

# What factors go into the decision?

# COLLEGE SEARCH

## Process offers many pathways for making a choice

GEORGIA ROSS  
THE RUBICON

“AS SOMEONE THAT’S BEEN SURROUNDED BY ACADEMIC RIGOR MY WHOLE LIFE, I’M KIND OF SICK OF IT.”

Autumn Spaulding



The college search: an exciting yet sometimes stressful road most juniors and seniors journey on.

This opportunity comes with mixed feelings: students feel expected to know where they want to live and what they want to do... with the rest of their life.

Focusing on which school characteristics students are drawn to can help clarify and narrow the search.

“A huge part of helping a student find colleges that really fit who they are starts with understanding who they are,” Director of College Counseling and Academic Planning Mary Hill said.

That’s why students are assigned a college counselor at the end of sophomore year. But this isn’t an assignment to start a college search; it’s about building a relationship with their college counselor.

According to Hill picking a college based on statistics is a misstep. Instead, “...explore characteristics of colleges that fit the learning environment [you] want,” she said.

Junior Audrey Senaratna said she is drawn to larger cities and people with a range of backgrounds. “Diversity is definitely some-

thing I want to be surrounded by when I go into the world by myself,” Senaratna said.

According to a poll sent to all current juniors and seniors, the geographical location of a college is a top three consideration.

This report doesn’t necessarily fit where people ultimately go after commencement. For instance, 56.3% of juniors said the second most enticing location for college is the West Coast; data in the admissions office shows only 20% of the Class of 2022 enrolled in West Coast schools.

On the matter of staying close to home? Only half of survey respondents would consider attending a college in Minnesota. Yes, according to the College Counseling School Profile of 2022-23, more grads enrolled at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities than any other college between 2019 and 2022.

Another consideration is a school’s emphasis on academics.

“As someone that’s been surrounded by academic rigor my whole life, I’m kind of sick of it,” senior Autumn Spaulding said.

Instead, Spaulding is seeking out colleges where people prioritize balancing school-work and having fun.

Students interested in pursuing a particular area of study may find themselves seeking out specialized programs that give them more opportunities in a field. For some, these programs, or lack thereof, could be a potential deciding factor.

“Something that deter[s] me from schools is a weak science program,” Senaratna said.

Spaulding has always found herself interested in fashion and business but only sometimes sought out specialized programs at the beginning of her college search. Eventually, she “...kind of realized there’s no point in pursuing a college that doesn’t have [fashion and business] as a program and doesn’t have connections.”

Hill said that it’s important to keep anxiety down and focus on the journey. Knowing there’s a road map, much of which gets drawn by students during their search, is a good place to start.



**50%** of juniors and seniors say they would consider attending a college in Minnesota.  
**YOU BETCHA!**

I love living in MINNESOTA because I love our SEASONS. There are also some COLLEGES in MINNESOTA with really good ACADEMICS and student communities. As long as I’m NOT TOO CLOSE to home or SPA, I’d attend college in Minnesota.

Maya Sachs

Most of my FAMILY lives in Minnesota so it would be nice not having to take an AIRPLANE to go see them. The CAMPUSES on the INSIDE also look a lot different than they do on the OUTSIDE so I can feel like I am in a new place, even though I am not that far from HOME.

Lucas Grewe

I want to BRANCH OUT by going to college in a different town, but not necessarily OUTSIDE of the state. I’ve realized I don’t want to leave the state because I like Minnesota and I want to stay within a car ride from HOME. On top of that, the college I LIKE the most happen to be in Minnesota.

Maggie Fried

# MINNESOTA = NICE?



**50%** of juniors and seniors say they would not consider attending a college in Minnesota.  
**NOPE, I’M OUT!**

I want to discover a location that is NEW and UNFAMILIAR to switch things up from what I am used to after living in MINNESOTA my entire life.

Clara McKoy

I want to ESCAPE Minnesota.

