



# Match & Fit Toolkit

## Knowledge and Resources for Helping Students Find the Right Campus

Produced as part of the  
To & Through Advising Challenge  
Last Updated: January 6, 2020

# Why Postsecondary Access & Success?

*Talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not.*

- The odds of a high-income student enrolling in postsecondary education directly after high school are **more than 3 times higher** than those of a low-income student.
- A high-income student is **more than twice as likely** to complete a postsecondary certificate or degree by age 26 as a low-income student.

Source: Education Pays 2016, p. 10 (College Board)

Source: Postsecondary Attainment: Differences by Socioeconomic Status (NCES, May 2015)

# NCAN's Member Footprint



# NCAN'S MISSION AND GOALS

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To build, strengthen, and empower education communities and stakeholders to close equity gaps in postsecondary attainment for all students.

**REALIZED BY**

**Goal 1:**

Promote high-quality services to support equitable outcomes for students

**Goal 2:**

Champion practice-informed federal and state policy

# WHAT IS THE TO & THROUGH ADVISING CHALLENGE

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- On-going project led by the National College Access Network and supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- 20 grantees aim to “change the way they do business around postsecondary advising” through four goals:
  - Incorporate fit and match into postsecondary advising
  - Increase access to financial aid by improving FAFSA completion
  - Reduce the harmful effects of summer melt
  - Accomplish the above through the strategic use of data

## WHAT IS THE TO & THROUGH ADVISING CHALLENGE

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- During the 2018-19 academic year, grantees developed implementation plans for accomplishing the project's goals. Starting in 2019-20, grantees will put these plans into place.
- Grantees receive funding for implementation, expert coaching on postsecondary advising and data use, NCAN memberships, targeted technical assistance, and opportunities to learn from each other.

## WHY ARE MATCH AND FIT IMPORTANT?

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- Students who are academically matched to an institution are more likely to complete a postsecondary program
- A good college fit leads to high satisfaction which may increase a student's likelihood to persist and graduate
- Knowledgeable school counselors, college advisers, and other caring adults can shift students' trajectories to help them make better college matches

## WHAT ARE MATCH AND FIT?

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- **Match:** The degree to which students' academic credentials are aligned to the admission qualifications of the postsecondary institution(s) where they apply and/or enroll
- **Fit:** The degree to which students' values, interests, wants, and social and needs are aligned with the characteristics of the of the postsecondary institution(s) where they apply and/or enroll

## MORE ON MATCH

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- Match primarily focuses on the numbers
  - Grade Point Average
  - Admissions Test Scores (SAT, ACT)
- There are three types of Match to be aware of
  - *Match*: Student enrolls at a college or university whose selectivity level matches his or her academic credentials
  - *Undermatch*: Student's academic credentials are higher than the average student's academic profile and institutional standards
  - *Overmatch*: Student's academic credentials are lower than the average student's academic profile and institutional standards
    - Less commonly seen as a problem by higher education stakeholders

Source:

[https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/CollegeMatch\\_2015\\_UsersGuide%202016Rev%20Final.pdf](https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/CollegeMatch_2015_UsersGuide%202016Rev%20Final.pdf)

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# WHAT IS UNDERMATCHING?

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- Undermatching is when a student enrolls at a postsecondary institution that is less selective than that which he or she could attend
- Why do students undermatch?
  - Perception that college is too expensive; lack of financial resources; lack of college knowledge; low expectations; lack of advising/guidance; minimal college recruiting/visits

# WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO UNDERMATCH?

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- Low-income students
- First-generation college students
- African-American students
- Hispanic students
- Rural students

