

Discovering Your Choices for College and Career

Narrator: CaliforniaColleges.edu. Discover. Plan. Launch. Discovering your choices for college and career. Javier, a high school senior.

Javier: Back when I was a freshman, I never would've believed I'd have so many choices. School seemed like that conveyor belt at the grocery store checkout. You just ride on it till the end and it dumps you off where you're supposed to go. And college, that never seemed like an option at all.

Narrator: Yvonne, college and career counselor

Yvonne: I remember sitting down with Javier in the guidance office. When I asked what he wanted to do, he shrugged. But when I asked what he enjoyed doing, he really opened up.

Narrator: Career planning.

Yvonne: Javier didn't see how his interest connected to jobs so I walked him through a career assessment on CaliforniaColleges.edu.

Narrator: On CaliforniaColleges.edu, the career menu is selected, followed by the interest profiler.

Javier: My dad's a mechanic and I've always loved seeing how things work. The career assessment Ms. Hill had me do, came back with jobs I'd never even thought of: electrician, aircraft technician, even mechanical engineer.

Narrator: A range from strongly dislike to strongly like is presented for the interest profiler. Upon completion it shows there are a variety of jobs which can be favorited along with the required educational level and salary estimates.

Yvonne: Javier spent a lot of time on the career search tool, researching what these jobs involved, what they paid, and what kind of education or training he'd need to get them.

Javier: One thing that they all had in common was that they needed more than just a high school diploma. To be a mechanical engineer, my best bet is a bachelor's degree. While an associate's degree could really help in becoming an aircraft technician. To be an electrician, I'd need to get certification.

Yvonne: Javier needed to find schools with specific programs and he needed them to be affordable and close to home. The major search tool let him put in programs of study then find colleges that offered them. He found three nearby. LA Trade Tech provides an electrician certification program, West LA College has an AS in aviation maintenance and Cal State Northridge offers a BS in mechanical engineering Narrator: College eligibility tracking.

Javier: All these schools required different things. If I wanted to be eligible for CSU, I'd have to meet A through G requirements. That meant passing a bunch of high school classes and different subjects along with having the right GPA. I was already a junior and I was worried I was way behind.

Yvonne: Calculating A through G eligibility by hand is confusing, but because the CSU and UC eligibility tools connect to Javier's actual transcript, figuring it out was a snap. I ran a report and found that Javier was just two units off track for CSU.

Javier: Ms. Hill helped me find a summer English course to get caught up, and I was able to test out of Spanish too. I even used the academic planner to plot out all my senior year courses and make sure I stayed on target.

Narrator: College application tools.

Yvonne: Javier applied to three schools: CSU Northridge, West LA College, and LA Trade Tech. Since he used his CaliforniaColleges.edu account to apply, I could track when each application was submitted.

Javier: CSU application was the most intimidating because I had to enter all my A through G courses. What if I left something off or got a course name wrong? It turned out to be a breeze. CaliforniaColleges.edu let me automatically import my A through G courses right from my account. Took 30 seconds and it made sure I didn't make any mistakes that could hurt my eligibility.

Narrator: An import option is available on the Cal State Apply website.

Yvonne: By submitting his CCC apply applications through CaliforniaColleges.edu, his transcript data was automatically passed along with them. That way, LA Trade Tech and West LA College had the information they needed to properly place him in first year english and math.

Javier: Applying was one thing, figuring out how to pay for college was something else.

Narrator: Financial aid application reporting.

Yvonne: Javier applied to three different schools, but when I ran the financial aid application report, I could see he hadn't submitted a FAFSA or California Dream Act application, so I called him into the guidance office. I wanted him to know there was financial aid out there for him.

Narrator: Financial aid lessons and tools.

Javier: No one in my family had ever gone to college so I had no idea how paying for it worked. I was freaking out about how I was going to be able to get loans for school or how I'd pay them off even if I did. Ms. Hill pointed me to the financial aid lessons which took me step by step through how financial aid worked and how to apply. Turned out I was eligible for a whole bunch of free grants and work study too.

Yvonne: Javier launched his financial aid application through his californiacolleges.edu account. That let us both track when it was submitted and whether the school had sent his GPA so he could be eligible for a Cal Grant.

Javier: March and April were like a dream come true. I got admitted to Northridge and got confirmation of my financial aid options at all three colleges.

Yvonne: There's nothing better than seeing a student succeed at something they thought was impossible. Javier ran into the office and pulled the acceptance and financial aid emails up on his phone. He said, "Can you believe I got into college?" I said, "Yes, I can."

Javier: Four years ago I felt like I was on a conveyor belt, like I didn't have any choices at all. Suddenly, I've got three amazing career options that I think I'd really love and three great colleges to choose from. Now comes the hard part, deciding what I want my future to be. It is a tough choice, but it's a great one because I'm the one who gets to make it.

Narrator: Discover your college and career goals. Plan how you can achieve them. Launch into a fulfilling future. Learn more at CaliforniaColleges.edu.

End of: Discovering Your Choices for College and Career Video Duration: 06:23