



October 6, 2021

College 101: A Good Fit College...



Has What **You** Want Including....

What you want to think about/do... Does your list of possible schools offer the majors, minors, subjects, concentrations, and degrees (BA vs BFA/BM – see page 2 for more details) you know you're interested in or might be interested in?

How/where you learn best... College visits will help you assess the best arrangement for you as far as (a) **Location** (urban/suburban/rural and near vs far), (b) **Size** (big/medium/small campus/classes), (c) **Format** (lecture, seminar, independent studies, cooperative learning, internships, etc.).

Connections between learning and doing... Clubs, organizations, study abroad, research, performance requirements/opportunities not only enrich the learning experience/environment, they provide excellent opportunities to build resumes and develop relationships with mentors.

Availability of Student Support Services... To juggle all of the conflicting demands of college, students need ready access (Hours of operation? Are appointments required/limited?) to the following support services: Financial Aid, Academic Advising, New Student Orientation, Housing Resources, Mental Health Counseling, Tutoring, Work Study/Jobs Search, Career Planning/Counseling, and Study Abroad assistance.

Making Student Success a priority... Students complete their degrees on time. Students have high acceptance rates if choosing to continue their education (2 yr. to 4 yr. transfers, graduate schools). Job placement rates are high and related to career interests. Mentor relationships (student/faculty, student/alumni, student/community) are fostered.

Affordability... Merit aid (grants and scholarships) is available. Scholarship criteria and the institution's policy regarding meeting demonstrated financial need is clear.

Wants What **You** Have Including....

Grades... Do your grades fall within their accepted student middle 50% range? Have you completed the required high school courses? **Students in the top 25% of an applicant pool (GPA and ACT/SAT) are most likely to receive merit aid (free money).**

Test Scores... If your test scores are not in the middle 50% range of the schools on your list, considered: test optional schools, retesting or broadening your school list. **Test optional schools may still award merit aid for high ACT scores.**

Resume... How have you spent your time while in high school? How have you grown academically and artistically? Where have you demonstrated leadership/commitment/excellence/engagement with others? In class? During J-Term? As a SPCPA student leader (ambassador, new student orientation, NHS, student council, yearbook, graduation performer)? Through paid/volunteer employment, outside groups/organizations, performing? Keep track of the time you spent in each area to make it easier to include this information in your applications. **Schools award scholarships for leadership, service and talent.**

Demonstrated Interest... How much and what kind of contacts have you had with the schools on your list? If they require an essay, be prepared to write one that helps them understand what you will bring to their campus – do your research to show you “know” each school and what they value. **Get to know your admissions representative – they can be your best advocate during the admissions process.**

Academic Interest... How have you shown that you are prepared to be successful? **Students interested in business, engineering, healthcare and other “analytically” focused fields should have 4 years of math and science on their transcript.**

Artistic Talents... Are you planning to audition or submit an electronic portfolio or audition piece? **Auditioning may give non-majors access to scholarships.**

Diversity... What unique qualities or attributes (gender, race, ethnic, economic, geographic, experience or interests) do you bring to campus? **Schools look for applicants that will increase connections inside and outside campus.**

Important information for college applications:

SPCPA School Code: 242 284

Counselor: Alison Green
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School Information:
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COLLEGE
POSSIBLE™

Will you be the first (or one of the first) in your family to go to college after high school? Do you worry finances will prevent you from achieving your college dreams?

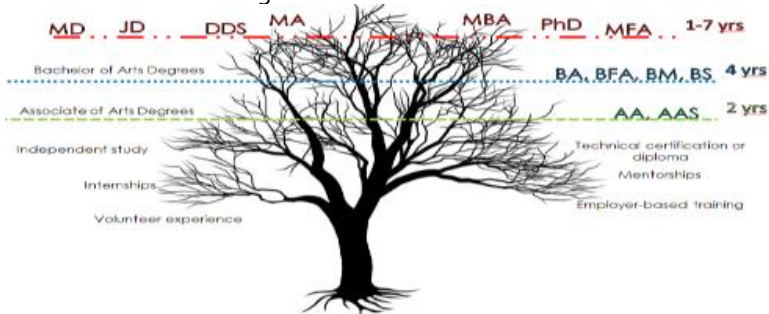
College Possible (CP) provides SPCPA students who qualify with Tech-Connected Coaches who will help you navigate everything college. Founded in Minnesota in 2000, this AmeriCorps affiliate provides **FREE college planning and support services including ACT test prep** to more than 2,500 high school students annually. 99% of CP students have college acceptances. CP students are also 4 times more likely to graduate from college than similar peers, because **CP makes a commitment to every student they serve through college graduation.** **The regular application deadline is October 27, 2021.**

Click [here](#) to apply!!!



