

## Four-Year Programs

### The **BIG** Idea

- What can a four-year college offer me, and how should I choose one?

### AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up: My Choices (10 minutes)
- II. Some Options (5 minutes)
- III. Colleges for Me: RUPrepareND.com (25 minutes)
- IV. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

### MATERIALS

#### **PORTFOLIO PAGES:**

- Portfolio page 28, RUPrepareND.com's School Finder Results
- Portfolio page 29, Your Search Criteria

#### **STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**

- Student Handbook page 65, My Choices

### OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Learn about various types of four-year colleges.
- Develop a list of preferences that might guide their post-secondary choices.
- Use these preferences to create a list of post-secondary options.

## OVERVIEW .....

Students fill out a questionnaire about their four-year college interests and discuss their answers with a partner. As a class, they brainstorm the factors to consider when choosing a college to attend. They talk about different types of four-year college options, then visit the [RUReadyND.com](http://RUReadyND.com) to find colleges that match their current interests.

## PREPARATION .....

- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Write the day's vocabulary words and definitions on the board.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
  - **Portfolio page 28, RUReadyND.com's School Finder Results**
  - **Portfolio page 29, Your Search Criteria**
- Make arrangements for the class to use the computer lab, and make sure the [RUReadyND.com](http://RUReadyND.com) is accessible from students' computers.

## VOCABULARY

**Tuition:** Fees paid for instruction, especially for post-secondary education.

**Undergraduate:** A student in a university or college who has not received his/her bachelor's degree.

**Private College or University:** School that receives only a small amount of ongoing government support; tuition is usually higher, but so is the aid that is offered.

**Public College or University:** School partially funded by a state or local government, often called a state school or city college/university.

**Specialized College:** A public or private school that prepares you for a career in a specific field. Examples include art, music, teaching, engineering, business, health science, and religion.

**Financial Aid:** Scholarships, grants, loans, and other assistance programs offered to students to help pay for tuition and other expenses while attending college.

## IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

In **Activity III, Colleges for Me: RUPrepareND.com**, after discussing the questions/topics highlighted in the lesson, you may choose to allow your students to complete their School search independently. Once students have finished their survey, have them record their results on **Portfolio page 28, RUPrepareND.com's School Finder Results** and **Portfolio page 29, Your Search Criteria**. Then continue with the **Wrap Up** as written.

Note: In the **Activity III** discussion, North Dakota colleges are provided as examples. Facilitators working in other locations will need to reference colleges familiar to their students.

## ACTIVITY STEPS

### I. Warm Up: My Choices (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** True or false: All four-year colleges are pretty much the same, so it doesn't really matter which one you choose. [Students respond.]

There are all kinds of four-year colleges to choose from and every one is different. Today we'll find out about some of those differences and what your own personal preferences might be.

2. [Have students turn to **Student Handbook page 65, My Choices**. Ask them to fill out the questionnaire. For the first question, which includes the choices "students very similar to me" and "different types of students," you may want to describe ways in which students could be similar (e.g., gender, race, socioeconomic group, personal interests and style).]
3. [After students have had a few minutes to fill out the worksheet, call time. Pair off students and have partners discuss their answers. Make sure they give reasons for each answer, touching on questions like: What personal experiences influenced your response? Did you have a specific college in mind? Was the question easy or hard to answer and why?]

### II. Some Options (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** **Post-secondary education** has a vocabulary all its own, so here are a few terms you should know.

Every state has its own university system, sometimes with a few colleges and universities. The state gives these schools a lot of funding, so if you live there or one of your parents does, the costs are fairly low. These are known as **public schools**.

You can also go to a state university outside your home state, but you'll have to pay higher prices that are more like the costs for a private school.

**Private schools** receive much less government support, so they have much higher **tuition**. But you shouldn't rule them out just because of the price tag. These schools often offer scholarships and different kinds of **financial aid**, which can help you pay the bills.

There are also **specialized colleges**, which can be public or private. A specialized college is a school that prepares you for a career in a specific field. Can anyone name one? (*agriculture, art, music, teaching, engineering, business, health science, and religion*)

So if you know what you want to do with your life, a specialized college might be the way to go.

### III. Colleges for Me: RUReadyND.com (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** RUReadyND.com is a great place to find colleges and universities that match your interests. Using the **School Finder** feature, you can answer a few questions on the site, and it'll give you a list of schools with the things you're looking for. So let's sign in. [Note that students don't need to rule out a school they're interested in, just because it doesn't appear on their list.]

2. [Have students sign in to RUReadyND.com]

[Ask them to click on the College Planning tab at the top of the page, and then on the Explore Schools area. They should then click the School Finder link, and then on School Type, which is listed under Key Facts on the left side of the screen. Students should check off Bachelor's degree programs and Associate degree programs before proceeding to the next section.]

Students can now select additional characteristics from the list of choices on this page and along the left side of the screen. As a class, walk the students through the list of characteristics one by one to be sure that they know what each characteristic means.

