Clarion Review

Family & Relationships

The College Selection Compass: Helping Families Navigate a Difficult Course

Rebecca J. Callow
Susan P. Nichols
iUniverse
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Three Stars (out of Five)

If high school students were paid for all the time they put into the college application process they would have enough money to cover the cost of a semester's worth of coffee pizza and textbooks. Consulting *The College Selection Compass* can help guide both students and parents through this detail-oriented time sensitive and complex procedure.

Compass takes the reader through the entire operation of applying to college. It provides practical advice about gathering and organizing information planning college visits making preliminary selections of institutions based on students' interests and academic goals and meeting with college counselors and coaches. In addition this book discusses communication between students and parents. The authors suggest that parents "Keep the lines of communication open but try not to question your son or daughter more than necessary remembering that each child has his or her tolerance level…"

Rebecca Callow has experience as a coach and advisor to high school students and Susan Nichols has been involved with college admissions for many years as a local and national coordinator for Middlebury College in Vermont.

The authors not only rely on personal and professional experience with their topic they also interviewed more than 1500 college students from around the country and compiled interesting and helpful statistics about the college application experience. A twenty-page section is dedicated to graphs of the information gleaned from the students.

Callow and Nichols devote attention to important things to consider when making selecting a college beyond obvious factors like location prestige and size. They recommend researching everything about a potential university including less obvious things. "One of our daughters was very taken with a campus she visited but she loves working in libraries and this

outstanding school had a surprisingly antiquated library" one parent told the authors. That student the authors explain ended up at a college with a brand-new library where she spent many happy hours.

This book though valuable would have been better served by a design where information is presented in sections with bulleted checklists sidebars white space and a larger format. A layout like that of the "For Dummies" guides would have yielded an easier-to-read step-by-step formula. Although a sample application worksheet checklist student resumes thank-you and follow-up letters are included a larger size book with copy-ready templates would have been even more useful.

This book is a worthwhile resource as a realistic assessment of what needs to be done when the time comes to think about college. By following the wisdom of the authors students (and parents) can avoid the costly mistake of choosing the wrong school.

Luise Bolleber