colleges on your **Colleges I’m Applying To** list.

### Apply to Colleges

**Common App makes college application easy**

- Using the Common App, fill out all the required fields to send applications
- If you have colleges on your list that do not use common app see your guidance counselor for more information.
- Your college admission essay is part of the common application. If you need help writing your college essay you should see your English teacher or your guidance counselor.

### Scholarships

**Scholarships are a grant or payment made to support the student’s education. They are awarded to the applicants on the basis of academic or other achievement. Naviance makes it easy to find and apply to scholarships.**

- Scholarships have different deadlines.
- Scholarships can be specific (at least 3.2 GPA that volunteers in your community) or vague (athlete). Students need to check the criteria to qualify before applying.
- Students may apply to as many scholarships as they like as long as they qualify.
- Keep in mind that some scholarships require letter of recommendation, transcripts, a student essay, and other documents with the application.
- Local Scholarships are updated frequently.

### Student Self-Assessment Survey

**If you need a letter of recommendation, you need to fill out this short questionnaire.**

- It give teachers and counselors a snapshot of your accomplishments through you high school career.
- You may update your information at any time.

### Game Plan Survey

**The Game Plan Survey is important to fill out because it will help your counselor understand what career you want and how you want to get there.**

- There are no wrong answers so just be honest. There is an option for *Does Not Matter* for students who are still pondering certain questions.

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1. Click the **Colleges Tab**
2. Click on the transcripts Link under the **resources** heading on the left side of the screen.
3. Use the drop down menus and college lookup to make an official request.

1. Log into Common App
2. Fill out all the required fields.
3. Have someone else double check your writing for spelling and grammar.
4. Double check to make sure all the information is accurate.

1. Click the **Colleges Tab**
2. Click the **scholarships** link under the **scholarships & money** heading on the bottom of the page.

1. Click the **About Me Tab**
2. Click on **Student Self-Assessment** under the **surveys to take** heading on the left side of the screen.
3. Fill out the boxes and click **Update** when finished.

1. Click the **About Me Tab**
2. Click the **game plan** Link under the **interesting things about me** heading in the middle of the page.
3. Fill out all the questions and click **Save Changes** when finished.
College Planning Timeline

Spring of Junior Year
✓ College visits- try to visit while the college is in session
✓ Sign up for initial interviews and tours
✓ Sign up for and take standardized tests – SAT, ACT, SAT II, subject tests
✓ Senior course selection
  o Sign up for academic classes in you senior year that will challenge you
  o The 3 primary criteria most colleges look at when making admissions decisions are GPA, SAT/ACT scores, and the rigor of the courses you have taken
✓ Ask teachers for letters of recommendation

End of Junior Year
✓ Begin to narrow down you list of colleges
  o Use the information you have gathered through research and visits to refine your list
  o Enter prospective colleges into Naviance
✓ Review ACT /SAT results and GPA
  o College list should be refined to reflect estimates of the student’s admissibility to each school
  o Information about each college admissions requirements can be forum in Naviance.
✓ A good number of colleges to have on your list is 6-10
✓ Complete the Student Self-Assessment, Game Plan Survey, and Parent Questionnaire

Summer of Junior Year
✓ Visit Those Colleges!
✓ Determine the application procedure for each school on your list
✓ Read, search the internet, and ask questions!
✓ Start applications
✓ Begin working on you essay
✓ Do something interesting:
  o Get a job
  o Attend a summer program
  o Volunteer

Senior Year
✓ Early decision/ Early Action applicants meet early with their college counselors to make certain everything can be ready by the deadlines.
✓ First Deadline: November 1st

Senior Year Continues
✓ Meetings with college counselor
✓ Request teacher recommendation (if you haven’t already)
✓ Complete applications - Be sure to give your and counselor enough lead time to complete his / her work!
✓ ACT and SAT testing
✓ Financial Aid Paperwork
  o FASFA
  o CSS Profile
  o Individual School Forms
  o Scholarships
Process for Requesting Letters of Recommendation

When requesting a letter of recommendation for college admission from a teacher or counselor at Lee Middle and High School, you must follow these guidelines.

1. Initial requests should be made in person, and then followed up with a formal request through Naviance.
   a. Click the colleges tab, select colleges I’m applying to, and scroll to the bottom of the page to Teacher Recommendations and select add/drop requests.

2. Before requesting a letter you should complete your student self-assessment
   a. Click the about me tab and select student self-assessment under surveys to take on the left-hand side.

3. The following documents could also be helpful to your teacher or counselor
   a. A copy of your resume
   b. Your personal essay
   c. Any other specific information you would like included in your letter

4. Requests for letters of recommendation that are received by teachers before the start of school will be completed by October 1st.

5. All other requests will be completed 3 weeks from the date they are received.
   a. Pay attention to your deadlines and make sure to give your recommenders plenty of time.
   b. The earlier you ask, the better. If you apply under early decision or early action plans, you'll definitely need to ask for recommendations by the start of your senior year or before.
   Remember that some teachers will be writing whole stacks of letters, which takes time. Your teachers will do a better job on your letter if they don’t have to rush.

6. If a teacher is unable to complete a recommendation for you within this timeline or they do not feel comfortable writing a letter for you for any other reason they will let you know within 2 days of the request.

7. Teachers will upload letters and complete Common App forms through Naviance. Letters are confidential and teachers are not required to provide you with a copy.

