

# COLLEGE SELECTION

## 11<sup>TH</sup> - 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

### NOVEMBER 2008

#### Packing List

- The Basics (school folder, pencils, address change cards, etc.)
- Jr./Sr. Progress Form (1 per student)
- Senior Contact/Release Form (1 per senior)
- College Viewbook Packets (1 per 6 students)
- **College Picks** worksheet (1 per student)
- College Criteria Boxes (2 or 3 per workshop)  
Includes: College Criteria, Stickers, Glue Sticks, Scissors, and Markers
- *Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges 2009* (1 per workshop)
- Compass Carabiner Clips (1 per student)
- Assessments (3 per workshop)

#### Purpose:

The purpose of this workshop is to introduce students to college viewbooks and the criteria they need to consider when selecting a college. Students will participate in discussion about the worst reasons for choosing a college as well as steps to successfully selecting a college. Students will rank criteria in order of importance to them when selecting a college, then select two or three colleges of interest to compare.

#### Learning Outcomes & Assessment:

By the conclusion of this workshop, students will be able to identify one of the worst reasons for selecting a college, one successful college selection step, and their top college of interest.

#### Housekeeping: 10 Minutes

Have students complete Junior/Senior Progress Forms, Senior Contacts, and Senior Release Form. Give out any returned mail and complete change of address forms if necessary.

#### Finding Your Direction: 3 Minutes

This is a quick activity to get students thinking about the direction their lives will take when they go to college and how important it is to make well-informed decisions when it comes to choosing a college. Ask students to stand up, close their eyes, and use their right hand to point in the direction they believe is north. Once everyone has completed this task, tell students to open their eyes (still pointing) and look around to see where everyone else is pointing. The counselor should use the compass to determine north (do not reveal the true north until the end). Use this activity to begin discussion.

- What made you think north was that direction?
- Were you merely guessing?
- Did you feel pressured to peek and point the same direction your friends were pointing?
- Who do you think is pointing in the right direction?
- How could you be sure which way is north?

Emphasize that throughout their junior and senior years there will be a lot of people (friends, family, and teachers) all trying to point them in different directions, to different colleges and into different majors. However, it is the student's job to gather all the information they need to make an informed decision for him or herself about what college is the best fit and what direction they need to go. Then reveal which direction is in fact north.

## **Choosing a College Discussion: 3-5 Minutes**

Talk with students about how they plan to pick a college.

- How do you pick a college?
- What should you consider when selecting a college?
- What really matters to you?

## **College Viewbook Activity: 10 Minutes**

Split students into groups of about 6. Pass out the viewbook packets. Give students 5-7 minutes to look over the viewbooks, then discuss:

- What drew you to the viewbook you initially selected?
- What type of information is most important to you when selecting a college?
- Did you find yourself looking for that information in the viewbook?
- Did the viewbook give you all the information you need about the college? What else would you like to know?
- What is most important to you in selecting a college: Admission Requirements? Cost? College Type? Student Life? Athletics? Financial Aid Opportunities?
- Talking Point: While it's fun to look at viewbooks, many schools are moving away from viewbooks and paper applications and going almost entirely online. Become familiar with their websites!

## **College Picks Activity: 25 - 30 Minutes**

Read aloud the instructions at the top of the College Picks worksheet. Explain to students they will now have the opportunity to decide what college criteria is most important to them. First they will rank (in order of most important to least important) the following five college criteria: Type, Cost, Student Life, Athletics, and Financial Aid Opportunities. The Admission Requirements are listed as everyone's first criteria to emphasize how important it is to meet those first! Students should rank their criteria 2 to 6, writing each over the corresponding number. The University of Arkansas has been given as an example college pick. Take a moment to go over the information included in each criteria section (found on the post-it notes). The same information is given for all colleges. Students will pick two or three colleges of interest (college seal/logo stickers) and find the criteria descriptions for each school (on colored strips of paper). Students will use the glue sticks to attach these to their College Picks Corkboard. If students express sincere interest in a school not found in the College Criteria Packets, allow them to take turns using the *Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges/Two-Year Colleges* to find school information, recording college criteria on the Pick Your Own University post-it notes. Talking Point: If students are interested in specific majors, refer them to the Peterson's Guide/Barron's Guide (older versions available to borrow) and to visit the college's website.

Step 1: Read *College Picks* directions.

Step 2: Go over information found in each criteria description (provided for the University of Arkansas).

Step 3: Rank college criteria (write over numbers down left-side of worksheet).

Step 4: Select two or three colleges of interest (place college stickers across the top).

Step 5: Look through College Criteria box to find matching college criteria for each school (cut and paste post-it note criteria onto worksheet).

## **Choosing a College: 25-30 Minutes (during College Picks activity)**

As students are working on their College Picks Corkboard, discuss the worst reasons for choosing a college and the 10 steps to successful college selection outlined on the back of the College Picks worksheet (as time allows). Point out the *3 Things Every College Student Needs to Know* section for fun college advice.

## **Assessment: 1 Minute**

Select three students in each workshop to complete an assessment (those who finish the activity early).

Pass out **COMPASS CARABINER CLIPS** at workshop conclusion.