



# College Counseling

## *Suggested Timeline for the College Process*

### **Grade 9**

- Work hard in classes, become involved in extracurricular activities, discover areas of personal interest
- Keep in mind that freshman year grades DO matter to colleges and they ARE used in the calculation of GPA
- Parents *invited* to attend Financial Aid Night (October)
- Parents *invited* to attend SMARTTRACK® College Funding Webinar (October)
- Students & Parents *invited* to attend the *College Counseling Preview* program (March)

### **Grade 10**

- Continue to work hard in all your classes and be involved in activities, arts, athletics
- PSAT at Columbus Academy (October); review your score report (December)
- Parents *invited* to attend Financial Aid Night (October)
- Parents *invited* to attend SMARTTRACK® College Funding Webinar (October)
- Students & Parents *attend* the *College Counseling Preview* program (March)
- Practice ACT (April)
- Academic Planning Conferences with College Counselors for students and parents (April)
- AP exams, if applicable (May)
- DO NOT take your first SAT until Grade 11 fall or winter, at the very earliest

### **Grade 11**

- Junior Class Meetings with College Counselors for students (first quarter)
- Meet with college representatives visiting Columbus Academy during your free periods (September-November)
  - List available on MaiaLearning, TV Screens, Intranet and Social Media
- PSAT at Columbus Academy - *this is the one that "counts" for National Merit selection/honors* (October)
- Students and Parents *invited* to attend Financial Aid Night (October)
- Parents *invited* to attend SMARTTRACK® College Funding Webinar (October)
- Students & Parents *attend* *Grade 11 College Night* program (November)
- SAT/ACT (December/January, repeat March/April/May)
- College Counseling Class (third quarter) and regular meetings with your College Counselor
  - Class topics include the basics of the college search process, standardized testing, creating a resume, practice college interviews, writing the college essay, do's and don'ts of college applications, financial aid, requesting teacher recommendations and more
  - Meetings with college counselors topics include individual planning, creating college list, athletic recruiting, financial aid and suggestions for summer activities
- Schedule college campus tours (February); visit campuses over spring break (March)
- In-School SAT (April)
- AP exams, if applicable (May)
- Write college essay (May) and continue to visit college campuses (June/July)
- Students attend *Common Application Workshops* at Columbus Academy (August)

### **Grade 12**

- Parents (only) *attend Senior Parent College Night* at Columbus Academy (August)
- Meet with college representatives visiting Columbus Academy during your free periods (September-November)
  - List available on MaiaLearning, TV Screens, Intranet and Social Media
- Senior Class Meetings with College Counselors for students (first quarter)
- Finish applications and get necessary materials to colleges
- Continue to meet with your College Counselor as you prepare college applications and supplemental materials
- ACT (September); SAT (October)
- Students and Parents *invited* to attend Financial Aid Night (October)
- Parents file financial aid paperwork via FAFSA and CSS Profile (October/November for EA/ED applications; January for regular applications)
- Choose a college or university by May 1<sup>st</sup>



# Columbus Academy

Accredited by the Independent School Association of the Central States (ISACS), the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)

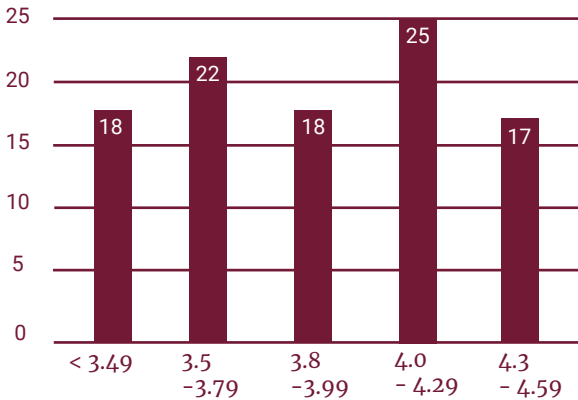
## 2022-23 School Profile

### About Columbus Academy

Founded in 1911, Columbus Academy is a coeducational school enrolling 1,170 students from our Explorers Program to Grade 12. Academy offers a challenging liberal arts, college preparatory program. Located on a 231-acre campus nine miles northeast of Columbus, the school draws a diverse student body of 420 students in grades 9 through 12, from a 30-mile radius in central Ohio. Approximately 25% of the upper school student body receives tuition assistance.



#### Class of 2023 GPA Distribution 100 of 101 students (1 new student) (as of September 1, 2022)



Students are graded on the following scale:

A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
Below 60 is not a passing mark.	

Our traditional grading scale allows for a 10-point differential within each letter grade.

#### Columbus Academy does not rank its students.

GPA's are calculated using all graded courses earned at Academy.

