

*finding the perfect*  
**COLLEGE FIT**

College Admissions Readiness  
Symposium

Ana Suarez  
Coral Gables Senior High

# STEP ONE

finding your fit

- The "best college" for you is the one that fits your unique needs and preferences.
- Don't get caught up in the hype of the "best" or most selective schools.
- Consider factors like size, location, and academic offerings when making your decision.
- Ask yourself questions like whether you would thrive in a large state school or prefer a small liberal arts college.
- Consider whether you are drawn to the bustle of a city or the tranquility of a rural area.
- Ultimately, the goal is to find a school where you feel comfortable, supported, and excited to learn and grow.



## Larger State College

- A public university with a large student population and a wide range of academic programs.



## Liberal Arts College

- A small college that provides a well-rounded education with an emphasis on critical thinking and communication skills.



## College in the City

- An urban-based institution that offers students access to a variety of cultural, social, and professional opportunities.



## Rural College

- A small college located in a rural area, with a close-knit community and a quieter, more intimate college experience.

# STEP TWO

what to look for

When deciding which college to attend, it's essential to consider several factors. From academic programs and teaching styles to campus culture and financial aid packages, there are many elements that can influence your decision.



## Tailored Program of Study

Offers a program of study to match your interests and needs.



## Teaching Style

Provides a style of instruction to match the way you like to learn.



## Academic Rigor

Provides a level of academic rigor to match your aptitudes.



## Comfortable Community

Offers a community that feels like home to you.



## Inclusive Value System

Values you for what you have to offer.



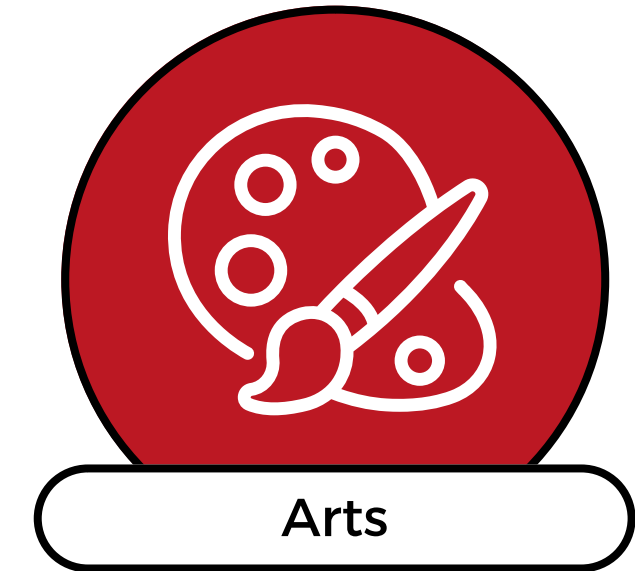
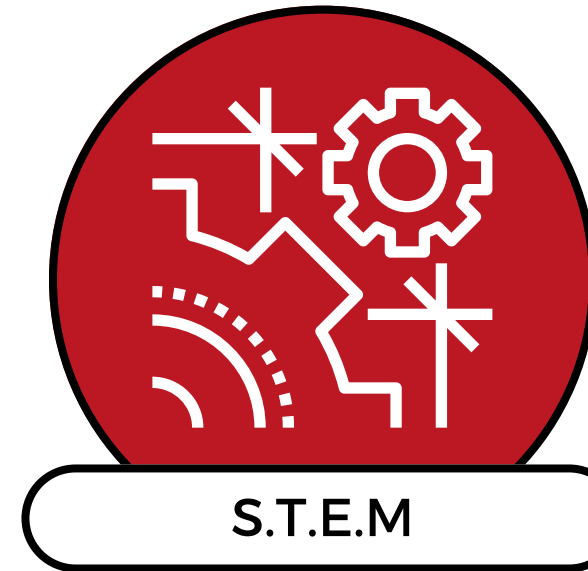
## Financial Assistance

Offers you the best financial aid package.

