



Common Myths & Truths in College & Career Planning	Myth?	Truth?	Notes
College planning begins when you take your SAT/ACT	x		- planning begins in freshman and sophomore year - PSAT in sophomore year is the first step
All college applicants must complete a FAFSA application	x		- financial aid eligibility is based upon objective financial criteria, not based on a family's own determination; regardless of a family's financial circumstances, applying for aid is the only way to know for sure if a student is eligible; students must complete a FAFSA if they wish to apply for a federal student loan and/or CAL grant; a student may also wish to have a FAFSA on file in case the family's financial circumstances change (such as a job loss) and a student wishes to request reconsideration for funding - some colleges will not consider applications for assistance submitted after their published deadlines, even if a family's ability to pay for college changes significantly
Only low-income students qualify for financial aid	x		- student can qualify for need-based or non-need-based aid based on their financial circumstances; income thresholds may not be as high as expected even at higher institutions - ex. Stanford offers fin aid to a student whose family income is less than \$125K; Rice U just announced half of tuition is paid for students starting in 2019 whose income is less than \$200K; through applying, students may find they are eligible for a middle-class scholarship
Ivy League schools are more selective	x		- some state/public schools have stricter admission guidelines; ex. SJ State Engineering requires a perfect SAT score, MIT will admit a students without a high school diploma if they successfully completed/scored high on IB HL courses!
You are more likely to be admitted to an out of state school than a UC/CSU		x	- UCs are over-enrolled and waitlists have been at an all-time high
An undergraduate degree takes four years	x	x	- at over-enrolled schools/programs, an undergrad could take 5-6 years due to required courses being at full capacity, causing delays for students to complete necessary units of credit for their degrees. While some private & out of state can offer 4 year graduation guarantees.
Admission essays don't really matter	x		- the admission essay tells a school something positive about the student and what sets a her/him apart and valuable to its school/program; essays should speak from the heart and not tell a school what they want to hear
The more extra-curricular activities you have, the better	x		- schools want to see students with dedication, commitment and passion for something, not overscheduled or overextended students that do everything
Average grades in challenging courses are better than A's in average courses		x	- schools want to see students who took on rigorous and challenging curriculum over bird courses and this factors into their admission decisions; colleges also know from a high school's profile which courses are most difficult, so taking a school's easiest courses just to boost a GPA will be seen by colleges and this is not favorable for the applicant; honors/ap/ib course completion is favorable
SAT/ACT scores are the deciding factors in the college admission process	x	x	- some schools only consider scores and weight them most heavily against other admission requirements; some schools admit using a more holistic approach, including ivy leagues and top private schools across the USA; some schools are now no longer requiring an SAT/ACT for admission
Wait until you are offered admission before visiting colleges and university	x		- schools will make note of student who attend admission presentations, visit their campuses and respond to recruiting emails as this shows a student's true interest
Every word counts in a college application so it takes time to make it right		x	- students can only submit their application once and so have one chance to make a good impression; written supplements have to be written many times before they're right; allow time to make changes and to make sure YOU come across in the application; proofread!
Merit aid and scholarships acknowledge and reward students who worked hard in high school	x	x	- yes with the National Merit Scholarship; not necessarily with other scholarships that may be used as recruiting methods
Applying with Early Decision is for legacy students	x		- early decision is for any student who is certain they only want to attend one particular school and are willing to commit regardless of the outcome of other applications; for some applicants, their chance for admission can increase by up to 25% versus regular applicants
Be modest on your resume/brag sheet	x		- admissions officers review hundreds of application packages and don't have time to read between the lines; it is important to highlight accomplishments and get straight to the point but there needs to be a balance between sounding cocky and modest
Only those who can't get into college go to a trade school	x		- students choose a trade school because they see the relevance of what they're being taught in the real world; vocational/trade programs focus on specific skills for specific occupations and most everything can be applied in the career they are pursuing; also, students in trade programs that have already earned a four year degree but are unable to find employment in that field of study
You can't get a real degree in a trade/vocational school	x		- beyond certificates and diplomas, many trade schools offer two-year associate degrees and some offer four-year bachelor's degrees, depending on the career
Community College offers transfer pathways to higher institutions		x	- students can earn units of credit equal to two years of college/university and then transfer to a higher institution to complete an undergraduate degree; students can save on college tuition by studying at a community college for less; foothill college recently announced free tuition for full time students starting studies in the fall 2018
If a college offers you an interview, participation is optional	x		- interviews are to a student's benefit and an opportunity to impress an admissions officer; "optional" usually means, "you should interview"; if a school is in a student's area holding interviews, they want a student to take the initiative and interview; this shows a student's true interest in that school
Colleges look for well-rounded students	x		- colleges look for well-rounded classes with a diversifies student population
Soft traits are a minor consideration in the application process	x		- soft traits are highly valued; colleges want students with character, resilience and grit



