

# Opinions, Stories and Advice – Oh My!

- Morgan Hardwick

A day doesn't go by without someone asking me about college. The questioning becomes an endless cycle of: "What schools are you looking at?", "Which major are you thinking of?", "Do you want to stay close to home?", "Big or small?", "Graduate school?" And before I can answer, another opinion is thrown at my face filled with somewhat impractical advice and lined with old memories. Although appreciated, enough is enough. Adults don't understand that hearing old tales about how hard they studied (or partied) in college is not going to make me consider a school anymore or less than before. My junior year is coming to a close and college is one of the most important things on my mind, but it is becoming cluttered with the opinions from family, friends, and even strangers that I cannot think straight. My own mother is pushing for UMASS Amherst, a prestigious university no doubt, but with the amount of articles she's printed out and emails she's forwarded me, I think my head might explode.

Picking a college ultimately comes down to the students' own opinion, and while adults are often wiser in aspects of teenagers' lives, this choice is something only the students can determine. I know letting eighteen year olds make such a huge, life-changing decision on their own might be scary, horrifying even, but no one knows where they belong better than themselves. Parents only want what is best for their child before they leave the nest; however, what they think is best isn't necessarily right.

Coming from a teenage girl dealing with the college search herself, I believe that the one thing parents must unconditionally supply isn't their opinion, but their support and guidance. Thinking about leaving for college is scary, no matter how hard someone might deny it. But with the added stress from the family, friends, and friends of the family, students find themselves pushing off the thought of college.

A mix of annoyance and fear, combined with an overloaded brain filled with the thoughts of others, makes the college selection that much less exciting and helpful. So parents, occasionally offer your opinions and always offer your support; and students, the time has come for us to take the reins of this decisionmaking process because college is fast approaching and we need to hold on tight.