Alexandra Cardwell

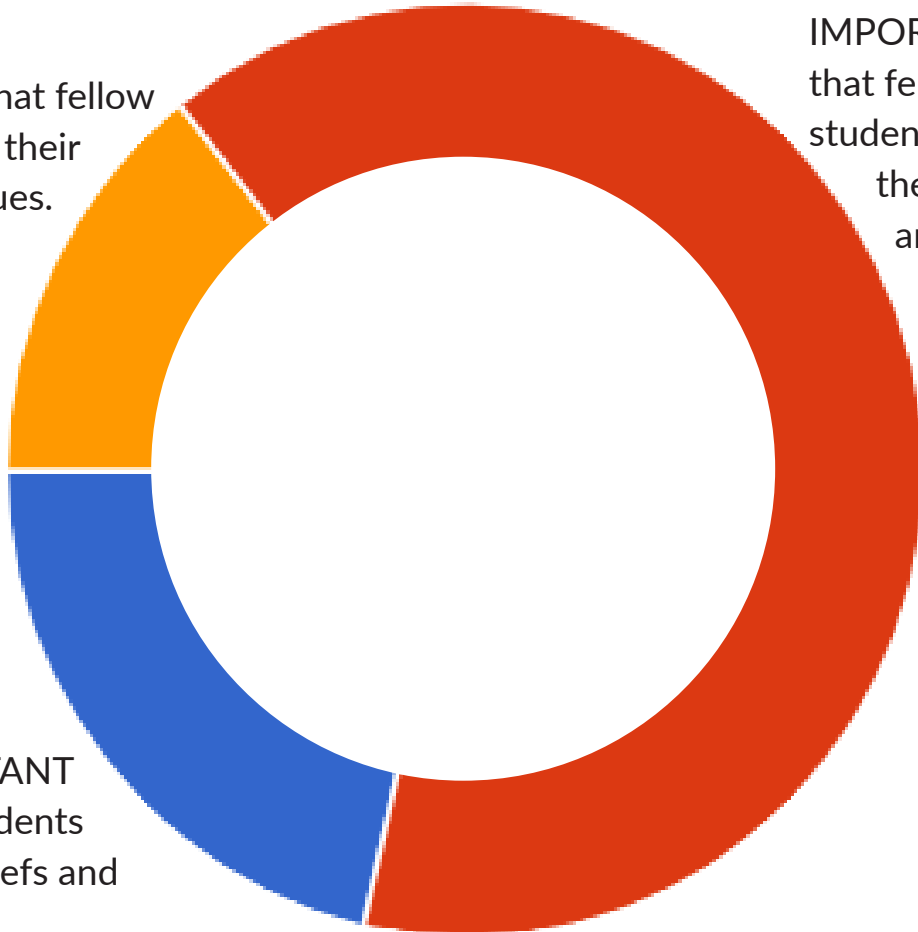
I need to GET OUT of Minnesota. It’s too COLD, and I don’t like it HERE.

Davan Rosen

## DO YOUR VALUES COME INTO PLAY?

**14.3%**

SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT that fellow students share their beliefs and values.



**21.4%**

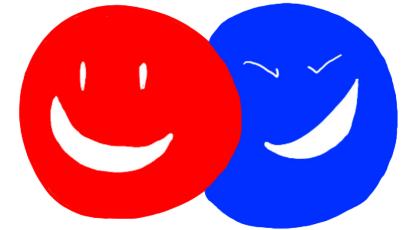
VERY IMPORTANT that fellow students share their beliefs and values.

**63.4%**

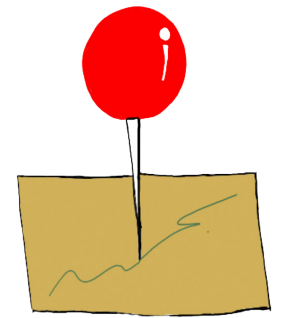
IMPORTANT that fellow students share their beliefs and values.

## WHAT WE LOOK AT MOST

Many considerations factor into the college search. But when it comes to top priorities, juniors and seniors share the same three:



**SOCIAL SCENE**



**LOCATION**

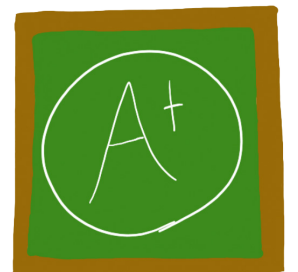
## OH THE PLACES WE'LL GO



Seniors are most drawn to colleges in the **MIDWEST** with 57.1% reporting themselves as interested.



Juniors are most drawn to colleges on the **EAST COAST** with 68.8% reporting themselves as interested.



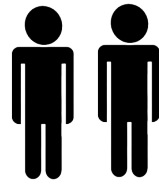
**ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

## TOO BIG? TOO SMALL? JUST RIGHT.

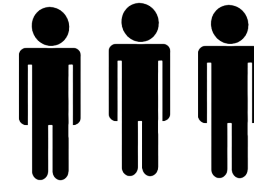


Juniors prefer small-sized colleges (under 5,000 students) the **LEAST**,

Seniors prefer small and medium-sized colleges (between 5,000 and 10,000 students) the **MOST**.



Juniors prefer medium-sized colleges the **MOST**.



Seniors prefer large-sized colleges (between 10,000 and 20,000 students) the **LEAST**.

## THE LAST WORD

### TAKE MY ADVICE ON THE COLLEGE SEARCH PROCESS



Maggie Fried

“ Try not to get too influenced by your PARENTS in your decisions. Obviously, their opinions are VALUABLE, but this is the next four years of your FUTURE.

Where do you see yourself have the most FULFILLING college experience?



Violet Benson

“ It's STRESSFUL, But EXCITING. But STRESSFUL.