Top Ten Tips to Survive the College Application Process

10. Demonstrate interest in the school. Schools will want to know that you’re really interested in attending. Show them that you want to know more about them by attending an informational session on the Oxbridge campus, follow them on social media, sign up for newsletters, and visit as many as possible. This research phase will also help you decide which college is the right college for you.

9. Carefully consider early decision applications. It may sound like a good idea to apply early, but it’s a very big decision, and a legal contract if you’re accepted. Think carefully about the implications and only apply early if you are 100-percent sure that the school is your first choice school.

8. Know that there are a lot of great schools. College applications and decisions are competitive and can cause many students a great deal of stress. It’s important to remember that there are many excellent choices. Whether it’s for a specific program, team, climate or just the “feel” of the campus. Look for the school that’s the best fit for YOU.

7. Be careful of sticker shock. Understand that a college education can be expensive, but try not to let the listed price turn you away. Just like no one pays sticker price for a car, students rarely pay sticker price for college. Between financial aid, merit awards, and other gifts, the cost of education is often less than what is listed in the admission materials.

6. Take your coursework seriously, starting NOW. Remember that you start building your transcript in your freshman year. Just like the foundation of a house needs to be strong, so does the foundation of your education. Low grades can really hurt a GPA, so be sure to take your class and your grades seriously from the beginning.

5. Be charitable early! College admission representatives can tell if you’re truly interested in volunteer work or if you’re trying to pad your application. Waiting until the last minute to volunteer or give back so that you can list is on your application is never a good idea.

4. Make a list of everything you want colleges to know about you. What makes you unique? Why should a college choose you to come to their school? List the fun facts, brilliant achievements, and important lessons that make you stand out from the rest of the applicants.

3. Choose the teachers who write your recommendation letter carefully. You want your recommendation letters to be authentic and compelling.
Find the teachers with whom you have the best relationship and who can most honestly speak to your achievements. Further, it’s important to BE the student who gets great recommendation letters.

2. It’s OK to be undecided. Eighty percent of college students change their major during the course of their collegiate education. If you’re not sure what you want to do when you graduate from college, don’t declare a major until you have a better idea.

1. Your college counselor is your greatest advocate. College counselors not only understand the process and can provide tips and advice; he or she has personal relationships with college admission representatives across the country. Often Oxbridge counselors make phone calls to colleges on behalf of their students. Working with your counselor ensures that they get to know how great you are and can relay that information to the individuals who will determine your acceptance.