

Road to College - Things You Need To Know!

What is a College vs. a University?

The term *college* is a general one that encompasses a wide range of higher-education institutions, including those that offer two year programs like a community college, and schools that have four year programs (Bachelor Degrees). The term *university* specifically describes an institution that provides graduate and professional education in addition to four-year post-secondary education. Despite these distinctions, the terms *college* and *university* are frequently used interchangeably in the United States.

Private vs. Public

The listed tuition at a private college is going to be much higher than at an instate public school. Sometimes people see the price and are scared off. Do your research. Often private schools have generous financial aid packages that make the cost on par with a public university. Each school will have a calculator on their site that will estimate how much aid you may qualify for.

Take the SAT's and/or the ACT's

People often take them multiple times. If you feel that you can prepare more and score higher, you should try. You may see the term "super-score" on a college site. What does that mean? It means the school takes the best scores from each specific (ACT or SAT) test and create a new score. However, most schools do not do this, and simply take the test you have the highest score on. Some schools, including Arizona Universities, do not require these tests at all, but students are usually not considered for any sort of Merit Aid if they do not have test scores, regardless of their GPA.

Naviance

Naviance provides a lot of college information. Why do you always have to sign up for things on Naviance? This is how I track who is coming to events. If there is a change or something you need to know, I can send you an email. If there is an event that takes place during class, I write up a note and have it delivered to your class to excuse you. When colleges you are interested in are visiting or send me some great scholarship

opportunity, I can send you the information. Your application and admissions information also helps future Arcadia students as it helps us track and graph admissions information.

Admissions

Admissions are crazy and changing all of them time. An admissions department is trying to create a diverse and well-rounded freshman class. You have better grades and test scores than someone else, but they get in and you do not. Is it fair? Not really. Maybe you spent your free time at swim practice and the other person spent their free time practicing the tuba. The incoming class could have several swimmers and athletes, but the band and music department are needing some tuba players. You can't really compare yourself and your stats to others because you do not know what a school is looking for from year to year.

If there is a school you are really interested in, the admissions representative from that school is your friend. They love the schools they work for and want you to apply. Do not pester them with questions that are easily found on their website, but stay in touch and let them know you are interested. Schools want students who want them! Everyone likes to be popular.

Stalker Schools and the Admissions Game

Speaking of popular, there is a crazy game going on in the world of admissions - Acceptance Rates. Is your mailbox and email full of brochures from schools? Thank the College Board and the any college search website that has you in their database. The websites are a business and higher level education is an even bigger business - even though most schools are non-profit. Money coming in means more money for financial aid, nice new buildings, technology, and an impressive faculty. A school can have 1000 people apply and accept 800 for an 80% acceptance rate. This makes them "less selective". Students and magazines who rank colleges see an 80% acceptance rate and immediately assume the school is just okay at best. Without changing one thing except for marketing, a school can have 2000 applicants and still admit 800. Now they have a 40% admissions rate and are considered a "more selective" or more desirable school. With each application costing on average of \$50, they just earned an additional \$50,000 in admission fees alone and will undoubtedly have even more applicants next year.

Hits & Ghosts

This is something important that did not exist several years ago. Back when your parents went to school, if they were interested in a school probably sent a postcard or

letter to admissions requesting information. With technology and social media, something termed “hits” has come into play in the admissions process. As I stated above, schools want students who want them. How do they know you are interested? THEY KEEP TRACK OF CONTACT. Visit them at the College and Career Center or a College Fair? Notice how they take your name and contact information? You are now part of their database and every time you make contact, you get a hit. Like their Facebook page? Follow them on Twitter? Visit campus and # the school on Instagram? Make sure it’s you doing this and not your parents. On the flip side, there is also a something admission representatives call “ghost applicants”. These are applications they receive from a person they have never heard of. This applicant has never visited, requested information, followed them on social media, or chatted with them at a school visits. Ghost applicants are considered to be students who are applying to as many schools as they can just to see what happens. Admission departments do not think highly of ghost applicants because it creates addition work for the department and they have to assume that their ghost friend will not accept admission if offered since they have shown no interest previous. Do not be a ghost applicant!

Financial Stuff

Estimated Cost of Attendance

How much does it REALLY cost? It costs more than you think! It’s more than tuition and room and board. College textbooks are notoriously expensive and several classes require more than one book. Does your program require a specific laptop or software? Add in technology fees, recreation fees, e-course fees, travel and everyday expenses too.

As an example, here is the front page of a syllabus for a lower level Biology lab at ASU. The Professor is using older versions of the required textbooks and manuals which are lower priced than the latest edition. Think about how many classes you will take during your college career!

