



How to know you are picking the right college

Two students share how they chose their colleges

By Alexandra Mayzler

My senior year of high school, I set my sights on a university. Rather, I became obsessed with the school. I visited the campus and instantly felt like it was the perfect place for me. I couldn't picture myself anywhere else. I loved the busy city in which the school was ensconced, the potential to get lost in the crowd, the ability to find myself.

For the next several months, I went through the admissions process. I took my SATs, wrote college essays, filled out applications. On November 15, I put my heart and soul into an envelope and mailed it away. As I waited to hear from my "dream school," I begrudgingly continued the process of applying to the colleges I had selected as back-ups, without truly considering their merits.

One day, a friend of mine invited me to take a visit to the school that was her "dream" and coincidentally one of my back-ups. I wasn't particularly interested in the college but figured a visit was a legitimate reason to miss a day of school.

We arrived at the college, and I immediately noticed how different it was from my first choice. This college was small and gentle, yet diverse and rigorous at the same time. It seemed to be a nurturing version of my dream.

As we toured the college and learned about its history, I started to drop my guard. When we left, I could really see myself attending this school. No, it wasn't the huge and bustling university of my early decision application, but it was a viable option.

By December, I had received a reply from my number-one choice. I was thrilled. But I kept thinking how unnecessary it was to get caught up in the dazzle of the big name. I realized that there were options for me and other colleges where I could have been perfectly happy. I learned that if you slow down a minute, you may find yourself pleasantly surprised.

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