

What Next? After the Acceptance Letter

After receiving your first college acceptance letter, you'll have to start making some difficult decisions for your academic career. Although you may feel overwhelmed, taking your time and carefully making a decision will help you make the right choice for your education. In addition to staying on top of your college-related emails, financial aid deadlines, and college portals:

Wait for More Options to Arrive If you've applied to more than one college, you should wait before making any decisions. However, you may not have as much time as you might like; most colleges require your reply by May 1st. Be sure to read each acceptance package for important deadlines.

Compare Costs Once you've heard back from all of the colleges that you applied to, you can start deciding which college to attend. Pay special attention to the cost of each school. If you're having trouble comparing the final costs of your schools, you can make a spreadsheet or talk to Mrs. Lemkau. Consider more than tuition when comparing schools; you'll also need to factor in the cost of living, such as meal plans or dorm fees. Use this information to have an in-depth discussion with your family about your financial situation. Ultimately, your scholarships and other financial considerations may make your decision for you.

Research the Culture After figuring out which colleges you can afford to attend, spend some time considering the culture of each school. If possible, visit the college campus on your own so that you can experience the atmosphere yourself. Look for events that you can attend on campus designed for prospective students. If you can't make an in-person visit, spend time online visiting the university's website.

Talk it Over Talking about your options with trusted family members or mentors is a good way to narrow down your college choices. You can also talk to other individuals who can lend some useful insight, including your current high school teachers or faculty members at the colleges that you're considering. You can also try to talk to some current students for a better understanding of life at your potential school.

Make Your Choice Even if you only received an acceptance letter from one university, you still need to finalize your choice. Once you've made your decision, use the paperwork included in your acceptance package to accept the college's enrollment offer. Make sure that you fill out your paperwork completely; although most colleges won't reject you for incomplete paperwork, there's no reason to risk losing your spot among the incoming freshmen.

Contact the Rejected Colleges After making your decision, you should contact the colleges that you will not attend. This is a courteous gesture that helps the colleges send out acceptance letters to other students on the waiting list. Most colleges will include a rejection form in the acceptance packet that you can mail back if you decide not to attend that school, or a way to notify them electronically in the portal.

Finish High School. No senioritis allowed at TPS! Since colleges will closely review your grades from senior year, a bad grade could spell trouble for your admitted status and financial aid offers. Instead, focus on keeping your good grades and staying involved in your extracurricular activities.

These are exciting times! Most of you will know where you will be heading by the end of March. Don't rush into your decision without considering your options. With research and careful thought, you can make a good decision that will help you reach your dreams!