College 101: Alphabet Soup

Many of the acronyms associated with college relate to the degree options that exist. The difference between an **AA/AAS/AFA** and a **BA/BS/BFA/BM** is the amount of time required to complete required courses and the academic focus of the degree.



EDUCATION OPTIONS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Time is a function of how many credits are required. A 3-credit college class typically^(*) has a 3 hour per week classroom component, whether it is delivered via lecture, lab, online or a combination of the three. Full time enrollment starts between 9 and 12 credit hours for most programs. To complete most degrees "on time," may require a full load of 14-16 credits per semester. Maximum credits per semester are usually capped at 21 credit hours. Working adults may take longer to complete their degree program, as they often limit their coursework to night and weekend classes and fewer than 9 credits per term. ^(*) Note: Students pursuing performing arts degrees may have a significantly higher "class time" commitment than their credits suggest as the credits received for rehearsals and technique class may be significantly smaller than the hours required for the activity.

Certificate and diploma programs are the quickest to complete. For example, an Accounting Clerk certificate at Century College is a 9-credit degree and prepares someone for an entry-level position. This work could easily be done in one semester. Students taking a full load could complete a 30-credit certificate as a Wellness Coach at North Hennepin Community College in a school year.

Associate degrees, whether focused on subjects within the liberal arts (**AA**) or those that emphasize more scientifically or fine arts focused fields (**AAS/AS** vs **AFA**), require 60 to 75 credits to complete (4 to 5 semesters of 15 or more credits each). **AA** degrees are designed to cover the general requirements of a 4-year degree. For example, an **AFA** in Music from Normandale prepares students interested in music and music business for work (an internship is required) or further study (**BM** or **BA**). Students who complete the 72 credit **AAS** Biomedical Equipment Technician program at Anoka Technical College are prepared to work in medical facilities or for device manufacturers.

Most bachelor (**BA**, **BS**, **BFA**, **BM**) degrees require 120 credits (or 32-36 for colleges that designate 1 credit per class). **To graduate with a bachelor's degree in four years, a student must take an average of 15 credits per semester** (or 4 classes per semester in 1 credit systems). Academic focus is indicated by the letter after the **B**: **BA** indicates a broad education with coursework across the liberal arts disciplines (*Arts and Literature, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Mathematics*); **BS** indicates a more technical focus; **BFA** has a performing or visual arts emphasis as does a **BM** for music. There can be multiple ways to study an area of interest. For example, Theatre students at Ithaca College could choose between a **BFA** in Acting, a **BA** in Theatre Studies, or a **BS** in Theatre Arts Management. Students hoping to continue in a profession like law (**JD**), medicine (**MD**), dentistry (**DDS**) or advanced studies in business (**MBA**), the visual, performing and creative arts (**MFA**) or any other field (**MA** or **PhD**) can expect years of education beyond a 4-year bachelor degree.



...and the chances of being accepted by the college of your choice.

- There are multiple variables that come into play when colleges consider applications. Community colleges accept high school graduates. More selective schools are concerned about GPAs and frequently ACT scores. The most selective schools will also require essays/short answers and recommendations before making a decision. Auditions and portfolios are typically required for BFA/BM programs. So, how does a student know what their chance of being accepted looks like?
- The answer starts with a review of the students the institution has accepted in the past. Many SPCPA students apply to the University of Minnesota -Twin Cities. [Their 2021 Admitted Student Profile](#) while helpful doesn't tell the whole story:

	Biological Sciences	Design	Education and Human Development	Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences	Liberal Arts	Management (Carlson School of)	School of Nursing	Science and Engineering
High School Rank								
High School Rank (if provided)	88 - 98%	72 - 92%	70 - 91%	70 - 92%	72 - 92%	86 - 97%	90 - 98%	85 - 98%
High School Unweighted GPA								
High School Grade Point Average (unweighted)	3.78 - 3.99	3.43 - 3.86	3.41 - 3.86	3.31 - 3.85	3.46 - 3.87	3.70 - 3.96	3.83 - 4.00	3.70 - 3.99
ACT Composite								
ACT Composite Score	29 - 33	26 - 30	25 - 30	26 - 31	26 - 32	28 - 32	29 - 32	30 - 34

[College Simply](#) (and others to be discussed in future editions) provides interested students with a somewhat more nuanced picture of college acceptance rates. Numbers (GPA and ACT) do not tell the entire story. Students who fall outside of the mid-range listed above do get accepted (see below) if they are able to demonstrate "other" attributes that the institution values (see page 1 for more details).