



ST. MARY'S
ACADEMY

College Search Guides and Resources

COMPREHENSIVE, OBJECTIVE COLLEGE GUIDES

These are data driven collections of statistics and comprehensive guides for every college and university in the United States. Much of the information they include is now searchable online, but book format makes it easy to find information about tuition, room & board, enrollment figures, location, most popular majors, etc. These guides are published annually and it is often possible to find a slightly older edition at Powell's.

The College Handbook, The College Board (online: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>)
Barron's Profiles of American Colleges, Barron's Educational Series
Four-Year Colleges, Peterson's
The Best 394 Colleges, The Princeton Review

NARRATIVE, SUBJECTIVE COLLEGE GUIDES

These books are meant to be read rather than searched, although they do have some statistics that make it easy to do a side-by-side comparison of colleges. They offer narrative descriptions of each of the colleges they profile which make it easy to appreciate a given colleges strengths and weaknesses.

The Fiske Guide to Colleges, Edward Fiske (updated annually, but does not change too much from year to year, generally positive about all the 300 schools it profiles).

Colleges That Change Lives, Loren Pope. First published in 1996, revised in 2013, the introduction is particularly valuable in understanding the merits of smaller liberal arts colleges. Pope then includes profiles of 40 he considered particularly noteworthy.

The College Finder, Dr. Steven Antonoff. Lists of colleges by major, co-curricular programs, and location. Some of Antonoff's categories: 'Colleges for the Quirky' or 'Colleges for the Bookworm' are highly subjective but are often based on other's ranking or sources. Some students find that his categories really speak to them.

GENERAL COLLEGE COUNSELING BOOKS

College Admission, Robin Mamlet and Christine Vandavelde (2011) A detailed how-to book about the college application process written for parents and students by former dean of Stanford and her co-author. The authors manage a blog with more up-to-date advice and resources at <http://collegeadmissionbook.com/>.

If the U Fits: Expert Advice on Finding the Right College and Getting Accepted, Kevin McMullin and Robert Frank (2014). Another how-to book with a more student-friendly tone and tons of good advice. It is published by the Princeton Review (a test prep company) so it does emphasize more test prep but the admission advice is generally sound. Its author, the founder of a CollegeWise, an independent counseling service also maintains a relevant blog at <http://wiselikeus.com/>

College Unranked: Ending the College Admissions Frenzy, Lloyd Thacker (ed.) 2004. A series of thoughtful essays by admission deans and experienced college counselors reflecting on the college admission environment; some good nuggets of wisdom, but not intended as a how-to book.

Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania, Frank Bruni (2015). Essays culled from Bruni's New York Times column questioning the frenzy around college admission.

FINANCIAL AID GUIDES AND INFORMATION

The Financial Aid Handbook: Getting the Education You Want for the Price you can Afford. Carol Stack and Ruth Vedvick (2017) Recently Updated, this is an essential how-to book about understanding and accessing merit scholarships and applying for financial aid.

The College Solution Lynn, O'Shaugnessy. Website and blog specifically related to paying for college. O'Shaugnessy trained as a journalist rather than as an educator. She offers webinars and booklets for a fee, but if you get on her email list, you can cull the free things effectively. <http://www.thecollegesolution.com/>

BOOKS OF LISTS/SPECIALTY GUIDES

Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges, Frederick E. Rugg (sorts colleges by major)

Smart Choices: Honors Programs and Colleges, Peterson's

Index of Majors and Graduate Degrees, The College Board

Colleges With Programs for Students with Learning Disabilities or ADD, Peterson's

Degree Programs in Visual and Performing Arts, Peterson's

Creative Colleges: Finding the Best Programs for Aspiring Actors, Artists, Designers, Dancers, Musicians, Writers and More, Elaina Loveland (2017)

TESTING AND TEST PREP

The Official SAT Study Guide, The College Board, 2018 edition. (The Blue Book).

The Real ACT, 3rd edition, published by ACT (The Red Book)

SAT Prep Black Book, second edition, Mike Barrett and Patrick Barrett (2017) and the *ACT Prep Black Book*, by the same authors. The 20-something authors have taken the 'official study guides' listed above and captured the standard test prep strategies in a very detailed how-to book that some motivated and detail-oriented students find an effective (and cost effective) way to prepare.

Free online test prep: www.khanacademy.org for the SAT; www.academy.act.org for the ACT. See the SMA College Counseling Handbook for a longer description of test prep options and resources.