Discuss the following questions below before students select their answers:

- **LOCATION (Key Facts):** Tell students that they should consider the travel involved in going to schools far away from home. If students want to be able to go home for weekends, or for family members' birthdays, they may prefer to stay within their region. This does not mean that students should be discouraged from looking at colleges outside of their state or region, but students need to think about the pros and cons of a school's location. (Example, a student from Fargo who wants to stay closer to home should check off either the Midwest or just North Dakota.)
- **SCHOOL SIZE (Key Facts):** To give the students a frame of reference between a very large, a large, and a medium school, discuss each example for your region:
  - **Extra Small:**
    1. Sitting Bull College (ND): 284 Students

- **Small:**
    1. Dickinson State University (ND): 2,668 Students
  - **Medium:**
    1. University of South Dakota (SD): 7,220 Students
  - **Large:**
    1. North Dakota State University (ND): 11,977 Students
  - **Extra Large:**
    1. Illinois State University (IL): 18,314 Students
- **ENTRANCE DIFFICULTY (Admissions):** Students do not need to understand the specific difference between each level of admissions difficulty, but some examples may be helpful. A school like Harvard or Princeton would be considered a “most difficult” school. They are very competitive and generally only take students with extremely high grades. A school with a strong academic reputation like Grinnell College, Carleton College or Cleveland Institute of Music would be considered a “very difficult” school. If students seem unclear about which level to pick, tell them to select “doesn’t matter.”
  - **TUITION (Tuition and Costs):** Explain that financial aid can sometimes make an expensive school affordable, so for now, students don’t need to make a choice about tuition costs.
  - **PROGRAMS/MAJORS OFFERED (Programs/Majors):** If the students already know their favorite career cluster, they should click “Choose specific programs” next to the appropriate cluster. They can then choose the major that they are interested in. If a student is undecided about what major they want to study, tell them to skip it.
  - **SPECIAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS (Programs/Majors):** Tell the students to skip this question unless they are familiar and interested in one of the options. For example, if a student knows that he wants to be in the ROTC: Air Force, then he should check that option.
  - **INTERCOLLEGIATE SPORTS (Sports):** Tell students that if they play a particular sport for a school or club team they should use the drop-down boxes to select that sport and their gender. They can skip selecting a Division and Scholarships Available. They do not need to select sports they enjoy watching.
  - **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (Campus Life):** Tell the students to skip this question unless they are familiar with and interested in one of the options. If a student is active in their theater department and wants to keep performing throughout high school and college, she should check off the drama/theater group box.

NOTE: If you are having your students complete the School Finder independently, tell them not to spend too much time on any question. They can always go back another time and revise their answers. Students can also choose to add any of the other characteristics listed, if time allows.

[When students have finished entering their criteria, ask them to click on **See Your List of Schools**. This button appears near the bottom of all of the criteria selection pages.]

[Show students how the following functions can be used.]

- To help remember what influences your choices, you can review your search criteria in the left column of the page.
- If a school that you hoped to see did not appear on the list, type the name of the school into the Search box in the upper right corner of the list.

#### IV. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. [Review the benefits of attending a four-year college as discussed in the previous lesson (campus experience, more varied and full education, path to a professional degree, preparation for a wider range of careers).]
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** If you wanted to find out more about the schools on your list, what could you do? (*Go to the school websites, talk to your school counselor about the school, plan a visit, and talk to adults you know who may have attended the school(s) you're interested in.*)
3. [Give students about 10 minutes to review and complete the questions. Once they have a list of schools, ask them to print them out or record them on **Portfolio page 28, RUPrepareND.com School Finder Results**. Instruct the students to then look at their list of search criteria at the top of the page and ask them to print them out or record their search criteria on **Portfolio page 29, Your Search Criteria**. Students can print the search criteria and list of schools by clicking **Print This** in the upper right corner of the page.]
4. [Tell students to save this search by selecting Save Your Current Search. They should enter a name for their search (for example, Local Nursing Programs or Large, Public Schools in North Dakota) and then click **Save**. They can review this search in the future by signing into RUPrepareND.com and returning to the School Finder page.]

#### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Encourage students to talk to a variety of adults they know (teachers, relatives, friends) about the four-year schools they attended. Explain that finding out what people liked and disliked most about their college experience is a great way to continue to learn about the options available.

## My Choices

For each sentence, circle the choice that best describes your college preferences.

1. I would like to attend a college with:

students very similar to me

different types of students

2. I would like to go to college where I can:

live close to home

see new places

3. I would like to go to college in a:

small town

big city

4. In my studies, I'd like to:

specialize in one thing

learn about a variety of things

5. A school where you get a lot of personal attention in smaller classes is:

very important to me

not very important to me

6. A school known for its sports teams is:

very important to me

not at all important to me



What kind of colleges interest you? Use RUPrepareND.com to begin your search.



## RUPrepareND.com School Finder Results

Use the RUPrepareND.com “School Finder” to find the undergraduate schools (two- and four-year colleges) that meet your needs. On each page, check the kinds of things you prefer — public or private school, big or small. The School Finder will create a list of possible schools.

**Print out your list and put it in your portfolio, or copy your top choices here. An example has been done for you.**

List **five schools** that were **exact** or **close to exact** matches:

Name of School	Type of School	City/State
<i>University of North Dakota</i>	<i>4-year</i>	<i>Grand Forks, ND</i>
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____

List additional schools that interest you. You may include schools that were not on your list.

(Do not include any schools listed above.)

6. _____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____
9. _____	_____	_____
10. _____	_____	_____

THE SCHOOL I AM RESEARCHING IS: \_\_\_\_\_

## Your Search Criteria

To help you remember what influenced your choices, review your search criteria listed above your list of schools. Print out your list by clicking **Print This** in the upper right corner of the page and put it in your Portfolio, or copy your criteria below.

1. Location: (If you remember the region you selected, record just that name below.)

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2. Program Type: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Public or Private: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

5. School Size: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Entrance Difficulty: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Tuition: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Program/Major: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Special Academic Program: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Sports: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Extracurricular Activities: \_\_\_\_\_