

## Advice From Sallie Mae on Selecting a College

(NAPSA)—With thousands of colleges to choose from, where do students and families begin?

“It is important for students to choose a college where they will feel comfortable and have the opportunity to excel academically and personally,” says Martha Holler, a spokesperson for Sallie Mae, the nation’s leading provider of education funding. “Above all, this is a decision that will have a lasting impact, so students and families should do their homework thoroughly.”

The first step in the college-selection process is to develop a checklist of objectives:

- **Cost**—First and foremost, how much can you and your family afford? What types of financial aid are available?

- **Curriculum**—Decide on the fields of study that you plan to tackle. Is there a specific subject in mind, such as art or music, or do you want a more general, liberal arts education? Do you want a range of potential majors and study programs?

- **Quality of education**—How much contact do you want with your professors? How much does it matter to you whether professors or graduate students teach your courses?

- **Size**—How large or small a school do you want? Do you prefer large lectures with hundreds of students or small classes with lots of student participation?

- **Admission requirements**—What does the school require for admission?



- **Facilities**—What would you like to see on or near your college campus?

- **Campus life**—Consider life outside the college classroom. What special-interest groups, activities, fraternities/sororities do you want to be involved in?

- **Location**—Which part of the country would you like to experience?

- **Housing and resources**—If you plan to live on campus, make sure to investigate the quality of dormitory life.

- **Retention and graduation rates**—Retention rate is the percentage of students who stay for four years. Graduation rate is the percentage of students who graduate within four years. Both rates can provide insight as to whether students are satisfied with their experience at the school and receive the support they need.

To help students and families make the most of their college decisions, Sallie Mae’s free planning and paying-for-college Web site offers a host of information, resources and college-selection checklists at [www.CollegeAnswer.com](http://www.CollegeAnswer.com).



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*Note to Editors: This article is one in a series of articles on college preparation and financing from Sallie Mae, the nation’s leading provider of education funding and the largest consolidator of student loans.*