College for me is something that I am highly interested in and concerned about at the same time. College is the next major challenge of my life and I want to be sure that I am fully prepared to take on this challenge. I for sure want to pursue the field of architecture because I feel that it is an ever growing profession and the history that comes along with architecture is astounding. There are a lot of great colleges across the country that offer many different opportunities and benefits when it comes to architectural studies, but what I was very concerned with when it came to researching colleges was the distance from home, costs, and weather or not I would be able to get into the college. To start my research I used an online website called "Niche" to found out what some good architecture schools are. Niche was very useful because It not only showed me which colleges were best for what I was looking for but it also showed me the average costs of the schools, the SAT ranges, the acceptance rates, and a brief review of the college and what it's like. I have selected 4 colleges that I am interested in to pursue architectural studies. University of Cincinnati, Penn State, Syracuse University, and Virginia Tech.

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

To start off this list is the University of Cincinnati, a school that is located in Cincinnati, Ohio. Cincinnati is a highly rated public university with 4 stars after 3,584 alumni reviews. It is a large school with an enrollment of 22,622 undergraduate students. The admission rate for Cincinnati is fairly competitive with an acceptance rate of 76%(Junior). A few majors that Cincinnati is best known for are "Nursing, Marketing, and Psychology". Along with graduating 69% of students, Cincinnati alumni go on to earn a starting salary of $35,800(Junior). The University of Cincinnati is the 25th best school for architecture in the country out of 115 schools. The SAT range is 1120-1340 and the ACT range is 23-28. The estimated cost per year is $21,050 but, average total aid awarded each year is $7,045. 82% of students at Cincinnati receive financial aid(junior)..

Cincinnati offers a program called "The School of Architecture and Interior Design" or "SAID". This program is highly recommended and made to "advance the professions of Architecture and Interior

Design by combining ethical judgment, creative research and technical proficiency in pursuit of excellence. The Students of SAID are encouraged to take risks with their design ideas, and develop the skills to communicate them"(University Of Cincinnati). The SAID program offers degrees in Architecture, Interior Design, Master of Architecture, Master of Interior Design, Master of Science in Architecture, And PhD of Architecture. Overall I do really like the University of Cincinnati and can definitely see myself going there. I really enjoy what they have to offer and the costs are above the national average but understandable. One down side is the distance from home. Cincinnati is 7 hours and 45 minutes away or a 3 hour plane ride. This would be a challenge to get used to but I feel as though I would be okay being that far away after some time.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Next on the list is Penn State, which has been one of my dream colleges for many years. Penn State is a highly rated and recommended public college located in State College, Pennsylvania. It is a very large school with a current enrollment of 39,785 undergraduate students. Penn State is decently competitive school with a 50% acceptance rate. Some of Penn State's popular majors include Information Science, Biology, and Economics. 85% of students graduate and go on to earn a starting salary of $40,100 (Sophomore). Penn State's SAT range is 1160-1340 and they have an ACT range of 25-30. It is around $25,346 per year to attend but $10,060 is the total average aid awarded each year. And 64% of current Penn State students receive financial aid. 6 years after graduation the median earnings per year is just over $50,000. Penn State is the 27th best ranked school for architecture in the country (Sophomore), which is the lowest on my list but not very disconcerting to me because of what their program for architecture has to offer.

Penn State's architecture program is one of the oldest and most respected programs in the country. The Department and program was established in 1910 with a four year course in architectural engineering. This program's main focus is all on "The century-strong traditions of drawing,

model-making, community outreach/service learning, and hands-on construction that prepares students to explore innovative models of architectural practice as well as to engage non-traditional means of building delivery, such as design-build and digital fabrication"(Department of Architecture). Penn State's department of architecture teaches students by actively pursuing work in a professional practice, research and service projects, participation in national and international competitions, publications, and presentations at professional meetings. The results of participation in these activities have contributed substantially to the recognition of this program and its teaching personnel. Penn State graduate degrees include Ph.D. in Architecture, Ph.D. in Architecture and HDNRE (Dual-title Ph.D.), Master of Science in Architecture (M.S. in Architecture), Master of Science in Architecture and HDNRE (Dual-title M.S.), and Professional Master of Architecture (M.Arch). Penn State also has Undergraduate degrees which are Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch), Bachelor of Science in Architecture (ARCBS), and Architecture Minor (Department of Architecture). Penn State is the closest school on this list at about a 2 hour drive from my home. This is a major plus for me and really will help in my decision making.

UNIVERSITY OF SYRACUSE

The University of Syracuse is a college that I knew very little about before starting my research. Syracuse is a beautiful place and filled with great architectural history which will be duly noted when it comes to my decision making time. Syracuse is highly rated amongst it's alumni and a private university located in Syracuse, New York. It is also a fairly large school with a current enrolment of 14,675 undergraduate students. Admissions for Syracuse is pretty competitive with a 47% acceptance rate, the lowest rate on the list. A few popular majors include Information Science, Psychology, and Finance(Alum). Graduating 83% of their students, they go on to earn a starting salary of $45,900 after school. Syracuse is also rated as having a very good value, great academics, and pretty good diversity. The SAT range for Syracuse is 1160-1350 and the ACT is 25-30. The cost per year is $35,306 which is decently above the national average but Syracuse awards on average $27,878 a year to students which is

drastically above the national average for aid awarded. About 73% of current Syracuse students receive financial aid. Six years out of school alumni earn about $62,100 a year and based off polls done by Syacuse 85% of their current students feel confident that they will find a job in their field after graduation. This is supported by the fact that 96% of students are employed 2 years after graduating(Alum).