- No additional weight added for standard college-preparatory courses
- 10% additional weight added for "Advanced" courses
- 15% additional weight added for "Honors" courses

*Prerequisite criteria must be met for entry to Advanced and Honors courses.*

- **Advanced** courses typically are accelerated versions of the college-preparatory courses.
- **Honors** courses are those in which the syllabus is designed predominantly to prepare students for a college-level, external examination.

Weighted grade-point averages (WGPA) are reported on transcripts and documents sent to colleges and scholarship agencies.

Columbus Academy • 4300 Cherry Bottom Road • Gahanna, OH 43230 | More information at: [columbusacademy.org](http://columbusacademy.org)

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# Class of 2022 College Enrollments & Acceptances

Typically 100% of Columbus Academy graduates enroll at four-year colleges and universities. One or more members of the Class of 2022 will attend colleges and universities in **bold italics**.

Alabama State University  
 Albany State University  
 Allen University  
 American University  
 Amherst College  
**Arizona State University**  
**Ashland University**  
**Babson College**  
 Baldwin Wallace University  
 Bates College  
 Baylor University  
 Bellarmine University  
 Berkeley College of Music  
 Bethune-Cookman University  
 Boston College  
**Boston University**  
**Bowdoin College**  
 Bowling Green State University  
 Brown University  
 Bryn Mawr College  
**Butler University**  
 California Institute of Technology  
 Capital University  
**Carleton College**  
**Carnegie Mellon University**  
**Case Western Reserve University**  
 Central State University  
 Centre College  
 Clemson University  
 Cleveland State University  
 Coastal Carolina University  
**College of Charleston**  
**College of William and Mary**  
 Colorado College  
 Columbia University  
 Columbus College of Art and Design  
 Connecticut College  
**Cornell University**  
 Dartmouth College  
**Davidson College**  
**Denison University**  
 DePaul University  
**DePaul University**  
**Dickinson College**  
 Drake University  
 Drexel University  
**Duke University**  
 Duquesne University  
 Eastern Michigan University  
 Eckerd College  
**Elon University**  
**Emory University**  
**Emory University, Oxford College**  
 Endicott College  
 Flagler College-St. Augustine  
 Florida Institute of Technology  
 Fordham University  
 Fort Valley State University  
 Franklin and Marshall College  
 Furman University  
 George Washington University  
 Georgetown University  
 Georgia Institute of Technology  
**Hamilton College**  
 Hampton University  
**Harvard University**  
**High Point University**  
**Hobart William Smith Colleges**  
 Howard University  
 Illinois Institute of Technology  
**Indiana University-Bloomington**  
 Jackson State University  
 James Madison University  
 John Carroll University  
**Johns Hopkins University**  
 Johnson C. Smith University  
 Kent State University  
 Kentucky State University  
 Kenyon College  
 Lake Erie College  
 Lawrence Technological University  
 Lewis & Clark College  
**Loyola University Chicago**  
 Macalester College  
**Marist College**  
 Marquette University  
 Mercyhurst University  
**Miami University-Oxford**  
 Michigan State University  
 Mississippi State University  
 Mississippi Valley State University  
 Muskingum University  
 Nazareth College  
**New York University**  
 Norfolk State University  
 North Carolina A & T State University  
 North Carolina State University  
**Northeastern University**  
**Nova Southeastern University**  
**Oberlin College**  
**Ohio Northern University**  
**Ohio State University**

