



Climbing the steps to success

January 2016

24rd – SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests

Seniors – Complete and submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after Jan. 1st. Apply online at www.fafsa.ed.gov

Seniors – Search and apply for scholarships that match your qualifications

Seniors – File any additional college applications

Juniors – Investigate summer options

February 2016

6th – ACT and ACT plus Writing

(register by 1/8 - late registration 1/15)

Juniors – Begin your college search

Juniors – Map out dates and prepare for spring SAT and/or ACT exams

Seniors – Contact colleges to be sure your applications are complete. Send mid-year grades if required. Update colleges with any new information that might affect admission

Alternatives in Higher Education

As enrollment numbers and tuition costs continue to rise, some interesting alternatives to the traditional college experience have emerged. Eager to change the concept of learning by way of textbooks, memorization and lectures, a handful of schools is taking an entirely new route to the four-year degree. One thing they all seem to have in common is an emphasis on knowledge retention through active learning and student participation. Experts are referring to this as nothing short of a revolution in higher education.

Named after the Roman goddess of wisdom, The Minerva Project, at newly formed Minerva University, is one example of a radical new imagining of the college experience. Minerva is a four-year, accredited undergraduate program centered around fast-paced and interactive online seminar classes. In this forum, students get instant feedback from their professors, and are constantly called upon to participate. After a freshman year spent learning about core abilities such as reasoning and problem-solving, students get to study in different cities around the world, moving every semester. Along with gaining a global perspective, this unique curriculum is designed to improve knowledge retention, with high levels of student involvement and active learning. At only \$10,000 per year for tuition, Minerva is hoping to establish itself as a competitive, high-ranking university at a fraction of the cost of an Ivy League education.

Quest University is another school offering an alternative experience. Located in Squamish, BC, Quest is Canada's first independent, non-profit, secular university. Quest offers only one degree: a Bachelor's of Arts and Sciences. Students spend the first two years in a Foundation Program, studying a variety of subjects within arts and sciences. The second two years are spent in a Concentration Program, in

which students design their own majors with assistance and guidance from faculty members. This alternative school is not inexpensive; Quest still costs upwards of C\$50,000 per year. Similar to Minerva, the curriculum at Quest emphasizes critical thinking, effective communication, employability, and a strong engagement in the teaching and learning process.

Deep Springs College is located on an isolated cattle ranch in Big Pine, CA. It is a small, year-round, two-year college built on the three pillars of academics, self-government and manual labor. Scholarships cover tuition, room and board for every admitted student. Active participation is highly emphasized and, like Minerva, seminar-style discussions form the basis of classes. There are no majors at Deep Springs. Classes focus on the humanities, social and natural sciences, and include an introductory Summer Seminar, Writing and Public Speaking classes. Students are expected to perform 20 hours per week of labor on the ranch, and assist in decision-making regarding admissions and the hiring of faculty. After completion of this two-year program, students receive an Associate of Arts degree and most transfer to highly ranked colleges to complete their Bachelor's degrees.

The jury is still out on whether or not these alternative methods will be effective and sustainable over time. There are many styles of learning, and these programs may be more appealing to highly motivated, self-directed students. While millions of future undergraduates will still choose to attend traditional universities each year, it will be interesting to see if students who graduate from alternative programs are able to find and keep jobs in their chosen fields with equal success. Programs such as the ones offered by Minerva, Quest and Deep Springs are experimental, but hopefully they will add another effective route to obtaining a degree and achieving success.

Career Paths for Energy Management Majors

After graduation, Energy Management majors can anticipate solid employment opportunities because of pent-up demand in the industry. Many programs report that close to 100% of graduates have one or more job offers with high starting salaries before graduation.

Graduates enter the industry in many areas, including but not limited to accounting and finance, land management, and property administration for energy production companies. In the oil and natural gas extraction sector, some students will start their careers as landmen, who manage the operation of production facilities. Other recent graduates land jobs working in consulting, product management, utilities marketing and public policy positions.



