

**100 Black Men of America**  
**Education Committee Subcommittee on Higher Education Committee**  
**“ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY”**

**ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS – Requirements for College/University Acceptance**

Perhaps one of the more important things parents and prospective students need to consider when thinking about enrolling in a college or university are the requirements for admission. It would be wise to begin planning and preparing to meet the entrance requirements of higher education institutions by the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or sooner. One of the first things that should be considered is the level of selectivity of the institutions a student may wish to attend.

**Academic Achievement (GPA)**

The high school grade point average (GPA) is a critical factor in the college application and admissions process. The higher the GPA the better chance for selection, as colleges and universities target the “best and brightest” students, and the GPA is part of a historical record of knowledge and predictor of success in higher education. The selection process is competitive within and across all institutions, so the closer the student applicant’s GPA is to 4.0 on a 4.0 scale, the better chance for selection, especially when considered among the other critical components for admission. It is important to understand that the high school GPA is the average of 4 years of high school grades, starting with 9<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. High School students with their parents need to do the research to learn the minimum number of high school credits required for admission for the college of choice. It is the student’s advantage to successfully complete as many advanced placement courses as practical during the high school years which, thereby, enables the student to earn college credits prior to leaving high school and resulting in the college application being more impressive.

**Test Scores**

Conduct research far in advance on what is required for the colleges/universities you may wish to attend and learn about the college entrance testing program, including studying reports in the College Board on the SAT: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) and for the ACT: [www.act.org](http://www.act.org). Some colleges/universities are extremely specific on which tests are required and the minimum score for consideration, while there are other schools which do not require an entrance exam for consideration. Among those which require applicants to take an entrance exam, the most popular are the ACT and SAT exams. The higher the score, the better chance for selection. It is advisable to study months in advance to prepare prior to taking either exam. Also, plan on taking such exams more than one time. It is common but not universal for the minimum score requirement to be 18 on the ACT. An SAT score of 1,600 places you in the top 99<sup>th</sup>ile among test takers in the country. The average or 50<sup>th</sup>ile SAT score for 2019 was 1059 composite score: Evidence-based writing (ERW) – 531 and math – 528. For the year 2020 the average composite score was: 1050-1060, with the ERW score at 530. Some colleges make exceptions on the minimum test score requirement, depending upon the high school GPA and graduation examination results.

There are basically three levels of institutional selectivity with respect to testing. They are:

**Open Enrollment Schools:** Technical College; Junior College; Community College

**Selective Schools:** 800-1000 SAT / 17-22 ACT Class Rank and GPA are important, Prerequisite courses required

**Highly Selective Schools:** Require very high SAT/ACT (1100+ / 24+) Scores; Top Class Rank (10%-20%), High GPA in High School (B+ or Better)

All colleges will consider the academic record of a student for admission to the various academic programs. Some academic programs have higher admissions standards than others. For example, an engineering program may have a higher entrance requirement than a teacher education or political science program. Strong recommendations from a high school counselor or teachers can be helpful for admission to some higher education institutions as well as some level of community service or special talents or achievements.

### **Curriculum Requirements**

Many four-year institutions of higher education will require the following courses in high school.

- 4 Units of English
- 4 Units of Math (Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Geometry, Trigonometry)
- 3 Units of Science
- 2 Units of Social Studies including U.S. History
- 1 Unit of Government/Economics
- 1 Unit of Physical Education, Band, or ROTC, etc.
- 1 Unit of Computer Science
- 1-2 Units of a Foreign Language
- Electives in Fine Arts (Art, Music, Dance, Theater)

It is essential that a student as well as a student's parents meet with the high school guidance counselor to ensure that a student is following the appropriate curriculum plan to meet the entrance requirements of the higher education institution(S) of his or her choice. Some higher education institutions have eliminated SAT and ACT test requirements. However, it is necessary to check with a student's guidance counselor or the prospective college or university of choice.

Several higher education institutions offer pre-college summer programs to help prepare students to attend their institution once they graduate from high school. Some of these programs are entirely free of cost. This is certainly an option that should be examined by contacting a guidance counselor or a higher education institution to inquire.

