Solutions for your future

Fall 2026 • Vol. 1

plan the path

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Student Spotlight

Leo Silverstein

Colorado College
Class of 2029

Fun fact:
Leo wrote his personal statement about the qualities of resilience and surrender he discovered within himself while canoeing in unexpected and perilous conditions.

Leo Silverstein of Montclair, NJ delighted us as a Plan the Path student. He brought his passion for poetry, philosophy and the outdoors to his applications, and together we worked to highlight what a hardworking, creative, and resourceful young man he is.

Leo is thrilled to share that Colorado College, with its immersive block plan and extraordinary natural environment, is the perfect fit for him. He's majoring in English and Philosophy, and he's still outside exploring every chance he gets.

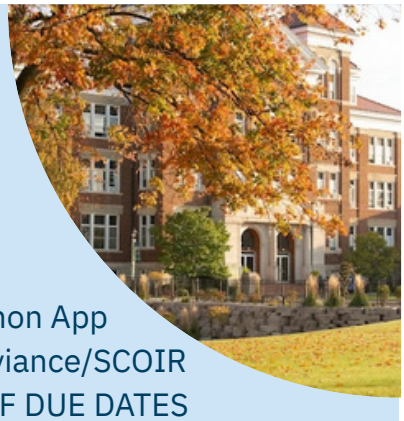
Community Update

A New Beginning

Welcome, or welcome back, to our re-launched newsletter! I look forward to sharing our insights on the evolving nature of the college admissions landscape in this quarterly offering. I'm also thrilled to share that Plan the Path has expanded our services, grown to a team of 10, and built a new website to highlight all that we do. Please take a look!

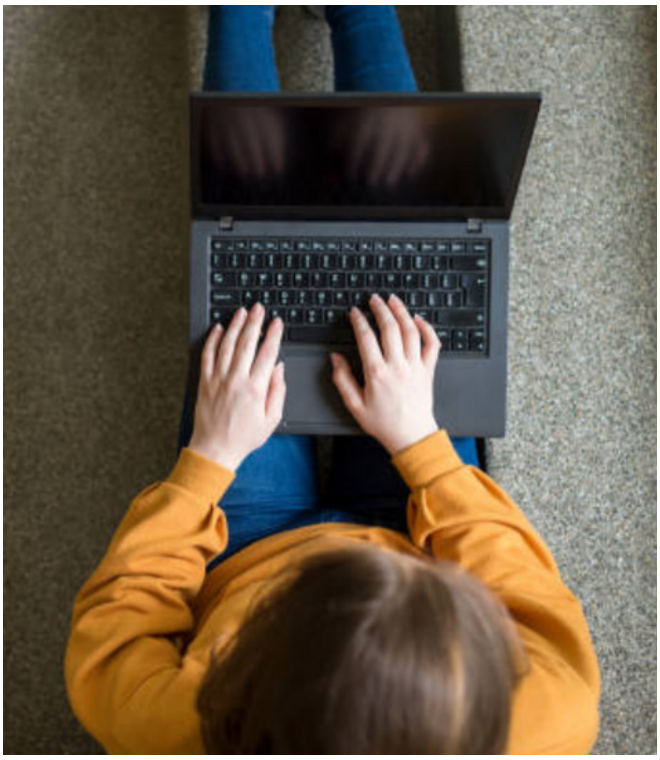
Thank you for joining us on the path,
Marcia Kramer, MA • Founder & CEO, Plan the Path

Planning Your Path for Fall Term



Juniors:
- Prepare & register for SAT/ACT
- Research & visit Schools

Seniors:
- Connect Naviance/SCOIR to Common App
- Request Teacher Recs through Naviance/SCOIR
- Fill out applications • BE AWARE OF DUE DATES
- Send test scores • Fill out Financial Aid Forms
- Request transcript from Guidance Office
- Submit Applications
- Fill out STARS (after applications submitted)



Getting Ready for College

Pro Tips for Campus Visits

The college search process is a time for discovery and learning. Once you've done the preliminary research to determine which schools you want to visit, it's time to sign up for tours and information sessions. In the "Admissions" section of each school's website, there will be opportunities to do so.

