



# The MEFA Institute: Helping Students and Parents Approach the College Choice Process Systematically



# ABOUT US

Dr. Sterk, Dr. Poynton, and Dr. Lapan have partnered together to bring research informed practices and data driven strategies to help students and families navigate the college-going process through a robust student workbook and corresponding curriculum.

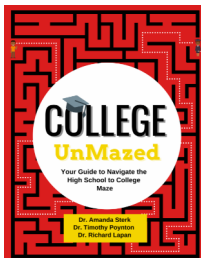


Dr. Timothy Poynton

Dr. Richard Lapan



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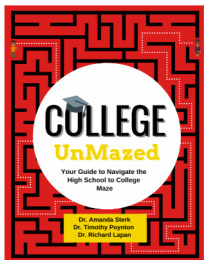
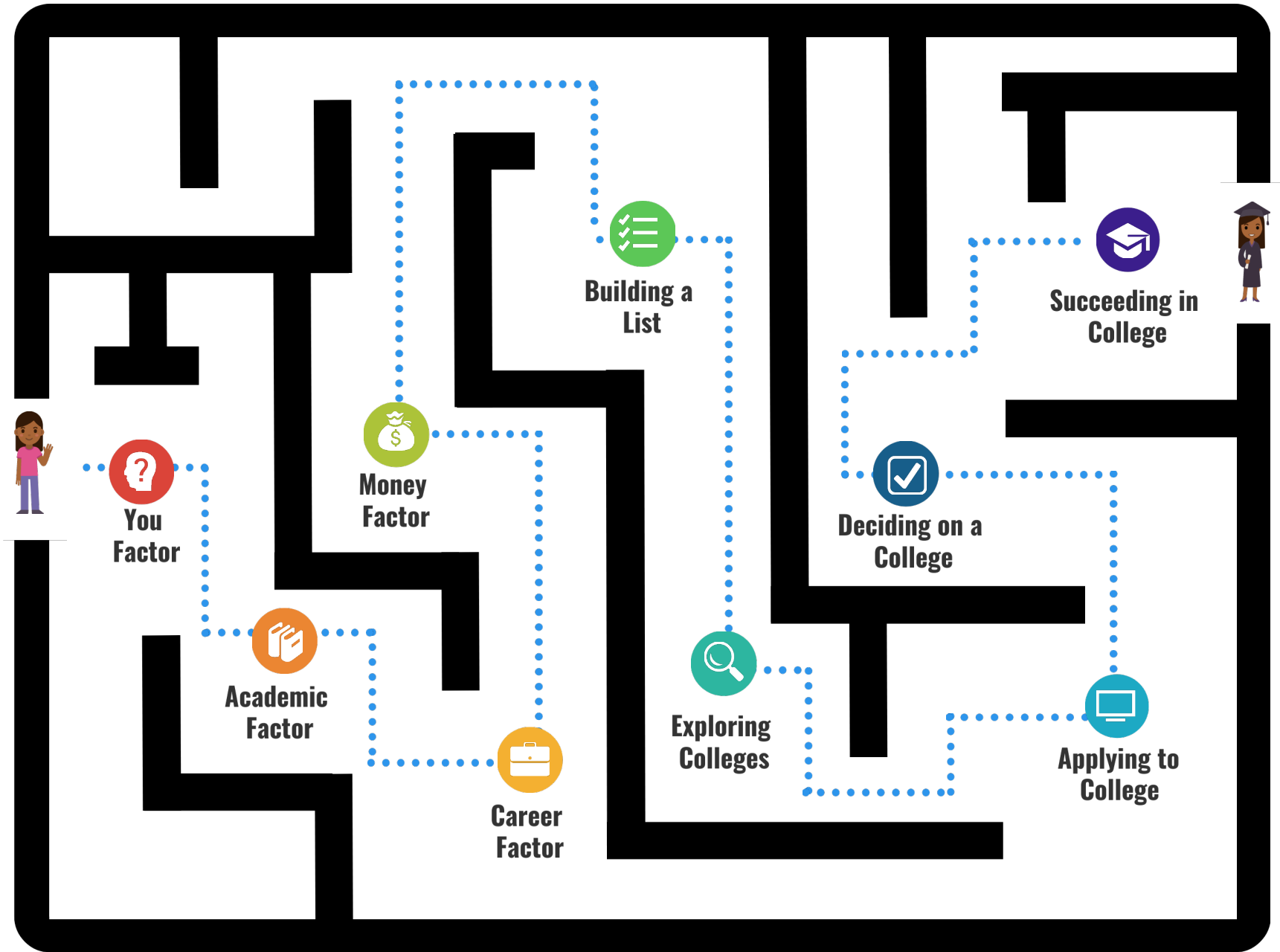
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# COLLEGE UNMAZED



# COLLEGE UnMazed®

Your Guide to Navigate the High School to College Maze

## SELF & COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

4 Factors essential for building a set of skills and abilities preparing you to become college and career ready.

### YOU FACTOR

#### 8 STRENGTHS

- Agency
- Positive Beliefs
- Effective Goals
- Knowing Yourself
- Becoming a Successful Student
- Character for Workplace Success
- College Knowledge
- College Support Network

#### ACTIVITIES

- Work Experience
- Community Involvement
- Creative Pursuits
- Major-Specific Activities
- School Clubs & Activities
- Leadership

### MONEY FACTOR

#### MONEY SOURCES

- Institutional
- National
- State
- External
- Gift Aid
- Loans
- Subsidized
- Unsubsidized
- Parent Plus
- Work Study
- External
- Out-of-pocket
- Savings/529