8. Once letters are uploaded to Naviance by teachers, they have not been sent to colleges until you ask your counselor to do so. It is the student’s responsibility to tell your counselor when you want them sent and which letters you want sent to which colleges.
How to Get a Great Letter of Recommendation
Colleges often ask for two or three recommendation letters from people who know you well. These letters should be written by someone who can describe your skills, accomplishments and personality.

Colleges value recommendations because they:
- Reveal things about you that grades and test scores can’t
- Provide personal opinions of your character
- Show who is willing to speak on your behalf

Letters of recommendation work for you when they present you in the best possible light, showcasing your skills and abilities.

Whom to Ask
It’s your job to find people to write letters of recommendation for you. Follow these steps to start the process:
- Read each of your college applications carefully. Schools often ask for letters of recommendation from an academic teacher — sometimes in a specific subject — or a school counselor or both.
- Ask a counselor, teachers and your family who they think would make good references.
- Choose one of your teachers from junior year or a current teacher who has known you for a while. Colleges want a current perspective on you, so a teacher from several years ago isn't the best choice.
- Consider asking a teacher who also knows you outside the classroom. For example, a teacher who directed you in a play or advised your debate club can make a great reference.
- Perhaps most important, pick someone who will be enthusiastic about writing the letter for you.
- If you’re unsure about asking someone in particular, politely ask if he or she feels comfortable recommending you. That’s a good way to avoid weak letters.

How to Get the Best Recommendations
Some teachers write many recommendation letters each year. Even if they know you well, it’s a good idea to take some time to speak with them. Make it easy for them to give positive, detailed information about your achievements and your potential by refreshing their memory.

Here’s how:
- Complete your student self-assessment through Naviance.
- Talk to them about your class participation.
- Remind them of specific work or projects you’re proud of.
- Tell them what you learned in class.
- Mention any challenges you overcame.
- Give them the information they need to provide specific examples of your work.
- If you need to discuss part of your transcript (particularly for your counselor letter) — low grades during your sophomore year, for example — do so. Explain why you had difficulty and discuss how you've changed and improved since then.

Whether approaching teachers, a counselor or another reference, you may want to provide them with a resume that briefly outlines your activities, both in and outside the classroom, and your goals.

Final Tips
The following advice is easy to follow and can really pay off:
- Waive your right to view recommendation letters on your application forms. Admission officers will trust them more if you haven’t seen them.
- Make sure your references know the deadlines for each college.
- Follow up with your references a week or so before recommendations are due to make sure your letters have been sent.
- Once you’ve decided which college to attend, write thank-you notes. Tell your references where you’re going and let them know how much you appreciate their support.
Your students’ college essay is their opportunity to reveal their best qualities and to show an admission committee what makes them stand out from other applicants.

How important is the essay?
The National Association for College Admission Counseling’s 2011 State of College Admission report found that while grades, strength of curriculum and admission test scores are the top factors in the college admission decision, a majority of colleges and universities believe the essay to be of considerable or moderate importance in determining which academically qualified students they would choose.

In other words, when all else is equal between competing applicants, a compelling essay can make the difference. A powerful, well-written essay can also tip the balance for a marginal applicant.

What are colleges looking for in an essay?
College admission officers look to the essay for evidence that a student can write well and support ideas with logical arguments. They also want to know something about the personality of the student.

Sarah Myers McGinty, author of The College Application Essay, shares the following tip for both counselors and students: "If you get a chance, ask college representatives about the role of the essay at their colleges. At some colleges the essay is used to determine fit, and at others it may be used to assure the college that the student can do the work. At any rate, find out from the rep how essays are weighted and used in the admissions process."

What are the different types of essays?
There are typically three types of essay questions: the "you" question, the "why us" question and the "creative" question. The following descriptions and tips are based on information found in McGinty's book.

The "you" question
This question boils down to "Tell us about yourself." The college wants to know students better and see how students introduce themselves.

   **Example:** "The University of Vermont values a diverse student body. What contributions might you make to our campus community outside of academic achievement?"

   **Plus:** This type of direct question offers students a chance to reveal something about themselves other than grades and test scores.

   **Danger:** The open-ended nature of these questions can lead to an essay that's all over the place.
The "why us" question
Some institutions ask for an essay about a student's choice of a college or career. They're looking for information about the applicant's goals, and about how serious the student’s commitment is to this particular college.

Example: "How did you become interested in American University?"

Plus: This type of question provides a focus for the essay; that is, why the student chose this particular college or path — and the answer to that will (hopefully) be clear.

Danger: Any factual errors in the essay will reveal that the student really hasn't thought deeply about the choice. For example, writing about attending Carleton College to major in agriculture would be a blunder, because Carleton doesn't have an agriculture major. An upside to this type of question is that while working on the essay, the student might realize that the college is not a good match — and it's better to know that sooner than later.

The "creative" question
The goals of the "creative" question are to evaluate a candidate's ability to think and write creatively and to assess the breadth of the student’s knowledge and education.

Example: "Sharing intellectual interests is an important aspect of university life. Describe an experience or idea that you find intellectually exciting, and explain why."

Plus: This kind of question gives students an opportunity to convey their personalities and views.

Danger: Some students may take the "creative" aspect of the question as license to be obscure, pretentious or undisciplined in their writing.

How much help is too much help?
According to the College Board report Admissions Decision-Making Models, admission officers have expressed concern about how much assistance students receive in preparing an essay. Many institutions now ask applicants to sign a statement avowing that the essay submitted is their own work.
8 Tips for Crafting Your Best College Essay
https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays/8-tips-for-crafting-your-best-college-essay

1. **Get started by brainstorming**
   Starting the essay can be the hardest part. Brainstorming about your personality traits and defining your strengths is a good place to begin.

