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Finding the Right College for You

Lauren Hagan
Western Kentucky University

Jessica Lancaster
Western Kentucky University, jess.lancaster@belmont.edu

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Finding the Right College for YOU!

The college search can be a time of tremendous excitement and great stress. A study conducted by Burdett (2013) found that each student surveyed tackled their college choice process in a unique way depending on what was important to them and the resources available. **If you put in the time and effort as you begin your search, you could avoid possible future stress and regret.** A poll done in 2017 found “51% of Americans regret one of their college education choices.” Students “might have just made different choices if they had different information at the time they were picking a major or picking an institution to graduate from.”

Institution Size

The general sizes are small (less than 5,000), medium (5,000-10,000), and large (over 10,000). Each has their own unique characteristics. Do you want to be “a big fish in a small pond” or “a small fish in a big pond”?

Public v. Private

Public — A portion of their funding is received from the state government; tend to have a wider variety of degree options, larger student population

Private — Rely on contributions, donations, and tuition costs; tend to have smaller class sizes, a wider variety of students from different places

In-State v. Out-of-State

How far away you are willing to be from your “comfort zone”? Are tuition differences significant? For private institutions, the tuition rate is the same regardless of location. Public tuition is dependent on the state you live and the location of the institution.

Community and Technical Colleges

These exist for students that want to earn an Associate’s Degree, a certificate in a program, or to learn a technical skill. Their tuition costs are much lower compared to a university and time of completion is also lower. A majority of students transfer from a community college to a four-year institution to complete their desired degree(s).

Other Aspects to Consider

- **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)** — Offer all students, regardless of race/ethnicity, an opportunity to develop their skills and talents with historical roots of serving African-Americans
- **Predominantly White Institutions (PWI)** — Offer all students an opportunity to attend a university and the enrollment percentage of white students is 50% or more
- **Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI)** — Federal programs designed to assist colleges and universities in the U.S. that have a large percentage of Hispanic students.
- **Research Universities (R1, R2, R3)** — Known for their research activity and doctoral programs
- **Liberal Arts Colleges** — Specifically focus on Education and the Arts