### **Selectivity Barriers/Cautions**

The student applicant may avoid barriers to selection by being cautious and precise in responding to each section and question in the application. For example, adhere to these tips:

- Essay –
  - Write in full sentences and edit as appropriate prior to submission.
  - Respond directly to prompt or topic, and make sure the essay is well organized, not too wordy or rambling and that only relevant material is included.
  - Use high level, age appropriate language in the essay and check for correct grammar, spelling and mechanics of writing utilized.
- Fees –
  - Know which fees and other payments are due to the college and make all payments in a timely manner.
  - Make sure you do not owe money to the high school or school district from which you are graduating. Some high schools will place a hold on school records if there is a debt owed to the school.
- Community Involvement and Participation in Extracurricular Activities –
  - Be effusive in telling your story of engagement in showing service above self, including record of dates, places, and hours of helping others.
  - Project an image of yourself as a well-rounded individual who will be an asset to the college/university.
  - Include in your portfolio of successful accomplishments your involvement in school, church, and community programs, especially if you served as an officer and instances of being the program speaker.
- Background/Profile Information -
  - Do not hesitate to articulate your best qualities, given the opportunity.
  - Now is not the time to get in trouble. Be careful in your conduct and who you “hang around”. Think in terms of risks-rewards. Do not risk any behaviors that may lead to police involvement or trouble throughout your school career. Your “good name” and character will be considered during the college selection process.

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The College Board

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ACT – Solutions for College and Career Readiness:

### **PRE-COLLEGIATE ADVISING - How do you get admitted into college**

Initial conversations with students about college can be exciting and engaging or intimidating and confusing. There are students who have defined their career choices in

elementary school and have well developed plans of actions that include the schools they would like to attend and the majors they will pursue. The students who have established future career goals and a course of action generally require assistance with logistical concerns such as pursuing funding, entrance examinations, completing applications.

While many students begin developing on college and career plans in middle school or earlier, there are student who defer this planning. Those who have not engaged in college and career planning by high school may have done so for several reasons such as being unclear about the career path they would like to take, not see college as being a viable option for them or others in their sphere of influence, lack of exposure to colleges or insufficient guidance pertaining to college preparation. Still, some may be unsure about their options because of less than stellar academic records on the secondary level or feel that college may be unattainable financially.

It is critical that policymakers, higher education and secondary educational institutions, community organizations and parents provide mechanisms and opportunities for students to better understand their options for attending college. The recommended opportunities include but are not limited to funding, early conversations around career interests, university campus visits and engagement with admissions counselors and recruiters. This is especially important for the students of parents who have not attended college and for those who have been traditionally marginalized and underserved. Community organizations and institutions should consider taking an inventory of their impact and reach, with scalability as a focus, to increase the number of underserved students making the decision to attend college. It is also recommended that students begin the pre-collegiate advising process prior to the freshman year of high school.

### **Required HS Coursework**

All coursework from the ninth grade through graduation will be evaluated by college admissions offices. While some colleges are more competitive than others, the general requirements for college admissions are four years of English, three to four years of mathematics (Algebra I and II, Geometry, Trigonometry, Calculus, three years of laboratory science (Biology, Chemistry or Physics, Earth/Space Science), Social Studies (U.S. history, U.S. government, World History or Geography) and two years of foreign language (College Board, n.d.). Many colleges also recommend coursework in the arts.

### **Career Planning - Conversations to build awareness around college admittance and financial aid.**

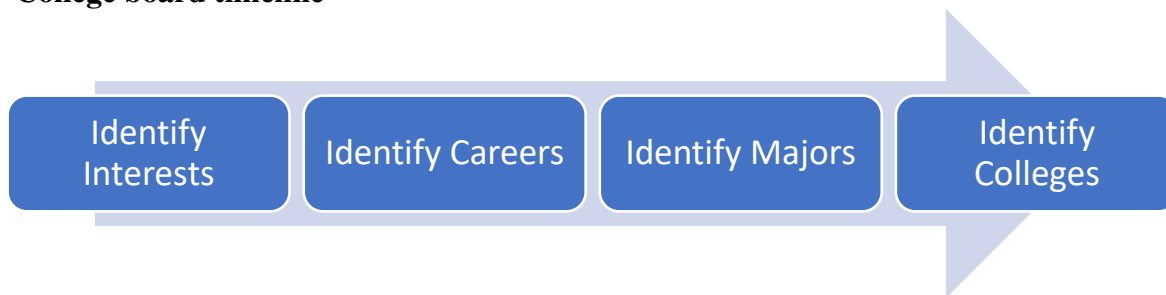
Several entities have been established to support the planning and execution of career and college goals. In doing so, these groups have echoed similar guidelines for this process. Students should engage in an inventory of their passions, goals, and interests to create a career plan of action. By taking a personal assessment, students can identify and eliminate career paths based on what may be most suitable for them. This process should be systematic, connecting career interests to college majors and then to colleges offering the respective discipline. The colleges identified can then be evaluated in terms of their suitability to individual students.

### **Holistic Admission**

Historically, many schools have relied on the admissions essay, a counselor's recommendation along with test scores and GPA's to determine admission. However, far too often decisions only came down to the latter two considerations. Increasingly colleges and

universities with any level of selectivity are utilizing holistic admissions to improve upon the make-up of an incoming class. Often students who previously may have been denied acceptance are offered a more thorough review of their potential for success at that particular institution. Holistic admission offers institutions the ability to construct a class of students that most closely aligns with the institution's unique mission. The process involves among others, a "(c)onsideration of multiple, often intersecting, factors—academic, nonacademic, and contextual—that, in combination, uniquely define and reflect accomplishments and potential contributions of each applicant in light of his or her background and circumstances."