Syracuse, New York is pretty well known as having beautiful architecture around the city and Syracuse University doesn't fall short on this either. This could be why they are ranked 15th in the country as one of the best colleges for architecture. A student named Ethan Russell-Benoit is graduating this year from Syracuse with a major in architecture and his description of the architectural program at Syracuse is what first piqued my interest.

"One of the unique things about the School of Architecture is how closely students interact with faculty. Studio classes and electives often have as few as 14 students working and sharing dialogue with teachers who bring their own passions and interests to the table."

-Ethan Russell-Benoit '19, Architecture

Syracuse's school of architecture is described as offing a "professional curriculum that stresses creativity, research, and problem solving"(Undergraduate). A major part of the school is studying abroad. Over 90% of architecture students study abroad at least once which could be a semester or even a full year. A few university centers where you can study abroad are located in Florence, London, and even at the Fisher Center in New York City. Another part of the school is the practical experience that you will receive by getting hands on opportunities to work with industry leaders. Throughout your time at Syracuse, you will make frequent field trips to major cities. In the first year you make a trip to New York City. In your third year, you will select from a group of studios offered by professional architects serving as visiting critics. 96% of Syracuse architecture graduates were employed in an architectural field 2 years after graduating. Syracuse is also the number one most hired from school for architects according to research done by DesignIntelligence. This is thanks to The School of Architecture's Office of Career

Services. They will help you with everything from accessing the alumni network to interview training and portfolio preparation. Current Director Connie Caldwell was cited as a Most Admired Educator by DesignIntelligence for her ability to recognize student strengths and connect students with companies and professional practices(Undergraduate). Syracuse by far has the most opportunities and options when it comes to architectural studies and those opportunities I value a lot when it comes to learning.

VIRGINIA TECH UNIVERSITY

Last but certainly not least on my list is Virginia Tech University. Virginia Tech is one of the highest rated public schools in all of america and located in Blacksburg, Virginia. Virginia Tech is a fairly large college with 26,603 current undergraduate students. Top majors include Mechanical Engineering, Management Sciences, and Information Systems. The acceptance rate is 70% which is somewhat competitive, but of that 70%, 67% of accepted students are from Virginia. 84% of students graduate and those Alumni go on to earn a starting salary of $48,000. The SAT range is 1180-1360 and the ACT range is 25-30(User). The cost per year is $18,700, not much above the national average. And the average total aid awarded is $8,261 a year. Only 65% of current Virginia Tech students receive financial aid. 6 Years after school alumni earn a median of $62,500 a year, and 96% of alumni are employed 2 years after graduation. Over 90% of students feel confident they will find a job in their field after graduation(User). Almost all of Virginia Tech students use their career center to find a job after graduation and 94% of those students feel that it was extremely helpful in finding a job. Virginia Tech has the 11th best architectural program in the country which is the highest on my list.

Virginia Tech has a very interesting approach when it comes to studying architecture. This approach is described as a "studio-based curriculum which provides a learning environment that cultivates vigorous dialogue and debate, intellectual discipline, and a self-motivated search for architectural values"(Architecture). The goal of the program is to develop students who can be creatively independent and inventive. Students should also leave the program with the desire to make lasting contributions to

society. Virginia Tech offers many degrees when it comes to architecture. They offer a Bachelor of Architecture, Master of Architecture, Master of Science in architecture; concentration in Urban design, Master of Science in architecture; concentration in Building Science, Doctor of Philosophy in architecture and design research, Minor in Industrial Design, and Minor in Landscape Architecture(Architecture). Overall, I really like what virginia tech has to offer in their architecture program. It sounds as though they are very hands on and real world when it comes to studying which is something that I am very interested in learning. I feel as though this environment will best prepare me for the real world of architectural work.

After spending a lot of time looking around at colleges that I believe I could succeed and thrive at, I'm very glad I picked these four to look into more and find out more about. Like I explained before college for me is something that is very important and will be a major part of my life soon. In college I want something that isn't too far from home, cost effective for me, and to be sure I can get into the school. The biggest part of the college search and the main reason that I picked these colleges is architecture and what these schools have to offer when studying architecture. All of these schools have great programs and the opportunities seem endless for all of them. But at the same time each program has its benefits and learning styles. I like that I have the choice of style in which I learn when it comes to the school's program. I can't say I have a decision now because there are still many things to come which are possibly touring the school, getting back my testing scores, and figuring out with my family what my best fit and option would be. This experience of looking to colleges was many things; extremely eye opening, exciting, scary, interesting, and fun. I look forward to this next part of my life and I think this was a great start for me finding out about these schools.