

## 2021 Skills Workshop Series

### Getting into College and Succeeding

Tuesday, October 5, 2021

5:00 -6:30 PM

#### Q&A from the Webinar

**Question** - What grades do colleges really look at?

**Answer** - We look at grades 9-12

**Question** - I am a high school sophomore interesting in pre-med, I would like to know which courses I should be taking now to make sure I am prepared for undergrad?

**Answer** - Courses that fit and are appropriate for you. If your high school offers STEM courses that lead to AP courses then work with your guidance counselor to find a workable, doable schedule. Hope this helps :)

**Question** - My daughter wants to be a doctor eventually. I always hear people talking about to go to a medical school you'd better go to a not very competitive school so you can have a good GPA and also may save some fund for medical school. Is that true? What unique opportunities the more competitive school can offer to a student want to be a doctor eventually?

**Answer** - This is an individual decision and most students go to the best school fit for them that may or may not include ranking schools. Environment matters and community so a good fit and culture is important. Hope this helps!

**Question** - What should community college students do to ensure they're fully prepared for the academic rigors of a 4-yr college/university prior to getting there? Thanks.

**Answer** - It is important to be curious and ask a lot of questions and know that you would still need to self-advocate as one of our panelists mentioned! Doing your best where you are is a great way to prepare for a 4-year college!

I would also recommend attending the Community College Pathways webinar session on October 21st.  
[https://harvard.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_9YXR7xaaQSOEPv\\_DiVxT2w](https://harvard.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9YXR7xaaQSOEPv_DiVxT2w)

**Question** - What are some of the resources that you can recommend for someone that is not clear yet about their career path and the best college for that. Sometimes I feel that I'm already late in the game and I'm a junior.

**Answer** - There is still time as you are a junior and you are right on schedule! Please seek out your guidance counselor and check out college websites that you may be considering

**Question** - Where do you find college counselors that are not associated to one particular college?

**Answer** - Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are an excellent resource. There are private counselors out there, but most will charge you money for information you can get for free through CBOs & online.

**Question** - How do you manage stress in college?

**Answer** - You continue to work on skills that you have developed in high school and hopefully get some better skills: Time management, working with peers, thinking ahead and working ahead so you don't procrastinate, and reaching out to professors and mentors to help you!

**Question** - I want to be a family medicine doctor, what majors/ universities here in Mass would be good for my career choice?

**Answer** - any 4 year college/university would be great and any major that you are excited about and may leverage your strengths, interests and curiosity! You will need to complete some STEM requirements but you can pick any major, so please pick any major that you like! How fun :)

**Question** - What do you expect in your first year of attending college?

**Answer** - Great question and our next speaker will address this great question and Jen Schoen will talk about this in her discussion point! Thanks for asking!

**Question** - So as a junior in high school, it's better if I'm just engaged in general and authentic rather than (Basically)overworking myself just to seem highly engaged?

**Answer** - I would say that it is better to be authentic and be involved in the things that you are excited about, rather than overworking "just to seem" anything!

**Question** - Do colleges over fly in programs for juniors? Or is that something they only offer for seniors?

**Answer** - Hi Ragy, typically these programs are offered for seniors, and even admitted seniors, but I would say check with individual schools that you are interested in because this will vary based on school.

**Question** - What are undergrad schools and graduate schools

**Answer** - Undergraduate programs are attended after high school and graduate programs are for after undergraduate.

**Question** - If I want to know where did the students at certain major finishing their undergraduate study go for work or study, where should I ask?

**Answer** - Typically Offices of Career Services keep this information and you might be able to find it on their websites. Often times though, students don't go into subjects related to their majors so I wouldn't limit myself there if I were you.

**Question** - My Question is,How to avoid to procrastinate in schools ?

**Answer** - You become more organized in college, you work with an advisor that can help you do this, but also your peers and professors can help you stay on track.

**Question** - Should a student not apply to a college if their SAT scores are not what the college requires

**Answer** - Many colleges do not have a required SAT score. They will publish the score ranges for admitted students (the average SAT score of admitted applicants). But if your score falls below that range, it doesn't mean you shouldn't apply! Never let your SAT score stop you from applying. The college may also be test-optional, so if your score is below their average admitted student score, you can choose to not report your scores.

**Question** - I am a parent who has no dime saved for my child's college. I did take a loan to go college in Europe. I worked every summer and took care of elders before going to school to take care of my need. My question is: Is it possible to go to college in the USA without taking a loan?

**Answer** – Consider attending Thursday, October 14 – 5:00 – 6:30 PM- Finances and Your Education  
[https://harvard.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_kAonL3wNTC6fRh6aJjCJzg](https://harvard.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kAonL3wNTC6fRh6aJjCJzg)

**Question** - Are you allowed to turn down a college that you applied to ED because of financial reasons? If so how difficult is it to do so

**Answer** - ED is usually a binding contract meaning that you must go if you are admitted. Financial Aid is typically the exception to this, if the financial aid package isn't as great as you were hoping but I would read the contract that you sign before deciding on this.

**Question** - How many classes would you say in general would you need before you start taking nursing classes, or medical classes, or even to get into med school? Or like do you need to take any other classes beforehand, or can you go into college and jump right into the medical field or med school?

**Answer** - You need a Bachelor's degree to attend medical school. To be pre-med, you typically will take several courses like general chemistry, or biology, some math courses, etc. to make sure you are prepared for medical school when you apply. When you are in college, you can do research or work with professors so that you have experience in the medical field while still being in undergrad.