*Source: Bowen et al., 2009; Carnevale and Strohl, 2013; Smith et al., 2012*

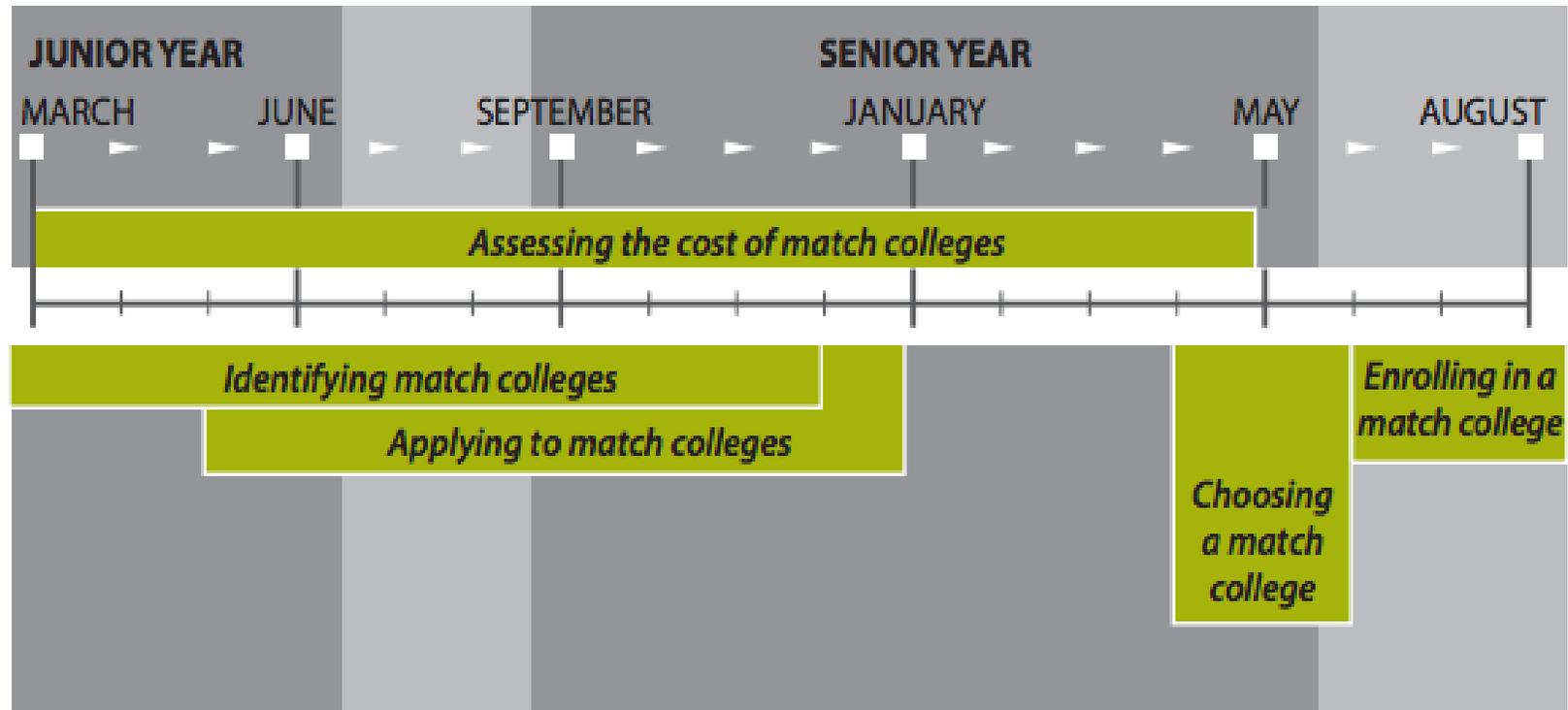
# WHY SHOULD WE AVOID UNDERMATCHING?

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- Attending selective institutions can have positive impacts on completion, advanced degree attainment, and lifetime earnings
- Completion rates at selective institutions is 73% and only 40% at open access institutions
- Students at more selective institutions have access to better-resourced peer networks that lead to job opportunities and better wages
- More selective institutions have more resources (i.e. student support services, academic resource centers) to support students to graduation
- For some low-income students, a selective institutions may actually be more affordable

# FINDING A MATCH: TIMELINE

**FIGURE 1** Match Application Timeline



Source:

[https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/CollegeMatch\\_2015\\_UsersGuide%202016Rev%20Final.pdf](https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/CollegeMatch_2015_UsersGuide%202016Rev%20Final.pdf)