GENERAL BIOLOGY 1 (BIO 181) LABORATORY

Tuesday 9:00 – 11:45 AM

CLCC 353

Fall 2012

Instructor

Dr. Becky Ball

FAB 161

602.543.2819

becky.ball@asu.edu

Office hours: Tu 3-4 PM, Th 12:15-1:15 PM

or by appointment

Course Info

Lecture: MWF 9 - 9:50 AM

CLCC 246

Laboratories: M 10:30 AM - 1:15 PM,

1:30 - 4:15 PM, 6:30 - 9:15 PM;

Tu 9:00 - 11:45 AM, 1:30 - 4:15 PM,

6:30 - 9:15 PM

Course Description: Biology 181 laboratory is designed to give students a survey of the basic theories of the discipline and the relationship between structure and function in living organisms at the molecular, cellular, organismal and population levels. This course is designed to be taken as the first of a two-semester series. The second semester (BIO 182) should be taken after this course.

Attendance: Attendance at all laboratory exercises is essential to performing well in this course. It is the student's responsibility to obtain information from missed laboratory exercises. Laboratory quizzes, exercises and reports cannot be made up. If you absolutely must miss a laboratory period, inform the instructor at least one week in advance so that other arrangements can be made if possible. Tardiness to the laboratory will not be tolerated. It disrupts the lesson, and can be especially disruptive of experimental protocols. If it is unavoidable, please inform the instructor in advance. Reasonable accommodations will be made in cases of religious holidays or emergency situations. It is the student's responsibility to provide the instructor with documentation of holidays and or emergencies and a plan to cover the missed course material.

Students that miss more than two laboratory exercises will not pass the course.

Course Materials:

Biology, 9th edition (2010), Campbell et al. Pearson/Benjamin Cummings

Biology Laboratory Manual, (2008), McGraw Hill

Writing Papers in the Biological Sciences, 4th edition (2006), Bedford/St. Martin's

Goggles are available for sale in the bookstore: Safety goggles must be worn during the lab periods when chemicals are used, as well as gloves (provided during the lab). Close toed shoes and appropriate clothing are required for all labs.

Computer Access: Many of the documents necessary for this course will be posted on the course's Blackboard web site. Students can access this from their myASU account (<https://my.asu.edu>). Computers for student use can be found in Technopolis in the basement of Fletcher library.

Biology, 9th edition (2010) - \$141.21 on Amazon

Biology Laboratory Manual (2008) - \$136.84 on Amazon

Writing Papers in the Biological Sciences (2006) - 13.48 on Amazon

Safety Goggles - about \$12.00 on Amazon

Total cost for books and supplies for one class - \$303.53

Below is a chart of estimated costs at the University of AZ for Fall of 2016. Every school will have a chart or list similar to this on their website:

Category	Arizona Resident Living w/Parent Commuting	Arizona Resident UA Housing	Arizona Resident Minimum Costs	Non-Resident UA Housing	Non-Resident Minimum Costs
Tuition*	\$11,400	\$11,400	\$11,400	\$32,600	\$32,600
Room/Board	\$2,700	\$9,840	N/A	\$9,840	N/A
Books/Supplies	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200
Travel	\$1,500	\$1,500	N/A	\$1,500	N/A
Miscellaneous	\$1,800	\$1,800	N/A	\$1,800	N/A
Loan Fee	\$100	\$100	N/A	\$100	N/A
iCourse Fee	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
TOTAL	\$18,800	\$25,940	\$12,700	\$47,140	\$33,900

The most popular car in the USA right now is the Toyota Camry. The most popular model of the Camry is the XLE at \$26,000. One year in-state at U of A is like buying a brand new car every year!

You go to college for 4 years, right? Maybe. From the U of A Daily Wildcat:

“According to a Complete College report, most college students in America do not graduate within four years, but the UA graduation rate exceeds that national average.

Complete College, a nonprofit organization, released “The Four-Year Myth” in early November, a report that stated college students in America do not graduate within the general student goal of four years.

The number of students who graduate within four years at the UA exceeds the national average indicated by the Complete College study. According to “The University of Arizona Fact Book,” 40 percent of students who began their freshmen year in fall 2007 graduated within four years and 61 percent graduated within six years.”

Why am I telling you this? I think it’s important that parents AND students know how much money college costs and how long it can take. Doing well in school not only helps you get accepted to college, but it also the major deciding factor in receiving merit aid. I personally know a brilliant Harvard Professor who started his college career at his local community college. After two years, he transferred to the University of Michigan and

then went to Harvard for all of his graduate work. It's not where you start, it's where you end up that is most important! We all tend to forget that.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): You've probably heard of the FAFSA, but do you know what it is and just how important it can be for you and your family? [Filling out the FAFSA](#) is one of the first steps in the financial aid process, and determines the amount that you or your family will be contributing to your postsecondary education. The results of the FAFSA determine student grants, work-study, and loan amounts. The FAFSA determines your estimated family contribution, that is, it takes your information and kicks out a dollar amount it thinks your family can afford to pay for school. The number will be much higher than you think you can afford to pay, but the number is then passed on to schools. Some people erroneously think that they will not qualify for anything and don't take the time to complete the FAFSA. We recommend that everyone fills out the FAFSA; it only takes about an hour to complete, and you may be surprised with the results. This year FAFSA becomes available on October 1 and you use your 2015 tax information to compete it.