# STEP THREE

## interests & passions

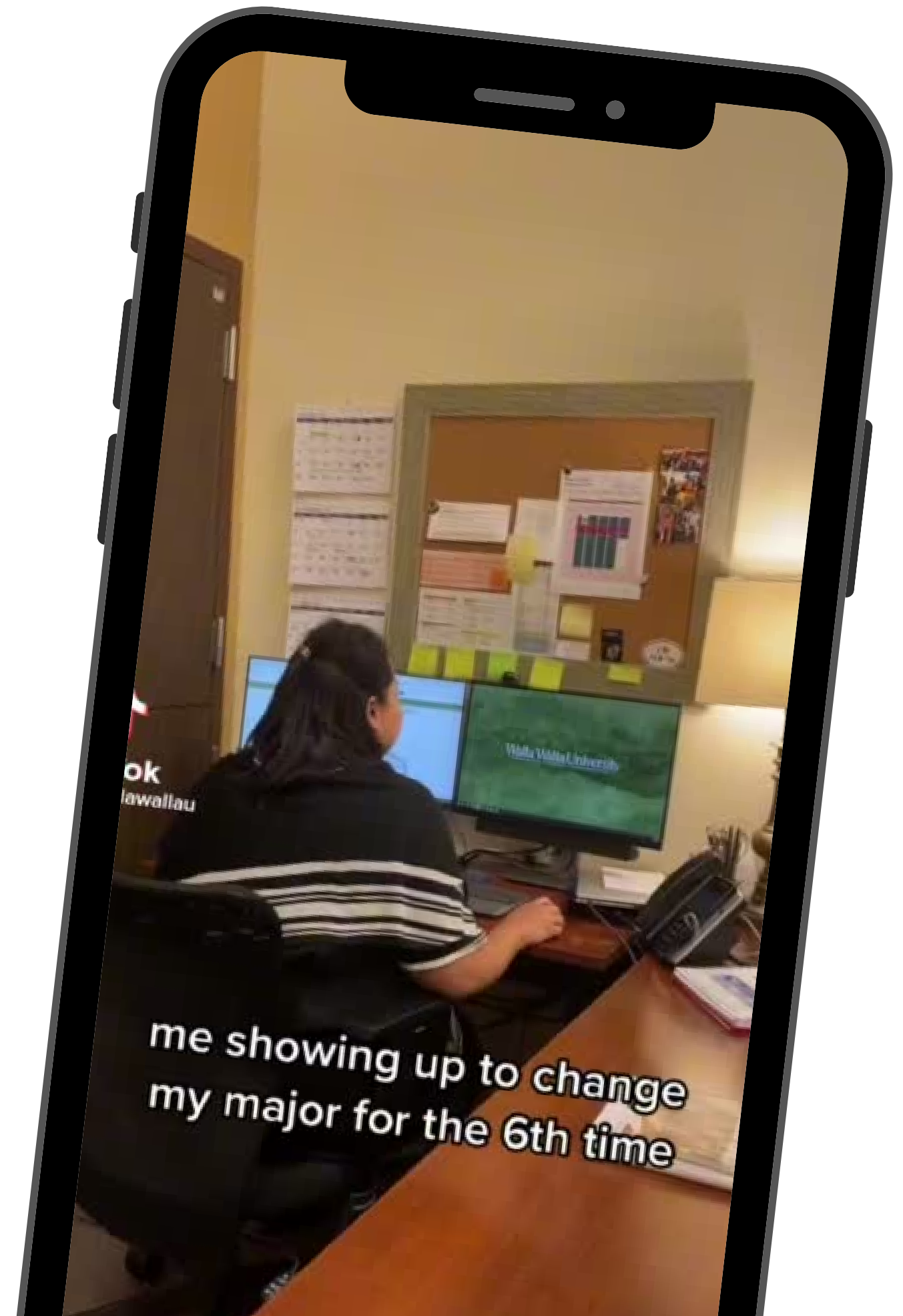
- Focus on colleges that offer programs aligned with your interests and goals
- If you have a clear idea of your desired field of study, research colleges that offer related programs
- Seek out colleges that provide a diverse range of options if you're unsure of your direction
- Look for colleges that accept you for who you are and support your personal and academic growth



# STEP FOUR

—embrace the unknown

- Half of all college students change their major 2 times, and two-thirds change it once.
- Colleges determine 5 years in advance what that class needs to look like in order to fill their needs.
- “Undeclared” is the major most students declare as a freshman in college.
- Statistics say that you will change jobs 4 times and careers 2 times in your lifetime.
- Colleges are reporting that 85% of people who graduated 25 years ago are now in careers that did not exist when they graduated.





