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### College Research Project

Throughout the course of life, we are asked many important questions. One of these questions is whether or not we will attend college and if we will, what school should we attend? This is a very important decision to make and many things should be taken into consideration when deciding. Not only do we put pressure on ourselves to make the “right decision” but there are a lot of other people looking at our lives during this time and they have their own opinion too. Perhaps one of the most difficult decisions we are asked to make is choosing a college. College is something that could be a huge impact on the direction of the rest of your life. Although the process of choosing a school can be very stressful, it can also be very rewarding. One very important part of this decision is making a list of top schools and properly researching them.

I narrowed down my top three schools to Clarion University, Lock Haven University, and Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. I picked each of these schools based on the following characteristics which I deemed to be important: available majors and technical programs, location, and if the school has a wrestling program.

## CLARION UNIVERSITY

Clarion University of Pennsylvania is a public institution that was founded in 1867. It has a total undergraduate enrollment of 3,776, its setting is rural, and the campus size is 201 acres (How Does Clarion). It is known for its student to faculty ratio. The student-faculty ratio at Clarion University of Pennsylvania is 16:1, and the school has 38.2% of its classes with fewer than 20 students (Here's What Student).

This beautiful campus is nestled into the Appalachian Mountain region and provides for a wonderfully remote location for learning. Clarion also has a lower number of students with only 4,703 students currently enrolled. The location of the premier campus allows students to create close friendships with one another while doing things outdoors. When considering a degree in business or finance, Clarion is a top school in Pennsylvania and even the nation. Clarion University's finance program ranks 13th in the nation (Clarion University's). Ryan Wentz, Class of 2000 quotes, "My time spent at Clarion University was an integral part of my success as a professional. My coursework, along with the hands-on experience in student-run organizations, prepared me not only for my career but for life. I would recommend Clarion University to those who would like the challenge of a big university education in a small-town setting."

Although most athletics at Clarion University are division 2 sports, their wrestling team competes in division 1. A large portion of Clarions matches are also wrestled in our home state of Pennsylvania against teams like Edinboro, Lock Haven, and Bloomsburg. Clarion has also

boosted a winning record the past three years competing in a very tough schedule. Clarion has also recently renovated its wrestling room and created optimal training conditions for its student-athletes. I had the chance to train in both their old facilities and their new one, the improvements were outstanding.

When not training as a team Clarion has a student rec center that is open to all students and staff Monday through Friday 8 am - 9 pm and has some shortened hours on the weekends. Some things available are weight room, indoor climbing wall, boxing equipment and, cardio/fitness area. “Our 4800 square foot weight room is fully equipped with free weights, dumbbells, plate loaded, and variable resistance machines to cover all of your fitness/training needs! Dumbbells range from 2.5 to 100 pounds with 10+ benches and a rack of plate loaded straight bars to compliment the free weight area” (Facilities).

When all of these things are combined I believe it would create a great work environment and a wonderful place to gain an education. The only drawback is that the food is not the greatest.

## LOCK HAVEN UNIVERSITY

Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania is a public university in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. The main campus consists of 200 acres and the branch campus covers 12.9 acres (Lock Haven wiki) Lock Haven is also another school that gives you the feelings of a big and

small school. They also have an awesome student to faculty ratio of 14:1. This ensures that you get the attention needed for success.

Lock Haven is surrounded by the breathtaking natural beauty and outdoor adventure of the Susquehanna River and the Bald Eagle Mountain range (Lock Haven University edu) Currently there are 4,607 students attending the university. This school is also uniquely located as it is easy to access and has a rural feeling. Lock Haven also has an excellent small business development center. Their business center is combined with Penn State's SBDC creating even more opportunities for students. If attending Lock Haven this would definitely be a program that I would be interested in attending. "The Penn State SBDC provides entrepreneurs with the education, information, and tools necessary to build successful businesses. Free or low-cost seminars and programs along with free, confidential consulting services are provided to people looking to start or grow a small business" (About).

Another very attractive part of Lock Haven is the deep history of success on the division 1 wrestling mat. Lock Haven has had 6 different division 1 national champions. They have also had various wrestlers go on to compete on the world and Olympic teams. As head coach of the LHU wrestling team, Coach Carl Poff took the team to new heights. "The winningest wrestling coach in school history, Poff's teams went 167-62-3 and amassed a winning percentage of .720. His 2000-01 team went 21-2 and his 1996-97 team finished fifth at the NCAA Division I Championship". (Carl)

All in all, I think Lock Haven would be a good fit because of how comfortable I feel on the campus. There are two drawbacks to a school like Lock Haven. Teams that compete at the level that they do, don't have much free time, and the average cost before financial aid is \$27,374 so Lock Haven is more expensive than my other choices.

#### THADDEUS STEVENS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology is a public technical college in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. It offers twenty-two academic programs for about 1,200 students (Thaddeus). One of the most appealing parts of Stevens is that most of the programs are only 2-year programs. This allows you to save a lot of money when paying for school. Stevens is also a lot cheaper than other schools typically costing \$8,250 a year.

Another great benefit to Stevens is the wrestling. They compete in a lower division than my other two choices against some much easier competition. This would allow me to focus on my academics and other things much more. Although Stevens is competing in this lower division they have been very successful in the past few years.

If attending Stevens I would most likely be interested in farthing my welding education. This university would be a great place for me to do this. It would also be very close to home and be a very manageable commute. This would also allow me to save a lot of money.

## CLOSING

In conclusion, I think that I would be best suited for a university like Stevens. One reason is that the school is very affordable. The information that I would gain at the technical university would also better prepare me for the career that I want. The only drawback would be spending time learning information that I may have already learned. Coming in at a close second was Clarion. This school appeals to me because of the rural location and the recently renovated facilities. One of the major drawbacks is the expense of the school also with spending time at the school before I have learned that the food isn't very good. The last school on my list was Lock Haven, this is because to go to a school like this would require me to be recruited by the wrestling coach. At this point, I have not had much contact with the coach. If recruited by the coach I think this school would be a great fit.