

Postsecondary Planning
11th Grade Advisement Activity
Estimated time: 30 Minutes

Georgia Teachers-As-Advisors Framework

Goal 8-2.3 – Identify and participate in ongoing, lifelong-learning experiences to enhance the ability to perform effectively and work in a diverse and changing world.

a. Describe the processes for transition from one learning level to the next.

Objectives:

- Students will become familiar with various postsecondary selection criteria
- Students will evaluate and rank considerations for choosing postsecondary institutions
- Students will be better prepared for “Apply to College Week” if LEA participates

Materials:

- Handout: “DECISIONS about Postsecondary Education”

Activity:

Say: Good morning, students. Welcome to advisement. Have you ever had to make an important decision? *Pause.* “We make decisions every day. Many of them are not important. Whether you chose to eat a Big Mac or a Chik Fil-A for lunch, will probably not affect your future. Maybe you had to make a personal decision having to do with your integrity, maybe you thought about cheating on a test, lying to you parents. *Entertain discussion.*

Ask: When we make an important decision what steps do we take? *Entertain discussion.* Yes, we weigh the pros and cons as we visualize the outcome of our decision. Today we are going to discuss considerations when selecting a postsecondary institution. For those of you who will not continue your education in a traditional institution, please help think this through. It’s like planting a tree. It must offer you what you are looking for – shade, visual appeal, temperature hardiness, etc. Like a tree, your postsecondary education will be around a long time. Let’s look at some of the criteria perhaps you should consider when deciding: *Distribute the handout.*

2. *Say:* “You may or may not have thought about which postsecondary school you might attend. I hope by this time you have discovered several options that can prepare you for your chosen work. Just to help you, let’s look at the things you should consider when selecting a school.

Location: distance from home, city, suburbs, rural. If it is important to be home often, consider a commuter school or a program that you can take some online classes. Some students enjoy being far away from home in an unfamiliar environment. Everyone is different. Do what works for you. Your friends are not you!

Total enrollment: Universities generally have the largest total student enrollments. You may thrive in a diverse environment. Or, your program of choice may have a smaller enrollment. What do you prefer? Georgia has levels of postsecondary institutions: Research University, Regional Universities, State Colleges. For more information you can go to <http://www.usg.edu/inst/group/>. *Write this address on the board or flip chart.*

Program Availability: A no brainer. If the institution doesn’t have your program of choice, don’t go there! You will attend postsecondary education to continue your education in your chosen field of study. So if you are interested in nursing, you want to continue in an institution that will meet your career goal in the field of Nursing. What level of education does the institution provide: associate (2-years), baccalaureate (4-years) or above. There multiple levels of degrees in the nursing field.

Cost: This is important, although should not be THE most important factor. But, it gives you a starting point to figure out how much your education will cost you. You will need to compare this against your “expected family contribution” when selecting the most economical way to continue your education.

Financial Aid Possibilities: The types and amounts of financial aid will determine your bottom line cost. If the institution has a history of generous grants (free money), that may balance out a hefty tuition.

Extracurricular Activities: Do you really have to have a winning Division I football team? If this is the only reason you are going, think again! Football games are 10 Saturdays during the entire year. You may be in a state of bliss on those Saturdays, but the rest of the time, you may be miserable. Generally an institution will have some type of extracurricular activities which will be of interest to you. Decide ahead of time what's REALLY important.

Opportunities for internships or work: Sometimes the location of the institution and agreements with local businesses are a handy source of income to help pay for your living expenses.

Special considerations: If you have health issues or other concerns, ask the admissions counselor at the school. Most of the time programs will have special equipment, tutoring, or other help if you qualify.

Average class size: If you love being anonymous, then a large university is for you. You will be a pinhead in the crowd to the professor in a large lecture class. If you thrive with personal tutoring and encouragement, a smaller program may better suit your personality.

If a significant percentage of freshmen do not return, or if there is a high drop out of a technical program, there is a problem. This is the one question you should always ask the admissions counselor who assists you or gives you a tour. If that person doesn't know the answer, ask to speak to the Director of Admissions who will have this information. What is your graduation rate after 4 years?

Special programs: Some schools will allow students to double major with little additional cost, or go on to an advanced degree. Travel abroad for a semester is an enriching experience, regardless of your major. Sometimes special programs are a tipping point to help you decide.

Pros and Cons from the current student perspective: Plan to have a coke in the student union or where students hang out between classes. Strike up a conversation. Current students will be brutally honest about the school. Take every opinion with a grain of salt. If several students from different groups say the same thing, it is worth noting.

Respect/ reputation of the institution: Ask for the programs which are nationally ranked. Research the school online. However, just because none of your friends ever heard of this school, don't automatically dismiss it for your consideration." Remember GACollege411 can help you discover some of these issues ahead of time.

3. *Say:* It's hard to remember the facts about various programs. Here's a grid to help you keep track as you explore your options. *Say:* Using the grid on your handout, first, rank order these criteria in order of importance to you. That is, if you think that location is the most important consideration, then place that in the first grid. List the others in your order of importance. Use GACollege411 to further define your investigation and then record your results in your 411 PORTFOLIO. Your senior year will be here before you know it! See you next time! Have a great day!

DECISIONS about Postsecondary Education

Now that we have talked about each of these reasons to select a postsecondary school, take some time to rank order these criteria located in the box to the right in order of importance to you. That is, if you think that location is the most important consideration, then place that in the first grid. List the others in your order of importance.

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- Location
- Total enrollment
- Program Availability
- Cost
- Financial Aid Possibilities
- Extracurriculars
- Opportunities for internships or work
- Special considerations
- Average class size
- % of students who transfer or leave before program completion
- Special programs
- Pros and Cons from the current student perspective
- Respect/ reputation of the institution