#### MONEY TERMS

- Award Letter
- EFC/SAI
- FAFSA/CSS Profile
- Cost of Attendance
- Net Price

### ACADEMIC FACTOR

#### PROGRAMS

- Credit-by-Examination
- Dual Enrollment
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
- Industry Certification

#### GRADES

- Recalculated
- Weighted
- Unweighted

#### TESTING

- Pre-ACT
- PSAT
- ACT
- SAT
- Test Optional

### CAREER FACTOR

#### CAREER SELF KNOWLEDGE

- Interests
- Abilities
- Values

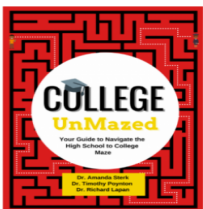
- Realistic
- Investigative
- Artistic
- Social
- Enterprising
- Conventional

#### DEGREES

- Certificates
- Associate
- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Doctorate

#### CAREER PATHWAYS

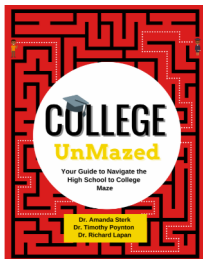
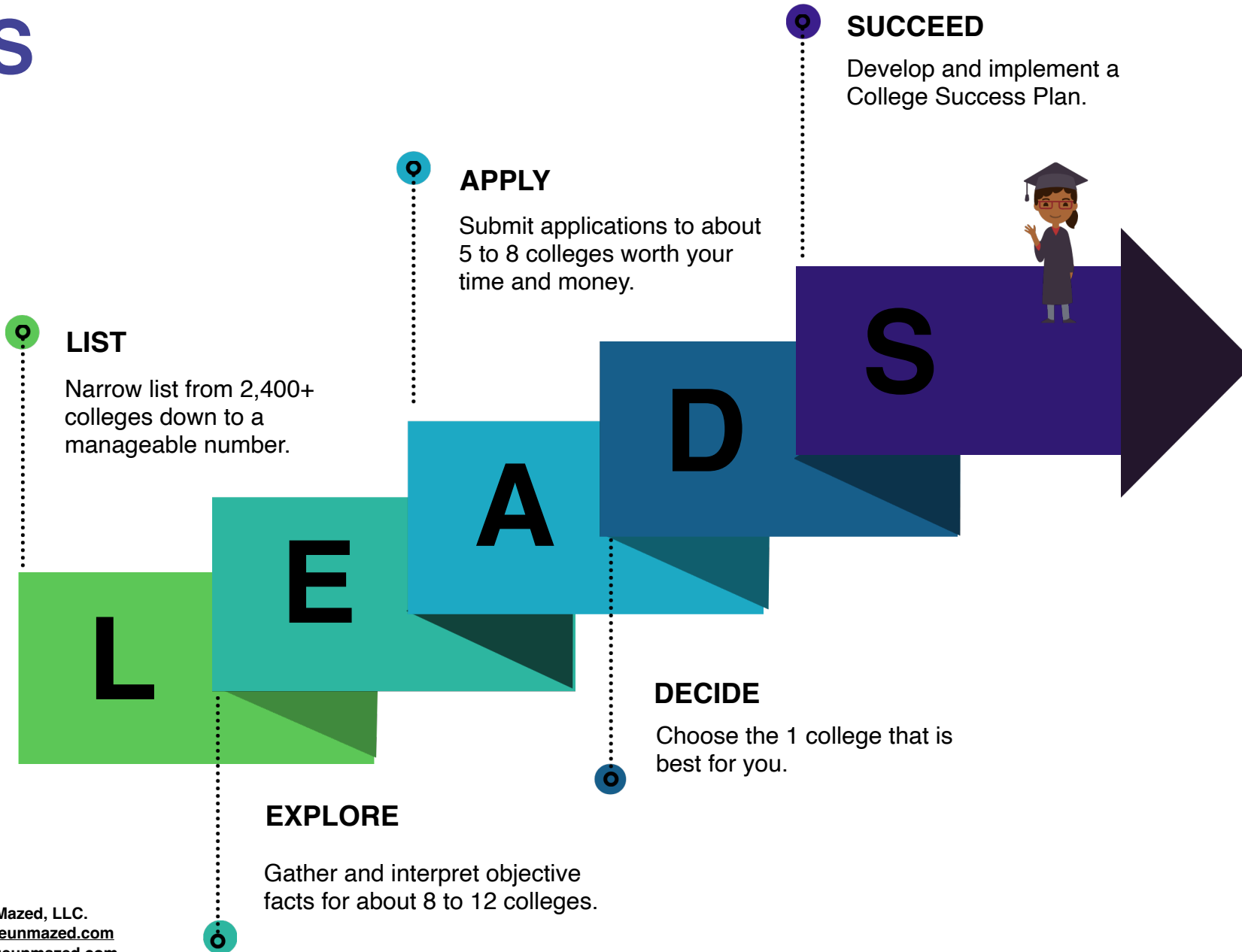
- Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications
- Business, Management & Administration
- Education & Training
- Finance
- Government & Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Math
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics



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# LEADS



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# COLLEGE UnMazed®

Your Guide to Navigate the High School to College Maze

## LEADS STRATEGY

5 steps to making an informed college decision



- Academic Match
- Career Match
- Financial Match
- Personal Match
- Student Outcomes
- Student Support

### 6 KEYS

- 2+2
- 4+1/3+2
- Colleges That Change Lives
- Historically Black Colleges & Universities
- Honors
- Internships
- Learning Communities
- Limited Access
- Study Abroad

### COLLEGE PROGRAMS

- Eligibility
- Budget
- Financial Aid Office

### COLLEGE SUCCESS PLAN

- Financial Integration
- Academic Integration
- Social Integration

- Relationships
- Extracurricular
- Comfort/Climate

- Orientation/Welcome Activities
- Faculty & Staff
- Advisors
- Learning Resources

