



College Advice from a Ryman Alumna

Hello fellow high school students! My name is Stephanie Petteplace, a Teaching Assistant at Cal State Fullerton who comes every now and then to Otis College of Art and Design. As a college student who has gone through the application process and is currently going through the transferring process, I would like to share some important advice that you will only find from experience.

- 1. ALWAYS Take the Trip!** I cannot express how important it is to physically go to the campus to see how it is for yourself! For many students, they can get a sense from their gut feeling if this is the right place for them or not. Whenever you plan your trip, always bring a notebook to write out the pros and cons of the campus. Liked the artwork the students presented in the college's art gallery? Note it. This way, by the time your decision comes you'll have a good sense of what the college is like on the daily basis.
- 2. Talk to Everyone.** The staff, alumnus, currently enrolled students, or anyone who either knows about the campus or is there when you make the trip. This is important because each person will have a different and unique experience that you can take notes from. Also talking with them can help you get advice that you might not have ever thought of asking.
- 3. Research, research, research!** Not just in college searches, but in life as well, you will need to do your research to see what is best for you! Research each college individually and write the pros and cons of each. Then compare them to each other based on your desires in a college. You can refer to the Ryman Arts' Guide to Choosing a College under the College and Career Resources page for a start and then use either the U.S News- 10 Tips for Starting Your College Search for a more personal search or How to Do College Research Right: Step-by-Step for a more concrete college search.
- 4. When applying, never doubt yourself.** You will never know for sure what a college will do to have you come to their campus. Don't think, "I'm not good enough" because:
 - 1.** You're wrong. You are always good enough.
 - 2.** There is such a thing as scholarships and other options you can follow to have minimal to no student loans.

So never be afraid to apply. If you never try, you'll never know.

- 5. Make it your decision.** As you are reaching adulthood, you need to follow your own instincts and go with what you think is right. Granted, your family, friends, and peers may have the good intentions to help you, but it is your choice and no one else's to decide where you want to go in life or what you want to do.

6. **Mark those due dates!** This might sound obvious, but unfortunately it can be something that can easily slip one's mind. Put them all in your calendar and set your goal to complete your applications as early as you can. Apply for early action if possible.
7. **Notice your portfolio.** If you are unsure on what to work on or send to colleges, here are three quick notes that can help.
 1. Put your best foot forward and only put in your strongest pieces that you are proud of.
 2. Use work that shows off your current skills, not things that are over 2 years old.
 3. Quality over quantity. The typical range is 5 to 10 pieces but double check the college's requirements.

If you have or are in the process of working on the portfolio, make sure you plan out how long it will take you to have your work finished and ready to submit. Make it a goal to plan out how long it will take you to complete your portfolio, because you don't want to jeopardize your ability to finish the applications. Also read carefully on how to send your portfolio since different colleges have different formats that they want the work uploaded. For example, some will only accept it sent as a PDF while others might require a physical copy. If you are still unsure, call the administration office for details. If you want to know more about the portfolio, do research. Refer to the Ryman Arts' College and Career Resource Page for a start.

8. **Scholarships are your Best Friend.** Seriously. It's free money to your education and there are tons of scholarships out there. Don't only apply for the big numbers however, because though they sound great, doing a multitude of smaller scholarships can add up quickly. Find local ones in your neighborhood since those have a smaller pool of students. Some high schools have their own scholarships for their students or the colleges you are applying to may have scholarships for new freshmen. Talk to your high school counselor for scholarship opportunities. However, note that you will never pay to apply to earn a scholarship. If they ask you to pay something, it's a scam.
9. **Get that Financial Aid!** There is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), California Student Aid Commission (CSAC), Cal Grants, and so much more. Check their dates as well and mark them in your calendars. Apply and check their requirements! There is financial aid for middle class students as well, such as the Middle Class Scholarship from FAFSA and others that you should really look into.
10. **Always strive for your personal best!** It's really easy to compare yourself to others in almost every way. If it's a habit to you, break it. Comparing yourself doesn't help you become a better person. Strive for your personal best. In art, you should always date your work so when you look back to it you can see your improvement. Over time, you will see yourself grow as an individual, no matter what college you go to. Push yourself to your ultimate goals, because if you begin to take it one step at a time, it won't be long until you make it.