2. **Let your first draft flow**
   After you've gathered your notes, create an outline to organize your essay and decide where you want examples to appear. Now you're ready to write your first draft. Don't worry about making it perfect. Just get your ideas flowing and your thoughts down on paper. You'll fix mistakes and improve the writing in later drafts.

3. **Develop three essay parts**
   - Introduction: One paragraph that introduces your essay.
   - Body: Several paragraphs explaining the main idea with examples.
   - Conclusion: One paragraph that summarizes and ends the essay.

4. **Be specific**
   Give your essay focus by figuring out how the question relates to your personal qualities and then taking a specific angle. Make sure everything you write supports that viewpoint.

5. **Find a creative angle**
   Katherine, a college freshman, had to describe why she would make a good Reed College student for that school's essay. "I am a huge fan of Beat Generation writers, and many of the West Coast Beat writers attended Reed," she says. "So I related my love for writing and the Beats to why I would be a great fit for the school."

6. **Be honest**
   The essay question might ask you about your best quality, an experience that shaped you or the reason you want to attend a certain college. Don't be tempted to write what you think the admission officers want to hear; answer the question honestly.

7. **Get feedback**
   Show your draft to family, friends or teachers. Ask if it makes sense and sounds like you. Consider their feedback and make changes, but keep your voice. High school senior Dana warns, "Make sure the essay is in your own voice. If at some point you read over your essay and you hear your mother's voice, something is wrong."

8. **Proofread and make corrections**
   Read your essay over carefully to check for typos and spelling and grammar errors. It's best to ask someone who hasn't seen it yet to take a look as well. They're likely to see mistakes you won't catch.
College Interviews: The Basics
https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/interviews/college-interviews-the-basics

The interview is a great chance to show your interest in a college.

The college interview is a part of the college application process at many colleges — but not all of them. You may meet in person to talk with someone from the admission office, a current student or a graduate of the college. Or you may be able to take part in a video interview, often via Skype.

Why Interview?
The interview is rarely the deciding factor in whether the college will accept you, but it can give a representative from the college a chance to get to know you better. And the interview gives you a chance to:

- Show your interest in the college.
- Share information about yourself beyond what’s listed on your transcript.
- Bring up anything in your record that you’d like to explain, like a temporary drop in your grades.
- Discuss your goals and the reasons you want to attend the college.
- Ask questions about the college.

What to Expect
You’ll talk one-on-one with the interviewer. If your parent comes with you, he or she probably won’t be in the room during the interview but may get a chance to talk to the interviewer afterward.

An interviewer may ask questions like “Why do you want to go college?” and “Why do you want to attend this college?” He or she may also ask about your high school experiences, your hobbies and your accomplishments.

The interviewer will also ask if you have any questions. Asking questions shows the interviewer that you’re interested in the college, and it allows you to get information you can’t find on a website or in a brochure. If you’re interested in a certain major, ask what the program is like. If you’re planning to live on campus, ask about campus life. Just try to avoid asking questions that you can easily find answers to on the college’s website.

How to Prepare
First, find out whether interviews are required, optional or not offered at all. If the college requires or offers interviews, look on the college’s website or contact its admission office to find out what you have to do to set one up. If you have to travel to the college to interview, you may want to schedule a campus tour for the same trip.

After you’ve scheduled an interview, you can do several things to prepare. One important step is to research the college so you feel ready to talk about why the college is a good fit for you. Another good idea is to do practice interviews with family members and friends.

Just remember that while it’s smart to get ready in advance, you shouldn’t memorize answers to common interview questions or compose a speech — the interview should be a conversation.
More Interview Tips
You can’t pass or fail an interview, but you can make a good impression by doing the following:
✓ Dress nicely, not in jeans and a T-shirt.
✓ Arrive early.
✓ Be polite.
✓ Avoid using slang or other inappropriate language.
✓ Be confident but not arrogant.
✓ Answer questions honestly.
✓ Send a thank-you note to your interviewer after the interview.

What to Do Before and After Your College Interview
Use this checklist to prepare for your college interviews and to take care of details afterward. Being prepared will help you stay calm and confident. It's also important to be honest about who you are and what you've done. You'll be more convincing — and appealing — if you stick to what's real.

Before
✓ Make an interview appointment with one of the colleges I want to attend.
✓ Mark the date and time on my calendar.
✓ Research the college by checking out its website, brochure and course catalog.
✓ Make notes about why I want to attend this college.
✓ Make notes about my academic background and high school experiences.
✓ Make notes about my life outside the classroom, including activities, community service and hobbies.
✓ Get familiar with common interview questions and do some practice interviews with a friend or family member. Take turns being the interviewee and the interviewer.
✓ Prepare questions about the school to ask the interviewer.
✓ Get directions to the interview.
✓ Choose appropriate clothes to wear for the interview.
✓ Gather documents I might need, such as test scores and my high school transcript.

After
✓ Make notes about the interview.
✓ File away any business cards with contact information that the interviewer and other admission staff offer.
✓ Send a thank-you note to the interviewer. Thank the person for his or her time and refer to something specific we discussed.
Financial Aid and Scholarships

Types of Aid
1. The financial aid package you receive directly from your college or university – which can include grants, loans or work study from the college or the federal government
2. Local Scholarships
3. National Scholarships
4. Private Loans

Financial Aid Packages
You will receive a financial aid package from each college you are accepted to typically in late March or early April. This package is based on the information you provide on your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and can include grants, loans, and work student opportunities provided by the college or the federal government.