### College board timeline



### High School College Admissions Counselors

Students should engage in critical conversations in each phase of this continuum. Parents, adults and career professionals in addition to high school and college counselors can greatly assist in this effort. On the high school level, it is recommended that counselors actively engage students in activities that will help them identify their career goals and connect them with the appropriate personnel on the collegiate level. These connections should not be limited to the admissions offices, but should also include representatives on the department level, where students can gain better understanding on the exact requirements and expectations necessary for degree attainment. Additionally, if students have additional interests outside of academics (i.e. athletics, band, civic organizations, etc.) these initial connections could generate increased interest in college for students and could assist with matriculation.

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## CHOOSING A COLLEGE – How Do I Select A College

When it comes to choosing a college, the most important consideration is which of the over 4000 institutions in the U.S. (there are plenty more international institutions) provides the best place for success. Collegiate success is often measured in academic accomplishments, subsequent career opportunities, and the quality of one's life. Additionally, students often seek colleges where they can explore, expand, and enrich their horizons. The selection is also influenced by a host of variables such as cost to attend, size of the school, location, and student body make-up. The following is a breakdown of some of these variables.

While it is fully recognized that two-year colleges may be a solid option for some, this discussion will focus on accredited four-year colleges and universities that lead to baccalaureate and subsequent graduate and/or professional degree options. Unaccredited and for-profit institutions are highly discouraged and as such are not part of this presentation.

### **Public / Private**

In general, state funded higher education is known as public higher education. Every state in the union supports a system or systems of public colleges and universities. Each state also has a designated flagship university that typically has that state's name in the title, it typically has a very large enrollment, and it typically has a comprehensive offering of degrees, majors, research opportunities in addition to a large campus with plenty of extracurricular activities and intercollegiate athletics. These state supported institutions also are usually less expensive options than private colleges. Public colleges were designed to meet the needs of a particular state or region of a state. They serve the public's interest and as such have more generous admissions options for the citizens of the state. (Ex: University of Michigan, North Carolina State University, Jackson State University, Louisiana State University)

Conversely, institutions that are run by private boards of control and private organizations are referred to as private institutions. Many are affiliated with religious organizations or were founded by religious congregations. These colleges and universities are located throughout the country. They typically have more competitive admissions requirements and almost always are more expensive than public universities. They tend to be smaller institutions, with long histories, and some have quite wealthy endowments. Private colleges and universities are known for their academic rigor and their reputations for scholarship. (Ex: Harvard University, Pepperdine University, Xavier University of Louisiana, Emory University)

### **HBCU / PWI**

Just over 100 of the 4000 colleges and universities in the United States are known as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). These institutions are so designated because they were founded before 1965 with the express purpose of educating African Americans. Having been founded in a racially segregated time is significant since most colleges prior to 1965 did not enroll black students and those that did, did so in small amounts. That is why the HBCU's have historically and continue today to be particularly focused on black student achievement. Currently while most are still predominantly black, they enroll an increasingly diverse student body enrolling larger numbers of white, Asian, and Latinx students. It should also be noted that most HBCU's have very diverse faculties. These institutions are as varied as PWI's with some that are large or small; private or public; and academically strong or academically limited. Nearly all are located in the southeastern part of the country and nearly all offer extensive extra-curricular activities and athletic and cultural events. HBCU's instill a great deal of race pride and institution pride which often translates to a lifetime of social capital. (Ex:

Morehouse College, Howard University, Xavier University of Louisiana, Jackson State University)

Predominantly White Institutions (PWI's) refer to those institutions that do not fall into the HBCU, HSI, or TCU categories and whose enrollment is made up of predominantly (but no longer exclusively) white students. In addition to HBCU's there are two other types of diverse collegiate institutions. Colleges and universities with at least 25% of their enrollment from the Latinx community are known as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI's). Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU's) are institutions that are controlled and operated by American Indian tribes. Like HBCU's, PWI's are quite varied with some that are: large or small; private or public; and academically strong or academically limited. They can be found across the country and in every state. These institutions typically enjoy more funding and have larger endowments than HBCU's. Like HBCU's these schools also offer extensive extra-curricular activities and athletic and cultural events. Presently most of these institutions are working to increase diversity on their campuses. (Ex: University of Michigan, Harvard University, North Carolina State University, University of Kansas)

### **In-state / out-of-state**

Whether you choose to go to a school in your state or outside of your state can depend on several factors. You might have to go out of state if you want to attend an HBCU and your state does not have one; if you are interested in a discipline that no schools in your state offer; or if you find a highly selective college that is located in another state. On the other hand, you may stay in state if you choose to be closer to home or if you want to attend a school in your state where most of your family or students from your high school have gone. However, one of the biggest factors is staying in state to save on the costs of education. Most state public schools charge out-of-state students higher tuition than residents of that state. Further in an attempt to keep their citizens in-state, a number of states now have special scholarship programs and incentives (TOPS in Louisiana, HOPE in Georgia) that provide money for students who attend college in their home state.

