



Climbing the steps to success

April 2017

1st - Seniors should have final letters of acceptance

8th - **ACT and ACT plus Writing**

Juniors – Visit colleges

Prepare for AP Exams

Seniors – Compare offers of admission; revisit top choices

Evaluate financial aid packages and explore college funding options

May 2017

1st – Common reply date for college enrollment

6th – **SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests**

(register by 4/7
late registration 4/18)

1st - **12th** **AP exams**

Juniors – work on resume; speak to advisor about military colleges or ROTC programs

Seniors – notify the colleges that you will not attend and take some time to thank those who wrote your letters of recommendation

Evaluate financial aid packages and explore college funding options

Social Media—Think Before You Post

Stories abound of students and even teachers sharing inappropriate items on social media. One would hope students who are about to apply to colleges and be evaluated by admission officers would know better. The truth is that the vast majority of high school students are very responsible about their social media presence, and we only hear about the foolish ones whose mistakes live on as lessons for others.

A big question most parents ask is whether or not colleges are fishing in the social media waters. Are colleges and universities proactively seeking out information on prospective applicants or not?

Recent research from Kaplan Test Prep, a survey of nearly 400 admissions officers, demonstrates that “the percentage of admission officers who visit applicants’ social media pages to learn more about them has hit a record high of 40% — quadruple the percentage who did so in 2008,” when Kaplan first explored this issue. Further research also identified that only 11 percent of admission officers do it “often.” Googling an applicant to learn more about them has remained relatively stable over the past two years, at 29 percent.

Why are colleges looking?

It’s interesting to note that what triggers admission officers to look beyond the traditional elements of the application (GPA, standardized test scores, extracurriculars) and turn to Google and Facebook are both positive and negative factors. Contributing factors include:

Special talents - Students who are musicians, writers, models or poets will often invite admission officers to view their social media presence in their applications. According to Kaplan’s research, 42 percent of admission officers reported an in-

crease in such invitations compared to two years ago.

Award verification - There is no formal “fact-checking” process when students submit their applications. Colleges generally take at face-value whatever honors students list and the time commitments and leadership roles students state in their extracurricular activities and work experiences. However, a mention of a particularly distinguished award will sometimes trigger a search.

Negative stuff - Some admission officers say that if an applicant mentions he or she has a criminal background or a record of disciplinary action, they will do some online digging to get more details.

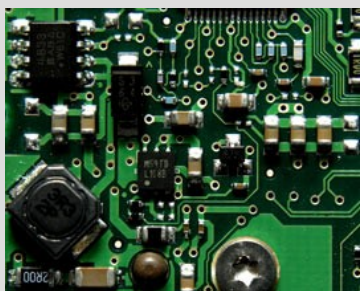
Scholarship applications - Students applying for special scholarships can come under greater scrutiny, as schools want to ensure those receiving the scholarships are fully deserving; extra due diligence can come in the form of online checking.

The worst reason a student’s social media presence may be viewed is referred to as “Admissions Sabotage.” The ugly truth is that college admissions officers are occasionally anonymously alerted to social media postings by students or parents who are trying to sabotage another student’s chance of being accepted, presumably with the hope that they will instead be accepted. Admission officers will typically follow-up to verify any accusations.

What’s the take-away for high school students? Clean up your current social media profile before you begin the application process and *think* before you post.

Career Paths for Electrical Engineering Majors

- Computer Network Engineer
- Electrical Drafter
- Electrical Engineer
- Electrical Technician
- Electro-Mechanical Technician
- Electronics Engineer
- Engineering Professor
- Mechanical Drafter
- Instrument Technician
- Engineering Sales
- Testing Research Engineer
- Design Engineer
- Project Engineer
- Test Engineer
- System Engineer
- Application Engineer Consulting
- Software Engineer
- Hardware Engineer



For both electrical engineering and electrical engineering technology programs, prospective students should make sure that the program they are considering has been accredited by ABET, the accrediting agency for engineering and technology programs, in order to make sure their program meets the standards required by employers. ABET provides a searchable database of all accredited programs on its website at <http://main.abet.org/aps/Accreditedprogramsearch.aspx>.