Local Scholarships
A list of local scholarships is kept up-to-date in Naviance. Some are dependent on your grades, or your residence, where you, your parents, or your grandparents work or organizations to which they or you belong. Others require a certain major in college, family income considerations, or some other specific criteria. Most take several weeks to amass the information needed. Many require a personal statement as to your future goals and why you feel you should receive this scholarship. Students should check the list regularly and are encouraged to apply for any scholarships for which they meet the criteria.

National Scholarships
There are an abundance of scholarships available nationally beyond those in our local list. These can be found in various ways including scholarship search websites like the examples listed below.
- My College Dollars - https://apps.facebook.com/mycollegedollars/

Financial Aid Forms
Find out what types of forms are required and make note of the filing deadlines. (They are different from admission deadlines.) These deadlines are not flexible. Early decision candidates usually need to complete a CSS Profile or Institutional form.
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) - https://fafsa.ed.gov/ – Anyone who wants financial aid needs to fill out this form. It determines the dollar amount that you and your family will be expected to contribute towards college. The FAFSA must be filed after January 1st and before your earliest financial aid deadline.
- CSS PROFILE - http://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile – Many colleges require the PROFILE and there is a fee. (The PROFILE can be filed before January 1st. Make sure you know the PROFILE filing deadlines for each of the colleges on your list.) You need to check with colleges to which you are applying to see if they require the PROFILE.
- Institutional Forms – Some colleges have their own aid forms in addition to the ones above. Check with each college and follow their instructions.
Staying Connected
Some of the ways we will communicate information to you about the college application process

Website
http://leepublicschools.net/schoolcounselors
The school counseling website includes direct links to Naviance, the school counseling blog, the YouTube channel, Twitter feed, college planning information, and much more.

Wildcat Newsletter
The Wildcat Newsletter is published at least 8 times each school year (at progress report and report card time). It contains information about upcoming events, highlights student achievement, and aims to keep you connected to the day-to-day life of the school. It always contains a section specifically for school counseling information. All newsletters are archived on the school counseling website (http://leepublicschools.net/schoolcounselors). Hard copies are mailed home, and PDF versions are emailed to the email address you have on file with the school.

Twitter
The School Counseling (@leecounselor) department has Twitter account and sends out tweets on a regular basis, many of which contain information about the college application process.

Counseling Blog
http://leecounselor.blogspot.com/
The Counseling Blog has been developed to post information and opportunities that school counselors feel may be relevant to students and the school community. Anyone can sign up to receive emails when new items are posted, and all new posts are automatically tweeted by @leecounselor. The blog can also be translated to just about any language using the dropdown link on the page.
2-year College Planning

Time Required:  48 minutes (2 half day class periods)

Objectives (Students Will…):
- Read and discuss two articles about the value of a college education.
- Review and discuss the MassTransfer Benefits program
- Become more informed about school policies and procedures regarding the college application process

GOAL:  Students will become more informed about the process for attending 2-year colleges.

Activity Statement:
Students will be split into two equal groups. Each group will be given one of the 2 articles to read (Is College Worth It? Clearly, New Data Say & Want Proof College is Worth It? Look at this list of the highest paying majors). The groups will be asked to read their article and report back to the group about what they thought were the important parts of the article. After the discussions, the advisor will distribute the handouts for students to review and discuss.

Materials:
1. Is College Worth It? Clearly, New Data Say
2. Want Proof College is Worth It? Look at this list of the highest paying majors
3. Fast Facts Needed for College Applications
4. Transfer Counseling

Procedures and Discussion:
1. Students will be split into two equal groups.
5. One group will read Is College Worth It? Clearly, New Data Say and the other group will read Want Proof College is Worth It? Look at this list of the highest paying majors.
2. Each group will present the information from their article to the other group and the adviser. They should point out the information that they felt was most important, anything they didn’t already know, and anything that surprised them.
3. The adviser will distribute the remaining handouts and give the students a few minutes to look them over.
4. The adviser should point out the chart on the 3rd page of the Transfer Counseling handout which highlights the benefits of getting good grades at a 2-year school when transferring to a 4-year school afterwards.
5. The adviser will ask if they have any questions or if there are any other items they would like to discuss.
Some newly minted college graduates struggle to find work. Others accept jobs for which they feel overqualified. Student debt, meanwhile, has topped $1 trillion. It’s enough to create a wave of questions about whether a college education is still worth it.

A new set of income statistics answers those questions quite clearly: Yes, college is worth it, and it’s not even close. For all the struggles that many young college graduates face, a four-year degree has probably never been more valuable.

The pay gap between college graduates and everyone else reached a record high last year, according to the new data, which is based on an analysis of Labor Department statistics by the Economic Policy Institute in Washington. Americans with four-year college degrees made 98 percent more an hour on average in 2013 than people without a degree. That’s up from 89 percent five years earlier, 85 percent a decade earlier and 64 percent in the early 1980s.

There is nothing inevitable about this trend. If there were more college graduates than the economy needed, the pay gap would shrink. The gap’s recent growth is especially notable because it has come after a rise in the number of college graduates, partly because many people went back to school during the Great Recession. That the pay gap has nonetheless continued growing means that we’re still not producing enough of them.

“We have too few college graduates,” says David Autor, an M.I.T. economist, who was not involved in the Economic Policy Institute’s analysis. “We also have too few people who are prepared for college.”

