



A Smarter Approach to College Admission *and* Success

Prospective Client Guide





College Transitions

August 2023

Dear Prospective Client,

Thank you for considering us at this exciting time!

Over the past decade, our firm is proud to have helped guide thousands of students successfully through the college admissions process.

Founded by a team of doctoral-level researchers, College Transitions was one the very first virtual counseling firms in the country. This unique background has allowed us to develop a highly-structured and data-driven counseling model—a system designed to work efficiently and effectively around your hectic schedule. Within this stress-reducing framework, awaits a team of talented, veteran counselors and writing coaches whose sole mission is to provide students with an unparalleled level of support.

We believe that this blend of expertise/data-backed decision-making along with a caring, human touch is what leads to truly exceptional results for clients. While all outcomes statistics from college consulting firms should be taken with a sizable grain of salt (further explanation in the FAQ section of our prospectus), we are immensely proud of our track record. Year after year, College Transitions clients earn acceptance into the most highly-selective colleges in the United States and abroad at a rate that far exceeds that of the general applicant pool.

We are equally proud of the many students whom we have assisted in finding their ideal-fit college, sometimes one that was entirely off their radar when the process began. In addition to thousands of satisfied customers, we are also honored to have reached tens of millions of students and families through our popular blog, Dataverse, and published books. All of these interactions further our overarching mission to help students and families become better-informed college consumers, more capable of navigating an increasingly complex and expensive process.

We invite you to read more about College Transitions and sincerely hope we have the opportunity to work with your family in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

Andrew Belasco, Dave Bergman, & Michael Trivette
Founders

Services



Preliminary Review and Strategic Positioning

Typically, we begin by reviewing your transcript (courses and grades), standardized test scores, extracurricular activities, talents, and courses that you are currently taking, as well as the courses that you plan to take in the following year(s). In addition, we discuss admissions positioning strategies, focusing on what you can do both inside and outside the classroom to ensure maximum consideration of your credentials.

Developing the College List and Assessing Your Admission Prospects

Based on our preliminary review, we compile a list of colleges and academic programs that represent the best match between your interests/credentials and the institution's admissions standards and offerings. We also provide an assessment of your admissions chances at each of your prospective colleges.

College Visits

At the height of the COVID pandemic, most colleges invested heavily in producing high-quality virtual tours and other online resources for prospective applicants. Yet, when feasible, it can still be immensely beneficial to make a physical trip to a handful of campuses. We advise clients on how to make the most of these exciting and informative trips.

Demonstrating Interest

An underappreciated aspect of the admissions process, students receive guidance on how and when to most effectively "demonstrate interest" in their prospective colleges. How likely colleges believe an applicant is to enroll plays a more significant role in admissions decisions than most realize. We'll ensure that you are on the right path in this regard.

Completing Applications

Once we have devised a list of suitable "target" colleges, we will assist you in coordinating application materials and completing all applications. We clarify application instructions, review forms, and provide guidance on all questions/items. After drafts are completed, we review each application for omissions, unanswered questions, inconsistencies and any other "red flags" that may negatively impact your admission prospects.

Essays/Personal Statements

Initially, we work with you to brainstorm essay topics that are capable of reflecting your best attributes. We then assist you in developing essay content, while teaching you the elements of an effective college essay. Finally, we review your essays for clarity of expression and grammatical correctness, and offer further suggestions on how you can enhance your writing. It's important to note that we will spend as much time as needed to help you draft authentic and compelling essays that represent the best of what you have to offer to your prospective colleges.

Activities List/Resume and Extracurricular Planning

The activities list has become an increasingly important part of the college application. We will help you devise an activity sheet/resume that is clear, concise, and reflective of your involvement both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, we will help you identify and deepen your involvement in the extracurricular activities that will distinguish you from similarly accomplished applicants and enable you to further explore/develop your interests.



Course Planning

The strength of your curriculum (i.e. the difficulty level of your courses) is often times viewed as equally or more important in the admissions process than your grade point average or standardized test scores. Each year, we advise you on which courses you should choose in order to maximize your admission prospects without compromising your class rank/GPA and ability to engage in extracurricular pursuits.