Majoring in Electrical Engineering/EE Technology

What do cell phones, computers, televisions and automobiles have in common? Electrical engineers and electrical engineering technologists play central roles in designing and building these and other familiar tools we use in everyday life. They're also at the forefront of creating important new technologies, such as life-saving medical devices, solar energy, and robots. If you've always been fascinated by cutting-edge technologies, majoring in electrical engineering or electrical engineering technology may be a good choice.

Electrical engineering (EE) and electrical engineering technology (EET) are two separate but closely related college majors. Although the course requirements for both majors have some overlap, there are key differences between the two that are important to understand in order to decide which major is the better match for your interests and career goals. One key difference: EE programs focus more heavily on theory and conceptual design of electrical systems, while EET programs focus on the application and implementation of electrical systems.

Graduates of electrical engineering programs are trained to become professional *engineers*. Their program of study will include multiple semesters of advanced calculus, physics and other sciences, and courses from other disciplines, such as computer science, mechanical engineering, and materials science. In addition to courses in circuits, electronics, digital design and microprocessors, EE majors also take advanced courses in design theory and methodology and in specialized areas such as communications systems, optical systems or medical instrumentation, all with heavy laboratory components.

Upon graduation, EE majors are qualified for entry level positions as electrical engineers, and after gaining several years of experience, they may apply for licensure as a professional engineer. Electrical

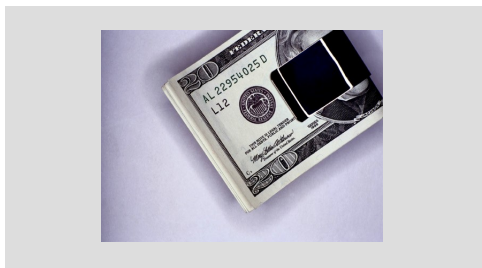
engineers are typically involved with designing, developing and supervising the manufacture of electrical equipment. They work in a wide range of industries, including the aerospace, biomedical, automotive, semiconductor and computer industries, among others.

Job and salary prospects for electrical engineers are strong. According to U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics, the median income for electrical engineers is \$82,160. A survey conducted by the IEEE, a professional association for electrical engineers, found that the median starting salary for new electrical engineering grads was just over \$60,000 a year. Salary ranges vary based upon the size of the company and the industry.

Graduates of four year electrical engineering technology programs are trained as engineering technologists. In general, their coursework is more narrowly focused and application oriented than that of EE programs. While EET students also take courses in circuits, electronics, and microprocessors, these courses will generally deal more with practical implementation versus theoretical concepts. EET students also take several semesters of mathematics in college, but the courses will focus on advanced algebra, trigonometry and applied calculus.

After graduating with a bachelor's in EET, students typically work in entry level positions applying the principles of science, math and engineering to solve technical problems. They may assist scientists and engineers with finding solutions to technical questions during the research and design phase of product development. Others work in manufacturing and field settings, assuring that production quality is maintained. Some graduates of four year EET programs may opt to attend graduate school to receive a masters in electrical engineering.

Financial Matters: Appealing for More Financial Aid



If your first choice college offers everything you want but the price tag is making you waiver, don't give up hope. Instead, consider appealing to the college's financial aid office for more money. While colleges and universities won't encourage it, you are within bounds. Individual financial aid officers are empowered to make adjustments, if they are deemed warranted.

If you plan to pursue an appeal with the financial aid office, be prepared with the following:

First rule - if possible, try NOT to make a deposit until you've settled the financial aid discussion. Once they have your money, colleges will be less motivated to reel you in with a better deal.

Be realistic. Gail Holt, Dean of Financial Aid at Amherst College (www.amherst.edu) shares "Be realistic

about what you – and the college – can contribute. Show the college that this is a partnership that you want to be part of, but need just a bit more assistance."

Know exactly what you CAN afford, but be honest here. If your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is more than the cost of tuition, then make sure that your request makes sense. Do your homework and negotiate in good faith.