Federal student aid: The largest form of student aid in the country, federal aid programs come in the form of government grants, loans, and work-study assistance and are available to students at eligible postsecondary institutions (colleges, vocational schools, and graduate schools).

Financial need: This is the amount of a student's total cost of attendance that isn't covered by the expected family contribution or outside grants and scholarships. A student must demonstrate financial need to be eligible for need-based financial assistance programs.

Grants: Unlike loans, grants can come from the state or federal government, from the college itself, or from private sources, provide money for college that doesn't have to be paid back. We'll take this opportunity here to remind you again to fill out the FAFSA; many grants determine eligibility by looking at your FAFSA results.

Loans: If scholarships and grants don't cover the entire cost of your tuition, you may have to take out a [student loan](#) to make up the difference. Federal student loans don't have to be paid while you're in college. The rates and terms are generally more flexible than private loans.

Room and board: Everyone needs to sleep and eat. If you plan to do it on campus, those fees are part of your total cost of attendance.

Scholarships: There really isn't much difference between a scholarship and a grant, though the general consensus is that scholarships are primarily awarded for academic merit (good grades) or for something you have accomplished (volunteer work or a specific project); however, there are many need-based scholarships out there as well. Like grants, scholarships don't have to be repaid.

Work-study/work award: The Federal Work Study program provides funds to eligible students (see FAFSA above) for part-time employment to help finance the costs of postsecondary education. In most cases, the school or employer has to pay up to 50 percent of the student's wages, with the federal government covering the rest. You could be employed by the college itself; or by a federal, state, or local public agency; a private nonprofit organization; or a private for-profit organization.

Let's get started!

- Schedule a Family Meeting

Who is paying for college? What can you and your family afford? Do you want to stay close to home or go far away? These are all good things to discuss so there are no surprises later.

- Make a List of Schools

Make a long list of schools that might interest you. You can narrow it down later. Add these schools to your Naviance account.

- Take the ACT's and/or SAT's if you have not done so yet
- Research

The internet is your friend. Use it to learn about schools and programs. Even a school with a great reputation may not be the best school for you or your intended field of study. Visit the College and Career Center and utilize the books and information available to you. You do not have to know what you want to major in, but it's good to have a general idea of the area of study you like. Take advantage of on-site visits. We have schools with great programs that visit Arcadia. Even if you have not heard of them or they are in another part of the country, you may discover something you really like. You can stop in for 5 minutes or for an hour. The important thing is that you meet the college representative and learn about their school. Keep an open mind!

- College Visits

Now is a great time to start visiting schools that you are interested in. Start locally, even if you think you want to go out of state. It will give you an overview of what to expect on

a college tour and what questions you might want to ask. Schools are more than pretty buildings - observe the students. Do you feel like you could fit in and be happy here?

Some useful websites:

There are links for several sites on the College and Career website including College Navigator which is from US Govt. in an effort to make the true costs of college more transparent to the consumer. It's a little more statistical than other sites, but has a lot of good, core information about things like graduation rates, and net price. On the CCC site, there is also a link to College Answer, UNIGO, and the College Board. The College Board has a section called Big Future that is very user friendly when researching college. Here are some other sites you might want to check out.

College Raptor.com

This site has you fill in basic financial information (check with your parents first), your grades, test scores, and activities. Based on your entries, it gives you an estimated price for schools and chances of admissions. It also makes recommendations.

[College Raptor](#)

College Confidential

PLEASE do not let the forum area of this site discourage you. There seem to be many over achievers and their parents on this site crying over their terrible 4.0 GPAs and perfect SAT scores. However, if you keep an open mind, you can find good information about schools and the admissions process.

[Collegeconfidential](#)

Raise.Me

Register with this site and plug in your credentials and based on your info you receive "mini-scholarships". Of course the scholarships are only valid if you end up going to the school who offered it. Even without participating in Raise.Me you would qualify for these, but it's fun to see who is willing to give what. There are not many schools participating yet, but they are adding schools on a regular basis. This site can be motivating as it provides instant feedback. You can also link your Raise Me account to the Arcadia College and Career Center.

[Raise Me](#)

Niche

A good place to read student reviews of schools and everything about them - food, campus quality, academics, guys and girls - just a general overview of the culture of the school. It's kind of like Yelp, so remember - while it's unfortunate that a reviewer's roommate was a slob and snored, that doesn't make UCLA a bad school.

[Niche](#)

Cappex

Another site to get reviews and information about schools.

[Cappex](#)

You Visit

Do you want to see what the campus looks like? This site provides virtual campus tours. These videos are created by the schools and are going to show you their school in the most positive way. They will show the beautiful historic building, but not the ugly storage warehouse directly across the street for it. However, it's a good way to get a sneak peek.

[You Visit](#)

The Actual College Website

If you are interested in a school, visit their website!