It’s important to emphasize these shortfalls because public discussion today — for which we in the news media deserve some responsibility — often focuses on the undeniable fact that a bachelor’s degree does not guarantee success. But of course
it doesn’t. Nothing guarantees success, especially after 15 years of disappointing economic growth and rising inequality.

When experts and journalists spend so much time talking about the limitations of education, they almost certainly are discouraging some teenagers from going to college and some adults from going back to earn degrees. (Those same experts and journalists are sending their own children to college and often obsessing over which one.) The decision not to attend college for fear that it’s a bad deal is among the most economically irrational decisions anybody could make in 2014.

The much-discussed cost of college doesn’t change this fact. According to a paper by Mr. Autor published Thursday in the journal Science, the true cost of a college degree is about negative $500,000. That’s right: Over the long run, college is cheaper than free. Not going to college will cost you about half a million dollars.

Mr. Autor’s paper — building on work by the economists Christopher Avery and Sarah Turner — arrives at that figure first by calculating the very real cost of tuition and fees. This amount is then subtracted from the lifetime gap between the earnings of college graduates and high school graduates. After adjusting for inflation and the time value of money, the net cost of college is negative $500,000, roughly double what it was three decades ago.

This calculation is necessarily imprecise, because it can’t control for any pre-existing differences between college graduates and nongraduates — differences that would exist regardless of schooling. Yet other research, comparing otherwise similar people who did and did not graduate from college, has also found that education brings a huge return.

In a similar vein, the new Economic Policy Institute numbers show that the benefits of college don’t go just to graduates of elite colleges, who typically go on to earn graduate degrees. The wage gap between people with only a bachelor’s degree and people without such a degree has also kept rising.

Tellingly, though, the wage premium for people who have attended college without earning a bachelor’s degree — a group that includes community-college graduates — has not been rising. The big economic returns go to people with four-year degrees. Those returns underscore the importance of efforts to reduce the college dropout rate, such as those at the University of Texas, which Paul Tough described in a recent Times Magazine article.
But what about all those alarming stories you hear about indebted, jobless college graduates?

The anecdotes may be real, yet the conventional wisdom often exaggerates the problem. Among four-year college graduates who took out loans, average debt is about $25,000, a sum that is a tiny fraction of the economic benefits of college. (My own student debt, as it happens, was almost identical to this figure, in inflation-adjusted terms.) And the unemployment rate in April for people between 25 and 34 years old with a bachelor’s degree was a mere 3 percent.

I find the data from the Economic Policy Institute especially telling because the institute — a left-leaning research group — makes a point of arguing that education is not the solution to all of the economy’s problems. That is important, too. College graduates, like almost everyone else, are suffering from the economy’s weak growth and from the disproportionate share of this growth flowing to the very richest households.

The average hourly wage for college graduates has risen only 1 percent over the last decade, to about $32.60. The pay gap has grown mostly because the average wage for everyone else has fallen — 5 percent, to about $16.50. “To me, the picture is people in almost every kind of job not being able to see their wages grow,” Lawrence Mishel, the institute’s president, told me. “Wage growth essentially stopped in 2002.”

From the country’s perspective, education can be only part of the solution to our economic problems. We also need to find other means for lifting living standards — not to mention ways to provide good jobs for people without college degrees.

But from almost any individual’s perspective, college is a no-brainer. It’s the most reliable ticket to the middle class and beyond. Those who question the value of college tend to be those with the luxury of knowing their own children will be able to attend it.

Not so many decades ago, high school was considered the frontier of education. Some people even argued that it was a waste to encourage Americans from humble backgrounds to spend four years of life attending high school. Today, obviously, the notion that everyone should attend 13 years of school is indisputable.
But there is nothing magical about 13 years of education. As the economy becomes more technologically complex, the amount of education that people need will rise. At some point, 15 years or 17 years of education will make more sense as a universal goal.

That point, in fact, has already arrived.
Want proof college is worth it? Look at this list of the highest-paying majors

New research shows that, for almost every major, lifetime earnings are higher for college grads. But some majors pay a lot better than others.

By Jeff Guo September 29 Follow @jeffguo

Is a four-year college degree worth it? Generally yes, but the results vary quite a bit across majors — and can even vary widely within majors.

That’s the takeaway from new research by Brad Hershbein and Melissa Kearney at The Hamilton Project. The authors analyzed Census Bureau data to find out which college majors earned the most and the least. Topping the list are the engineering fields, to no one’s surprise. Some of the least-earning majors are related to education, theater and art. Over a lifetime, the median expected earnings for a drama or theater arts major is lower than that of someone with a two-year associate’s degree.

But the report found that regardless of major, “median earnings of bachelor’s degree graduates are higher than median earnings of high school graduates for all 80 majors studied. This is true at career entry, mid-career and end of career,” the authors write.

“College degrees may not be a guarantee of higher income, but they come closer than just about any other investment one can make,” they add.

Early childhood education majors had the lowest median earnings, but still higher than the median earnings for people with only a high school degree. The researchers estimate that even when college costs are taken into account, the median early childhood education major still makes 10 percent to 15 percent more than the median American with just a high school degree.
This is the full chart of majors ranked by median lifetime earnings:
One thing to keep in mind is that these rankings exclude people with graduate degrees, which leaves out doctors, lawyers, and professors. This explains the somewhat low spot occupied by political science and government majors, a good chunk of whom go on to law school. If those students are taken into account, they tug the median earnings for the major above the median earnings for, say, architecture or nursing.

In this interactive from the Hamilton Project, which allows you compare up to four majors, you can include or exclude people with graduate degrees. The top chart shows what a median person makes in a year over the course of his or her career.