# STEP FIVE

— use your resources

## Unigo.com

- Student reviews

## The Fiske Guide (Interactive)

- The "expert" opinion

## CollegeXpress

- Amazing college lists by specific criteria

## CollegeData.com

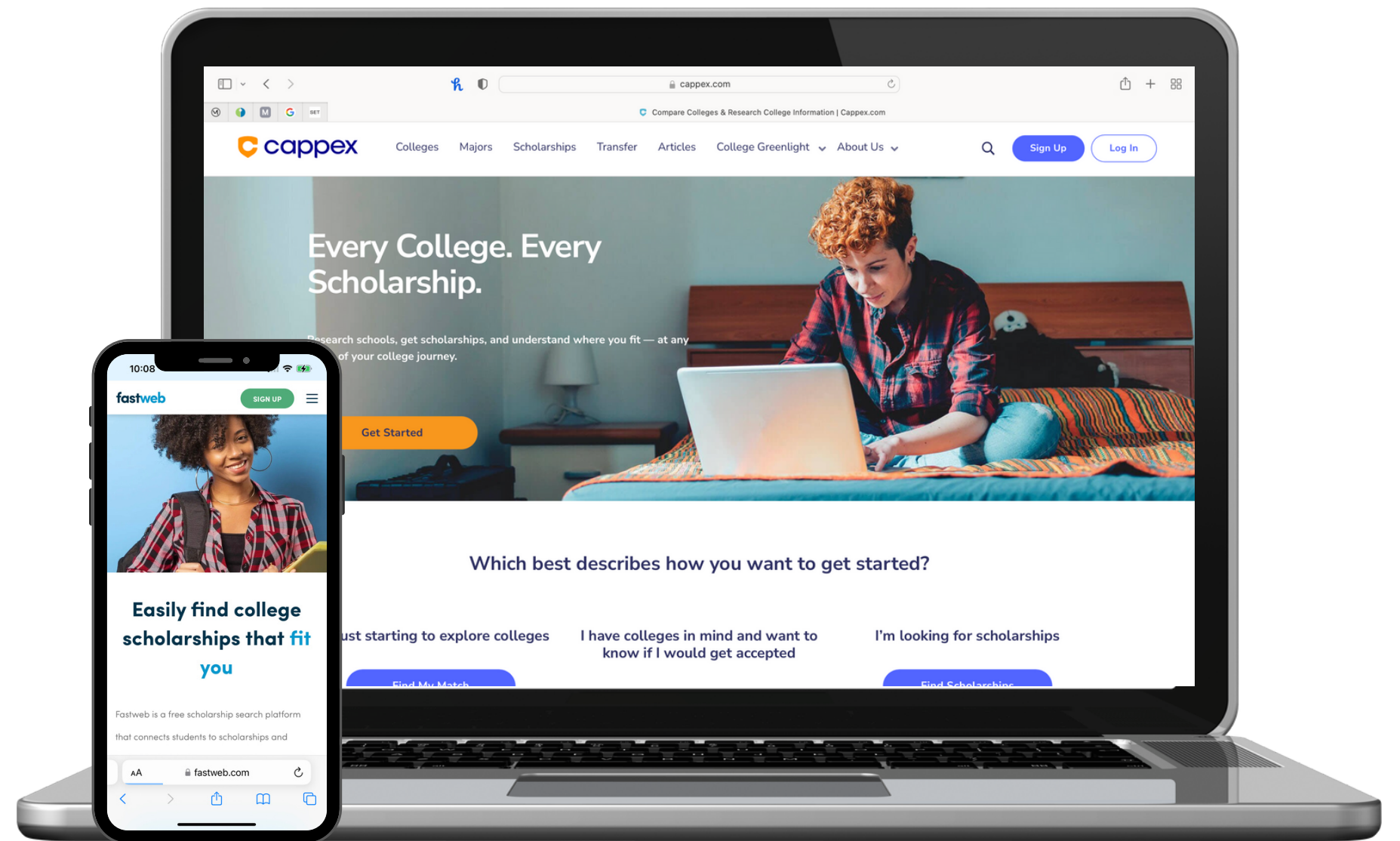
- Data! Anything numbers related.