# FINDING A MATCH

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- Use institutions' freshman profiles to assess a student's likelihood of admission based on academic qualifications
  - Many institutions use holistic admissions practices
- Recommend each student applies to 3+ institutions
  - Safety: Student exceed academic qualifications/standards and is likely to be admitted
    - Safety institutions should also include affordable options
  - Target: Student meets academic qualifications/standards and has a fair chance of admission
  - Reach: Student falls slightly short of academic qualifications/standards and is less likely to be admitted

*Source:*

[https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/CollegeMatch\\_2015\\_UsersGuide%202016Rev%20Final.pdf](https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/CollegeMatch_2015_UsersGuide%202016Rev%20Final.pdf)

# COLLEGE FIT

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Fit focuses on all of the *other* characteristics of an college or university that students consider in picking an institution

College fit includes, but is not limited to:

- Affordability & financial aid packages
- Academic reputation & prestige
- Location & distance from home
- Institution/Class Size
- Major/minor offerings
- Campus diversity & social climate
- Housing options
- Religious affiliations

## KEY RESOURCE:

### [FIND THE FIT](#) ENHANCED COLLEGE ADVISING TOOLKIT

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- Assembles existing research-backed materials into one convenient package; tested on a sample of 194 Upward Bound programs covering nearly 4,500 students
- Provides resources to help students through college search, application, and enrollment processes
- Designed to be used during the summer before and during students' senior year of high school
- Coordinated by Abt Associates, American Institutes for Research, ED, and others

## FIND THE FIT: COMPONENTS

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- [Student Materials](#) (available as downloadable PDF, Word, and Excel files)
- [College Advisor Resources](#) (nine training modules and an advisor handbook)
- [Parent Materials](#) (letter and timeline for parents explaining the campaign)
- [Text Message Campaigns](#) (along with detailed instructions on how to implement the text message component of *Find the Fit*)

## EVALUATION OF FIND THE FIT

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“Key findings show that the Find the Fit did the following:

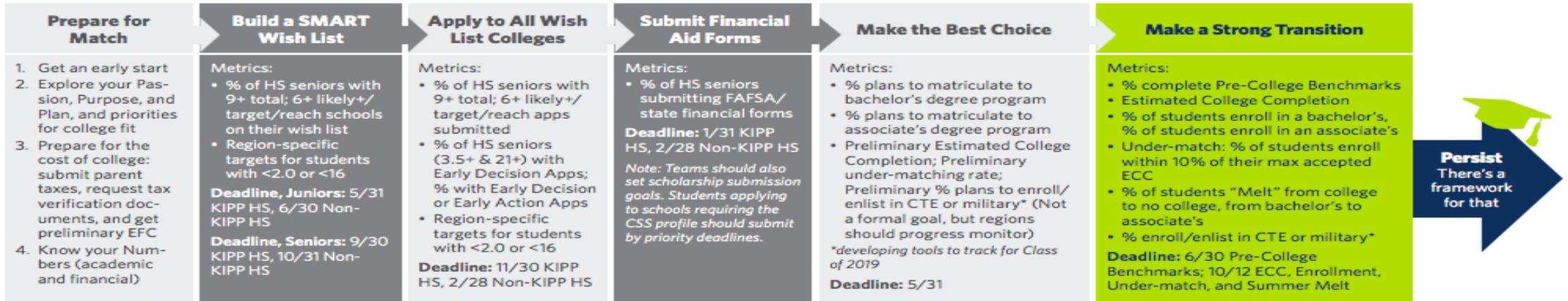
- Increased the share of students who applied to four or more colleges
- Led students to apply to more-selective colleges
- Had no impact on the importance students placed on academic quality in choosing a college
- Did not affect the share of students completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid early”

Source: <https://www.mathematica.org/our-publications-and-findings/publications/study-snapshot-study-of-enhanced-college-advising-in-upward-bound-impacts-on-steps-toward-college>

