The College Journey
@TIDE Academy
Hello!

I am Lara Sandora
I am the 11th grade and College Counselor at TIDE Academy. I have more than two decades of experience in public high schools and college admissions work. And I’m the parent of two (very different!) teen boys.
TIDE Academy is located on the ancestral homeland of the Ohlone peoples, the original stewards of this land. Please join us in acknowledging and honoring their ancestors, their elders, and their communities.
There are hundreds of paths up the mountain, all leading in the same direction, so it doesn't matter which path you take. The only one wasting time is the one who runs around and around the mountain, telling everyone that his or her path is wrong.

- Hindu proverb
Does this resonate for you?
There are infinite options

The goal is to determine what the best first step after TIDE should be for each student.
3,982

Degree-granting institutions in the United States.

Plus thousands more around the globe.
So why do we spend so much time talking about the same 25 schools?
Keep an open mind...
1. **Academics**

Exploring interests and learning to learn
Course Selection
Being enrolled at TIDE ensures that students are enrolled in a rigorous schedule, including several dual enrollment courses each year.

Grades
Finding success in those classes will vary among students. Some classes will feel easier, some will feel harder. It is most important to grow and learn each semester, but earning higher grades will allow for more college options.

Engagement with learning - education is not transactional
High school is a great time to try new things - and learn what is a “yes” and what is a “no” for the student. If you choose single credit (concurrent enrollment courses) in addition to to dual credit courses, then those classes should be another chance to explore.
2. Social & Emotional

Being college-ready beyond the classroom
What are the roles and responsibilities

The Student
Is the lead astronaut on the voyage. They can gather input from other astronauts, but they will live with results of any and all choices.

The Family
Can and should provide guardrails and boundaries, but cannot make decisions for the student. Most students will be 18 by the end of this process, so they need to practice their autonomy now.

The School Staff
Can provide a map for the voyage, and fuel along the way, but the student is the captain of the voyage.
How to Raise an Adult: Can your teen....?

Cook a basic meal - including planning & shopping

Launder & put away their own clothes

Pump gas & change a tire (& drive safely, if of age)

Handle basic cleaning & maintenance tasks - lawn mowing, vacuuming, unclogging drains

Interview for & obtain a job - including choosing appropriate attire

Manage their own medications/vitamins & schedule a medical appointment
Avoid the Boomerang

It is important to build social emotional skills to ensure students can stay and graduate - and those skills help in the application process as well.
The CASEL Competencies: Survive vs Thrive

Practice these skills whenever possible: at home and at school.
3. **Post-Secondary Exploration**

The college search process
The Search for Ikigai

★ What are you good at? What are your strengths?
★ What do you love? What delights you?
★ What does the world need? How can you serve or support others?
★ What can you be paid for? And how and where do you want to live?
Reframing the College Search

College acceptance is not a finish line. Life does not end at 17 1/2 so it’s important to remember that college is a part of the journey, not the end point.

There is more than one right answer. There are thousands of colleges to choose from, not just the same 25 that "everyone" seems to talk about.

There are no sure things. No number of college classes, no GPA, no number of clubs/sports/volunteer activities can or will guarantee admissions to anyone at any school.
This is a two-way street.
Students should "interview" colleges to see if each is a fit for them - and reject any schools that don't meet THEIR criteria.

This is YOUR story.
The one thing that only you can share with the world (and college admissions offices) is YOUR story. Spend time reflecting on how you arrived at this point and how you want to shape the chapter ahead. You don’t need to have a vision of your life at 37, but you should consider how what happened in your life at 3 and 7 and 13 affect who you are at 17.
Introducing Scoir

The College and Career Planning Tool we will use to support the exploration and applications processes.
Exploration can take many forms - get on college campuses whenever and wherever possible (even more important as the pandemic continues). Ask questions of any adult you know - what did they gain from their college experience? Would they choose that college again?

A relatively short, though often intense, part of the process. If the explore and search process has been thoughtful, then the application process will be focused and less stressful.

The search process takes place as students begin to understand the characteristics they are seeking - and what they hope to gain from their college experience, then they search for schools who will provide those.

Thriving does not mean that every moment of every day is perfect - if that was the case, then growth would never occur. But we want students to land in a place where they are free to learn, connect with others and be their best selves.
Recommended Reading

Where you Go is Not Who’ll You Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania
Frank Bruni

The Price You Pay for College: An Entirely New Road Map for the Biggest Financial Decision Your Family Will Ever Make
Ron Leiber

Who Gets in and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions
Jeff Selingo

The Truth About College Admissions: A Family Guide to Getting In and Staying Together
Brennan Barnard & Rick Clark
THANKS!
Credits

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

★ Presentation template by SlidesCarnival
★ Photographs by Unsplash