COLLEGE APPLICATION DECISION GUIDE

Academic Environment
When assessing the academic environment of the college or university, ask yourself the following questions:
- Will this college admit me?
- Have I satisfied the course or other admission requirements of the college?
- Are my test scores (placement tests or entrance tests like the ACT, SAT or TOEFL) in the appropriate range for this school?
- What courses are required of all students?
- What are the typical class sizes both for first year students and upper class students?
- What is the availability of counseling or tutorial programs in the event that I experience academic difficulty?
- What kinds of professions and careers do students enter after graduation?
- What kind of experiential learning (internships, apprenticeships, industry certifications) could I participate in or earn as a student?

Majors, Degrees and Certificate Programs
Most students change their majors at least once during their college careers. Some courses of study are not available at the high school level and other fields that seem unappealing to you now may become much more exciting as you become more involved. However, you probably have a general idea of at least two or three areas that interest you, and you may want to consider how strong those departments are at the colleges you are considering.

- For example, if you are interested in nursing or business, do they offer degree or certificate programs in this area?
- Does the college offer industry certifications that I might be able to complete in a shorter amount of time than a two- or four-year degree?

Affordability and Sources of Financial Assistance
- What forms of financial aid or scholarships does the college offer and is this money I have to repay?
- Would I have to take out a student loan and if so, for how much?
- What types of jobs exist on campus for students and does my pay check go toward my tuition bill or do I get paid directly?
- Are staff members available to help me fill out the application forms for financial aid and scholarships?

Sample Decision Matrix
The table below is useful as you research information about your preferred colleges to determine which one is the best option for you. Many students opt to begin college at a local community college and perhaps transfer to a four-year institution to complete a bachelor’s degree in their chosen field of study. Other students desire to obtain a two-year degree or a certificate program that the community college offers so that they may more quickly prepare to enter the job market or get a better job that requires a college degree or specialized training.

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<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Major Offered</th>
<th>Type of Program</th>
<th>Financial Aid</th>
<th>Tuition</th>
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