# MATCH & FIT FRAMEWORKS: KIPP

## College Match Strategies Framework

### STUDENT BEHAVIORS & KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



### KEY COUNSELOR PRACTICES

<p><b>Conduct 1-on-1s</b> throughout students' junior &amp; senior years on topics relevant to their place in the college process.</p>	<p><b>Build Family Investment</b> by engaging families early and throughout the college process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold family nights about match in junior and senior year</li> <li>• Plan family meetings on critical match topics including wish lists, matriculation decisions, and financial aid decisions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Use Data Tools</b> to build SMART wish lists, track progress to Match goals, and analyze wish lists and financial aid awards.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td> <p><b>Main Tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KIPP Student Match Tool</li> <li>• KIPP Counselor Match Tool</li> <li>• KIPP Alumni Database</li> <li>• KIPP Strong Transition Dashboard</li> </ul> </td> <td> <p><b>Supporting Tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under-matching and ECC tracker</li> <li>• uAspire Award Analyzer</li> <li>• Department of Ed College Scorecard</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>Main Tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KIPP Student Match Tool</li> <li>• KIPP Counselor Match Tool</li> <li>• KIPP Alumni Database</li> <li>• KIPP Strong Transition Dashboard</li> </ul>	<p><b>Supporting Tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under-matching and ECC tracker</li> <li>• uAspire Award Analyzer</li> <li>• Department of Ed College Scorecard</li> </ul>
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### ENABLING CONDITIONS

Rigorous Progress Monitoring	KTC & HS Leadership Alignment	Whole School Engagement	Counselor Competency & Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorous and realistic bottoms-up goals</li> <li>• Weekly tracking of metrics using Counselor Match Tool</li> <li>• Regular email communication to communicate progress to goals</li> <li>• Monthly Match Meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students take ACT 2-3x, with first test in April of junior year</li> <li>• Curriculum and academic policies oriented towards college and career readiness (See HS blueprint)</li> <li>• Shared goals and accountability (ECC)</li> <li>• All KIPP HS's have 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Seminar (ideal — 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>)</li> <li>• Dir. of College Counseling and/or KTC Director on HS Leadership team</li> <li>• Resources for fee waivers, college trips, and PD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School and dept PD aligned to college match process</li> <li>• School-wide Match campaigns</li> <li>• Regular teacher-counselor communication and updates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align JD, performance review, and PD to Match Strategies Framework</li> <li>• Regional PD days</li> <li>• Attendance at national KTC webinars and in-person retreats</li> <li>• Visits to regional colleges and counselor fly-ins</li> <li>• Professional memberships and conferences (NACAC, NCAN, etc.)</li> </ul>

## A WORD ON MATCH & FIT PLATFORMS

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There are a great number of online platforms from which students can choose that will help them identify colleges and universities that might be right for them. We highlight a few of them in the following slides. These platforms differ in terms of individual functionality. We encourage exploring these different services and comparing the recommendations they make.

# MATCH & FIT PLATFORMS: COLLEGE GREENLIGHT

The screenshot shows the College Greenlight website interface. At the top, there is a green navigation bar with links for HELP, CREATE ACCOUNT, and LOGIN. Below this is the College Greenlight logo. The main content area features a header for 'University of Maryland-College Park' with a 3.8 average rating and a 'Like 30' button. A form asks 'INTERESTED IN THIS SCHOOL?' with 'Yes' and 'No' buttons and a 'Choose Another School' dropdown. A left sidebar contains a menu with 'Overview' (selected) and sub-items like 'Quick Facts', 'At a Glance', and 'Reviews', along with other categories like 'Admissions', 'Tuition & Costs', etc. The main content area displays 'University of Maryland-College Park Stats, Info and Facts' with a 'Quick Facts' section. This section is organized into a grid with four main data points: 37,641 Students, 47% Admitted, 30,762 Undergraduates, and \$8,315 Tuition/Year. Each data point includes a 'See Your Fit' or 'See Your Chances' link. To the right, there are 'Reviews in 3 Sentences' with user avatars and text snippets, each with a 'Read More' link. A vertical 'Feedback' button is located on the right edge of the page.