The College Interview

The college interview can prove as an important factor in the college admissions process, and can even prove as the key to admission for a borderline applicant. As such, we provide extensive coaching on the college interview. We teach you how to prepare, what questions to expect, and what questions to ask. In addition, we review interview etiquette and teach you how to leave a positive impression with your interviewer. Finally, through our mock interview sessions, we help you to achieve a high level of comfort and confidence on interview day.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

Scholarships and other financial aid for college are not limited to students with financial need. Regardless of your financial circumstances, we provide sound advice on how to secure competitive and non-competitive funds from your target colleges. Financial aid guidance includes advice on how to complete and process financial aid forms, how to apply for college scholarships, and what strategies you can employ to win merit (non-need-based) aid.

Decision Guidance

After receiving your admission offers, we schedule a meeting (and subsequent meetings, if necessary) exclusively devoted to reviewing the costs and benefits of attending each institution into which you have been admitted. Discussion and guidance focus on the evaluation of financial aid awards, the academic and extracurricular offerings of your prospective colleges, possible majors, and plans beyond your undergraduate study.

Standardized Testing Strategy

Whether you are a high school freshman, high school senior or potential college transfer, we will advise you on which standardized tests to take or re-take in order to maximize your admissions prospects and minimize time to major-related coursework and your college degree. Testing strategies encompass SAT, ACT, AP, IB, CLEP, and various subject tests, among others.

Transition Support

In the months before enrolling at your new institution, we help you explore majors, develop a program of study, and identify campus-based supports so that you have the knowledge and tools needed to succeed at your college of choice. In contrast to most college planners, we will work with you after acceptance because we believe that our success is measured not only on the basis of admission offers, but also on the basis of your college success and ability to maximize the benefits of a higher education.

Frequently Asked Questions



Why a Private Counselor?

Aside from purchasing a home, a college education represents the largest investment you will make during your life. If you take into account the personal and professional benefits associated with earning a degree, college will likely be your most important investment.

Despite committing as much as \$350,000 toward college-related costs, students and their families rarely seek the advice of a specialist, as they would when purchasing a home or planning their retirement, for example. Instead, most families choose to rely on their respective high schools. Unfortunately, most schools have devoted less, not more, resources to college planning in recent years. School counselors, for example, play an extremely crucial role in promoting the personal and social development of our youth, but mounting responsibilities in the areas of academic remediation, mental health support, course scheduling, and state standardized testing have forced many school counselors to shift their focus away from college-related tasks. Currently, the average school counselor spends less than 40 minutes per student on college planning activities over the span of four years. In contrast, private college counselors focus exclusively on college guidance and can provide families with the personalized and intensive support they require. Ideally, private college counselors fill the need for greater college guidance by offering services that a typical school counselor cannot:

Private college counselors can also help families save on college costs, for example, by:

- Pointing students to good-fit colleges that are relatively inexpensive and where they are likely to receive significant (need-based and/or merit-based) financial aid.
- Teaching students how to maximize their financial aid eligibility and locate suitable scholarship opportunities.
- Pointing students to credit-earning opportunities before college admission, and helping them to navigate course (i.e. major and general education) requirements after admission – both shorten a student's time to degree.
- Facilitating career exploration and recommending college majors that ultimately pave the way for professional fit and success.

Ultimately, (capable and well-trained) private counselors help students enroll and succeed at good-fit colleges, while ensuring that families receive a substantial return on their postsecondary investment.

Why College Transitions?

Our background...

Unlike most other providers, College Transitions counselors have worked on "both sides of the gate" – as high school counselors and administrators, and as college admission representatives. We are also published researchers, having authored articles on the college-related effects of counseling, the predictors of selective college admission, and education debt, among other topics. We are the only college planning company in the country to have contributed articles to higher education's top journals and to have published two best-selling books, *The Enlightened College Applicant* (now in its second edition) and our annual guide *Colleges Worth Your Money*, which is now in its 4th edition.

In sum, our background and experience allow us to offer unique insight into the context and trends that impact college-related decisions; while our professional affiliations enable us to acquire college-specific information that is not readily accessible to school staff or to other private college counselors. As a result, we know how colleges – at all levels of selectivity – approach the admissions process, and we know why students achieve college success.



Our approach...

At College Transitions, we believe that the college admissions process should be about more than admission. We value personal growth and self-discovery as much as selectivity, and by doing so, we hope to bring perspective (and some sanity) to college planning.

