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College Research Paper

This is the year we start deciding the purpose of our lives. Who are we? Who do we want to become? Why are we on this earth? These are all questions we begin asking ourselves. By the time junior year comes around, many students already have an image of their perfect school. Their dream school. But this is also the year where reality strikes. Different complications become an obstruction in the process to our future. It is not as effortless as movies, books, and shows make it out to be. Many of us don't get full scholarships or have the luxury of going anywhere in the world. There is an abundance of factors to take into consideration: expenses, programs, location and even admission requirements. Before making any final decision, it is important for every student to deliberate all possible options to determine what university best fits their exclusive needs. Therefore, that is what I will be doing with Penn State University, Temple University and York College of Pennsylvania.

Penn State University

As I looked further into Penn State University, the cons outweigh the pros. Penn State stands out for their campus life. Since I was young, a dream of mine was to attend Thon to help raise money for childhood cancer. This dream inspired me to become a member of my

highschool's Mini-Thon. Penn State is known across the nation for its efforts with the Four Diamonds Fund. The university is also known for its football team. As a student who heavily involves herself in school activities and school spirit, football games, clubs and committees are very important for me.

The university offers an amazing and extensive campus experience, but is also ranked the second highest party school in all of Pennsylvania. (2020 Top Party Schools in Pennsylvania.) To me, this is a big factor as I care about reputation. A party school doesn't entice me as the environment wouldn't be the best for me to focus on my goals for the future.

Unfortunately, Penn State also separates me from my family and relatives. The campus is 109.1 miles from my parents' home, and is a commute of 1 hour and 56 minutes. This disconnect also interferes with my job. With my parents health at a constant risk, it is very important for me to stay in a close enough radius in order to take care of them.

During my research, I was asked if I would rather be a big fish in a small pond, or a small fish in a big pond. After answering the question, I realized that the size of the university is an important factor for me. Penn State has roughly 98,783 students enrolled as of 2018. That seems like a pretty large pond. I personally believe I will thrive in a space that feels more intimate and comfortable-- a big fish in a small pond. The intensity of a highly populated school would most likely overwhelm me and distract me from my studies.

The minimum GPA required for admission at Penn State is 3.58. (Penn State Tuition & Financial Aid.) My GPA currently is a 3.8. The preferred SAT score for admission is within a 1160-1340 range. (Penn State Tuition & Financial Aid.) My PSAT score is a 980. I would have to progress 200 points in order to fit their preferred score. The cost for in-state tuition is \$36,344.

(Penn State Tuition & Financial Aid.) This price is astronomical compared to the other schools I am looking into. Penn State may not be the best decision for me after all. The thriving campus life may be like no other, but Penn State lacks the Graphic Design program I want, the close proximity, and the size that I was looking into when it came to my dream school.

Temple University

Ever since I was a young girl, Temple University has been my dream. The Graphic Design program they offer is one of the best in the state and has always been something that excites me. All my life, I wanted to study design and create digital and tangible art. Through Temple University, I would be able to explore this art, and constantly be challenged to keep creating. Temple has international recognition for its Design program. Its Tyler School of Art alone has one of the most appreciated and interactive programs in the design industry. (25 Top Graphic Design Degrees.) The program doesn't just teach about line weights and softwares, but also practices designing for a publication or print. The program cultivates creative thinking and teaches students a sense of discipline when designing for a client.

The commute to this campus is roughly 2 hours, being 102.6 miles from my childhood home. (Temple University.) Although the distance is farther than Penn State, my parents are constantly in the heart of Philadelphia for my father's chemotherapy, so visits would happen more regularly than if I were to go to Penn State. I do have other commitments to my York/Harrisburg area, but the travel isn't unbearable. However, the location is very dangerous. It is rumored that Temple University is a very unsafe campus prone to shootings in its area.

Philadelphia alone isn't the safest city. These concerns play a major part in the decision making process for me, as I look out for my own safety and security.

