The value of a college education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think.  
Albert Einstein

The CCG Pre-College Program provides middle and high school students with the opportunity to learn about STEM careers and acquire skills that will help them prepare for and get into college. The program offers workshops and activities designed to expose you to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) career options and opportunities. Learning activities focus on the academic and personal preparation that is required for college-level work and includes industry-led workshops and demonstrations of scientific and mathematic principles.

This program goes beyond academic applications; it helps you, your family, and your teachers to focus attention on some of the common issues for college-bound students, and for the college freshmen, the guiding principle is learning how to seek help.

The CCG Pre-College Program Resource Guide can be used by you and your parents to locate resources for transitioning from high school to college and to point you to the educational opportunity for all students.

The CCG Pre-College Program is offered as a one-day activity at our STEM conferences each February in Washington, DC, and each October in Detroit, MI. You were selected to participate because you have taken the first step by participating in an after-school STEM-related program.

We hope your experience will have a lasting and meaningful impact on your career goals.
You hear it every day—a college degree is indispensable. That may be true for many people, but is college really for you? While most people cannot agree on whether the college degree is necessary or not, there is no arguing that education is necessary to move forward in a knowledge-based society. Fortunately, there are alternative paths that lead to satisfying and meaningful careers without the level of commitment of time and money that comes with attending a four-year college. Some examples are below:

- Learn a trade
- Get a job
- Start a business
- Volunteer to gain skills
- Attend community college
- Join the military

ALTERNATIVES TO THE FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE PATH

As the list above illustrates, there are many alternatives to the traditional four-year college path. Here is a collection of websites offering a myriad of views based on facts and opinions that can be useful in determining the appropriate alternative path to your career goals.

- Is College for Everyone? 11 Alternatives to the Traditional 4-Year College
  https://www.artofmanliness.com/2014/04/17/is-college-for-everyone-10-alternatives-to-the-traditional-4-year-college/

- Next Steps After High School? Some Alternatives to College
  https://www.liveweb.com/question/100958/college-alternatives

- 4 Alternatives to a Four-Year College Degree
  https://www.kiplinger.com/article/college/T042-C000-S002-4-alternatives-to-a-four-year-college-degree.html/

- 40 High-Paying Jobs That Don’t Require a Bachelor’s Degree

FINANCIAL AID 101: HOW TO AFFORD COLLEGE AND ACHIEVE YOUR DREAMS

https://fafsa.gov/

Federal Student Aid manages the student financial assistance programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. These programs provide grants, loans, and work-study funds to students attending college or career school. They ensure students and their families can find information about:

- The availability of the federal student aid programs and the process for applying for and receiving aid from those programs.
- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form.
- Free assistance to students, parents, and borrowers throughout the entire financial aid process.

When, Where, and How to Apply for Financial Aid

Review the application deadlines for the upcoming year at https://fafsa.ed.gov/deadlines.html/

Online applications must be submitted by midnight Central Time, June 30, 2018. Any corrections or updates must be submitted by midnight Central Time, September 30, 2018.

College Deadline

Check with the college(s) you are interested in attending. You may also want to ask your college about its definition of an application deadline—whether it is the date the college receives your FAFSA or the date your FAFSA is processed.

Scholarships

In addition to scholarships offered by individual colleges, FastWeb is one of the oldest and most extensive searchable databases of scholarships available for students pursuing higher education. Visit their website at www.fastweb.com.
PREPARING FOR COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

The SAT, the ACT, and AP courses are some of the common tests colleges use to determine admission. The SAT is used most frequently to evaluate applicants; more than half of all colleges count SAT scores among the top three most important factors for admission. These tests are difficult, and students should take advantage of every benefit that helps them to achieve their best score. Here are three free resources to help students prepare.

High School Prep Test
High School Prep Test features FREE interactive practice tests for high school students. It also features automated scoring along with thorough explanations. The best way to prepare for your exams is to work through as many practice problems as possible. The High School Prep Test website contains practice tests for the ACT, SAT, and AP tests. All of these practice tests are organized by subject, so you can focus on the specific areas to improve. When you miss a question, be sure to carefully read the explanation because this is a great learning opportunity.

http://www.highschoolprep.com

College Board Practice Tests
College Board’s FREE SAT practice exam
• Full-length practice test
• Score shows you an approximate SAT test score
• Created by official test makers

http://sat.collegeboard.org/practice/sat-practice-test

Khan Academy’s FREE Diagnostic Quizzes & Practice Tests
Khan Academy partnered with the creator of the SAT, the College Board. It offers diagnostics tests and a customized study plan that takes into account your test date. The materials include video lessons and seven practice tests written by the College Board. Create an account to get started.