Our fundamental objective is to guide students into good-fit colleges, where they can thrive and effectively pursue their personal and professional goals. We work toward this objective by leveraging our knowledge, as well as the knowledge of other professionals throughout higher education, with whom we have built extensive relationships over the course of our careers as researchers, admission counselors, and consultants.

Please refer to our bios and reviews for more information.

What are the advantages of a remote arrangement?

We adopted a remote model in order to reach a broader range of families and better accommodate our students, many of whom have extremely busy schedules during the week, and as such, need to meet on short notice and/or during nights and weekends. We communicate through email, phone, and most often video chat (Zoom, Google Meet), responding to our families' needs more quickly and offering greater flexibility and availability than what could be offered in a traditional "brick and mortar" model. In the past ten years, we have provided remote services to students residing in nearly every state and more than a dozen countries. Ultimately, our long-term success has been due to our responsiveness and unique knowledge set, rather than our location or proximity to certain students.

Why are your prices so low?

Families researching the pricing and plans of multiple companies will soon find that our rates are equal to or lower than nearly every comparable provider. We keep rates relatively low because we can and because we want to. Initially, as school-based counselors and higher education researchers, we sought work more practical and lucrative than that available in an academic setting, but that still enabled us to do what we loved: helping a diverse group of students enroll and succeed in higher education. Over the past decade, we have been able to develop an online presence and remote-based model that allows us to deliver services in an effective and efficient manner, while serving an increasingly broad array of families. Ultimately, we have been fortunate enough to build a business that contributes to more than one bottom line.

Why are your prices so high?

Our rates are about average for our industry; however, we are sensitive to the reality that not all families can afford to pursue private college counseling. Therefore, in order to make our knowledge and expertise available to a broad range of students, we engage in a large number of pro-bono activities; operate a very extensive award-winning blog; publish books and blogs; and devote a substantial amount of time to building our Dataverse, which offers comprehensive information and data on hundreds of colleges and their admissions and financial aid policies. For those who can afford services, but are still undecided about whether college counseling is a wise investment, we encourage you to consider the many ways in which we ultimately save our families money (see previous page).

When Should I Start?

The bulk of our work together will occur in grades 11 and 12. However, 9th and 10th grade students can benefit from early planning—in the areas of high school academic advising, extracurricular planning, and major/career exploration, for instance.

We encourage prospective college transfers to contact us at least six months before their applications are due, but we can and do take on students throughout the transfer admission cycle.



When are you available?

College Transitions counselors are available weekdays, weeknights, and weekends. We work according to your schedule, and are fully committed to providing you with responsive and convenient support.

How Do You Deliver Services?

We work with families on a remote basis, delivering services through email, phone, and, most often, video chat using Zoom, Google Meet, or any other video chat platform that proves most convenient for the student and their parent(s). In our experience, any college-related task that can be accomplished in person can also be accomplished remotely—more efficiently and effectively in many cases.

Will others know I worked with a private counselor?

No. Maintaining your privacy and safeguarding your confidentiality is of the utmost importance to us. We do not release any identifying information about our families unless our families explicitly instruct us to do so.

Do you only work with elite students?

No. We work with students of all abilities and academic backgrounds. At College Transitions, we believe that we should be evaluated on our ability to guide all students to – and through – “good-fit” colleges, and not on our ability to get a few select students into a few select institutions. Do we take pride in guiding past clients into every Ivy League institution as well as other elite colleges? Absolutely. However, we take equal pride in guiding others to a wide range of excellent yet less competitive public universities and private institutions.

How do you define your success?

The short, quantifiable answer is that, in a typical year, 94-97% of our clients are admitted into one of their top-3 choice institutions. Further, our school-specific acceptance rates are generally between 4 and 8 times higher than the overall acceptance rate for the general population.

However, it is important to note that statistics of this nature from our company (or any other college counseling provider) have **significant limitations**. A portion of our success is, of course, due to the immensely talented group of students with which we have the privilege of assisting. Additional factors like the financial ability to apply via Early Decision can also be highly impactful.

Personally, the College Transitions team defines its success more holistically. We take our greatest pride in seeing our clients discover their dream schools, refine their academic/career aims, and ultimately—matriculate into good-fit colleges that will set them up for success over the next four years and beyond.

For those wondering more about the specific universities where last year's College Transitions clients enrolled, please continue on to our Results list.

