

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Questions your mentee may have about college

Why should I go to college?

The simple answer is money and employment. College graduates earn more money and are less likely to be unemployed. With each year of college you complete you can increase your annual pay by an average of 10%. Over their working life, a college graduate (Bachelor's Degree) on average earns almost a million dollars more than a high school graduate.

Although the ability to earn more money may be the ready answer to the question of why college is important, it is by no means the only answer. A college education provides a number of economic and social benefits for individuals and for society in general. Following is an array of the potential benefits of a postsecondary education:

The Potential Personal Benefits of Post-Secondary Education

| PERSONAL ECONOMIC BENEFITS | PERSONAL SOCIAL BENEFITS |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Higher salaries and benefits | Improved health/life expectancy |
| Employment | Improved quality of life for offspring |
| Higher savings levels | Better consumer decision making |
| Improved working conditions | Increased personal stature |
| Personal/professional mobility | More hobbies, leisure activities |

The Potential Public Benefits of Post-Secondary Education

| PUBLIC ECONOMIC BENEFITS | PUBLIC SOCIAL BENEFITS |
|--|---|
| Increased tax revenues | Reduced crime rates |
| Greater productivity | Increased charitable giving and community service |
| Increased consumption | Increased quality of civic life |
| Increased workforce flexibility | Social cohesion/appreciation for diversity |
| Decreased reliance on government financial support | Improved ability to adapt to and use technology |

Source: Institute for Higher Education Policy (1998). Reaping the Benefits: Defining the Public and Private Value of Going to College. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Additionally, a college education can lead to a sense of personal fulfillment and empowerment, an increase in self-awareness, a better grasp of local and world events, more efficient problem solving skills, and exposure to and appreciation for various cultures and worldviews.

What do you mean by “college”?

Colleges include a range of postsecondary institutions that offer career-based training for young people after they finish high school. These may be 2-year institutions, 4-year institutions or career-focused vocational or technical institutions.

What is college like?

It can be fun and exciting, but the coursework can also be challenging. To find out more about college and college life, talk to several people who have been or are currently in college.

Is a 4-year college just like high school, except that you live on campus?

The difference between college and high school is much more than living on campus. In high school, most students take the same general subjects. College students take some general courses, but many of the courses they take are specific to their fields of study/career paths. Additionally, no one in college will be looking over your shoulder on a daily basis to make sure you do your assignments and instructors are often less forgiving than high school teachers. If you fail to complete an assignment, you may not have an opportunity to hand it in later. In college, you are expected to be adult-like and take responsibility for your decisions and actions.

When should I start preparing for college?

Right now, look over the college prep checklists within the appropriate age section for details on how to prepare. You can find out about those steps from your high school guidance counselor. You can also visit helpful sites like www.michiganccap.org.

When should I apply for college?

You should begin making steps toward college in your junior year. Begin by making a list of colleges you would like to attend and get admission requirements for each school. Usually by November of senior year, applications should be submitted. Check each school's application guidelines to make sure you will not miss any application deadlines.

Where should I go to college?

The size, location, cost, and course offerings, among other things, may all play a part in the decision making process of choosing a college.

What kind of classes should I take in college?

It depends on your chosen career path or field of interest/major. If you want to get an idea about the type of classes you would have to take for a particular major, check out a college's website.

What if I don't know what I want to be before I have to apply for college?

Don't panic, many young people do not know what they want to be after they graduate from high school. Most 2-year and 4-year schools require students to take a number of general education courses before taking courses for specific career paths/fields of study. That time can be used to explore possible fields. Many individuals enter college and change fields a couple of times before graduating. To discover careers that might be a good fit for you, take a career aptitude test (see your high school counselor) or use the self-inventory document as a guide.

What should I do if I haven't done that well in high school?

No matter what your grades, you can still go to college! There are different types of colleges for people of all skill levels. Maybe a 4-year school isn't for you. You can still choose to attend 2-year colleges or other post-high school career training programs. 2-year colleges, like community colleges, and most career training schools accept a wider range of those who apply. Additionally, there are remedial classes available at many colleges for underprepared students. These remedial courses may not count for credit but they will help them catch up academically so they can perform successfully in traditional classes.

How much does college cost?

It depends. You will have to go to or call each school's registration office or visit their websites to find out specific costs. In general, 2-year schools, such as community colleges, cost less to attend than 4-year institutions. However, don't make a decision about a school solely based on stated costs. Some schools may cost more but also may offer more scholarships and financial aid, making them just as affordable as less expensive institutions.

How will I pay for college?

Even if you are unsure about whether family resources are available to pay for college, you can still get a college education. There are a number of options when considering how to pay for college, such as financial aid, scholarships and grants, loans, and work study programs. Check with your high school counselors and the financial aid office of the college you plan to attend to find out more information about potential funding options.

Where are the colleges in Michigan?

Michigan College Guide is one Internet source that lists 2-year and 4-year colleges in Michigan broken down into four geographical regions (<http://www.michigancollegeguide.com>). For information about other postsecondary institutions in the state, check with your high school guidance counselor, or go to www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid. Click on "Michigan Postsecondary Handbook."

Should I go to college in Michigan?

It's up to you and your parent(s)/guardian(s) whether you should attend college in Michigan. The state has a number of excellent colleges to choose from. Just make sure you make an informed decision about the college you plan to attend based on what you would like to study.