- Direct Costs
- Indirect Costs
- Self-Help Aid
- Net Price

### AWARD LETTERS

- Admit
- Alternative Admissions
- Defer
- Waitlist
- Deny

### ADMISSION DECISIONS

### INFORMED DECISION

- Create
- Evaluate
- Analyze
- Apply
- Understand
- Remember

### ADMISSION TYPES

- Open Access
- Competitive
- Selective
- Highly Selective

### VISITS

- Formal
- Informal
- Fly-ins
- High School Visits
- College Fairs
- Virtual Fairs

### ACADEMIC & NON-ACADEMIC FACTORS

- Rigor
- Class Rank
- GPA
- ACT/SAT
- Essay
- Recommendations

- Talent/Ability
- Interview
- Character/Personal
- Extracurriculars
- Volunteer Work
- Work Experience
- Level of Applicant Interest

- First-generation
- Alumni Relation
- Geographical Residence
- State Residency
- Religious Affiliation
- Racial/Ethnic Status

### DOCUMENTS

- Résumé
- Essay
- Letters of Recommendation
- ACT/SAT
- Transcript
- FAFSA/CSS Profile

### APPLICATIONS

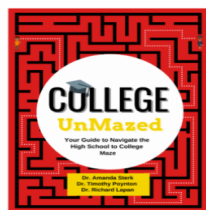
- Common App
- Coalition App
- Institutional

### ALTERNATIVE ADMISSIONS

- Support Programs
- Online
- Alternative Programs
- Alternative Term

### DEADLINES

- Early Decision
- Early Action
- Priority Deadline
- Regular Decision
- Rolling Admissions



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# What is FIT?



- Tutoring services
- Academic labs/tutoring centers
- Counseling centers
- Disability/Adaptive services
- Recreational and community service organizations

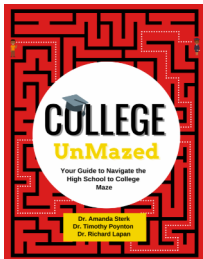
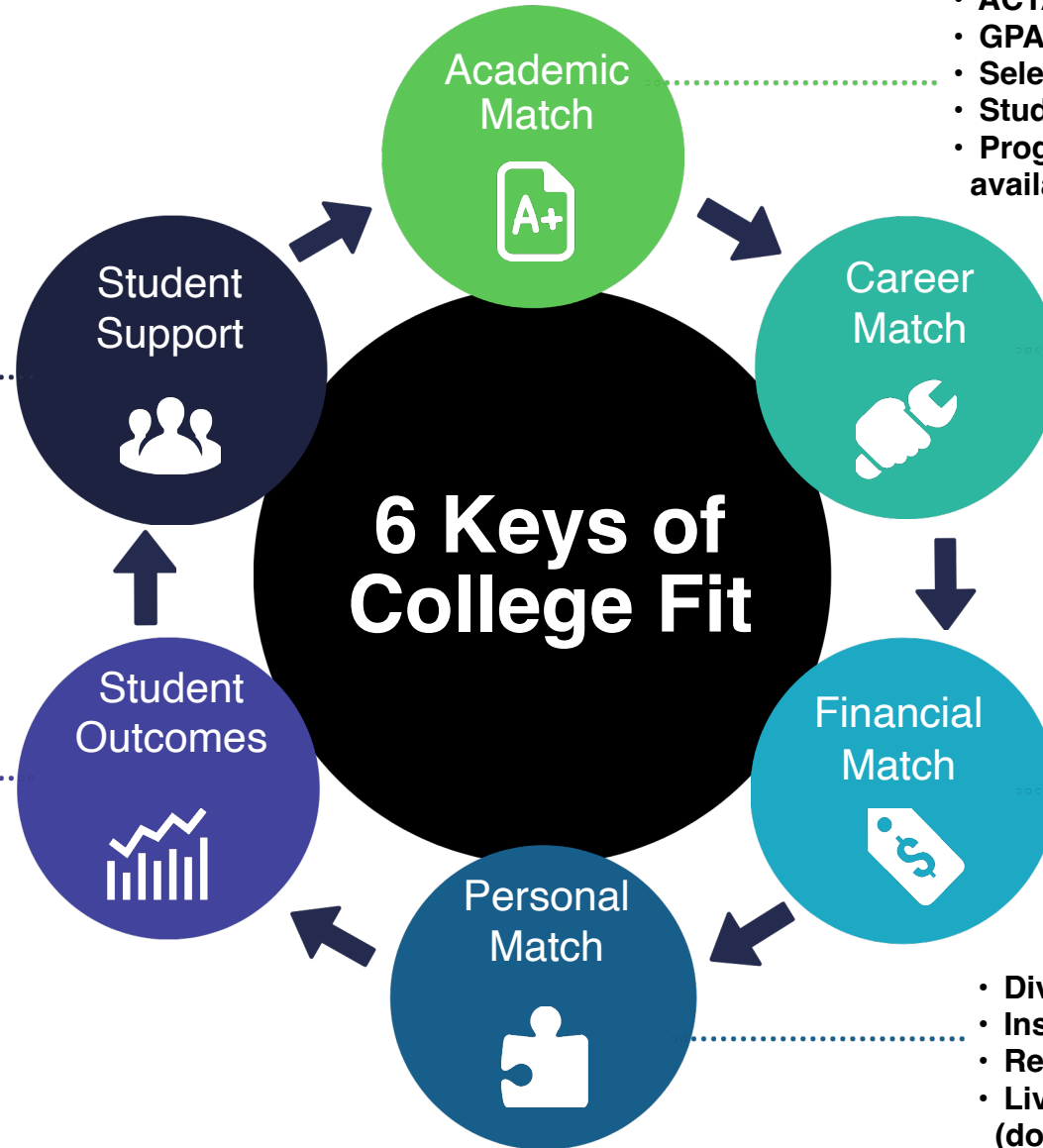
- ACT/SAT Scores
- GPA
- Selectivity
- Student-to-faculty ratio
- Program size and availability

- Alumni network
- Mentoring
- Internships
- Career placement

- Graduation rate
- Retention rate
- Alumni salary
- Loan default rate

- Sticker price
- Gift aid
- Net price
- Median debt

- Diversity
- Institution type
- Recreational options
- Living arrangements (dorms, food, etc.)