Ohio State University, Newark  
**Ohio University**  
 Ohio Wesleyan University  
**Otterbein University**  
 Pennsylvania State University  
**Pomona College**  
 Providence College  
**Purdue University**  
**Quinnipiac University**  
**Radford University**  
 Reed College  
**Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**  
 Rhodes College  
 Rider University  
**Rochester Institute of Technology**  
**Rollins College**  
**Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology**  
**Saint Louis University**  
 Salve Regina University  
 Santa Clara University  
 Seton Hill University  
**Skidmore College**  
 Southern Methodist University  
 Spelman College  
 St. Lawrence University  
**Stanford University**  
 Suffolk University  
 Syracuse University  
 Tennessee State University  
**Texas Christian University**  
**The College of Wooster**  
 The University of Alabama  
 The University of Edinburgh  
 The University of Findlay  
 The University of Montana  
 The University of Tampa  
 The University of Tennessee  
 The University of Texas at Austin  
**The University of Texas at Dallas**  
 The University of the South  
 Thomas More College  
**Trinity College**  
**Tulane University**  
 University of Akron  
 University of Arizona  
 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 Chicago**  
**University of Cincinnati**  
**University of Colorado Boulder**  
 University of Dayton  
 University of Delaware  
**University of Denver**  
**University of Florida**  
 University of Georgia  
 University of Indianapolis  
 University of Kentucky  
 University of Louisville  
 University of Maryland  
 University of Maryland  
 University of Massachusetts  
**University of Miami**  
**University of Michigan**  
 University of Minnesota  
 University of Missouri-Kansas City  
**University of Mount Union**  
**University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill**  
 University of Oregon  
**University of Pennsylvania**  
**University of Pittsburgh**  
 University of Puget Sound  
 University of Redlands  
**University of Richmond**  
 University of Rochester  
 University of San Francisco  
 University of South Carolina  
 University of South Florida  
**University of Southern California**  
 University of St. Andrews  
 University of Toledo  
**University of Utah**  
 University of Vermont  
 University of Virginia  
 University of Washington  
**University of Wisconsin**  
 Valparaiso University  
 Vanderbilt University  
 Villanova University  
 Virginia Polytechnic Institute  
**Wake Forest University**  
 Washington & Jefferson College  
**Washington University in St. Louis**  
 West Virginia State University  
 West Virginia University  
 Wheeling Jesuit University  
 Wittenberg University  
 Wofford College  
**Xavier University**  
**Yale University**

# Class of 2022 Standardized Test Scores

SAT® Reasoning	Mid 50%	Mean	ACT® Average	Mid 50%	Mean
EBRW	610-740	666	Composite	26-33	28
Mathematics	565-770	657			
SAT®	1180-1500	1323			

## National Merit Scholarship Results

From our Class of 2022, 27 students (24%) were recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation: Commended Students and Semifinalists, 19 of whom became Finalists.

# 50

Community service hours logged by 100% of the senior class

# Class of 2022

# 14%

Planned to compete in intercollegiate athletics

# 100%

Gave a Junior Speech to an audience of 400+ people

## HONORS COURSES/AP PREPARATION

Please note: Columbus Academy does not offer Advanced Placement (AP®) courses. However, AP® examination preparation is offered in all Honors and many Advanced courses. The designation “AP®” is not included on the transcript for those respective courses. See columbusacademy.org/courses for additional details.

## 2022 AP® Examination Results

Total Exams	542
Students taking exams	240
Students with scores of 3 or above	216
Number of AP® Scholars	119

Students typically take AP® exams in the following subject areas:

Biology	English Language & Comp	Physics 1
Calculus AB & BC	English Literature & Comp	Physics C: E&M and Mechanics
Chemistry	European History	Spanish Language & Culture
Chinese Language & Culture	Latin	Statistics
Comparative Gov & Politics	Macro & Micro Economics	U.S. Government
Computer Science	Music Theory	U.S. & World History

## Graduation Requirements (Minimum Credits)

- English . . . . . 4 credits
- Mathematics . . . . . 3 credits (*through Algebra 2*)
- Science . . . . . 3 credits
- Fine Arts, Music, . . . . . 1 credit
- Performing Arts
- Language of 1 language . . . . 3 credits (*OR 2 of 2 languages*) . . . . (4 credits)
- History . . . . . 3 credits
- Physical Education . . . . . minimum of 1 season/semester per year for 3 years
- Health . . . . . 1 year
- Ethics & Character . . . . . 1 year

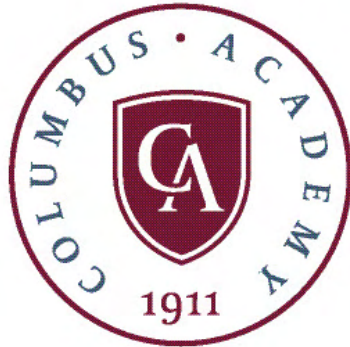
## Additional Requirements

- Public Speaking . . . . . 0.25 credits (*Junior Speech*)
- Community Service . . . . . 50 hours
- Senior Project . . . . . 75 hours (*completed May of Grade 12*)



Website: columbusacademy.org • Phone: 614.509.2311  
 CEEB/ACT Code: 361525

# SMARTTRACK®



**Columbus Academy is providing access to SMARTTRACK®  
College Funding to help you learn how best to pay for college,  
how to pay *less* for college, and how to keep your retirement safe  
in the process.**

Creating your account and completing the secure online assessment takes about 5 minutes.

Scan the QR code to get started.