Majoring in Energy Management

Affordable, reliable sources of energy – from oil and natural gas to renewable energy and fuels – are critical to the global economy. The energy industry is the third largest industry in the U.S., yet energy company executives report that they face a chronic shortage of skilled professionals to fill managerial positions in the industry. As energy production becomes ever more complex, it's anticipated that the future demand for trained managers and leaders will continue to grow throughout the industry for years to come. The U.S. Bureau of Labor estimates that energy-related jobs, including managerial level jobs, could increase by almost 2 million in the next decade.

How can students prepare for careers in this dynamic, growing industry? One pathway is a major in Energy Management. Offered by a number of universities, this interdisciplinary college major is designed to help students develop knowledge about all aspects of running a business in this field. Although specific requirements vary, students in most Energy Management programs combine science and technical courses in fields such as geology, geophysics and environmental science, with business courses in accounting, management, marketing and finance. Additional coursework in energy and real estate law helps round out the program, giving graduates a deep skill set for management jobs throughout the industry.

Many Energy Management programs focus on specific energy-industry areas. For example, some programs focus on preparing students for careers in the oil and natural gas industry, while others emphasize preparation for careers in sustainable energy. Other programs offer concentrations that can help students prepare for specific jobs within the broader industry, such as finance, accounting, real estate management or resources marketing.

Most programs place a strong emphasis on real-world learning. Internships are a

common component of an Energy Management major. Many programs also offer special scholarship programs for Energy Management majors, often underwritten by corporations eager to increase the pool of trained professionals in the industry.

An Energy Management major is best suited for students who have a strong interest in both business and energy use and its impacts on the environment. Students in this major should also have good math and science skills in order to be successful in both the major's technical classes and business courses. Majors should be strong communicators, with an analytical bent, in order to work in this fast-paced industry.

Long-term prospects for energy-related management careers are excellent. A recent survey of energy industry executives conducted by the Association of Energy Engineers found that nearly 70% of executives said their businesses faced a shortage of energy management professionals in coming years. Mid-career salaries within the industry are strong as a result, with industry financial managers averaging \$159,000, marketing managers \$175,000 and chief executives \$225,000 or more. Salaries are higher in some industry sectors than others. For instance, energy professionals in the oil and gas extraction segment may earn more than those in newer energy fields such as wind or solar energy.

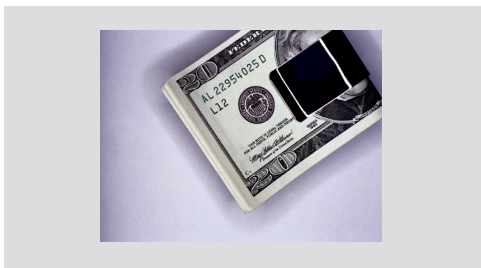
If you want to learn more about Energy Management as a major and career, check out these links:

American Association of Professional Landmen: <http://www.landman.org/education/accredited-programs>

Select USA: The Energy Industry in the U.S.: <http://selectusa.commerce.gov/industry-snapshots/energy-industry-united-states>

American Energy Works: <http://www.americanenergyworks.com/#/?section=morethan-just-a-job-a-career>

Financial Matters: Time to Complete the FAFSA



The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is the main form used by colleges to determine eligibility for need-based aid. You'll want to file your FAFSA as soon after January 1st as you can this year, and then refile yearly while attending college. Beginning in the fall of 2016, the FAFSA will open for submission on October 1st, and will use financial information from the prior prior year (2015 info for the 2017-18 academic year.)

The FAFSA collects basic information about both the student and his/her parents' incomes and assets, and uses this information to determine an *expected family contribution* (EFC). The EFC is the amount that the student and family are expected to contribute towards the student's college expenses during the next academic year. The difference between the EFC and the *total cost of attendance* at your college of choice is known as *demonstrated need*. Using the demonstrated need figure, colleges prepare a customized financial aid package for each admitted student who qualifies for need-based financial aid.

This package may include both grants and loans, as well as self-help such as work-study opportunities. Only some

colleges guarantee to meet 100% of established need, so financial aid may not cover all of your expenses at a particular college.

Complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov as soon as possible after January 1st. You'll need your 2015 tax return and other financial records as noted on the site. It is possible to complete the FAFSA even if you do not have your taxes done yet—you can use estimated figures and update later. It's best to complete the FAFSA as early as possible.

Not a senior? Families of underclassmen can get an early estimation of eligibility for aid with the FAFSA4caster at www.FAFSA4caster.ed.gov.

BA vs BFA: Which is Right for You?

You have a passion for musical theater. Or, perhaps you love to paint, dance, or perform with your musical instrument. You can't imagine not pursuing a major in your chosen creative area in college. But as you explore colleges, you notice that some offer BA degrees and others BFA (or BM) degrees in your intended major. What's the difference, and how do you decide between the two?

Generally speaking, all students will complete between 30 and 40 classes during college, regardless of their major or degree. The main difference between a BA and a BFA program is how those classes will be divided between courses in the arts/performing arts and courses in other areas of study.

Students working towards a Bachelor of Art (BA) will usually complete 10 to 12 courses in their major (i.e., studio art, music, dance, theater, etc.). They'll take the remaining courses towards their degree in a broad range of other subjects. For students studying for a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA)

degree, that schedule will be reversed. Depending on the school, BFA students may take 18 to 20 courses in their creative area, filling out the rest of their schedule with courses in other subjects. (Some music conservatories offer a Bachelor of Music (BM) degree, which is similar to a BFA in terms of the number of courses required for the major.)

Which degree path is right for you? That depends on your interests and goals.

Students studying in a BA program have more flexibility to study other subjects that interest them. A BA degree also makes it possible to double major in a second subject area and still graduate in four years. For example, a student may decide to study both studio art and business, or music and neuroscience. This flexibility keeps the doors open in terms of after-college career options as well. Therefore, the BA degree is often the most comfortable fit for students who have a wide range of academic interests who aren't sure

they want to focus most of their attention on their creative interest during college.

On the flip side, students who are positive that they want to devote most of their time during college to developing their creative talents – perhaps with the goal of a career in the field – may find a BFA degree program the best fit. The greater number of courses in the student's area of study often means deeper and more intensive training. For this reason, many consider a BFA to be a *pre-professional* degree, preparing students for a specific career.

One other difference between BA and BFA programs is that BFA programs often have more stringent admissions requirements and some programs are quite competitive. Students applying to BFA programs should expect to prepare and submit portfolios or attend auditions as part of the admissions process. Although there are some exceptions, most BA programs do not require auditions or portfolios at the time of admission.

Athletes and College Recruiting

A2Z College Planning

2327 Englert Drive

Suite 101-13

Durham, NC 27713

919.450.0171

info@a2zcollegeplanning.com

a2zcollegeplanning.com

Thinking about playing your chosen sport in college? Are you wondering how to make your current involvement in athletics enhance your chances of admission? Here are some guidelines for prospective college athletes.

- Choose a college by following the “broken leg” rule. It’s simple—if you were unable to compete there, would you still want to attend that college? If not, that school should not be on your short list.
- Earn the best grades that you can. Although you may receive letters of interest from very selective colleges, they will not continue in the recruiting process unless they feel you can be competitive academically as well as on the playing field. SAT and/or ACT scores are also critical for these institutions. At highly selective colleges, the required GPA and scores will be far above the NCAA eligibility requirements.
- Be realistic. Ask your coach for his/her honest assessment of your ability

to play in Division I, II or III. Check out times or stats of players at the colleges that are of interest to you.

- Be proactive. Start the process early. Research colleges that meet your criteria both for athletics and academics. Include schools with sports teams from at least two different divisions. Complete prospective athlete forms on the athletics area of college websites. E-mail appropriate coaches expressing your interest in their program.
- Market yourself. Don’t count on colleges finding you. Make yourself visible by playing at regional events and showcases. Make unofficial visits to campuses that interest you. Contact the coaches ahead of time and ask if you could meet with them while you’re on campus.
- Register on the NCAA Clearinghouse website by the end of your junior year. www.ncaaclearinghouse.org.