*Primary objective of List phase is to identify options that generally fit you without getting overwhelmed and missing any good options. Should ideally have about 10-15 colleges. California has 233 four-year colleges, Texas 129, Massachusetts 91. Wyoming has 3 four-year colleges.*

## Personal Match

- Location
- Distance from home
- Size of campus (small, medium, large)
- Sports teams
- Religious affiliation
- Special mission (HBCU, tribal, single sex)

## Career Match

- Majors & programs offered

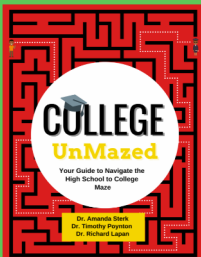
## Academic Match

- Online/distance learning options
- Availability of weekend classes
- Credit for life experience
- Available degrees (certificates, Associate, Bachelor's)
- Type of college, 2- or 4-year
- Public or private

# Developing a List

1. Career pathways
2. Housing available on or near campus
3. Distance from home
4. School size
5. Varsity athletic teams
6. Institution type
7. Level of award

***What is not considered at this stage?***  
***Cost, Chance of Admission***



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Name of School  
Type name of school here

States (use map for more than 1 state)  
No Preference  
Alabama  
Alaska  
Use Map

ZIP Code Miles from

Programs/Majors  
0 Items Selected  
Browse for Programs

Level of Award  
 Certificate  Associate's  
 Bachelor's  Advanced

Institution Type  
 Public  4-year  
 Private non-profit  2-year  
 Private for-profit  < 2-year

MORE SEARCH OPTIONS

Tuition & Fees  
Maximum State you live in

Undergraduate Student Enrollment  
Minimum to Maximum

Housing?  Yes  
Campus Setting  
 Rural  Suburban  
 Town  City

% of Applicants Admitted  
Minimum to Maximum

Test Scores – 25th Percentile  
SAT Reading/Writing: Min Max  
SAT Math: Min Max  
ACT Composite: Min Max

Varsity Athletic Teams  
 Men  Women  
No Preference

Extended Learning Opportunities  
 Distance learning only  
 Weekend/evening  
 Credit for life experience

Religious Affiliation  
No Preference

Specialized Mission  
No Preference

Show Results

Guide Me | Clear Search

Find the right college for you

Guide Me

- » Refine your search with *More Search Options* to select additional search criteria.
- » Build a list of schools using *My Favorites* for side-by-side comparisons.
- » Pinpoint school locations with an *interactive map*.
- » Export search results into a *spreadsheet*.
- » Save your session including search options and favorites.
- » [Add College Navigator](#) to your browser search bar.

## College Affordability and Transparency Center

Browse lists of institutions with the highest and lowest tuition & fees and net price. [» GO](#)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Preparing for your Education

Find out what you need to do to prepare for education beyond high school. [» GO](#)

### Financial Aid

Apply for Federal Student Aid on FAFSA. [» GO](#)

### Postsecondary Education Outcome Measures: ED, DOD, and VA

ED, DOD, and VA have identified a set of potential education outcome measures for Veterans and service members. [» GO](#)

### Careers

Deciding on a career? Consult the *b/s.gov* Occupational Outlook Handbook. [» GO](#)



*All 6 Keys considered in Explore; primary objective is to get to about 8-12 colleges you Explore more deeply through visits and further investigation with Six Keys.*

*Here is where you begin to consider cost and chance of admission.*

---

### **Academic Match**

- ACT/SAT Scores
- GPA
- Selectivity
- Student-to-faculty ratio
- Program size and availability

### **Career Match**

- Alumni network
- Mentoring
- Internships
- Career placement

### **Personal Match**

- Diversity
- Institution type
- Recreational options
- Living arrangements (dorms, food, etc.)

### **Financial Match**

- Sticker price
- Gift aid
- Net price
- Median debt

### **Student Support**

- Tutoring services
- Academic labs/tutoring centers
- Counseling centers
- Disability/Adaptive services
- Recreational and community service organizations

### **Student Outcomes**

- Graduation rate
- Retention rate
- Alumni salary
- Loan default rate

*We can better estimate chances of admission if we know how a particular college views the importance of the academic and non-academic factors they consider when making admission decisions*

Figure 6.2



**MALLEABLE  
NON-ACADEMIC FACTORS**

- Talent/ ability
- Interview
- Character/ personal qualities
- Extracurricular activities
- Volunteer work
- Work experience
- Level of applicant interest

**LESS MALLEABLE NON-  
ACADEMIC FACTORS**

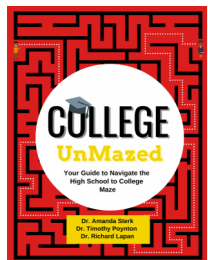
- First generation
- Alumni relation
- Geographical residence
- State residency
- Religious affiliation/ commitment
- Racial/ ethnic status