# Factors in College Readiness and Success

<b>Dispositions</b>	<b>Definition</b>	Internal characteristics that distinguish a person's predominant outlook or characteristic attitude	<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personality</li><li>• Temperament</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Values</li><li>• Attitudes</li></ul>
<b>Habits of Mind</b>	<b>Definition</b>	"Habits of thought & action that help people manage uncertain or challenging situations... [supporting] thoughtful and intelligent action" (Costa & Kallick, 2000)	<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Metacognitive Skills</li><li>• Creative Thinking</li><li>• Study Attitudes</li><li>• Outcome Expectations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intellectual Curiosity</li><li>• Appreciation For Diversity</li><li>• Leadership</li><li>• Positive Self-Concept</li></ul>
<b>Executive Functioning Abilities</b>	<b>Definition</b>	Foundational skills that allow individuals to effectively navigate daily tasks, including the ability to "orient, plan, program responses and verify and modify performances" (Denckla, 1996)	<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Study Habits</li><li>• Long-Term Goal Setting</li><li>• Realistic Self-Appraisal</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reasoning</li><li>• Decision Making</li><li>• Self-Control</li><li>• Goal Commitment</li></ul>
<b>External Resources</b>	<b>Definition</b>	External factors that the individual may be able to access to support college readiness/success	<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• University Fit</li><li>• Financial Stability</li><li>• Institution Intervention</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family Education Beliefs</li><li>• Support Person</li></ul>
<b>College Knowledge</b>	<b>Definition</b>	Explicit and implicit knowledge required for college success; essentially knowing how to "do" college	<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge of college requirements, placement test policies, tuition costs</li><li>• Understanding of the structure of college</li><li>• Ability to recognize the systemic requirements and norms</li></ul>	
<b>Academic Factors</b>	<b>Definition</b>	Factors explicitly targeted in formal education	<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subject matter knowledge, high school grades, standardized test scores, etc.</li></ul>	



## Books and Periodicals

*Students and Parents are encouraged to explore these resources*

### Books

- Colleges That Change Lives, Loren Pope
- Creative Colleges: A Guide for Student Actors, Artists, Dancers, Musicians and Writers, Elaina Loveland
- Fiske Guide to Colleges, Edward Fiske
- The College Finder: Choose the School That's Right for You!, Steven R. Antonoff, Ph.D.
- The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Differences, 14th Edition: 338 Schools with Programs or Services for Students with ADHD, ASD, or Learning Differences (College Admissions Guides), The Princeton Review
- The Truth about College Admission: A Family Guide to Getting In and Staying Together, Brennan Barnard and Rick Clark
- Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania, Frank Bruni
- Who Gets In and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions, Jeffrey Selingo

### Periodicals (with good "college admission" sections or educational writers)

- *Inside Higher Ed* (author Scott Jaschik is recommended)
- *The Atlantic Monthly*
- *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (author Eric Hoover is recommended)
- *US News & World Report* (however, be cautious of those rankings!)

### Social Media

- College Board
- ACT
- NCAA
- Common App
- Chronicle of Higher Education
- Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools (ACCIS)
- National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC)
- DeanJ @UVA Admissions
- Eric Hoover
- specific colleges & universities
- specific athletic conferences

Follow our college counselors on Instagram and Twitter for the latest in the world of college counseling!



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@Vikings2College

# COLLEGES THAT CHANGE LIVES

40 SCHOOLS THAT WILL  
 CHANGE THE WAY YOU  
 THINK ABOUT COLLEGES

## LOREN POPE

Author of *LOOKING BEYOND THE IVY LEAGUE*

REVISED BY HILARY MASELL OSWALD



### Getting Beyond the Hype

(or Why You Can Relax and Enjoy  
 Your College Search)

Let's begin by agreeing that college should change your life. It's a catchy idea (and not a bad book title), so hang on to it for a minute and contemplate: What does it mean to find a college that changes your life?

The answer depends on you, but for all college-bound teens, the idea of a transformative college experience is an invitation to be bold. Don't fall for Ivy worship. Don't listen to the blather about "best" schools whipped up by the rankings game. Don't let your older friends' descriptions of frat parties and football games define what college should be for you.

Be bold. Set your expectations high.

It won't be easy. The national conversation about higher education is obsessed with outcomes: What do you *get* for your four (or five or six) years in college? A little piece of paper that says you did what the college told you to do? A bigger paycheck? An entrée into grad school? A photo op with the college president?

This question makes sense in light of how expensive a college degree is. But it misses an essential point: College isn't just about the end result. It's also about the means, the process, the path you take to earn your degree, whom you meet, and who inspires and mentors you. If the path is right for you, you'll get the piece of paper, the bigger paycheck, the acceptance to grad school, the

photo op with the president, and more—you'll be a sharper, wiser, and better-prepared adult.