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 to post secondary education

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One common application can be used for all colleges you're applying to	x		- while the common application can be used to apply to many schools, each school has separate essay/written responses that aim to filter applications; thousands of students with a 4.6GPA may apply, but that zeros out and then schools look at supplementary information students can only submit their application once and have one chance to make a good impression
College & university is so much harder than high school	x		- rigorous and challenging academics in high school will help a student develop time management, organization, and independent/critical thinking skills necessary for college success; college is difficult in the sense that students are accountable for all of their assignments and deadlines, professors will not be sending out reminders or calling home - in this way, students may find it more difficult
You must declare a major during the application process	x		- during the application process for CSUs and UCs most require that a major be declared - "undecided" majors are also an option, however, it does not guarantee admission; having somewhat of an idea would be helpful; many schools do not allow a student to declare a major until after freshman/sophomore year; some schools require completion of some core/liberal arts courses before declaring a major - one reason for this is because some college students change their majors a few times
College isn't the real world - just more academics	x		- college teaches independence, perseverance, survival
College means a four-year degree	x		- college means any program that leads to a degree or certificate
Being ready for college means high school graduates have the skills they need to do well in college		x	- being ready means students graduate from high school with key skills in ELA and mathematics
Being career ready means getting a job in the real world	x		- career ready means high school graduates are qualified for and able to do well in long-term careers
A career is a job	x		- a career is any profession that lets graduates succeed at a job they enjoy and earn a competitive wage
College fairs are too busy and you can't talk to the reps you want, so why bother attending	x		- you may not see those you came for, but will learn and explore schools and programs you didn't know about
A vocational education limits you to one career your whole life	x		- a vocational degree/certificate can be the beginning of a second, higher degree or pathway to a related industry
Liberal Arts Colleges are good options for students uncertain about what major to pursue	x		- LAUs are less competitive and allow students to explore their academic interests while taking advantage of an exclusive undergraduate education and sense of community; many LACs also do not rely heavily on standardized test scores
It's an application benefit to attend college fair events you're invited to		x	- if students respond to college fair and admission presentation invitations, their participation is noted and valued
Forget applying to top colleges - they're too expensive	x		- many top colleges have high tuition fees but also high endowments and are committed to helping students complete an undergraduate degree with little to no student debt; in some cases, expensive schools are less so than some second tier or state schools
The best recommendation letters are from VIPs and CEOs	x		- the best recommendation letters come from teachers, especially teachers who challenged you, as they have seen your academic accomplishments, and your character and personal growth
No one single factor determines admission to a UC		x	- UCs look at scores as well as the quality of your senior-year program of study, achievement in special projects, special awards and talents, and more
The college application process is a family affair	x		- the college process is not about parents; parents can guide and provide support; students should lead efforts in college exploration, college visits, communications with colleges and should take ownership in the process and their decisions
Colleges check facebook pages and social media posts		x	- colleges have to consider thousands of applications, and when filtering the pool of applicants, questionable social media posts is an easy reason to reject an application
Thank you for attending our College & Career Planning Talk			
presented by myDonsLife of the Del Mar High School IB Parent Organization - October 16th, 2018			