Get Prep Books and Study Independently
You’ve probably seen students at school carrying around SAT prep books, and for good reason. Here’s an even more comprehensive list to get you off to a good start (all found on Amazon and likely at your local bookstore):

Books (SAT)
• Barron’s Strategies and Practice for the NEW PSAT/NMSQT

Books (SAT)
• OH SAT Prep Flexbook
• Kaplan SAT Prep Premier (2017 Edition)
• Kaplan SAT Prep – 8 Practice Tests (2017 Edition)
• Barron’s SAT Critical Reading Workbook (for New SAT 2016)
• Barron’s SAT Math Workbook (for New SAT 2016)

Don’t Want to Take a Standardized Test?
FairTest, a standardized test watchdog, publishes a list of over 900 colleges and universities that do not require standardized test scores. Check out the list to see if your dream school is on it.

http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional

Khan’s Academy’s FREE Diagnostic Quizzes & Practice Tests
Khan Academy partnered with the creator of the SAT, the College Board. It offers diagnostics tests and a customized study plan that takes into account your test date. The materials include video lessons and seven practice tests written by the College Board.

http://khanacademy.org/mission/sat/diagnostics

Getting ready for the college application process can feel intimidating, and you probably have several questions. Which classes should you take in high school to prepare yourself for success? How do extracurricular and standardized tests fit into the picture? What sort of application essay should you write? Once you get into college, how should you go about paying for it? The good news: You’re not alone.

Every student who has gone on to college has had these same sorts of questions at one point or another. Often, a way to begin is by looking at a timeline that lists activities to see which ones are most interesting to you. Once you take a look through each of the sections, see what you’ve missed, work to get yourself caught up on the things you can change, and don’t worry about the things that you can’t.

Throughout High School (Freshman–Senior Year)
• Take college prep courses: Take challenging courses in high school (e.g., honors, AP, IB, HS/college dual enrollment), focusing on the core academics: English, math, science, history, and world languages.
• Focus on your grades: Your high school transcript is considered one of the most important parts of your college applications, and good grades will distinguish you from many other applicants.
• Explore and commit to extracurricular and leadership activities: Freshman year is a great time to try several different extracurricular activities to see which ones are most interesting to you. Once you decide what you like, dedicate more time to fewer activities in order to become deeply involved.
• Find summer volunteer opportunities/jobs/internships: Summer is a great time to earn extra money for college while exploring different career fields.
• Begin an ongoing dialogue with your parents about how to pay for college: Start discussing ASAP, both in terms of why you want to go to college and how you’re going to pay for it. That way, you and your family will be comfortable with the topic when it’s crunch time in 11th and 12th grade.

The will to succeed is important, but what’s more important is the will to prepare.

Bobby Knight

it always seems impossible until it’s done.

Nelson Mandela

MASTERING THE COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS

Getting ready for the college application process can feel intimidating, and you probably have several questions. Which classes should you take in high school to prepare yourself for success? How do extracurricular and standardized tests fit into the picture? What sort of application essay should you write? Once you get into college, how should you go about paying for it? The good news: You’re not alone.

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Nelson Mandela
• Search and apply for non-traditional scholarships (those available before you are a senior in high school): Though most scholarships are available only for seniors applying to college, there are some scholarships available regardless of where you are in your high school career.
  www.collegeboard.com

• Take the PSAT: Take the PSAT as a junior to practice for the SAT and qualify for the National Merit Scholarship program.

• Prepare for the SAT and/or ACT: Begin preparing for the SAT and/or ACT at the start of junior year. It is a good idea to take a full-length practice test of each and use the results to help you decide which test is best for you. Many students take their test of choice two or three times, with the final test in early fall of their senior year.

• Make local visits to college campuses: Take time in the fall of your junior year to visit local colleges. Even if these aren’t schools you want to attend, this will provide you with an initial sense of what college is like. College Board provides a campus visit guide that can help with this on their site.

• If possible, set up appointments at your top target colleges: Call ahead to admissions offices of colleges you want to visit. Note that certain colleges offer “fly-in” programs to cover the cost of travel for students with financial need. Continue setting up appointments throughout your junior and senior year, but don’t worry if it’s not possible for you to visit your target colleges. College Board provides a campus visit guide that can help with this on their site.

• Search for traditional scholarships: Once you are midway through your junior year, it’s time to begin searching for more traditional scholarships that are specifically made available to students in their junior and senior year of high school. Continue searching throughout your junior and senior year.

• Write college application essays: Once your senior year begins, ask a teacher to preread your application essays, and then make any revisions and prepare final drafts before college applications are due.

• Ask for letters of recommendation: At least a month prior to the deadlines, provide your recommenders with bullet points listing how you excelled academically in your classes along with the letter of recommendation forms and stamped envelopes addressed to the colleges where you are applying.

• Gather all application materials: Make sure you or your guidance counselor have the necessary materials for college admissions, including forms, transcripts, essays, recommendations, and transcripts. If you are worried about the cost of the application, ask your guidance counselor or college of interest for a fee waiver!

• Compare financial aid packages from multiple schools: Once you are accepted, colleges offer a financial aid package consisting of grants along with loans and work-study.

What You Should Be Doing Now to Get into College

Start early: The best time to start thinking about college is middle school, but don’t delay if you are in high school and just thinking about attending college. Starting early allows you to develop a plan for finding the best scholarships available to you. It also allows you to have a better idea of what to expect when you get to college.

Research colleges and universities: Conducting research on colleges and universities is important for many reasons. First, it will allow you to narrow down the list of potential schools to thousands to a number that’s more reasonable. Second, the more you know about a potential school, the better you can demonstrate to admissions counselors that you are an excellent fit.