To find a life-changing college, you must pay attention to *how* a college educates its undergraduates. Scratch the surface of the Ivies, their clones, and most large universities, and you'll be surprised at what you find. Undergraduates are generally ignored. There are few rewards for teaching, so professors do little of it. If they do, you'll see them only behind a lectern. At a large state university, your adviser won't know much about you, except that you need to register for Biology 102 next semester. If you can't get a course, even if it's necessary for other classes you must take, you'll just have to wait until the next time it's offered. There's little chance anyone will advocate for you, and when the time comes to find a professor to guide you toward your next steps—graduate school, a job, a year as part of a volunteer corps—you'll have a hard time finding anyone who knows you well enough to give advice or write a letter of recommendation on your behalf.

Dr. William Deresiewicz, a writer and former Yale professor of English, wrote in *The American Scholar* in 2008, "There are due dates and attendance requirements at places like Yale, but no one takes them very seriously. Extensions are available for the asking; threats to deduct credit for missed classes are rarely, if ever, carried out. In other words, students at places like Yale get an endless string of second chances."

The Ivies inculcate feelings of security and entitlement. "Getting through the gate is very difficult, but once you're in, there's almost nothing you can do to get kicked out," Dr. Deresiewicz writes. Students conflate their success (or supposed success) with their worth and value, so failure is terrifying.

Therein lies the rub: "[I]f you're afraid to fail, you're afraid to take risks, which begins to explain the final and most damning disadvantage of an elite education: that it is profoundly anti-intellectual. This will seem counterintuitive. Aren't kids at elite schools the smartest ones around, at least in the narrow academic sense? Don't they work harder than anyone else—indeed, harder than any previous generation? They are. They do. But being an

intellectual is not the same as being smart. Being an intellectual means more than doing your homework."

Dr. Deresiewicz's coup de grâce is a condemnation of professors at Ivies and their ilk: "Throughout much of the 20th century, with the growth of the humanistic ideal in American colleges, students might have encountered the big questions in the classrooms of professors possessed of a strong sense of pedagogic mission. Teachers like that still exist in this country, but the increasingly dire exigencies of academic professionalization have made them all but extinct at elite universities."

The former professor is not the only one to bemoan the quality of education at big-name schools. Every so often, an administrator at an Ivy or a flagship public university publicly confesses his or her institution's sins: We aren't paying attention to undergraduates; we are graduating people who aren't any sharper or inspired than they were when they arrived here; we've sacrificed learning at the altar of research.

Then these contrite administrators point to liberal arts colleges and say, "We need to be more like them." The Ivies and large universities are great places to go to graduate school (after all, their focus is on grad students!), but for the very best undergraduate education, seek out a small liberal arts college.

Here's why. The colleges in this book have one primary mission: educate the undergraduate. Each appeals to a slightly different type of teenager, but they all share a mission to raise students' trajectories and develop thinkers, leaders, and moral citizens.

The little-known truth is that these colleges have been on the cutting edge of higher education for decades. Many of them have outperformed most of the rankings sweethearts in the percentages of graduates who become America's scientists and scholars. Their students have won Fulbrights, Rhodeses, Goldwaters, Watsons, and other prestigious postgraduate scholarships far out of proportion to their sizes and selectivity. And their graduates get accepted to medical, dental, law, and graduate schools at rates that far outpace the national averages.

These colleges not only equip their students to live full lives,



but they also work their magic on a wide range of students. The list includes colleges for the venturesome, the do-it-yourselfers, those who need structure or nurture or both, the late bloomers, the naïfs, and those who need a second chance.

Every one of these catalytic places will push and stretch you beyond what you think possible; they'll let you slip and slide and they'll help you find your footing, but they won't let you hide from your potential or yourself.

Almost all of them accept more than half of their applicants, and they attract strikingly different kinds of kids. Their programs range from the choose-your-own-adventure challenges of Marlboro and New College to the prescribed, no-electives approach of the Great Books curriculum at St. John's.

Their power is in how they teach. The focus is on the student, not the faculty; he is heavily involved in his education. There are no passive ears; students and faculty work so closely together, they even coauthor publications. Teaching is an act of love. Students and professors develop a mentor relationship in class, and professors become students' hiking companions, intramural teammates, dinner hosts, and friends. Learning is collaborative rather than competitive; values are central; community matters. These colleges are places of great coherence, where the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

It is these circumstances that develop leaders, people who can land on their feet, who are bold and imaginative, and who can see the big picture.

These colleges are places where people will listen to you. Not because all of your ideas are brilliant. (They're not.) Not because people are pandering to you. (They're not.) People—professors, peers, administrators—will listen to you because it's an essential part of learning. So many institutions of higher education in this country expect you only to listen—as you sit in a class of hundreds of students. But doesn't it make you wonder how students in these classes test their own ideas?

