

# *FairFutures* ➤

## **COLLEGE ADVISING PHILOSOPHY**

### **GOALS:**



Every student has the opportunity to attend a college that is an academic match where they will be both supported and challenged.



Every student has the opportunity to attend a school from which they can graduate debt-free (or with an amount of debt that they are fully prepared to manage).



Every student is an active participant in the college planning process and comes away from the process connected to a school choice that aligns with their vision for their own future.

## PRACTICES

### FOUR KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK AT THE START OF THE COLLEGE PLANNING PROCESS:

1. **Is the student qualified for/interested in attending a four-year college directly out of high school?**
2. **Where does the student want to live during college? The major categories here are:**
  - Somewhere out of the city.
  - Somewhere in the city but in a dorm.
  - Somewhere in the city and not in a dorm (i.e. in a foster home).
3. **What majors/fields of study is the student interested in?**
4. **Are there other aspects of a potential school that are especially important to the student?**

These might include: prestige, demographics of fellow students, proximity to family, size of the school, and more.

### GRADUATION RATE AND COST OF ATTENDANCE

**For each potential school match, it is important to consider the graduation rate and cost of attendance of the school.**

Graduation rates differ widely between schools; some graduate just 10 or 20% of their students, while others have graduation rates of 98 or 99%. Some of this has to do with the preparedness and affluence of the students who attend those schools, but the level of support available at the school is also an important factor in graduation rate.

**Resources for assessing graduation rate and cost of attendance include:**

[College Scorecard](#), a publicly available resource from USDOE that includes information about annual costs, timely graduation rates, long-term outcomes for students who enrolled as freshmen, and socio/economic and racial diversity at the school.

[College Results Online](#), which offers a deeper dive into graduation rates for specific student demographics, as well as information about collateral statistics like first-year retention and transfer rates.

## EXPLORING 4-YEAR COLLEGES

**In most cases, 4-year colleges should typically be the starting point for all students who are academically eligible to attend**, as students attending 4-year schools tend to experience better graduation outcomes than students who start at 2-year schools.

**TIP!** Students with GPAs in or above the 75-80 range and SAT scores above 400/section can feasibly begin to look at 4-year schools.

**For students exploring 4-year colleges, the major categories to look at are SUNY schools, CUNY schools, and private schools.** For every student in care, we believe that there is a match school that the student will be able to graduate from without debt!

## APPLYING TO 4-YEAR COLLEGES

### CUNY & SUNY SCHOOLS

**Students are encouraged to submit, at minimum, the full complement of free applications to CUNY and SUNY schools.** Students interested in 4-year CUNYs are counseled to include no more than one 2-year CUNY, ranked at the bottom of the application (since they will be accepted there automatically).

Students applying to 4-year SUNYs and CUNYs are always encouraged to apply for SEEK/EOP programs at “reach” schools that match their desired distance from home and major. Students who are academically qualified at a 4-year CUNY/SUNY do not qualify for SEEK/EOP there!

We encourage all students to complete their applications to CUNY/SUNY by Thanksgiving in order to ensure the highest likelihood of acceptance for SEEK/EOP spaces.

We also make sure to connect with the Youth Matter liaison at CUNY (for SEEK students) and EOP directors at SUNY to advocate for individual students.

### PRIVATE SCHOOLS

**Students are particularly counseled away from private schools and out-of-state public schools, unless those schools have 100% of need met financial aid policies and/or are willing to commit to covering the student’s tuition/room+board gap.**

**Private schools we’ve steered students away from in the past (and toward equivalent CUNY/SUNY options) include:** Fordham, St. John’s, LIU, Manhattan College, etc. Some of these are fine schools, but there are SUNY/CUNY options that are at least equivalent and the difference is tens of thousands of dollars in debt.

**Schools that students in care can attend for free include:** all of the Ivies (e.g. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Cornell, Columbia), Barnard College, Georgetown University, Vanderbilt University, Union College, etc. All of these have 100% of need met financial aid policies. ***It is so important for students in care who are dreaming of attending highly selective colleges to know this!***

Agencies will sometimes form direct relationships with colleges to offer guaranteed free tuition to a certain number of students in care. This is great! There are also organizations such as the Posse Foundation that offer full tuition scholarships.

*Unfortunately, it is extremely rare for a student to be able to find more than a couple thousand dollars in scholarships per year from publicly listed scholarships. Don’t oversell the possibility of piecing together scholarships online – it’s usually not a realistic plan.*

**GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS PLANNING TO ATTEND 2-YEAR/COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

**We ALWAYS recommend that incoming 2-year college students start at CUNY due to the support programs available and proximity to agency resources.**

While there is some variation between the quality of CUNY community colleges, and it is worth reviewing graduation rates in the process of considering options, the differences are generally fairly small.

Most CUNY community college 3-year graduation rates range between 16 and 22% on College Scorecard, with the exception of Guttman Community College, which has a 3-year graduation rate of 45%.

**We ALWAYS recommend that, if eligible, students enroll in Start, ASAP, College Discovery or at Guttman Community College.**

- We recommend **Start** for any student who has 2 or more remedial needs and encourage students with a math remedial need to take summer Math Start.
- **ASAP vs. College Discovery** is a student by student decision, depending on major and future plans. ASAP boasts stronger graduation statistics, while College Discovery's portability with SEEK/EOP/HEOP is an important benefit for students planning to transfer to four-year colleges.
- Many students in care have had positive experiences at **Guttman Community College** and it is a good idea to make sure that students at least interview there in order to have it as a college option. Drawbacks for some students are the single site and limited number of majors on offer.

**Within the above guidelines, the student generally guides the decision about their specific school choice based on proximity to where they expect to live and choice of majors.**