

## WHERE DO I START IN LOOKING FOR A COLLEGE/CAREER? A TOP TEN LIST

### 1) **Look at your strengths.**

What classes do you both enjoy and earn good grades? For which classes is homework “easy” or “fun” to complete? Do you have strong verbal skills? If so, you will want to look at careers where those are required. Maybe your strength is looking at details. In that case, perhaps you would excel in research or a field where a great amount of detail is required.

### 2) **Ask others what they see you doing?**

Sometimes others know us better than we know ourselves. Ask parents, other relatives and friends what they see you doing. While the answers may not always be what you would like to hear, what is the common thread in what people are saying? For example, if everyone sees you as the researcher in the lab, you may wish to reflect on whether or not that would be a match for you.

### 3) **Make a short list?**

Make a short list of careers that you feel you would like. What are the commonalities among those on the list? Strong math skills? Leadership skills? Research? Physical activity/desk job? Outdoors/Indoors? After you make your short list, ask your parents, friends, and/or guidance counselor for input. If no one sees you as a doctor, you might want to ask why?

### 4) **Look at your report cards.**

Over time, is there a particular subject you have always earned A's?

### 5) **Look at your test scores.**

When you take the ACT, is there a particular subject that you had a higher score than the others? For example, if you did well in scientific reasoning and you have always enjoyed your science classes, there are many options in that field for different personalities.

### 6) **Look at what your parents do?**

Sometimes you can't fight DNA. If mom and dad were both teachers and you have a natural flair for tutoring others, you might want to think about education as a career. Sometimes, we may be determined to not do what our parents do, but one can always look at related careers that are great matches.

**7) Look at the classified ads and job sites.**

When you look at ads, do you see yourself in any of those roles? For example, someone who likes helping people, may read carefully over the ads for psychologists or counselors.

**8) Find the college that matches your career interest.**

Start looking at schools that are strong in your interests or your short list of interests. After that, look at other criteria for a college match for you: large or small, close or far, etc. You will want to consider a range of schools as well as different types of schools in order to make an informed decision. Think in terms of targeting a list of reach, match and safety schools.

**9) Talk with older students who are now in college or recent alumni.**

Sometimes you can learn a lot about schools and majors from talking with other students. You can learn many details about colleges that do not reveal themselves on college tours or web site videos. You can also learn how accessible professors are and if the school has an environment that will match your interests.

**10) Talk with people who have the job you want.**

The reason that students do career shadowing or internships is to primarily determine whether or not they might see themselves in that career. One young man wanted to be a doctor for several years until he participated in an internship in college. He realized that he was unhappy in the summer position and realized that medicine was just not a match for him. He had placed a lot of pressure on himself for many years to find a career that seemed "successful" in society's eyes. So, now instead, he followed his heart in something that he truly enjoyed: his minor. He had chosen to minor in economics because he always loved math and thought that it could be valuable if he became a hospital administrator. He did not realize that his passion for math could actually help him be very successful in a different career.