It's a powerful thing to present your idea to an expert and hear,

"Yes, you're on to something!" or "No, I don't think you've got much to stand on. Let's talk about a different route." That's the stuff of life. And when you must get your own job, you won't last long if the only thing you know how to do is present someone else's ideas.

So let these schools inspire you. Dare to imagine your college years as a billion interactions that draw out your talents, ignite new passions, challenge your assumptions, nurture your hopes, and teach you how to own your place at the table when you're done.

### WHY YOU CAN (AND SHOULD) IGNORE THE RANKINGS

Imagine that someone asked you to rate NFL, NBA, NHL, and MLB teams on one scale. Are the Colts better than the Yankees? How would you convert triples to fourth-down conversions or break-aways to free throws?

You couldn't—no one could. Yet when publications rank colleges and universities, they're essentially engaging in this kind of absurdity. How can anyone measure what happens in a small philosophy class in Hoboken against what happens in a large Biology 101 lecture in Portland? And where does the individual student's growth come into play?

No matter the absurdity, publications make these comparisons all the time, based on criteria dreamed up by their editors, many of whom never talk to an administrator, professor, or student before crowning champions and runners-up. Statisticians measure mostly input factors—incoming students' SAT scores and class ranks, selectivity, professors' salaries—many of which are totally irrelevant to education. They know nothing about what happens to young minds and souls in the four years of college. Judging the quality of a college by the grades and scores of the freshmen it admits is like judging the quality of a hospital by the health of the patients it admits. What happens during the stay is what counts.

Rankings have fallen over the edge of misleading into the sea of

ridiculousness. You can find out which are the best “jock schools” and which are “dodgeball targets,” places characterized by “reefer madness” or “palatial dorms.” Every year, the media report on the biggest party school. (Doesn’t it make you wonder exactly how that’s determined? Is someone measuring students’ average blood-alcohol levels on a series of Saturday nights?)

So why do we pay attention? Rankings proliferated in the absence of clear research about the effects and value of higher education. Statistics like SAT scores and professors’ salaries are much easier to quantify than life-changing classes or personal epiphanies. And college is expensive: We want the best outcome, the best return on our investment, and the rankings make it seem so easy. But they jinx college choices year after year because they don’t—they can’t—tell *you* what’s best for *you*.

You have better options for evaluating the power of a particular college’s teaching, though not all colleges participate. One is the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, pronounced “Nes-sie,” like the Loch Ness monster). Each year, NSSE randomly surveys freshmen and seniors at four-year colleges across the country to find out how often they participate in activities that research has shown are linked to learning, such as studying, continuing class discussions outside class, receiving prompt feedback from professors, and using opportunities for collaboration with faculty. It also assesses how well the college uses its resources to get students engaged in these activities. NSSE allows schools to compare their results with those of similar colleges, so schools know how they are faring.

The other tool is the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), a three-part test that asks students to answer realistic problems that require them to assess the value and importance of various pieces of information. Researchers evaluate students’ written responses to the problems and “assess their abilities to think critically, reason analytically, solve problems and communicate clearly and cogently,” the CLA says. The assessment measures students’ growth over time and compares results across schools.

NSSE and CLA don’t release their reports to the public, but if

your prospective colleges participate—and many in this book do—you can ask to see the results. They’re far better measures of a college’s efficacy than the rankings.

## WHY SELECTIVITY IS JUST SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Thanks to ranking systems that give high marks to schools for refusing admission to the majority of applicants, we’ve been taught that selectivity equals value or prestige or rigor. That’s bunk.

But lots of people—and colleges—buy it. When colleges report their acceptance rates, they calculate those rates based on all of the students who sent in *any part* of the application. That calculation makes their prospective pool bigger and their resulting acceptance rate lower: If you have a pool of one hundred applications and you accept twenty of them, you’re more selective than if you have a pool of fifty applicants and you accept twenty of them.

This method is misleading because students don’t always complete their applications. Here’s an example: Emma uses the Common App to apply to six colleges. She sees that Awesome College allows her to apply for free, so she checks Awesome College’s box because she figures, “Why not?” But Awesome College has a supplement, which Emma doesn’t finish because she wasn’t very interested in Awesome College in the first place, and she’s tired of writing essays about which character from her favorite book is most like her.

But Awesome College still counts Emma as an applicant, even though there’s no way she could have actually gotten in because she didn’t finish her application. See the problem?

So for this book, every college has recalculated its acceptance rates based on its pool of completed applications. In each chapter, you’ll also find admitted students’ average high-school GPAs on a 4.0 scale and the standardized test scores for the middle 50 percent of accepted students. (The reported SAT ranges are math and critical reading scores combined and don’t include writing.) Those

numbers give you a much better understanding of your chances of admission *if you actually finish your application*.

