

The Stress With College

- Shanna Smith

As summer 2013 quickly approaches, upperclassmen come closer to making one of the biggest, most important decisions of their lives so far: college. The majority of students, particularly juniors, travel across America in order to find the college that is the right fit for them. In addition to touring colleges, juniors must narrow down their lists of desired colleges, participate in extracurricular activities, and maintain a high grade point average. While this experience is exciting, is it too much for seventeen-year-olds to handle?

Finding the right college is one of most stressful experiences in a student's high school career, arguably coming in second only to waiting for one's college acceptance letter. The process of finding safety, probable, and stretch schools seems endless and consumes a great amount of time. Many juniors go on college road trips during as many vacations as possible, in addition to visiting more local schools on weekends.

College visits are often limited by the lack of free time caused by extracurricular activities. Almost every high school sport meets five days each week for around two hours. This gets in the way of not only homework and sleep, but college touring as well. During school vacations, athletes must decide to embark on a college road trip or attend their often required sports practices. Since many sports oblige all athletes to attend every practice, these students are unable to tour colleges over vacations. This limits students' free time immensely, thus adding to their stress.

Maintaining one's grade point average during junior year, which many say is the most important year of high school, makes the college process all the more challenging. Many colleges emphasize one's junior year of high school, so it is essential to obtain satisfactory grades. Unfortunately, junior year is usually the most academically demanding year of high school, due to the difficulty of the content that juniors must learn. On top of all of this, juniors must search for the perfect college in their free time that seems to decrease exponentially as classes become more challenging. The stress of academics, combined with the necessity to balance college tours and extracurricular activities, requires both maturity and time management to result in success.

Choosing one's college should require excess amounts of time, because it is a massive decision that greatly affects one's future. The college process is a lot to handle, however it is manageable. The experience is invaluable, as it not only teaches the importance of time management, but also how to prioritize, something that will come in handy later on down the road.