



About the Discussion Guides

Use these discussion guides to generate awareness, understanding, and potential solutions to critical issues in college access.

They can be used with a wide variety of stakeholders ranging from students to educators to parents to community leaders.

This slide is intended primarily for the discussion leader. You may want to **delete** this slide before presenting to the discussion group.



This guide is designed to facilitate a two-part discussion. Be sure to schedule ample time between parts one and two so that participants can do independent reading and research.

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How to Use This Discussion Guide

Part 1:

1. Use this slide deck to present a basic overview of the issue for discussion.
2. As a team or group, work through the discussion questions provided in the deck. If you have a large group, you may want to utilize breakout groups.
3. Review the homework assignments participants should complete prior to attending the meeting for Part 2.

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How to Use This Discussion Guide

Part 2:

1. Reconvene the group that participated in Part 1 of this discussion.
2. Use the Part 2 Discussion Questions to continue exploring this issue and possible solutions.
3. Identify next steps.

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College Match & Fit

Discussion Guide



Goals

- Gain a foundational understanding of this issue.
- Explore possible solutions for our community.



Part 1

Match

Do the academic offerings of the college or program match the student's capabilities?

Fit

Does the college or program fit with the student's interests, personality, and needs?

What's the Problem?

1. **Match:** Low-income, first-generation, and minority students often “undermatch” or choose colleges and programs that are less rigorous than they are capable of completing.
2. **Fit:** Students often make college decisions based on unimportant factors like where their friends are going or how fancy the campus fitness center is.

What's the Impact?

Match:

- Students who attend elite colleges – even if they are a stretch for them academically – are more likely to graduate.
- Talent is equally distributed but opportunity is not. Only 3% of students at the most selective colleges come from low-income families.



What's the Impact?

Fit:

- Fit and student satisfaction are closely linked
- Student satisfaction is a strong indicator of whether or not a student will ultimately graduate.



In short, Match and Fit affect college success rates.



Discussion Questions

- Why do you think students “undermatch” when it comes to choosing programs that align with their abilities?
- What are some factors students should consider when determining if a college is a fit?
- What are some they should ignore?
- How can we help improve student match and fit?



Homework

Read the following materials:

1. [Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas: College Fit Issue Brief](#)
2. [Inside Higher Ed: The Missing Black Students](#)
3. [Chalkbeat: The College Board Tried a Simple, Cheap, Research-Backed Way to Push Low-Income Kids Into Better Colleges. It Didn't Work.](#)
4. [The 74: A Student's View: How to Find the College That's the Right Fit](#)

Write down your thoughts or observations.

Bring them with you for Part 2 of this discussion on <Insert Date/Time>



Part 2

Discussion Questions

- Did anything you read or learned about this issue surprise you?
- After having time to reflect, can you identify additional possible causes of undermatching?
- What do you think are the most important factors to consider for finding a college that fits?
- What are some additional ways we can help improve match and fit?



Resource

CFWV's [Admissions 101 Guide](#) offers several resources to help students identify programs and colleges that are a good fit.



Next Steps

- What steps do we want to take to address this issue? If any?
- What are our immediate next actions? Who will be responsible? By when?



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