Results



Representing 36 states, 11 countries, and 126 different high schools, the College Transitions Class of 2023 was our largest, most diverse, and most accomplished yet. With support from our team of counselors, CT students earned admission offers from more than 200 colleges and universities. We have included a sampling of our most popular schools below. Institutions listed in **bold** accepted five or more of our students.

Amherst College
American University

Babson College
Barnard College
Bates College
Bentley University
Binghamton University
Boston College
Boston University
Bowdoin College
Brandeis University
Brown University
Bucknell University

Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Carleton College
Claremont McKenna College
Colby College
Colgate University
Colorado College
College of William & Mary
Columbia University
Connecticut College
Cornell University

Dartmouth College
Davidson College
Denison University
Duke University

Emory University
Elon University

Florida State University
Fordham University
Franklin & Marshall College
Furman University

George Washington University
Georgia Institute of Technology
Georgetown University

Hamilton College
Harvard University
Harvey Mudd College
Haverford College

Imperial College London
Indiana University

Johns Hopkins University

Kenyon College
King's College London
Lafayette College
Lehigh University
London School of Economics
Loyola Marymount University

Macalester College
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
McGill University
Middlebury College
Mount Holyoke College

New Jersey Institute of Technology
New York University
North Carolina State University
Northeastern University
Northwestern University

Occidental College
Ohio State University

Penn State University
Pomona College
Princeton University
Purdue University

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Rhodes College
Rice University
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

Rutgers University

Scripps College
Skidmore College
Smith College
Southern Methodist University
Stanford University
Stevens Institute of Technology
Syracuse University
Swarthmore College

Texas A&M University

Trinity College
Trinity College Dublin
Trinity University

Tufts University
Tulane University

Union College
University College London
University of British Columbia
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine

University of California, Los Angeles

University of California, San Diego

University of California, Santa Barbara

University of Cambridge

University of Chicago

University of Colorado Boulder

University of Connecticut

University of Edinburgh

University of Florida

University of Georgia

University of Illinois

at Urbana-Champaign

University of Maryland

University of Massachusetts

Amherst

University of Miami

University of Michigan

University of Minnesota
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of Notre Dame
University of Oxford
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Richmond
University of Rochester
University of St Andrews
University of Southern California
University of Texas at Austin
University of Toronto
University of Vermont
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Waterloo
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Vanderbilt University

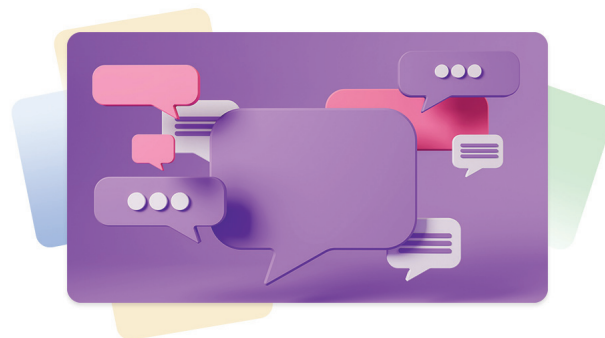
Vassar College
Villanova University
Virginia Tech

Wake Forest University

Washington and Lee University
Washington University in St. Louis
Wellesley College
Wesleyan University
Williams College
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Yale University