Attend college fairs: While you can research and compile a list of potential colleges and universities from any number of websites and books, nothing goes to a college fair, where you can meet with admissions counselors and get unique insights as well as make good first impressions.

Visit your final list of colleges and universities: Whenever possible, you should physically visit each campus and even stay overnight. The college you choose to attend is going to be your “home” for the next four years, and it’s important that the campus gives you the right vibe. An added plus of visiting is a chance to meet with an admission counselor and perhaps even wowing him or her if you decide to partake in an official interview.

TRANSITIONING TO COLLEGE

Coping with College Life

In the last year, over 30 percent of college students were so stressed out that their school work suffered. Below are some additional tips and suggestions to help you cope with the everyday stressors of your active college life.

Plan carefully: Buy a new day planner, and organize your days. Whether you only have a few hours of class a day or are juggling a job or athletics, it can be hard to balance schoolwork with other activities.

Get to sleep: Staying up until 2 a.m. to finish that paper seems like a great idea at the time, but when that alarm goes off at 8 a.m., you will regret it. Sleep deprivation sneaks up on college students and really takes its toll. So put your laptop away, and go to bed!

Watch your drinking: The legal drinking age in most states is 21. If you choose to drink, set limits for yourself. It may be tempting to use alcohol to relieve your stress, but remember that it is temporary. In the end, you will feel worse since alcohol is a depressant.

Get involved: Attend your school’s student activities fair, consider joining some extracurricular student groups. Not only will you make new friends and spend time doing something you enjoy but these groups can be a great way to alleviate some of the stress of schoolwork by giving you something else to think about.

Communicate with your roommate(s): Living with other people is stressful, and small things can grow into friendship-breakers. To help avoid anger and resentment, talk to your roommate now about setting some rules and sticking to them. Talk it out when you are frustrated.

Watch your spending: Like most college students, you are probably on a tight budget. Keep track of how much you spend on certain activities each month so you know where your money is going. If you are working part time, try to set up direct deposit accounts so you aren’t tempted to cash that check and head to the mall. The average undergraduate has $2,200 in credit card debt, so avoid the lure of plastic now.

Don’t be afraid to ask for help: College is a difficult time with many challenges. It’s great to have activities and people in your life to help relieve the stress, but when it gets to the point where you feel you’re in a pressure cooker, it is time to reach out to someone who can give professional guidance.
Adjusting to Life away from Home

Get out of your room: If you find yourself lonely and homesick in your room, make yourself go to a campus coffee shop, and do your reading there. Head to a computer lab to write your paper, even if you have your own laptop. Study outside in the quad. Challenge yourself to get out of your room and be around other people.

Give yourself a day here and there to be sad and move on: If you’re really struggling one day, let yourself be sad and miss home. There are things about being home that anyone would miss. The key is to let yourself be sad for just one day. And after that one day passes, move on. Get out of your room, go to a campus event, plan a study session with some friends, or join a club, and make sure to focus on all the great things your school has to offer.

Turn your college into your home away from home: College will never replace the home you left, but it can happily turn into a beloved home away from home. Think about the things that you loved most about your pre-college life, and work to re-create those at your school. Find several clubs that focus on your interests, and sign up to be involved with their events.

Realize that it’s never too late to connect: Okay, so you missed the club fair in the quad and you don’t really know too many people several weeks into the semester. The nice thing about college is that it isn’t as clique filled as high school. People drop in and out of clubs, student organizations, and social circles all the time. Go to the Office of Student Activities, and ask to see a list of clubs. Drop by the radio station to see if it needs new or substitute DJs. See if you can still join the Campus Activities Board.

Know you’re not alone: You may feel like you’re the only person struggling with homesickness, but it simply isn’t true. Take the initiative to reach out to other people. Plan a “home away from home” night in your room, where everyone brings a blanket and some snacks and watches a DVD.

Coping with Cultural Differences in College

Adjusting to college life is often harder than most first-year students and their parents anticipate. Students know that life at college is going to be different, and they are excited and perhaps a bit anxious about starting their adventure. But it’s difficult to anticipate how different life may be when you don’t exactly know what to expect. College is, for many students, a foreign culture.

Most students don’t equate entering college to entering a different culture. When we talk about culture, we often refer to those things that we do and accept without really thinking about them, our way of life. We have expectations, values, and ways of talking, eating, behaving, relating to each other, and even thinking—but we don’t give these things any conscious thought most of the time. When you head to college, you may need to think consciously about how you manage much of your daily life. You need to adjust—and that adjustment will come gradually.

Dressing Appropriately for College and Not High School

Many students grew up wearing uniforms in grade school. Some say that college students are grown adults and should be able to have the choice to wear what they want. Students use clothing as a way to express to others who you are, but some students have trouble finding the line between appropriate and inappropriate clothing. Check out these links for appropriate college attire:


What’s the difference between those who never reach their goals and those who achieve one goal after another? It’s self-motivation.
October 11–13, 2018
Women of Color STEM Conference
Detroit, MI

February 8–10, 2018
BEYA STEM Conference
Washington, DC