**Question** - How should I network if you're shy and feel like a stranger

**Answer** - You don't have to be a huge extrovert to network. You can network over email, you can network by coming to sessions like this and learning information passively or 1on1 with professors instead of in front of everybody until you feel comfortable.

**Question** - I am in a program in my city for allied health, would that help me get into college?

**Answer** - Programs that you are excited about and spend your time doing outside of the classroom are always helpful to give colleges a holistic view of who you are.

**Question** - Where can international students find resources for financial aid?

**Answer** - Look on the individual college websites on their specific policies on financial aid for international students. Some colleges have financial aid for international students and some don't.

**Question** - Is the FAFSA for seniors only?

**Answer** - The FAFSA is updated each year so you can fill it out earlier if you'd like but you will need to complete the form the year that you are applying to college. (EFC -- Expected Family Contribution)

**Question** - For a student who knows little about how college works, i don't know what questions to ask or where among the overwhelmingly many resources i should begin to research the broad topic of college. So can you give me a starting resource to begin researching colleges?

**Answer** - It would be great to first start with your school officials for example guidance counselor, STEM/science or non-STEM teacher or others at your high school

**Question** - What are the requirements for full ride scholarships?

**Answer** - These are going to be dependent on the scholarship that you are looking at -- each one will tell you the specific stipulations.

**Question** - is it a good idea to send one essay to multiple scholarships

**Answer** - That's completely fine! You just want to make sure that you answering anything specific that each scholarship is asking for. And make sure - if you are referring to the name of the school or scholarship - that you change it! :-)

**Question** - For example, if I want to know where did the last year undergraduate students finished their study in Biology major at Harvard go to work or study, is the Offices of Career Service the best place to ask? Thanks very much!

**Answer** - Yep! <https://ocs.fas.harvard.edu/career-pathways>

**Question** - Does external scholarships will reduce the financial aid from the college?

**Answer** - Every college handles outside scholarships differently- some may use an outside scholarship to reduce their aid to you. Some might not change your financial aid package even with outside scholarships. Most colleges, on their financial aid websites, will outline how they deal with outside scholarships. And you can always call and ask!

**Question** - When do you recommend for highschoolers to start applying for scholarships?

**Answer** - Typically high school seniors start to apply for college scholarships. There are a few that students need to apply for as juniors, so I'd start looking then. Anyone can start looking anytime, just to see what's out there and get information about what they may be eligible for.

**Question** - Does full need include loans or just grants

**Answer** - Full need is what the college covers after the expected family contribution is taken from the cost of attendance at the college. When the financial aid office puts together your aid, they will cover full need with both grants and loans. They may also add in work study, which is funding the student can access through an on-campus job. They work in a work-study job, get paid, then the money they make is theirs to spend on books and other costs of going to college.

**Question** - where will all of these questions and answers be available online? (exiting the Q&A removes previous question/answers from view)

**Answer** - The webinar will be recorded and posted on the website after. We will also try to post the questions with the supplemental documents sent out tomorrow!

**Question** - Can a student apply FAFSA before senior year?

**Answer** - The FAFSA is updated each year so you can fill it out earlier if you'd like but you will need to complete the form the year that you are applying to college.

**Question** - what if I get into a college, and realize mid quarter of that year that this is not the right one for me?

**Answer** - I would say first try to see what about the college could be better and give it a little bit of time before you make your decision. Ultimately, you are able to transfer to another institution if it isn't right for you!

**Question** - What are some advice if you don't have a car but you want to do extracurriculars / volunteer

**Answer** - There are many colleges which may not require a car to do campus activities for extracurricular and volunteer experiences. hope this helps :)

**Question** - What are some trustable sources I could use to get scholarship/find more information on it? Also how can I know if a scholarship source is not trustable?

**Answer** - If an online search engine makes you pay for the search, I'd consider that a bit fishy unless they are an organization that searches and helps you apply for scholarships. Some of the places you might want to look at include College Greenlight, Scholarship Owl, Fastweb.com, Scholarship Junkies. Also check out UAspire and MEFA.

**Question** - Where should I ask which universities the new students at Harvard medical school and other medical schools come from? Is it the medical school admission office? Thanks very much!

**Answer** - They come from so many different schools! But yes, if you are interested, HMS admissions would be a good place to start but they don't only admit from specific schools.

**Question** - I want to be an orthopedic surgeon. What major, colleges/universities would be a good choice for my major and career?

**Answer** - That's wonderful! Study whatever it is that you are excited about -- you don't have to major in a science field to be a surgeon. Whatever college/university makes sense for you is a good choice and then be successful once you get there!

**Question** - What are the major of the new students?

**Answer** - You can pick any major that interests you the most and you may find curious. hope this helps :)

**Question** - The live transcript doesn't work

**Answer** - I assume you may be referring to closed captioning? Unfortunately, that is not available for this webinar. If you are looking for something else please let me know and we can see what can be done.

**Question** - Would UMASS Medical school be considered a under grad school or graduate school

**Answer** - Medical School would be considered graduate school.

**Question** - My daughter will still be on U.S green card when she goes to college. Does that makes any difference comparing to U.S. citizens in terms of financial aid and tuition?

**Answer** - That often depends on the college. If students are permanent residents, they are considered the same as US citizens. If they are not permanent residents, they will often be considered as international students.

**Question** - If colleges are less determined on the student's transcript and more about what was provided from the high school. Would i be at a disadvantage if i move to a different high school each year? I move around and have been at a different high school for each year i've attended.

**Answer** - no worries this is your journey and we learned from the panelists tonight that you can tell your unique story!! We are confident that you have a great, unique story to tell and be your authentic self!