### **Academic Reputation**

As you can see, many different types of universities exist. They have a great deal of difference and yet they have a lot in common. One thing that can be found at each of these various types of universities are institutions with exceptional academic reputations. These schools are usually highly selective and often cost more than less academically strong institutions. They often have better academic reputations because they have exceptional faculty and they offer more rigorous programs and majors. However, more important than the overall reputation of a school is the reputation of your chosen field of study or major at the college or university you choose. (Harvard University, Morehouse College, Stanford University, Spelman College)

Which is the best option for you? There are certainly advantages and disadvantages to each of the options presented. But ultimately it should come down to where will your chances for academic and career success be best. Your decision should be based on which school has the best experience for you academically, socially, and certainly financially. It is an important decision and one that often creates a bit of anxiety, but suffice it to say that if you select an accredited (not-for-profit) college or university that has historically produced successful graduates with whom you have much in common, your chances of success increase. However,

regardless of where you enroll, your success is typically only limited by the kind of mentors and necessary resources you find available and the amount of work you are willing to put in.

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## **AFFORDABILITY - How Do I Pay for College**

When we ask the question about the cost to attend college, the answer can be intimidating. At a public 2-year college, tuition averages \$3,780 per academic year, plus \$8,990 for room and board. For an “in state” 4-year college, the costs average \$10,440 for tuition and an additional 11,510 for room and board. These costs increase to 26,820 for tuition and 11,510, room and board, for out of state colleges, and \$36,880 tuition and \$12,990 room and board for 4-year, non-profit, private colleges. To make it even more intimidating, these costs will likely increase every year that a student is enrolled. It is also prudent to add an additional \$2,500 to \$3,000 per year for personal expenses and recreation. (EducationalData.com)

So, the aspiration to attend college should be taken seriously by the student and his/her parents, and planning should begin as soon as possible for such an event. Also, it may be prudent to consider spending the first two years at a 2-year institution, in order to hold down some of the cost. Another consideration may be to plan to attend a college in one's hometown, and to stay with parents or relatives in order to save money on costs.

The Atlanta Chapter of 100 Black Men has a policy of providing financial assistance to as many students as possible who complete our Project Success program. We budget \$250,000 annually for this purpose. One-year grants are awarded, and these are renewable under conditions that we specify to the students at the time of the awards.

In the state of Georgia, students are able to take advantage of the Hope Grant or the Zell Miller Grant. The amount of these grants is set each year by the Georgia Legislature. Eligibility includes Georgia citizenship as well as a minimum B GPA. The Zell Miller Grant pays considerably more than the Hope Grant, based upon a much higher GPA. (GA Student Finance Commission).



Students who meet income and eligibility requirements may also qualify for the U.S. Government sponsored, Pell Grants. For 2020-2021, the maximum Federal Grant award is \$6,345, based upon qualifying factors. It is highly likely that many of the students that the 100 Black Men mentor will qualify for a Federal Pell grant, so it is imperative that we begin very early to counsel our students to apply. This includes providing assistance in completing the FAFSA application. It is critical that we work with parents and get them to provide their Federal Income Tax returns. We counsel the parents very early in the relationship to expect to have to produce the returns and other related documents that will be required.

Students with outstanding academic performance can expect to receive substantial financial aid if they are successful in being admitted to a top ranked, private, 4-year college. Many can attend, at greatly reduced cost, inclusive of tuition, fees, room, and board. This is where our mentoring and college preparation programs come into the picture. At the 100 Black Men of Atlanta, we conduct a “Saturday Academy” which meets twice per month (weekly during this summer and during the covid-19 crisis) At the academy, we do ACT/SAT test prep, as well as counselling about the financial and academic expectations to college attendance. This is in addition to our standard mentoring programs.

We have also begun our “Pipeline Program” for members of our Collegiate 100 program (and other qualified minority students). Under this program we secure internships for juniors and seniors. These internships provide needed professional experiences for the students. They also pay a stipend to the students for the summer that they work as interns. This is a new program, just starting in 2020. The pandemic has slowed our progress, but we have still succeeded in placing a number of our students. This is another program where chapter members may be able to aid and facilitation.

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