The primary goal of these visits is to make sure that the campus—which includes its vibe, professors, student population, amenities, facilities, and local surroundings—would be a good place to explore your academic interests, pursue extracurriculars, and develop new relationships.

Download our Campus Visits Checklist

A secondary goal of the visit is to let the school know that you are on campus visiting – that you are exhibiting what they call "demonstrated interest." Not all schools include demonstrated interest as a factor in the admissions process, but there's no downside to signaling your interest in attending. Be sure to register for an official tour and info sessions; don't just walk around on your own. You'll learn more this way (which will be helpful when it comes time to make decisions), and the school will see that you made the effort to come learn about them in person... **keep reading**

Applications 101

How to Write Your College Essay

Advice from PTP Writing Coach Kyle Lopez

While we can't guarantee your college admissions outcomes, we can promise that if you follow our advice, you'll have the foundation for a great college essay. It may take longer than you hope and be more work than you imagine, but our tips are proof that your essay will be its strongest with some strategy and planning ahead.

Your main goal for the Common Application essay should be to come across as specific, authentic, and clear. One of the easier traps to fall into is overthinking whether you seem "impressive" enough and then letting that drive your writing. Admissions officers read hundreds, if not thousands, of essays, and what stands out is a sense that a real person is speaking honestly about something that is personally important to them.

Start by figuring out a topic that... **keep reading**

Need Help Getting Started?

STEP ONE

What are four ways you enjoy spending your time – other than hanging out with friends?

STEP TWO

What are three character traits you'd like the admissions committee to know about you?

STEP THREE

Identify three moments that showcase these traits in the context of doing the things you love.

Once you're enrolled...

The majority of our work involves helping high school students approach the college application process. We explore their academic interests, personal passions, learning styles, lifestyles preferences, and more. From here, we develop a balanced list of schools that suits their wants and needs.

? What to Study

Some students are very clear on the academic direction they will take in college, but others have a variety of intellectual interests and are uncertain what to pursue. To help students understand the many options they'll find in college, we've launched an essay series, **Finding Your Fit**, which explores a wide range of fields, the coursework required, and varying career opportuniites that may await.

Regardless of how well they know their future plans, all of today's students hold an acute awareness of the rapid changes reshaping the workplace: the rise of AI, the emergence of remote and decentralized work, and the increasing interconnectedness of global industry. These shifts are causing young people to question the future of work and which fields are resilient in the face of change? How do you choose a major that balances personal interest with practical opportunity? Read on to learn more

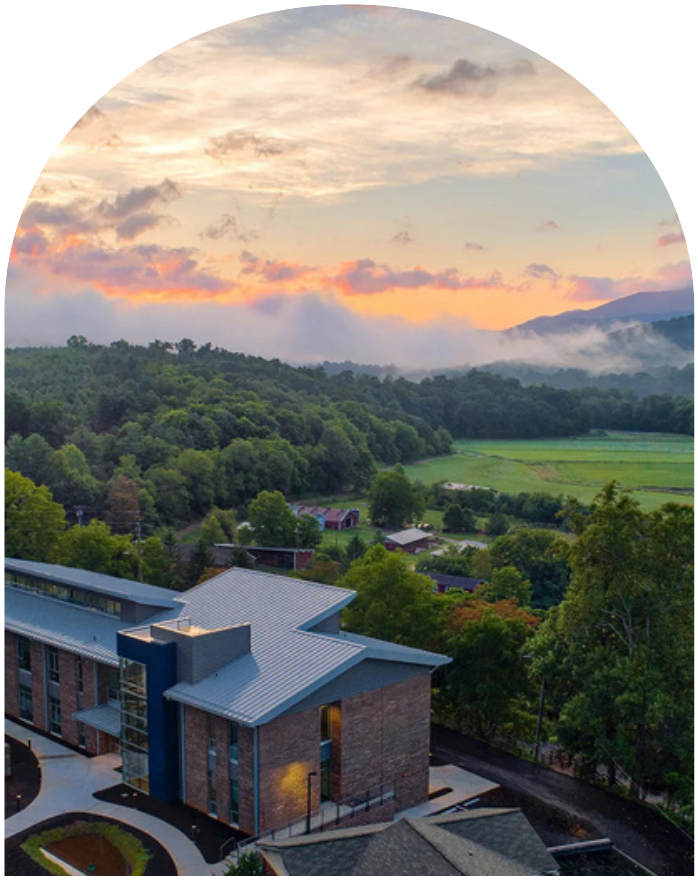
Follow us on Instagram for insights, info, and inspiration.