Better still, admissions officers at these colleges won't toss out your application if you have lower-than-desired test scores or you don't fit their academic profile perfectly. They're eager to know you and figure out if you'll succeed at their college, and they're willing to take chances on students who show potential and curiosity. And as of 2011, thirteen of them are test optional, which means that they don't require standardized test scores for admission: Agnes Scott, Clark, Denison, Earlham, Goucher, Guilford, Juniata, Knox, Lawrence, Marlboro, McDaniel, St. John's, and Ursinus. (Home-schooled students still might have to submit scores; check with the colleges that interest you.)

These schools' philosophy is countercultural, and the implications are huge: Your SAT score, your class rank, and your GPA do not determine your fate! That's good news for teenagers who haven't hit their academic strides, and it's also important news for those who have. In interviews with more than a thousand students at these colleges, I found both types of students. The late bloomers said that with patient guidance and gentle nudges from faculty members, they discovered their own talents and passion for learning. And students who were academic rock stars in high school gushed that these schools taught them how to think and take smart risks.

In short, you don't have to be one of the jittery millions of students anxiously fattening résumés to impress some high-status school that won't do nearly as much for you as the catalytic college that really wants you.

### WHY A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL

"Liberal arts" has nothing to do with a college's political bent or its sculpture program. It refers to an educational philosophy that embraces the value and importance of studying core academic subjects, typically comprising the humanities (literature; history, fine

arts, languages, religion, and philosophy) and the sciences (natural sciences, math, and social sciences).

The ancient Greeks dreamed up the idea of liberal learning. Sons of wealthy families studied such things as logic and astronomy, not trades, as the lower classes did. The Greeks saw this education as essential to society: These young men would grow up to debate laws in the assembly, hold sway over their communities, lead their fellow citizens during wartime, and influence ideas of beauty and goodness. Their education was a cultural inheritance expected to cultivate their intellect and their virtue. "Liberal" refers to these young men's freedom, political and economic, to get such an elite education.

Liberal arts colleges today depend on the same philosophy: Citizens ought to be educated in ideas and ways of knowing that aren't tied to doing one particular job. And even though the liberal arts tradition is more than 2,500 years old, it's more practical today than ever.

Liberal learning teaches students to investigate and understand the world: microorganisms and macroeconomics, the essence of a poem and the validity of political rhetoric, theories of chemical reactions and reactions to artistic expression. It builds nimble minds and creates independent thinkers.

It also builds the skills employers say they want. In 2009, as the economy sank into a recession, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) commissioned a survey of 302 private-sector employers to ask what they valued in employees. When asked where colleges should place the most emphasis,

- 89 percent said effective oral and written communication;
- 81 percent said critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills;
- 79 percent said knowledge and skills applied to real-world settings;
- 75 percent said connections between choices or actions and ethical decisions;
- 71 percent said teamwork and the ability to collaborate;
- 70 percent said the ability to innovate and be creative.

They might as well have written the marketing material for liberal learning.

If the first decade of the new millennium taught us anything, it's that the world is a wild, raucous place where almost anything can happen. And in such a place, nobody can tell you precisely how your career will go. Nobody can give you the facts you need to do your job ten years from now because nobody knows what your job will be ten years from now. A liberal education gives you skills you will always need to be an adaptive learner, an effective communicator, and a sharp-idea generator.

And then there are the personal benefits of liberal learning in the information age. Our digital idolatry has cost us focus. It has turned communication into fleeting 140-character messages and status updates of little consequence. It has diminished our need and ability to contemplate. It has unraveled the definition of community and allowed us to define friendships by clicks of a mouse. Of course, you can be a liberal arts student and love technology. None of these schools calls you to be a Luddite. But the richness and depth of your learning will enhance the things that this era of ubiquitous information and social media might cost us: patience, intimacy, an appreciation of nuance, a desire for truth, a sharp eye, and a tender heart.

It sounds lofty, but a liberal education doesn't just prepare you for work. It prepares you for life and all the things life comprises. It teaches you how to tell the truth from the slop. It equips you to vote, make good choices, influence your community, raise your kids, take smart risks, and keep learning long after the days when you're reading books simply because a professor put them on a syllabus.

Emerson wrote, "'What will you have?' quoth God. 'Pay for it and take it.'" These are places eager and eminently able, if you are willing to pay with hard work, to empower you to take it all—and carry it with you the rest of your life.

# Engineering vs. Liberal Arts: Who's Right— Bill or Steve?

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When students asked what subjects they should major in to become a tech entrepreneur, I used to say engineering, mathematics, and science—because an education in these fields is the prerequisite for innovation, and because engineers make the best entrepreneurs.