## YouVisit

- Virtual campus tours

## Big Future

- All around info; College search based on specific criteria



# STEP SIX

— instruction styles

- The following questions will help you identify learning environments that most fit within your learning style.
  - What is your favorite class right now, and why? Is it really the subject matter or the teacher that makes you enjoy the class?
  - Who is your favorite teacher right now, and why? Is it because they care, are engaging or because its lecture based and independent?
  - Do you prefer hands on or experiential learning, or would you rather read, take notes and work at mastering academic material in relative anonymity?
  - If your grade for the year could be determined by 1 assessment, would you choose a test, a paper, or a project and why?



# STEP SEVEN

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academic rigor

- Keeping your head above water is not enough. You want to select a college rigor that you can excel in and improve your academic advancement.
- Subjecting yourself to Organic Chemistry when you struggled through chemistry in high school is a recipe for disaster. Similarly, an intensive academic writing program can be overwhelming if you've never had exposure to analytical reading and writing.
- Deciding your academic fit is a difficult task because you have to be honest with yourself. You have to critically evaluate your strengths and weaknesses as well as your willingness to stretch yourself.

**AIM TO...**  
Improve your academic  
achievements

+

**REFLECT...**  
What are your academic strengths &  
weaknesses?

=

**FINDING...**  
Your academic match



# LET'S REFLECT

— academic self reflection

- Use this chart to fill in the courses you have taken/will take in high school.

	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
English				
Language				
Social Studies				
Science				
Math				

# LET'S REFLECT

— understanding your landscape

- Has there been progression in your coursework?
- Now look at the coursework you will be required to take at the colleges you are considering. Are you ready for a research methods, calculus or a college level language course? How well prepared are you to take the leap?
- **Example:** High school chemistry is not comparable to Johns Hopkins chemistry



# STEP EIGHT

—finding your community

As you explore colleges, what are your hopes and expectations? Surely, finding a community of like-minded individuals who share your background, interests, and loyalties is important to you.

01

## Professors

- Are they readily available?
- What research do they specify in?

02

## Community

- What is the campus culture?
- What communities exist on campus?

03

## Culture

- What is the feel or vibe?
- How are student-admin relations?

04

## Values

- What does the college value in their applicants?

05

## Interests

- What interests groups & extracurricular opportunities are offered?

06

## Inclusivity

- How is diversity and inclusion promoted on campus?

# STEP NINE

— knowing your value

- A successful relationship thrives on mutual investment and respect, and the same applies to your connection with a college.
- Your dedication to achieving your goals is evident, as you have a clear vision for your four years ahead and are prepared to take the necessary steps.
- On the other hand, it's essential to consider what level of investment and support you can anticipate from the institution in return for your commitment to success.
- What kind of investment will they make in you and your aspirations?



## Personal Communication

- Are you able to communicate with coaches, admin, faculty, etc.?



## Financial Support

- Is the college understanding of your financial situation?



## Academic Opportunities

- Are you presented with study abroad and research opportunities?



## Access to Information

- Is the college transparent and facilitates dissemination of important information?



## Develop Talents

- How are you encouraged to engage outside of the classroom?

# STEP TEN

—where's my money?

- When making college decisions, financial considerations often play a pivotal role. It is crucial to carefully evaluate the implications of taking out loans before committing.
- Keep in mind that loans accrue interest, resulting in a repayment amount that exceeds the initial borrowed sum.
- If your future plans involve graduate school, such as medical or law school, it may not be advisable to accumulate loans during your undergraduate education.
- Questions to ask yourself:
  - Is money the determining factor?
  - Do you want to attend grad school?
  - Are you taking out loans?
  - Do you have FL Pre-Paid or any savings for college?