Insight on Admissions
from an Admissions Officer

Stephanie Stahler
McDaniel College

Stephanie Stahler is a senior associate director of admissions at McDaniel College in Westminster, MD. Recognized as one of the Colleges That Change Lives, McDaniel is a unique liberal arts institution that puts the student experience front and center. Stephanie's keen sensitivity toward students and her understanding of the changing role of colleges positions her with invaluable insight to share with the Plan the Path community.

As I wrap up 28 years in college admissions, it's hard not to become reflective at this point in the cycle. I remember when summers were truly a time to recharge, but that's no longer the case. Over the next three-plus months at McDaniel, we'll be helping our... **keep reading**



Off the Beaten Path

Warren Wilson College
Swannanoa, NC

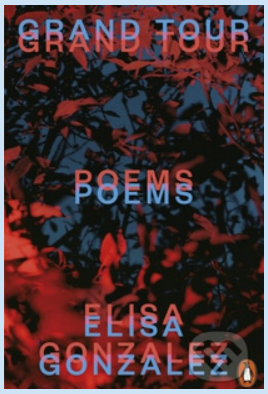
by PTP Writing Coach Mishal Mahmud

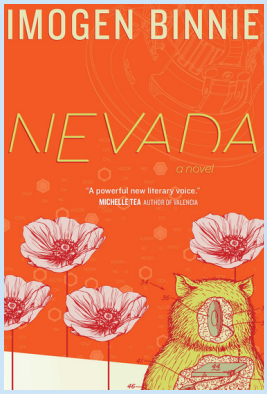
What makes Warren Wilson College special is its unorthodox approach to education. Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains outside Asheville, NC, it offers a radically different approach to higher education.

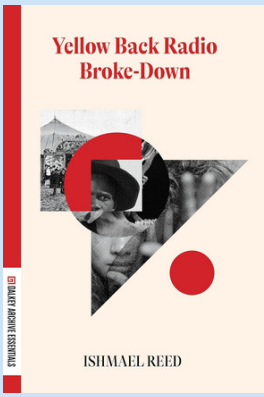
PTP founder Marcia Kramer has visited several times and recalls once seeing students working on the grounds, splayed in dirt with tools; they were fixing a shed as part of the Work Program. On another visit, she experienced the Swannanoa Festival, a five-week summer celebration that honors the music and dance traditions of southern Appalachia. Plan the Path has guided two students to Warren Wilson, both of whom... **keep reading**

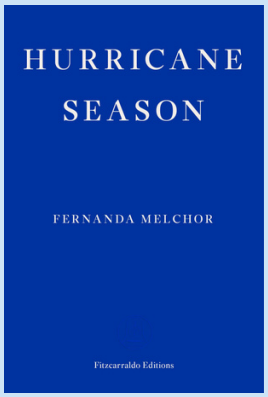
★ Books in Brief: Recommendations from Coach Kyle ★

Writing Coach Kyle Lopez brings his expertise as a published poet, essayist, and book reviewer, as well as a freelance copywriter and copy editor, to his work with Plan the Path students. His forthcoming book of poetry entitled Party Line and was published by Graywolf Press this summer.









Is your Plan the Path student still in college or a recent graduate?

We'd love to hear how it's going!

Please share your updates with us by emailing admin@planthepath.com

Do you know anyone who would benefit from our expert knowledge of the college admissions landscape and assistance with the application process?

We appreciate your referrals!