Regarding the size of the school, Temple is a private institution with around 39,581 students as of 2016. (Temple University.) Compared to Penn State, Temple's 'pond' is half the size. Also, due to the program that I would potentially enroll in, I would not have to be immersed in an extremely dense and overpopulated campus. For me, the incredible program outweighs the intensity of the school and it's slightly smaller size.

An unfortunate thing about Temple University is it's reputation. Temple University is most recognizable as Pennsylvania's party school. It ranks as the fourth highest party school in all of Pennsylvania. (2020 Top Party Schools in Pennsylvania.) The nightlife at Temple is intense. As someone who does not value that as a college necessity, I find it alarming and distracting.

Temple also requires a minimum 3.59 GPA, and a SAT score anywhere from 1010-1230. (Temple University.) With my current GPA of 3.8 and my PSAT score of 980, I am confident to meet the requirements for Temple University. However, other factors such as reputation and college life further me away from this campus. The estimate for all costs to attend Temple is roughly \$32,340. (Temple University.) While the price is less than Penn State, Temple is not completely worth the expenses and would lack a few of my personal requirements.

York College of Pennsylvania

At the heart of my hometown stands York College of Pennsylvania. I have never envisioned myself attending this school. It is very common for high schoolers to want to leave

their hometown and travel to new places. I used to be just like that, convinced that I would want to spread my wings by myself. Now I am invested on staying close to home. I have a new sense of responsibility to take care of my parents financially and physically.

The York College campus is only eighteen minute drive from my parents' home, a total of five miles away. I will most likely stay at home with my parents until I graduate, so room and board fees wouldn't be a problem for me. With York College being the 30th party school in all of Pennsylvania, I have no worries of the environment at all. (2020 Top Party Schools in Pennsylvania.)

The location of York College is my personal favorite since it has so much to offer in a short radius from the school. The campus is in Downtown York, meaning Central Market and other shops and boutiques surround it. In between classes I could go home, to work, or even just across the street to a variety of different cafes, bakeries, and shops.

A Graphic Design program is offered at York College, and is extremely extensive. (25 Top Graphic Design Degrees.) There is a lot of flexibility in the programs at York College, and you even have the capability to build your own major. I researched into the Graham Scholars program, and I found that it is similar to the Apollo program that I am currently enrolled in. While Penn State had hardly any programs for Graphic Design at all, and Temple had such an elite and extensive one, York College gives me the perfect, happy medium of both universities.

What makes me love York College the most is the size of their school. Currently, there are around 4,000 students enrolled. (York College of Pennsylvania.) That is monumentally different than both of the other schools I researched. The intimacy of such a small school feeds to my love of my small town. The quaint feeling of downtown is something that has always

intrigued me, and the size of York College allows me to have that. Academically, I also feel as though having less students in a class will give me more one on one time with professors and more opportunities to succeed.

York College of Pennsylvania is the most feasible. Not only for its cost, at around \$23,350 (York College of Pennsylvania) for a commuter like myself, but also for its flexible programs, beautiful location, campus life, and its size. The minimum GPA for admission is a 3.46, and the average SAT scores sit around the 1000-1095 mark. (York College Pennsylvania - Net Price, Tuition, Cost to Attend, Financial Aid and Student Loans.) With my scores and their acceptance rate of 69%, I'm confident to get into this school. (York College of Pennsylvania.) With only a few complications in mind, this college truly is the one for me.

As I reflect on the priorities for me, York College of Pennsylvania takes the cake for most of them. This university not only offers a great graphic design program with flexibility, it also has a vivacious campus life, with close proximity to my childhood home, and is a private institution that is exclusive and intimate. It nearly tops all criteria that I require for my future schooling. After spending the time to write out all the pros and cons, it is so stress-relieving to have a clearer look on what I can expect after graduation.

I now know that I can continue to be a big fish in a small pond here in my hometown. While the other schools are dream worthy, York College of Pennsylvania has become *my* dream school. It is the place where I will grow into the person I was always meant to be.

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