HELP CREATE ACCOUNT LOGIN

**COLLEGE GREENLIGHT**

**University of Maryland-College Park** College Park, MD ★★★★★ 3.8 AVERAGE RATING

INTERESTED IN THIS SCHOOL?  Yes  No

**Overview**

- Quick Facts
- At a Glance
- Reviews

Admissions

Tuition & Costs

Your Fit

Deadlines

Academics & Majors

Photos & Videos

Student Reviews

Campus Life

Around Town

Discussions

**University of Maryland-College Park Stats, Info and Facts**

Colleges > By State > Maryland > University of Maryland-College Park Stats, Info and Facts

**Quick Facts**

<b>37,641</b> Students	<b>47%</b> Admitted
41,200 full time 5,705 part time 16,863 men full time 15,073 women full time	26,372 applied 11,815 admitted 3,994 enrolled
<a href="#">See Your Fit &gt;</a>	<a href="#">See Your Chances &gt;</a>
<b>30,762</b> Undergraduates	<b>\$8,315</b> Tuition/Year
10,719 Graduates 728 Non-Degree	\$8,315 in state \$1,866 fees

Reviews in 3 Sentences

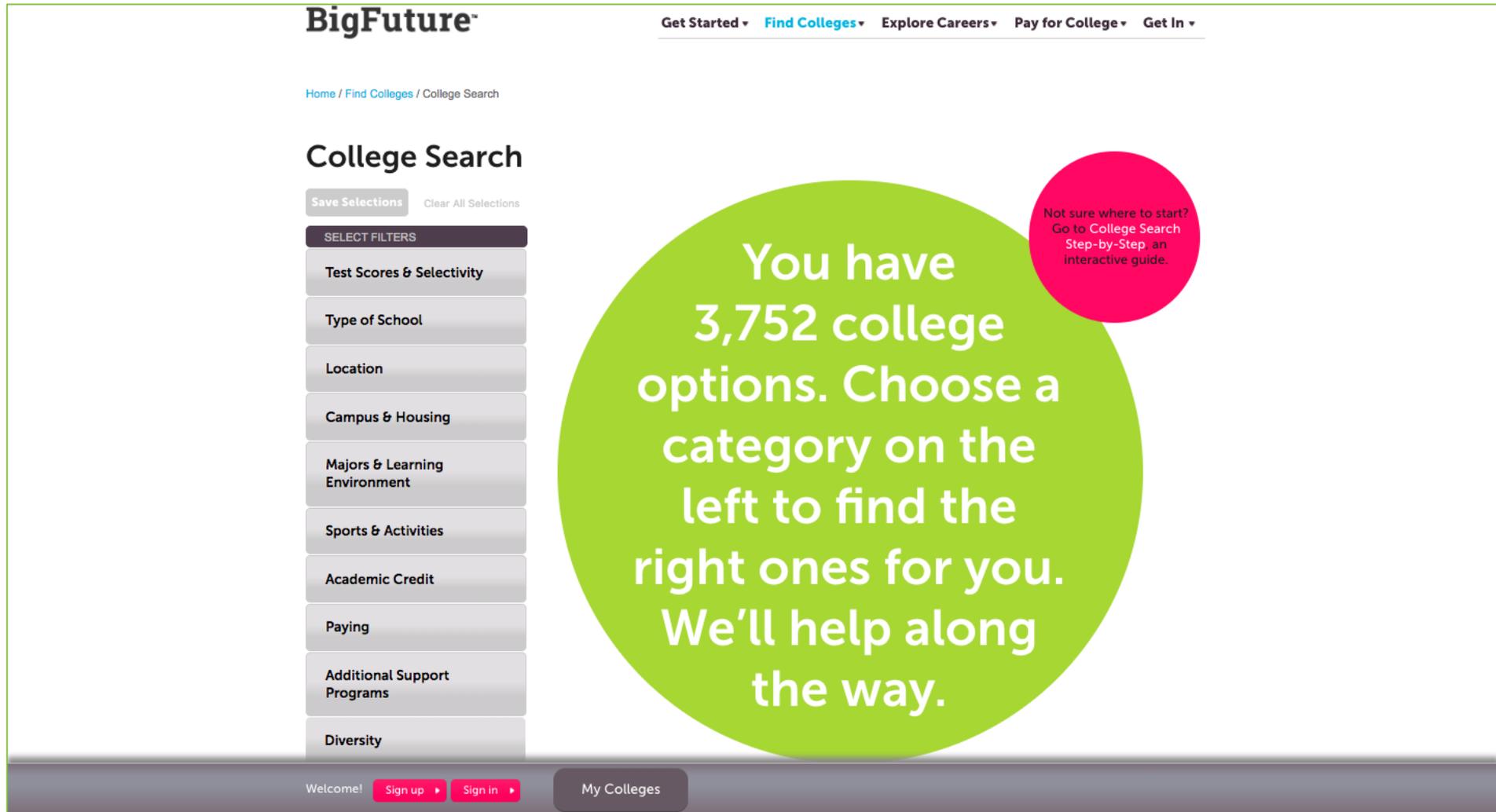
**Cherokee from Oxon Hill, MD**  
The University of Maryland is a school full of possibilities. They show diversity in multiple ways, from the diversity in the people on campus, to the variety of majors, and... [Read More](#)