The researchers point out that for some majors, like those involved with primary education, annual earnings peak early in a career. Other majors see continuous growth, drama and earth science being two examples. “There is a remarkable pattern in the data: Initially low-earning majors tend to see the fastest earnings growth in early career, while initially high-earnings majors tend to see the slowest earnings growth,” the researchers write.

The bottom chart in the interactive is even more interesting. So far we have been talking about people at the median, or the 50th percentile of the earnings distribution. But what about everyone else? People in the same major don’t all make the same amount of money.

Some majors are particularly unequal. For instance, lifetime earnings at the 90th percentile of economics majors are 2.9 times those at the median. The wide spread indicates the diversity of jobs that economics majors fill — from public policy to finance. In contrast, for elementary education majors, earnings at the 90th percentile are only 1.6 times earnings at the median.

The range of earnings within each major is wide — about as wide as the spread we saw above in the charts comparing median earners in different majors. Put another way, a person at the 90th percentile for childhood education majors will quite handily outearn someone at the 10th percentile of computer engineering majors. In fact, at the 90th percentile, people with only a high school degree outearn any college majors at the 10th percentile.

The real message in these data is your college major is not your destiny. It takes some amount of grit to make it anywhere. Smart choices about which skills to acquire will get you some, but not all, of the way there.
Fast Facts Needed for College Applications
For the Class of 2015

The following is a list of information you will likely need for most college applications (especially the Common App).

High School CEEB Code: 221-145

Lee Middle and High School
300 Greylock Street
Lee, MA 01238
Phone: (413) 243-2780
Fax: (413) 243-4105

Dan Korte Counselor (10-12) ext.2010 dkorte@leepublicschools.net

Senior Class Size: 50

We do NOT rank (just leave blank or check “we do not rank”)

GPA: unless otherwise specified, report your WEIGHTED GPA and check appropriate box.
GPA Scale: 100

Entry Date: August 2011
Graduation date: June 2015

Credits:
Year-long courses – 1
Semester courses/ PE – 0.5

Naviance: www.connection.naviance.com/leemhs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Type</th>
<th>LMHS Recommended Request Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transcripts</td>
<td>10 days before college deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Recommendation</td>
<td>3-4 weeks before college deadline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lee Middle and High School – Lee, MA
TRANSFER COUNSELING

TRANSFER OPPORTUNITIES

Are you considering going on to earn your bachelor's degree? BCC is a great place to start.

At Berkshire Community College students who wish to continue their education at a four-year college or university can easily transfer to a large number of public and private institutions throughout Massachusetts and beyond.

BCC's Coordinator of Transfer Affairs & Articulation is available to help facilitate your transition. Please contact Geoffrey Tabor at (413) 236-1610 to make an appointment. Students should consult with the Transfer Coordinator as early in their education as possible.

The Transfer Office, located in Room SBA 115 of the Student Development Center, is a resource for comprehensive information and assistance about all aspects of the transfer process. The Transfer Office can help you with...

- College Applications - including tips on essay writing and obtaining recommendations.
- Identifying Colleges/Universities.
- Networking with Representatives from local and regional four-year colleges/universities.
- Scholarship and Award Information.
- Transferring Credits.

A BCC degree can also be your link to many state or private colleges. Berkshire Community College has articulation/transfer agreements with many four-year institutions in Massachusetts and elsewhere in the country.

These colleges/universities will guarantee that if you graduate in a specific program, with a predetermined grade point average (GPA), and suggested course of study, you will be guaranteed junior status and be treated with the same rights as those students who originally started at the four-year school.

TRANSFER EXPLORATION - Check out these additional resources:

- http://www.collegeboard.com/
- http://www.collegenet.com/
- http://www.collegeview.com/

http://www.berkshirecc.edu/student-services-and-support/transfer-planning/
- http://www.petersons.com/
- A Smart Path to a Four-Year Degree (brochure)

TRANSFER EVENTS

BCC hosts a Transfer Fair each year during the Fall semester. The fair, which attracts many baccalaureate colleges and universities, provides students with an opportunity to talk with representatives from these institutions. Baccalaureate college and university representatives also visit BCC each semester to speak with interested students. Information about the visits and transfer opportunities is posted on Transfer Bulletin Boards located in the Student Development Center and the Susan B. Anthony Center foyer.

MASS TRANSFER PROGRAM

MassTransfer, a statewide transfer policy, was approved by Board of Higher Education in June 2008. If you are transferring from one Massachusetts public higher education institution to another, the MassTransfer policy will make the process easier. MassTransfer has two main purposes:

- Provide community college students, who complete associate degrees and enroll in linked MassTransfer programs, with full transfer of credit, guaranteed admission, and a tuition discount (each based on final GPA)

- Provide any student in the Massachusetts public higher education system who completes the MassTransfer Block with the benefit of satisfying the general education/distribution/core requirements at any other public higher education institution (with the receiving institution able to add no more than six additional credits or two courses).

Benefits for students completing associate degrees under MassTransfer Block:

- Students will be provided with the benefit of satisfying the general education/distribution core requirements at any other public higher education institution (with the receiving institution able to add no more than six additional credits or two courses).

The MassTransfer Block refers to a set of general education, core or distribution requirements, consisting of 34 college-level credits. Students completing an associate degree program under MassTransfer will graduate with a minimum of 60 credit hours and complete the following 34-credit general education transfer block, exclusive of developmental coursework:

**General Education Transfer Block**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Composition/Writing</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral and Social Sciences</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities and Fine Arts</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural or Physical Science</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MassTransfer Benefits

Is your associate degree program eligible for MassTransfer?