**C7. Basis for Selection: Relative Importance of Factors in Admission Decisions**

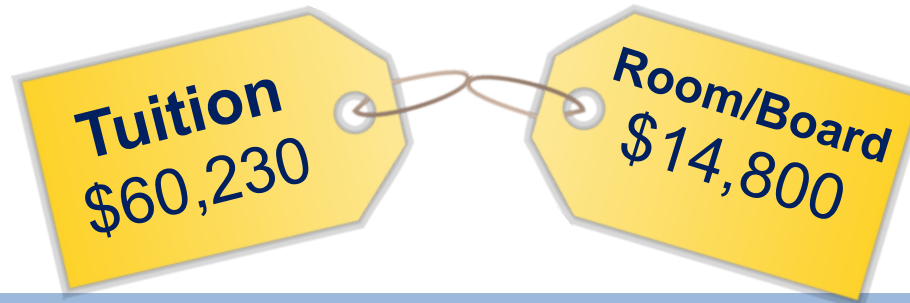
Please indicate the relative importance of each of the following academic and non-academic factors in your first-time, first-year degree-seeking general admission decisions (not including programs with specific criteria): *select from the dropdown menus.*

ACADEMIC	
Rigor of secondary school record	Very Important
Class rank	Important
Academic Grade Point Average (GPA)	Very Important
Recommendations	Important
Standardized test scores	Considered
Application essay	Important
NONACADEMIC	
Interview	Not Considered
Extracurricular activities	Important
Talent/ability	Important
Character/personal qualities	Important
First generation	Considered
Alumni/ae relation	Not Considered
Geographical residence	Not Considered
State residency	Considered
Religious affiliation/commitment	Not Considered
Volunteer work	Considered
Work experience	Important
Level of applicant's interest	Not Considered



TYPE OF AID	NUMBER AWARDED AID	PERCENT AWARDED AID	TOTAL AMOUNT OF AID AWARDED	AVERAGE AMOUNT OF AID AWARDED
Any student financial aid <sup>1</sup>	488	99%	—	—
Grant or scholarship aid	484	98%	\$20,165,838	\$41,665
Federal grants	98	20%	\$605,015	\$6,174
Pell grants	98	20%	\$478,182	\$4,879
Other federal grants	82	17%	\$126,833	\$1,547
State/local government grant or scholarships	71	14%	\$180,615	\$2,544
Institutional grants or scholarships	481	97%	\$19,380,208	\$40,291
Student loan aid	392	79%	\$2,997,498	\$7,647
Federal student loans	392	79%	\$2,022,101	\$5,158
Other student loans	56	11%	\$975,397	\$17,418

67% AVERAGE tuition discount!



*You will find this in Financial Aid section of College Navigator*

**September 20, 2022**

Lasell University today announced plans to reduce tuition and room and board costs to bring greater transparency to its pricing and make a Lasell undergraduate education accessible to a broader group of students.

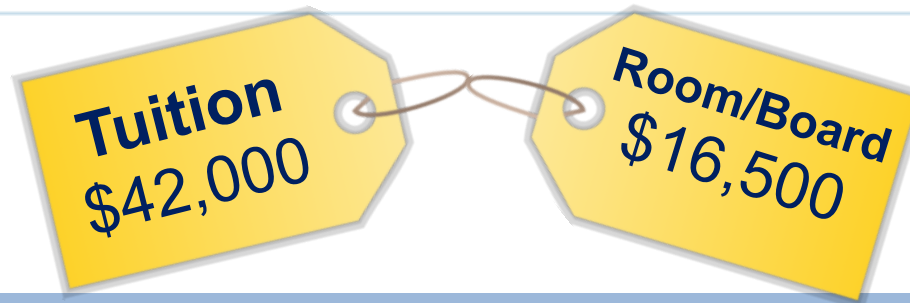
At its recent meeting, our [Board of Trustees](#) approved the rate of \$26,000 for tuition and \$13,500 for standard room and board, making Lasell housing and meal plan rate among the lowest in the Boston area and in all of New England. This reduction in price better reflects the actual out of pocket costs that the majority of current Lasell students pay after scholarships are factored in.

For the **2023-2024** academic year, the combined tuition and standard room and board price will decrease from \$59,130 to \$39,500, a 33% reduction from the 2022-2023 published rate.

According to research conducted by Sallie Mae, 60% of high school students won't consider a college or university— even if it meets individual academic, geographic, and social criteria— if the published price is deemed beyond their means. These decisions are often reached without a real understanding of the scholarships and generous financial aid packages that school's like Lasell offer, financial support that can make the cost of attendance more accessible.

TYPE OF AID	NUMBER RECEIVING AID	PERCENT RECEIVING AID	TOTAL AMOUNT OF AID RECEIVED	AVERAGE AMOUNT OF AID RECEIVED
Any student financial aid <sup>1</sup>	326	100%	—	—
Grant or scholarship aid	326	100%	\$8,196,018	\$25,141
Federal grants	117	36%	\$615,318	\$5,259
Pell grants	117	36%	\$553,682	\$4,732
Other federal grants	33	10%	\$61,636	\$1,868
State/local government grant or scholarships	136	42%	\$216,966	\$1,595
Institutional grants or scholarships	326	100%	\$7,363,734	\$22,588
Student loan aid	260	80%	\$1,989,222	\$7,651
Federal student loans	257	79%	\$1,377,192	\$5,359
Other student loans	44	13%	\$612,030	\$13,910

38% AVERAGE discount on tuition, room, and board



*You will find this in Financial Aid section of College Navigator*

Full-time beginning undergraduate students who paid the in-state or in-district tuition rate and were awarded grant or scholarship aid from federal, state or local governments, or the institution.

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Average net price	\$22,505	\$17,291	\$22,291

Full-time beginning undergraduate students who paid the in-state or in-district tuition rate and were awarded Title IV aid by income.