Be informed. Make sure you have researched the specific financial aid policies at each college before entering into a conversation with them. Nothing would be more damaging than contacting a college, touting your child's fabulous grades, awesome SAT scores and requesting merit aid, only to find out that that school doesn't award merit aid. End of discussion.

If merit aid is available, check if the colleges you're considering offer "preferential packaging" – it's a practice whereby they will meet a larger share of financial need based on the academic stats of your child, i.e., stronger grades and test scores will receive more money. Take a look to see if your child's test scores are in the "middle 50" or in the "top 25." There

will be more money at schools where their scores raise the school's profile. You can also check out some fascinating financial aid statistics, including what percentage of need colleges typically meet, at College Data (www.collegedata.com).

Be prepared. Colleges will generally reconsider awards for just two reasons: 1) the EFC from the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) was incorrect due to a change in the family's financial situation because of an illness, unemployment, etc. or 2) there is a competing offer from another college. If you plan to mention the competing offer, be prepared to fax a copy of the award letter to the financial aid office.

Ask about "second chance" or conditional aid. See if the college is willing to add any additional aid if your child pulls through senior year with straight A's.

Send a letter. Put all of your reasons down in writing and ask for a follow-up meeting, in person if possible or by phone. The college has already accepted you—now you're just asking that they help make it possible for you to attend.

How Parents Can Help Seniors Handle Rejection

Parents just want to help. The natural reaction when you see your child suffering is to try and make it better. Denials are inevitable in an atmosphere of increasingly selective admissions, so how can parents help ease the pain of college rejection?

The first step is to accept that it's complicated. It's complicated by your child's emotions, your emotions and both of your preconceived notions. It gets even more complicated when students feel pressure from their classmates. The worst is the judgment many students feel from their parents' friends, as if they disappointed their

parents. Parents need to know and accept that where their child chooses to go to college is not an assessment of their parenting skills.

Everybody wants the euphoria of the thick envelope, the balloon-decorated mailbox and the sense of pride of the college sticker on the back windshield of the family car. But what happens when you have to settle for Plan B, when there are no balloons, there's just resignation. How do you help your child roll with reality?

Advice in these kinds of situations always sounds so cliché, but the truth is that, as resistant as your child may be,

it works. Ideas to share with your child:

Don't take it personally. Encourage your child to understand the big picture. If sharing stats on the number of students who applied to Stanford and were rejected helps, then use them. Not being accepted is not the equivalent of "failure." Colleges are committed to fulfilling their institutional priorities by accepting students who are often underrepresented. Perhaps your child is a classic "over-represented" student. There just isn't much you can do to change your demographics.

(continued p. 4)

How Parents Can Help Seniors Handle Rejection (cont'd)

A2Z College Planning

2327 Englert Drive

Suite 101-13

Durham, NC 27713

919.450.0171

info@a2zcollegeplanning.com

a2zcollegeplanning.com

Don't feel like this only happened to you. There are lots of other students whose dreams also weren't realized. You're not alone. Reach out to friends and commiserate together and then try to move on together. You'll all appreciate the support.

Don't get caught up with the prestige factor. It's important to recognize that a brand name doesn't equal success or, more importantly, doesn't equal happiness. Your performance during your undergraduate experience will be the biggest factor that determines your job placement opportunities.

Don't obsess about the rejections and do your best to be positive about your other options. Don't spend a lot of time agonizing but, instead, use the time and your

energy to identify another school that you will like as much or more. Sometimes rejections can send a student to a different school, down a different path and in line for the unexpected opportunities that can crop up. Some students think they want big schools and realize they'll have more opportunity to shine at a smaller school. Be positive about other institutions. Celebrate your acceptances!

The big picture here is that for many students the "rejection letter" may be the first time they have experienced serious disappointment. Their egos are bruised and the truth is, as all adults know, they'll grow and they'll get over it. Handling this rejection will make them better prepared for future obstacles. College rejection happens to *almost all* students, but it doesn't need to define the rest of their lives.