That was several years ago.

I realized how much my views have changed when the *The New York Times* asked me to write a piece for its “Room for Debate” forum this week. The paper wanted me to comment on the divergence of opinion between Bill Gates and Steve Jobs. In a speech before the National Governors Association on Feb 28, Gates had argued that we need to spend our limited education budget on disciplines that produce the most jobs. He implied that we should reduce our investment in the liberal arts because liberal-arts degrees don't correlate well with job creation. Three days later, at the unveiling of the iPad 2, Steve Jobs said: “It's in Apple's DNA that technology alone is not enough—it's technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the result that makes our heart sing, and nowhere is that more true than in these post-PC devices”.

Because I am a professor at the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke University, and given all the positive things I say about U.S. engineering education, *The Times* assumed that I would side with Bill Gates; that I would write a piece that endorsed his views. But, even though I believe that engineering is one of the most important professions, I have learned that the liberal arts are equally important. It takes artists, musicians, and psychologists working side by side with engineers to build products as elegant as the iPad. And anyone—with education in any field—can achieve success in Silicon Valley.

Here is what I wrote for *The Times*.

It's commonly believed that engineers dominate Silicon Valley and that there is a correlation between the capacity for innovation and an education in mathematics and the sciences. Both assumptions are false.

My research team at Duke and Harvard surveyed 652 U.S.-born chief executive officers and heads of product engineering at 502 technology companies. We found that they tended to be highly educated: 92 percent held bachelor's degrees, and 47 percent held

higher degrees. But only 37 percent held degrees in engineering or computer technology, and just two percent held them in mathematics. The rest have degrees in fields as diverse as business, accounting, finance, health care, and arts and the humanities.

Gaining a degree made a big difference in the sales and employment of the company that a founder started. But the field that the degree was in and the school that it was obtained from were not a significant factor.

Over the past year, I have interviewed the founders of more than 200 Silicon Valley start-ups. The most common traits I have observed are a passion to change the world and the confidence to defy the odds and succeed.

It is the same in business. In the two companies I founded, I was involved in hiring more than 1000 workers over the years. I never observed a correlation between the school of graduation or field of study, on one hand, and success in the workplace, on the other. What make people successful are their motivation, drive, and ability to learn from mistakes, and how hard they work.

And then there is the matter of design. Steve Jobs taught the world that good engineering is important but that what matters the most is good design. You can teach artists how to use software and graphics tools, but it's much harder to turn engineers into artists.

Our society needs liberal-arts majors as much as it does engineers and scientists.

But I need to acknowledge the difficult reality: that employment prospects are dim for liberal-arts majors. Graduates from top engineering schools such as Duke are always in high demand. But PhDs in English from even the most prestigious universities, such as UC-Berkeley, can't get jobs. The data I presented above were on the background of tech-company founders—those who made the transition into entrepreneurship. Most don't. And, as you can note from Bill Gates' speech, there is a bias against liberal arts and humanities.

Angelika Blendstrup is an author and a lecturer who holds a PhD in Bilingual Bicultural Education from Stanford. She says that her liberal-arts background is "great for writing papers or PhDs, but it would be better to have studied engineering and have a choice of jobs".

Charles River Venture Partner emeritus, Ted Dintersmith, on the other hand, received a PhD in Engineering from Stanford. But he also studied liberal arts. Ted says "It doesn't have to be either/or—I double-majored in Physics and English, and never regretted combining two such different disciplines".

So there is no black and white here. We need musicians, artists, and psychologists, as much as we need bio-medical engineers, computer programmers, and scientists.

My advice to my students—and to my own children—is to study what interests them the most; to excel in fields in which they have the most passion and ability; to change the world in their own way and on their own terms. Once they master their domain, they can find the path to entrepreneurship. They can then come up with creative ways of solving the problems that they have encountered, and apply their ideas to other fields where their knowledge adds value. Maybe they can team up with the hard-core engineers who develop the clunky, inelegant, over-engineered products that Bill is famous for; maybe work with Steve to create the next iPhone or iPad.

You can read more views and witness the lively debate on the *New York Times* web site.

*Editor's note: Vivek Wadhwa is an entrepreneur turned academic. He is a Visiting Scholar at UC-Berkeley, Senior Research Associate at Harvard Law School, Director of Research at the Center for Entrepreneurship and Research Commercialization at Duke University, and Distinguished Visiting Scholar at The Halle Institute for Global Learning at Emory University. You can follow him on Twitter at @wadhwa and find his research at [www.wadhwa.com](http://www.wadhwa.com).*