Reviews



★ Trustpilot

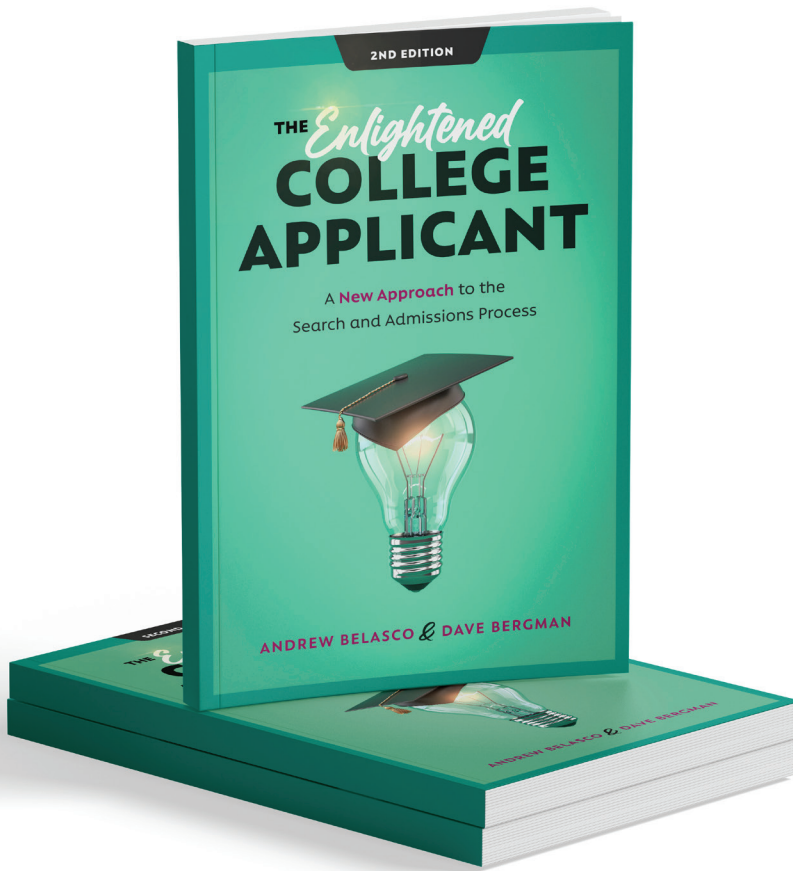
- "I truly felt like I had so many people supporting me that it made this process feel uplifting and easy. I ended getting an offer from my dream school, NYU, thanks to Andrew and the team's undivided attention to my questions and concerns." - Christina K.
- "Dr. Belasco was with me through every stage of the process...With the help of College Transitions, I was accepted to Duke, Brown, UGA (Foundation Fellow), Emory, Vanderbilt, Rice, and Georgetown." - Isha S.
- "Their data-driven approach positions applicants at their best, and the team knows their stuff better than anybody else in the industry." - Ryan S.
- "I felt very well-prepared and confident heading into senior year thanks to the College Transitions team. I now attend my first choice at the University of Pennsylvania, which is a fantastic experience!" - Nick
- "Without their help I would have never found my small little Liberal Arts school and I would not be where I am today." - Maria A.
- "(College Transitions) restored my faith in myself, and set me back on track to have a successful and enjoyable college experience." - Aashrita N.
- "I received a wonderful editor and mentor for my essays who helped me in all steps of the writing process... I am now at the University of Notre Dame in the Mendoza College of Business." - Sarah M.
- "College transitions introduced me to Vassar College, a school I never thought I would get into...I am now at Vassar, and it has exceeded my expectations." - Liana T.

facebook

- "We used College Transitions twice for our two kids and both got into NYU...Andrew was so helpful and generous with his time and Taylor was great in helping with essay writing. We HIGHLY recommend them - in fact, we recommended them to our friends whose child got into several selective schools." - Kristin M.
- "Thanks to College Transitions and Andrew, our daughter was accepted to Cornell University. Overall, I cannot recommend College Transitions and Andrew enough... Their expertise, attention to detail, and personalized approach made all the difference in our daughter's college journey...They truly are the best in the business!" - Steve C.
- "Ultimately our daughter was accepted to many schools & she ended up at an Ivy League school. I cannot say enough good things about College Transitions & Andrew & I highly recommend their service." - Deborah G.
- "Our kids went to a large public high school that did not have the bandwidth to help our kids with the process. With CT's guidance, each of my kids were accepted to their first choice schools." - Lucene W.

Google

- "The also de-escalated the parental anxiety and worry that comes along with the process. I recommend College Transitions without any reservation. They are truly the best out there and worth every penny." - Dr. D.
- "My daughter was recently accepted into the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Brown, and Princeton...Over four years working with two of my daughters, her guidance never missed the mark." - Kevin R.



The Enlightened College Applicant

A New Approach to the Search and Admissions Process

The Enlightened College Applicant presents a no-nonsense account of how students should approach the college search and admissions process. Instead of providing recycled entrance statistics or anecdotal generalizations about campus life, authors Belasco and Bergman incorporate cutting-edge data and research to pull back the curtain on critical topics such as:

- + Whether college prestige really matters,
- + How to maximize your college admission prospects
- + Which schools and degrees provide the best return on investment
- + How to minimize the costs of a college education
- + What college-related skills are valued in the job market, and much more. Whether you are a valedictorian or a B/C student, this easy-to-read book will improve your college savvy and enable you to maximize the benefits of your higher education.