**Kate from Charlotte, NC**  
It's huge, but I do really like it. There are tons of opportunities on such a large campus, from research to volunteering.... [Read More](#)

**Kierstin**  
UMD is a very big school that

Feedback

# MATCH & FIT PLATFORMS: BIG FUTURE



**BigFuture™** [Get Started ▾](#) [Find Colleges ▾](#) [Explore Careers ▾](#) [Pay for College ▾](#) [Get In ▾](#)

[Home](#) / [Find Colleges](#) / [College Search](#)

## College Search

[Save Selections](#) [Clear All Selections](#)

**SELECT FILTERS**

- Test Scores & Selectivity
- Type of School
- Location
- Campus & Housing
- Majors & Learning Environment
- Sports & Activities
- Academic Credit
- Paying
- Additional Support Programs
- Diversity

**You have 3,752 college options. Choose a category on the left to find the right ones for you. We'll help along the way.**

Not sure where to start? Go to [College Search Step-by-Step](#), an interactive guide.

Welcome! [Sign up ▶](#) [Sign in ▶](#) [My Colleges](#)

# MATCH & FIT PLATFORMS: STUDENT UNION

StudentUnion Powered by UPTAKE.org

[Results](#)
[Saved schools](#)
[Settings](#)
[About](#)
[Sign out](#)

## College recommendations

✎ Test score

GPA

**Go!**

Filter results to find great college matches.

📍 Select state(s)

🏠 Select campus size(s)

Select other characteristics:

- Campus housing available
- Meal plan available
- Universities that offer graduate degrees or certificates
- Women's colleges
- Historically black (HBCU)

Search for a specific college, city, or state...

Look carefully - 620
Just right - 533
Stretch - 107
Moonshot - 107

Match type	Admission	📊 Graduation rate	College/University	City	State	
Just right	82%	91%	📍 Pontifical College Josephinum	Columbus	Ohio	☆
Just right	70%	89%	📍 Wheaton College	Wheaton	Illinois	☆
Just right	71%	85%	📍 Worcester Polytechnic Institute	Worcester	Massachusetts	☆
Just right	81%	85%	📍 Santa Clara University	Santa Clara	California	☆
Just right	63%	84%	📍 Furman University	Greenville	South Carolina	☆
Just right	60%	83%	📍 Loyola University Maryland	Baltimore	Maryland	☆
Just right	73%	83%	📍 Gonzaga University	Spokane	Washington	☆
Just right	66%	82%	📍 Luther College	Decorah	Iowa	☆
Just right	71%	82%	📍 Centre College	Danville	Kentucky	☆
Just right	75%	82%	📍 Stonehill College	Easton	Massachusetts	☆
Just right	71%	82%	📍 Kalamazoo College	Kalamazoo	Michigan	☆
Just right	61%	81%	📍 Illinois Wesleyan University	Bloomington	Illinois	☆
Just right	80%	81%	📍 Saint Mary's College	Notre Dame	Indiana	☆
Just right	78%	81%	📍 St Mary's College of Maryland	St. Mary's	Maryland	☆

# MATCH & FIT PLATFORMS: COLLEGE RAPTOR



## Match Categories

College matches will be organized into one of five match categories: "Safety", "Near Safety", "Match", "Reach" or "Huge Reach". These categories are based on your estimated admissions chance at that particular college.