After completing your associate degree with at least 60 credit hours you will be eligible to transfer into a linked MassTransfer program at a Massachusetts state university or University of Massachusetts campus with the following benefits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Minimum Final GPA</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No application fee</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>MassTransfer Application required by deadline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No application essay</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic satisfaction of most or all general education requirements</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Receiving institution may require no more than six additional credits/two courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guaranteed transfer of credits</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>60 credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guaranteed admission</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Space permitting in the major and college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33% tuition waiver</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>For two years, provided student:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Matriculates within one year of receiving associate degree;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Enrolls continuously (full- or part-time) in day program;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Achieves 3.0 GPA in first two semesters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

- If the linked MassTransfer program requires a higher GPA or specific courses, you must meet these requirements.

- The MassTransfer tuition waiver applies to resident tuition rates and not to fees. Based on 2009-2010 tuition rates, the waiver amounts to an average annual discount of $319 at the Massachusetts state universities and $539 at the University of Massachusetts.

- Students matriculating in fall 2009, as well as currently enrolled students, may accumulate courses leading toward the completion of an associate degree eligible for MassTransfer or the MassTransfer Block. The policy benefits apply to students who plan to transfer for the fall 2010 semester or later.

Contact your academic advisor or transfer counselor with questions.
Career Planning

Time Required: 48 minutes (2 half day class periods)

Objectives (Students Will...):
• Read and discuss two articles about the value of marketable skills and skilled labor jobs.
• Consider their own skills and how they can use them to find a career

Activity Statement:
Students will be split into two equal groups. Each group will be given one of the 2 articles to read (Want to Earn More Money? Develop a Marketable Skill and 10 Best-Paid Skilled Labor Jobs). The groups will be asked to read their article and report back to the group about what they thought were the important parts of the article. The advisor will ask the students about marketable skills they have or think they could obtain.

Materials:
1. Want to Earn More Money? Develop a Marketable Skill
2. 10 Best-Paid Skilled Labor Jobs

Procedures and Discussion:
1. Students will be split into two equal groups.
2. One group will read Want to Earn More Money? Develop a Marketable Skill and the other group will read 10 Best-Paid Skilled Labor Jobs
3. Each group will present the information from their article to the other group and the adviser. They should point out the information that they felt was most important, anything they didn’t already know, and anything that surprised them.
4. The adviser will ask if they have any questions or if there are any other items they would like to discuss and facilitate a conversation about the importance of developing marketable skills and/or some type of skilled career training.

GOAL: Students will become more informed about marketable skills and careers that don’t require a 4-year degree.
Want to Earn More Money? Develop a Marketable Skill

Please, for the love of heaven, develop a marketable skill. You won’t earn more money until you do.

In my personal life, I know quite a few people who want to earn more money. They jump from job to job and scheme to scheme, looking for just the “right” job that will provide them with a better income, and put them on the path to financial success. It’s a nice thought, but I think the reason that these folks are struggling (beyond the current job climate) is that they share a common trait: No marketable skill.

If You Want to Be Paid, You Need to Have Something People Will Pay FOR

Here’s a harsh truth for you: If you want to be paid, you need to have something people will pay for. I’m not talking about specific training related to one specific job with one specific company. I’m talking about a marketable skill (or even more than one marketable skill). And, perhaps, some sort of certification that “proves” you have attained a certain level of proficiency in that skill.
Almost anyone can find a low-wage job. It takes a marketable skill — something that someone wants to pay for — to begin making more money. You don’t even have to develop this marketable skill with the expectation of working for someone else. Look about you, figure out what’s in demand, and then develop a marketable skill that allows you to start a home business. Whether you decide to strike out on your own, or whether you want a promotion at work or a better-paying job, the key is to develop a marketable skill.

You Don’t NEED a College Degree to Be Successful

I’m a firm believer that a marketable skill does not have to come from a college degree. There are a number of associate degrees, certifications, and other professional designations that allow you to work toward a successful career and solid finances. A “traditional” four-year degree is not required for your financial success. However, knowledge, ability and sometimes expertise bring opportunities to earn more money. When you are ready to increase your income, you need a marketable skill.

Attend a technical college to receive a certification — and then keep up with changes in your field. Earn a degree (associate, bachelor, professional or advanced) in an area that arms you with a variety of skills, including soft skills. Attend classes that teach you to master a craft so that you can open your own business selling your work. Audit university courses or attend seminars on specific skills, such as presentation, writing and communication, that you think will benefit you. Learn about the latest best practices in your field so that you can consult.

You don’t need a load of student debt to prove that you have accomplished something. It’s possible to develop a solid skill set without great expense. Consider where your natural talents lean already, and then build on that. Find something you can do well. It may take anywhere from two months to seven years (depending on what you choose to do), but your patience and persistence is more likely to be rewarded when you possess a certification or expertise.

There are a number of paths you can follow. But you need that marketable skill. Figure out what people are willing to pay for, and then build your own skill set. You will command a higher wage, feel more satisfaction in your work, and may even be able to turn your skill into the basis for a home business that allows you greater freedom and financial success.

Skilled labor jobs can pay well, even very well. Yet, many young people feel the pressure to get a college degree and don't consider hands-on labor. Fortunately, a growing movement hopes to get younger workers enthused about building, fixing, and installing.