AVERAGE NET PRICE BY INCOME	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
\$0 – \$30,000	\$12,033	\$6,061	\$10,858
\$30,001 – \$48,000	\$13,203	\$7,647	\$11,824
\$48,001 – \$75,000	\$16,667	\$11,340	\$15,768
\$75,001 – \$110,000	\$23,064	\$17,540	\$22,651
\$110,001 and more	\$29,311	\$24,211	\$29,809

*Net Price for low-income student at UMA = \$10,858, high income = \$29,809*

*You will find this in Net Price section of College Navigator*



Characteristic	SUNY at Albany	SUNY Empire State College	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	SUNY Cortland	Syracuse University
Student-to-faculty ratio (Explore)	19	18	17	16	15
% admitted (Explore)	57%		57%	52%	69%
% admit who enroll (Explore)	18%		15%	20%	16%
SAT Reading 25th Percentile (Explore)	550		620	550	
SAT Reading 75th Percentile (Explore)	620		720	610	
SAT Math 25th Percentile (Explore)	540		680	550	
SAT Math 75th Percentile (Explore)	630		780	610	
ACT Composite 25th Percentile (Explore)	22		29	22	
ACT Composite 75th Percentile (Explore)	28		34	26	

Academic Match

Student Outcomes	SUNY at Albany	SUNY Empire State College	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	SUNY Cortland	Syracuse University
Retention rate (Explore)	83%	65%	91%	85%	89%
4 year graduation rate (Explore)	54%	18%	61%	53%	71%
6 year graduation rate (Explore)	64%	25%	86%	71%	83%
Cohort default rate (Explore)	4%	4%	1%	4%	3%

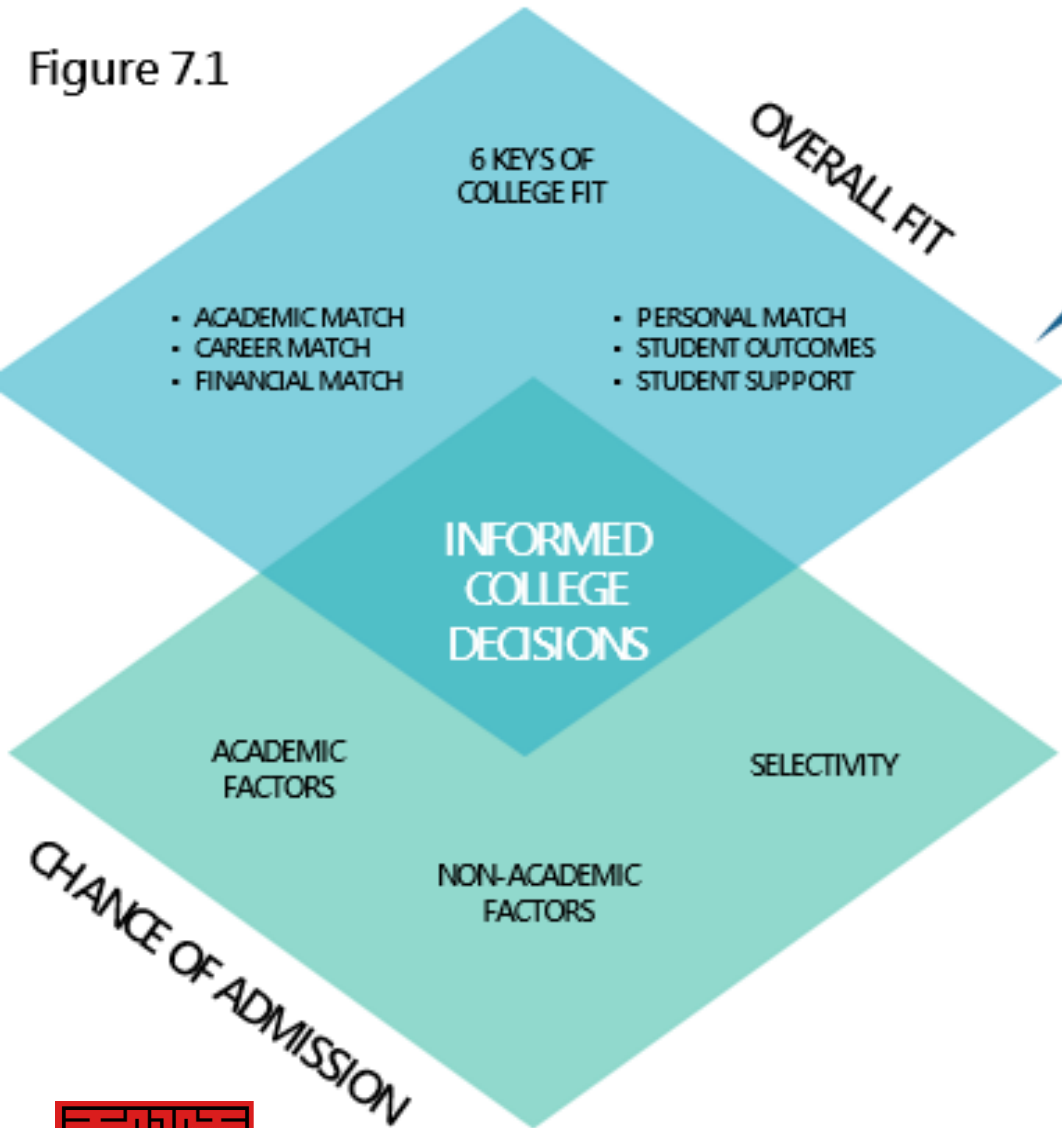
Tuition and fees, in state (Explore)	\$10,160	\$7,630	\$57,012	\$8,677	\$55,926
Tuition and fees, out of state (Explore)	\$27,750	\$17,540	\$57,012	\$18,587	\$55,926
Living arrangement - Room and board, On Campus (Explore)	\$14,620		\$15,954	\$13,100	\$16,356
Living arrangement - Room and board, Off Campus (not with Family) (Explore)	\$9,994	\$11,600		\$13,100	\$16,356
Living arrangement - Other (On Campus) (Explore)	\$1,720		\$1,608	\$2,860	\$1,806
Living arrangement - Other (Off Campus, with family) (Explore)	\$2,050	\$1,226		\$3,260	\$1,806
Living arrangement - Other (Off Campus, not with family) (Explore)	\$2,050	\$2,226		\$2,860	\$1,806
Avg. overall Net Price, from IPEDS (Explore)	\$17,486	\$12,059	\$40,661	\$17,743	\$47,177
Avg. Net Price (income \$0-\$30,000)			\$22,878		\$17,250
Avg. Net Price (income \$30,001-\$48,000)			\$20,738		\$19,737
Avg. Net Price (income \$48,001-\$75,000)			\$29,788		\$23,533
Avg. Net Price (income \$75,001-\$110,000)			\$31,589		\$28,653
Avg. Net Price (income over \$110,000)			\$43,003		\$47,284
% of students receiving institutional aid (Explore)	70%	56%	83%	58%	85%
Avg. amount of institutional aid (Explore)	\$3,860	\$649	\$31,461	\$2,185	\$24,390

