

How to start your college search - *from The Next Step Magazine*

Liberal arts colleges offer a broad base of courses in the humanities, social sciences and natural science. Most are private and focus mainly on undergraduate studies. Classes tend to be small. An education at a liberal arts college will prepare you for a broad range of career and graduate school options.

Community and junior colleges offer associate degrees in two years of full-time study. They frequently offer technical programs that prepare you for immediate entry into a job market.

Agriculture colleges, technical schools and professional institutes emphasize preparation for specific careers. Examples include art institutes and music conservatories, Bible colleges, business colleges, schools of health science, seminaries and rabbinical yeshivas, and teacher's colleges.

Universities are generally bigger than colleges and offer more majors and research facilities. Class size often reflects institutional size, and some classes may be taught by graduate students. Most universities are subdivided into colleges or schools. For example, a state university might have a large college of liberal arts, a school of engineering or applied sciences, a school of nursing, a teacher's college, and several graduate schools all on the same campus.

There are over 3800 accredited colleges in the United States and each is unique. Here are some things you should consider:

- Size of the student body and faculty
- Location
- Academic programs
- Retention and graduation rates
- Campus life
- Can you afford this college?
- Can you get in?

Start by creating a list of colleges you would like to learn more about, and start requesting information from them, visiting their Web sites, and (if possible) visit their campus.

Once you have a list, narrow the list to colleges which you plan on applying. Everyone has different interests, ambitions, and circumstances. When investigating colleges, you will probably look for different things than your friends, parents and siblings did when they applied.