

# College Planning: How to Get Started

## STEP 1: GET STARTED

Assess your strengths, weaknesses, goals, passions, learning style, and social skills. What is most important to you in the college-search process? What do you hope to learn from the process?

## STEP 2: MAKE SOME BASIC DECISIONS

- Where do you want to live?  
a small liberal arts college, or a historically black or religiously affiliated college?
- Will you go to college full time? Part time?
- Do you want to attend a single-sex school, a technical college, a public or private college, a large university,  
• How important is the cultural/ideological diversity of the student body?

## STEP 3: ENLIST HELP

Who do you want to assist you in this process (parents, teachers, siblings, relatives, friends)?

## STEP 4: CONSULT REFERENCES AND WEBSITES

Look at college directories (College Board's *College Handbook*, Barron's, Peterson's) and use college searches (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>). Visit the websites of the colleges that interest you.

## STEP 5: TALK

Discuss your goals and plans with your parents, teachers, and school counselor. They can provide helpful advice.

## STEP 6: MEET WITH COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

Visit with college representatives when they come to your high school. Make a list of your important questions to ask the representatives. Also meet college personnel at area college fairs.

## STEP 7: VISIT CAMPUSES

Try to go to the college campus and take a tour, meet with admission and financial aid representatives, and ask students what they think about the college. Can't make the trip? Many colleges provide virtual tours on their websites.

Source: Amherst Regional High School, Massachusetts.