

Top Twelve College Myths

Paula Koontz, College Planning Advisors

Myth 1: Employers are looking for specific colleges under “Education” on a resume.

Truth: There are many options for students and finding the right “fit” is more important than going to a certain school for its reputation.

Myth 2: If you haven’t heard of it, it must not be very good.

Truth: Different people have different definitions of “good”. There are over 2,400 colleges in the United States and some colleges are like hidden treasures. For more information see: www.collegeboard.com

Myth 3: If you want to be a doctor, you need to pick a college with a good Med School.

Truth: Medical School comes after undergraduate school, or the first four years of college where you earn a Bachelor’s degree. Your first college doesn’t need to have a Medical School.

Myth 4: Bigger is always better.

Truth: There are pros and cons to big and small schools. It depends on what you are looking for. Things to take into consideration include average class size, number of classes with more than 200 students, number of classes taught by teaching assistants, opportunities for involvement and internships.

Myth 5: Liberal Arts colleges are for people who are liberal or like art.

Truth: The term Liberal Arts means “studies that are intended to provide general knowledge and intellectual skills, rather than more specialized occupational, scientific, or artistic skills.” For more information see: <http://www.liberalarts.org/about/members.php>

Myth 6: Test scores are everything.

Truth: Colleges take into account several factors in making admissions decisions including grades, rigor of courses, personal background, extracurricular experiences, leadership, and others. There are many colleges that are “test optional” meaning that you can submit an application without SAT or ACT scores. For more information see: www.fairtest.org

Myth 7: If money is tight now, college will be too expensive for my family.

Truth: Financial aid is primarily based on need. There are many ways to pay for college including grants, scholarships, work study and loans. Student loans are an investment in your future and should be considered as a good way to pay for college. For more information see: www.fafsa.ed.gov

Myth 8: Private Colleges always cost the student and family more than a public college.

Truth: Private Colleges almost always have a larger price tag than in-state public colleges, but usually have more scholarship money available. Often times, private colleges cost about the same as a public college or sometimes even less than a public school. Also, students are having an extremely difficult time graduating from a public college in four years.

Myth 9: It is better to have lots of different kinds of activities on my college application than just a few.

Truth: Colleges like to see students being very involved in a few organizations, to have a passion.

Myth 10: Freshman year was difficult for me and I didn't do too well. If I want to attend college, I will have to go to a community college.

Truth: If a student continues to improve, it is called an "upward trend" and colleges really like to see this. They understand that transition is difficult for many of us and sometimes there are "bumps" along the way.

Myth 11: I want to just take the regular classes and not the honor classes because I have straight A's. If I take harder classes, my GPA might go down and hurt my chances of getting into my choice of colleges.

Truth: Colleges would much rather see a B for a harder class than an A for a class that is not challenging the student.

Myth 12: Applying to colleges is such a miserable, stressful time for the whole family.

Truth: Visiting colleges and supporting your student during the application period can be both enjoyable and fun.