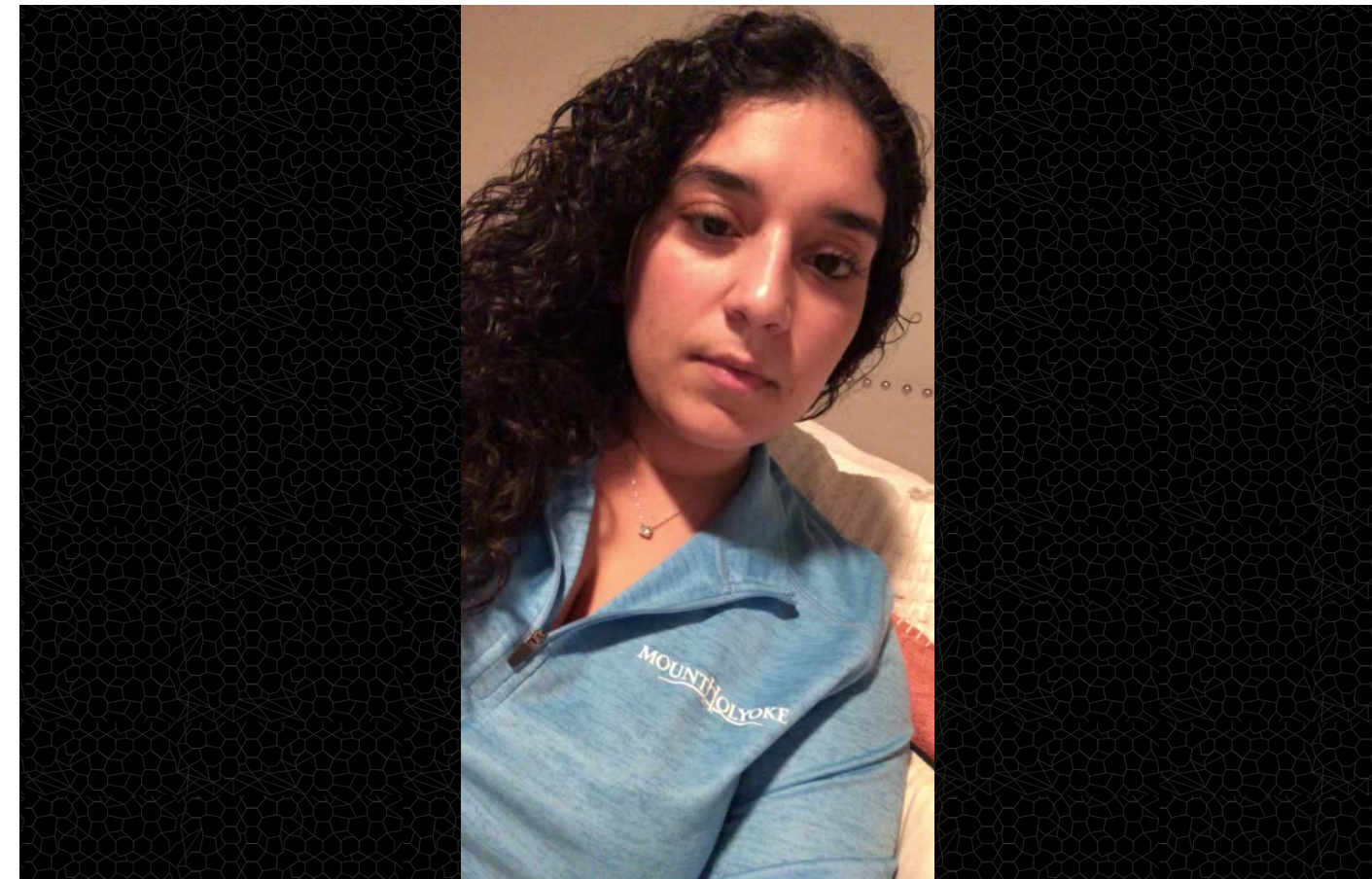
# GRADUATE STORIES

— a word from gables grads



**Jessie Wang**

Gables (2015) & Emmanuel College (2020)



**Valerie Montesino**

Gables (2015) & Mount Holyoke (2019)

# FINAL REFLECTION

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food for thought

- Your sense of purpose and intentionality are key factors in finding colleges that align well with your goals and aspirations.
- Start by answering the question: Why do I want to go to college?
- It's normal to feel overwhelmed by the college process, and it's okay to question whether college is the right path for you.
- Consider alternative options and different timetables for achieving your goals, such as working, traveling, exploring, or taking a gap year.
- Remember, there is no rule dictating that you must attend college immediately after high school.
- Take the time to explore your options and make a decision that feels right for your personal circumstances and aspirations.

## Questions to Ask

### Yourself

- Do I really want to go to college?
- Do I want to explore and maybe take a gap year?
- Why do I want to go to college?
- What are my priorities?
- What am I looking for in a college?
- What are my academic interests?

THANK YOU

questions?