Some colleges—particularly very selective colleges like Ivy League schools—will be categorized as a "Huge Reach" for all students, including those who match their academic profile. This is because even for well-qualified students, it's still very difficult to get accepted to these colleges.

Match Category	College Name	Academic Match	Acceptance Average	Your Acceptance Odds
Reach	California Institute of Technology	100	11%	26%
Reach	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	88	8%	29%
Huge Reach	Yale University	83	7%	11%
Reach	Washington University in St. Louis	82	16%	37%

## Admission Chances

Estimated admissions chances are based on a combination of the student's academic information and the overall acceptance rate of a college.

These chances are our estimates and may be different for each student, based on their individual coursework, class rank and other factors that we do not currently include in our calculations.

## Your Admission Profile - Admissions Chances

Your Acceptance Odds  
**Average**

Match Category  
**Near Safety**



# MATCH & FIT PLATFORMS: [NAVIANCE](#)

## College Search (4,662 schools available) a SuperMatch™ search

**MY SEARCH OPTIONS**  
Start Over Save My Searches

**FIND & PIN A SCHOOL BY NAME**  
Enter name of school

**FIND YOUR BEST FIT**

- Location
- Majors
- My Scores
- Tuition and Fees
- Ethnicity
- School Type
- School Size
- On Campus Housing
- Campus Setting
- Public or Private
- Gender Mix
- Historically Black
- Getting In



**GET MATCHED**  
Use over 20 search criteria to find the schools that are the best match for you and find out why.

**PIN YOUR FAVORITE**  
Keep an eye on the schools you're interested in by pinning them to the top of your list.

**COMPARE**  
See how your pinned schools stack up to each other on the factors that matter to you most with SuperMatch's Compare View.

# MATCH & FIT PLATFORMS: EDQUITY

The screenshot displays the EdEquity website interface. On the left is a blue navigation sidebar with icons and labels for HOME, EXPLORE, BUDGET, and AWARDS. The main content area features a search bar at the top right with a user profile 'JC Jun' and a search input 'Search for a school...'. Below the search bar are filter tabs: 'My Colleges', 'Recommendations' (selected), and 'Compare'. Filter options include 'Major' (I don't know), 'Location' (All schools), 'Distance' (Show All), and 'Degree Type' (Any Degree). A green 'Apply Filters' button is present. The 'Match Schools' section shows '4-year school recommendations' with four cards: Bentley University (EdEquity Score 95, Lifetime Gain \$2,478,665, Match), Bryant University (EdEquity Score 95, Lifetime Gain \$1,986,688, Match), Illinois Institute of Techn... (EdEquity Score 94, Lifetime Gain \$1,933,502, Match), and College of th... (EdEquity Score 94, Lifetime Gain \$1,501,360). The 'Safety Schools' section shows '4-year school recommendations' with four cards: Clarkson University (EdEquity Score 95, Lifetime Gain \$2,013,282, Safety), Molloy College (EdEquity Score 93, Lifetime Gain \$1,953,447, Safety), University of San Francis... (EdEquity Score 92, Lifetime Gain \$1,468,118, Safety), and Regis Univer... (EdEquity Score 92, Lifetime Gain \$1,541,250).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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- [Oregon Gear Up Toolkit](#)
  - A guide to assist educators help students develop their college-going identities, search for colleges, and select the right institution to attend
- [Find the Fit](#)
- [To & Through Advising Challenge Resources](#)

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the To & Through Advising Challenge and postsecondary match and fit advising, contact:

**Bill DeBaun**, *Director of Data and Evaluation,*  
*National College Access Network*  
[debaunb@collegeaccess.org](mailto:debaunb@collegeaccess.org) / 202-347-4848 x202

**MorraLee Keller**, *Director of Technical Assistance*  
*National College Access Network*  
[kellerm@collegeaccess.org](mailto:kellerm@collegeaccess.org) / 202-347-4848 x213