Mike Rowe of the popular TV series "Dirty Jobs" says, "Tradesmen need fans, regular people who understand the magnitude of their work, the impact of their chosen profession, and the importance of their skill." What this country needs, according to Rowe are more people willing to take the time to master heating and air-conditioning, electricity, creating solid foundations, smooth roads, and functional plumbing.

Ross Porter, President of IRWIN Tools based in Huntersville, North Carolina asserts, "A job in a skilled trade is a solid, decent and admirable way to support a family. To work with one's hands-to build something-always has been and always should be commendable."

Are you interested in earning high pay while working with your hands? Here's a list of the top 10 most highly-paid jobs that have the most potential for growth, according to PayScale.
1. **Wind Turbine Technician**

   **Average Salary:** $67,500 per year

   Wind turbine service technicians, also called wind techs, are responsible for repairing and maintaining the complicated machinery inside wind turbines. Their work can be as simple as changing light bulbs or as complex as repairing a circuit board. The field is so new there isn't an official certification track yet, however according to the American [Wind Energy Association](https://www.windenergy.org), the amount of energy provided by wind turbines grew by 39 percent each year between 2004 to 2009. Get ready to be blown away by your pay. With five to eight years of experience some techs can earn over $84,000 per year.

2. **Plumber**

   **Average Salary:** $51,600 per year

   This career is about much more than fixing leaky toilets. Plumbers install and repair the water, waste disposal, drainage, and gas systems in residential, commercial and industrial buildings using a variety of materials from copper to cast-iron. They must be able to follow building plans or blueprints and instructions from supervisors, lay out the job, and work efficiently with materials and tools. There's room for creativity as plumbers have become more involved in the design process of water and waste systems. No wonder highly-skilled professionals can take home over $92,000 per year.
3. **HVAC Controls Technician**  
**Average Salary:** $51,000 per year  
Without workers skilled in the science of heating, air-conditioning and refrigeration systems, we wouldn't be able to control the temperature, humidity, and the total air quality in residential, commercial, industrial, and other buildings. They also help with the storage and transportation of food, medicine, and other perishable items. Many HVAC technicians will specialize in either installation or maintenance and repair, but must first train to do both. High school students interested in this career should take courses in shop, math, mechanical drawing, applied physics and chemistry, electronics, blueprint reading, and computer applications.

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4. **Elevator Mechanic**  
**Average Salary:** $49,900 per year  
Mechanics are responsible for assembling, installing, maintaining and replacing elevators, escalators, chairlifts, dumbwaiters and moving walkways in new and old buildings. They must complete a four-year apprenticeship offered by local joint educational committees representing the employers and the union-the International Union of Elevator Constructors. The good news is that job prospects and salaries are looking up in this industry. Top earners make about $96,700 with over five years experience.
5. **Maintenance Supervisor**  
**Average Salary:** $48,800 per year  
You'll find maintenance and repair workers in almost every industry, and with them comes their supervisor. Responsibilities include supervising, troubleshooting and project management of machines, mechanical equipment, buildings, plumbing, electrical, and air-conditioning and heating systems. Many supervisors get their start right out of high school. Courses in mechanical drawing, electricity, woodworking, blueprint reading, science, mathematics, and computers are useful and education at a technical college is an important part of training.

6. **Construction and Building Inspector**  
**Average Salary:** $48,000 per year  
Got an opinion on those potholes on the interstate? How about your neighbor's sloping porch? If so, a career as an inspector is right up your alley. You'll examine buildings, highways and streets, sewer and water systems, dams, bridges, and other structures for compliance with building codes and ordinances, zoning regulations, and contract specifications. About 44 percent of inspectors worked for local governments but plenty of home inspectors are self-employed and make their own hours.
7. **Project Supervisor, Construction**

**Average Salary:** $46,600 per year

Independent types who want to manage a team and a project yet still work for themselves will be in good company as the BLS finds over half of construction supervisors are self-employed. Far from working alone, managers work with owners, engineers, architects, and others to coordinate and supervise construction from the concept through final build, the project gets completed on time and within budget.

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8. **Bricklayer**

**Average Salary:** $46,200 per year

Talk about staying power: the buildings, fences, roads and footpaths crafted by brickmasons, blockmasons, and stonemasons often outlast the individual because of the durability of concrete, stone and brick. The work itself ranges from simple masonry on walkways to complex installations of exteriors on a highrises. Training often happens on the job as an assistant to carry materials, move scaffolding and mix mortar. Learning restoration skills such as cleaning and pointing are essential to becoming a full-fledged craftsman. Registered apprenticeship programs usually last between three and four years.
9. **Refrigeration Mechanic**  
**Average Salary:** $45,600 per year  
You won't have to worry about becoming a desk jockey if you pursue a career as a refrigeration mechanic. Your "office" can be in any number of places including homes, stores, hospitals or factories that need installation, service, and repair of refrigeration systems. On the job, mechanics are required to read blueprints, design specifications, and manufacturers' instructions to install motors, compressors, condensing units, evaporators, piping, and other components. Systems must also be charged with refrigerant and checked for proper operation and leaks.

10. **Biomedical Equipment Technician (BMET)**  
**Average Salary:** $45,500 per year  
If you are fascinated by how things work, this could be the job for you. BMETs maintain, adjust, and repair every kind of healthcare machinery from patient monitors and defibrillators, to X-rays, electric wheelchairs and eye testing equipment. With the strength of the healthcare industry, this is a great occupation to pursue. Be prepared to head back to school if you want to work in this field. Employers generally prefer applicants with an associate's degree in biomedical equipment technology or engineering. Go for a four-year degree if you want to advance.