Financial Match





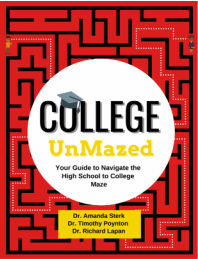
Figure 7.1



~~SAFETY, TARGET REACH~~

Figure 7.5

My Overall Fit by Chance of Admission		Chance of Admission		
		High	Moderate	Low
Overall Fit	Low			
	Moderate			
	High			





*Primary objective of Decide phase is to choose which college to attend. You again attend to Six Keys but now more strongly weight Desirability, the emotion-based side of informed college decision making.*

**1**

This college has a **little** of what I want and need to be satisfied and successful

**17 or lower = Low Fit**

**2**

This college has **some** of what I want and need to be satisfied and successful

**18–23= Moderate Fit**

**3**

This college has **much** of what I want and need to be satisfied and successful

**4**

This college has **most** of what I want and need to be satisfied and successful

**24–30 = High Fit**

**5**

This college has **everything** I want and need to be satisfied and successful

College	Student Outcomes	Academic Match	Personal Match	Career Match	Financial Match	Student Support Services	Total Key Score	Overall Fit

*Revisit 6 Keys with additional information such as Award Letters*

Figure 8.1

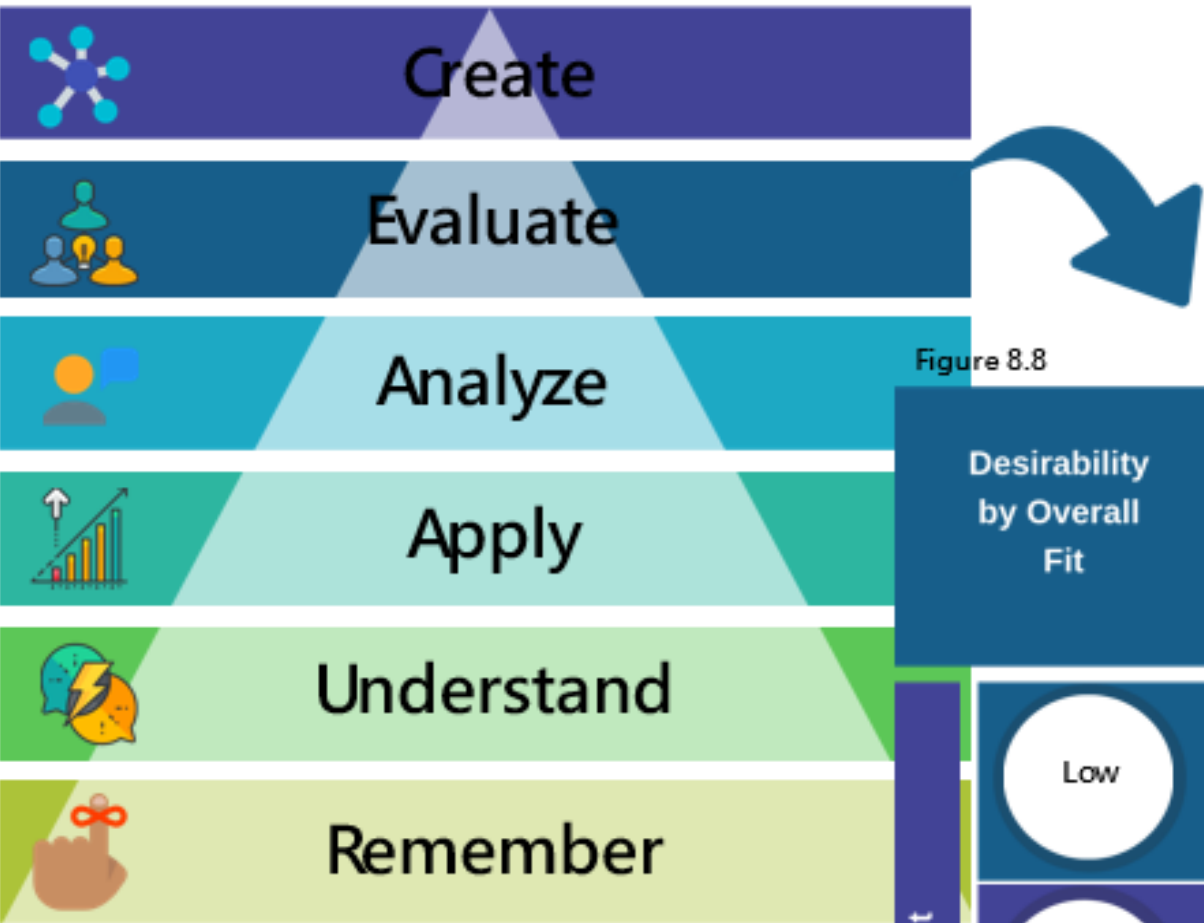
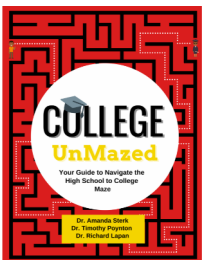
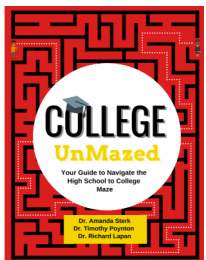
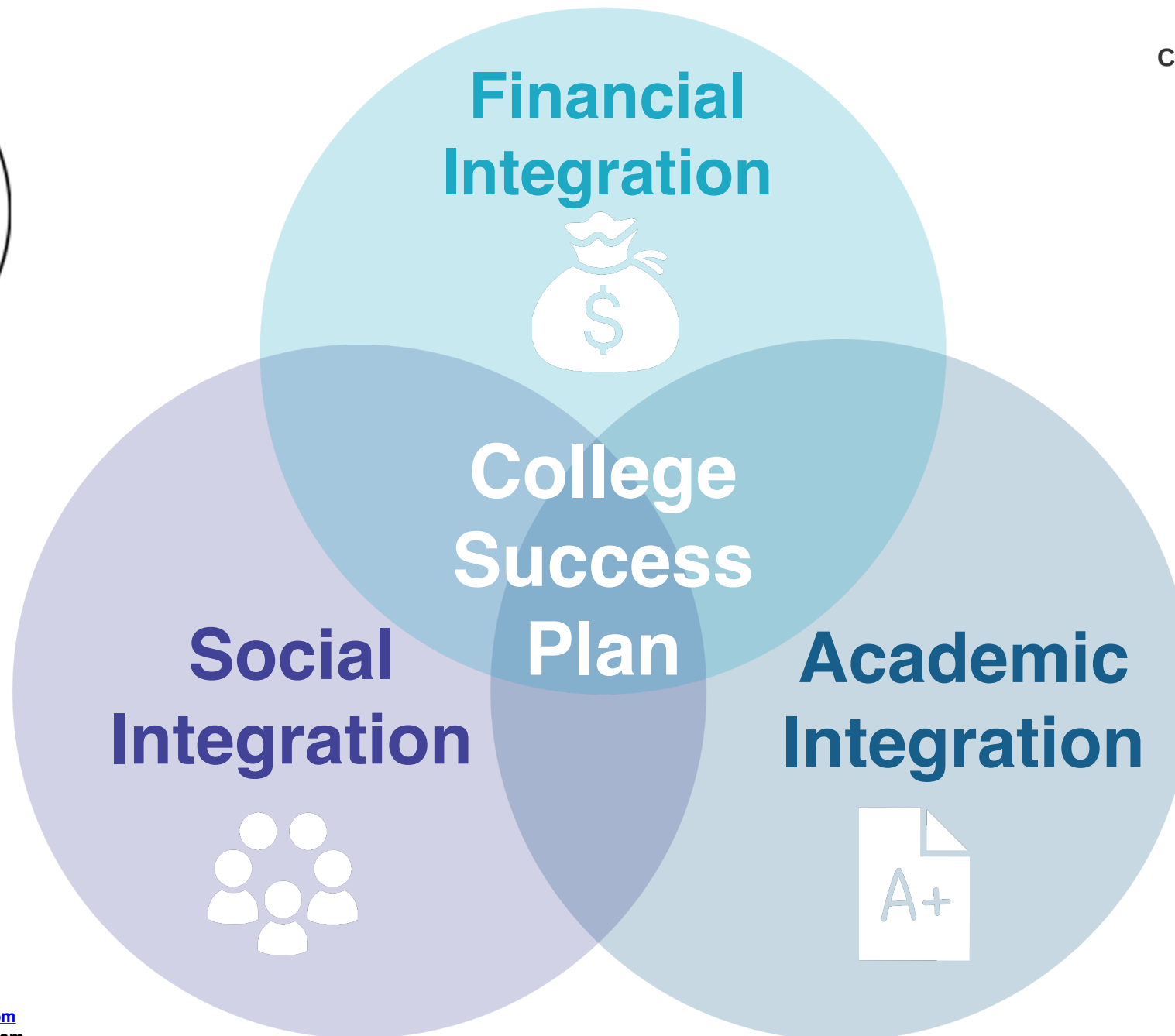


Figure 8.8

		Desirability		
		Low	Moderate	High
Overall Fit	Desirability by Overall Fit	Low	Moderate	High
	Low			
	Moderate			
High				





You  
Factor



Career  
Factor



Academic  
Factor



Money  
Factor

Developing  
a List



Exploring  
Colleges



Applying to  
Colleges



Deciding  
on a  
College



Succeeding  
in College



# Questions?

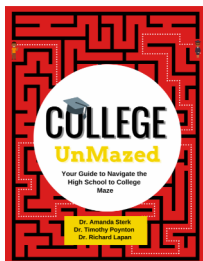
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Want to see a sample book and curriculum or free poster?

<https://www.collegeunmazed.com/programreview>



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