”

“...a friendly, easy-to-follow guide for approaching the overwhelming topic of higher education...these soon-to-be dog-eared pages will provide comfort and direction for those starting the application process.”

PUBLISHERS
WEEKLY 

”

“A de-stressing trove of data that will help readers make more well-rounded college decisions.”

KIRKUS

”

“There is a laser-sharp focus on targeting a school and major to maximize return on investment...Families seeking enlightenment about how to rationally and reasonably advise their teens in the higher-education arms race would do well to seek out this title.”

Booklist

”

“A superb and refreshingly unique book that does a masterful job of equipping families with what they need to successfully navigate the entire college application process.”

– Lynn O’Shaughnessy
Author of *The College Solution*
Lead College Contributor to CBS *Moneywatch*

Purchase book online:

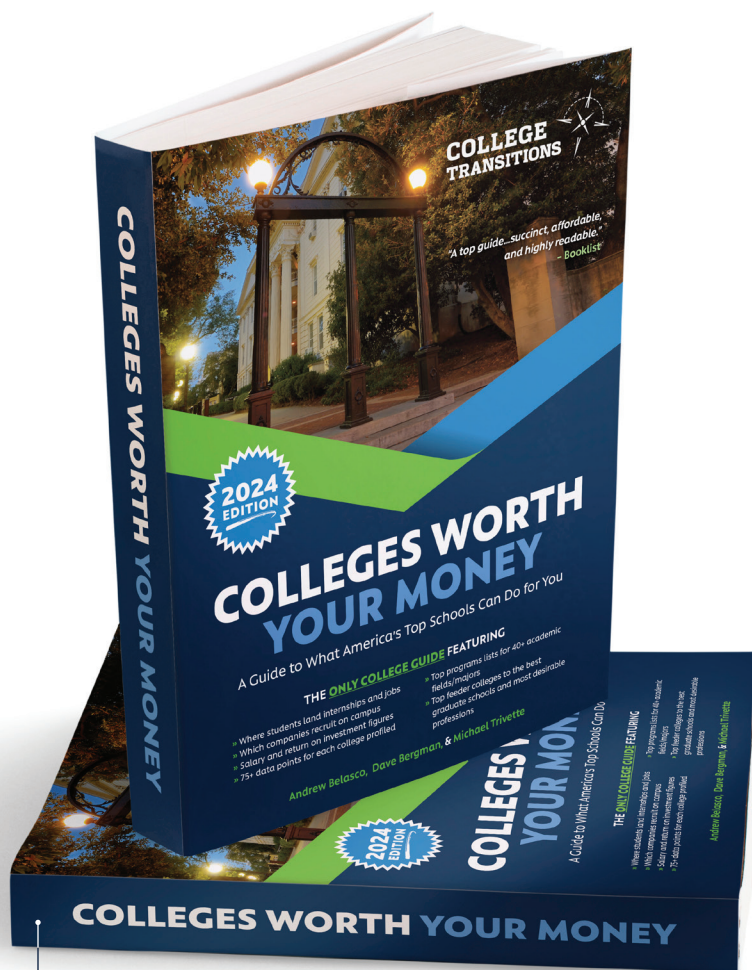
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LITTLEFIELD

BARNES & NOBLE

Colleges Worth Your Money

A Guide to What America's Top Schools Can Do for You



available at
amazon



"Colleges Worth Your Money is an innovative and invaluable resource that will provide you with answers to make the best possible college decisions. With so much at stake, I'd urge you to use this book as your college lifeline."

– Lynn O'Shaughnessy
National Recognized College Expert



"A refreshing combination of data and insight, this guide provides families with critical information... *Colleges Worth Your Money* not only answers key questions but also prompts families to ask important ones as they research, visit, and ultimately select from their college options."

– Rick Clark
Co-author of *The Truth about College Admission: A Family Guide to Getting In and Staying Together*



"A top guide to higher education choices, (*Colleges Worth Your Money*) is a succinct, affordable, and highly readable resource to suit the individual student looking for the perfect collegiate match...A superb choice."

Booklist



College Transitions



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