Negotiating School…
Using Library Resources and Websites to find out How to Navigate School, Find Info on Universities, Scholarships, and Professors, etc….

http://guides.library.txstate.edu/college-info

C.A.P. Camp
June 2015
Texas State University

- As library staff workers, we get these questions usually after students are already enrolled and starting class.
- As former or current students, we have also struggled with this. So, here is some of what we have learned.
How to Research:

- Professors
- Syllabi
- Scholarships
- Universities

Info on Professors
Info on Professors

- A professor can make or break a class. If you have a choice, do some basic research on a professor before you enroll in her or his class to get a better idea about the professor’s
  - Communication skills
  - Helpfulness
  - Difficulty
  - Organizational skills

- Two main sources of information:
  - University site addressing House Bill 2504
  - Ratemyprofessors.com

House Bill 2504

- HB 2504 requires that public universities in Texas provide access to
  - Syllabi
  - Professor’s CVs
  - Departmental budgets
  - Course evaluations
Texas Education Code 51.974 – Internet Access to Course Information

(a) Each institution of higher education, other than a medical and dental unit, as defined by Section 61.003, shall make available to the public on the institution’s Internet website the following information for each undergraduate classroom course offered for credit by the institution:

(1) a syllabus that:
   (A) satisfies any standards adopted by the institution;
   (B) provides a brief description of each major course requirement, including each major assignment and examination;
   (C) lists any required or recommended reading; and
   (D) provides a general description of the subject matter of each lecture or discussion;

(2) a curriculum vitae of each regular instructor that lists the instructor’s:
   (A) postsecondary education;
   (B) teaching experience; and
   (C) significant professional publications; and

(3) if available, a departmental budget report of the department under which the course is offered, from the most recent semester or other academic term during which the institution offered the course.

Texas Education Code 51.974 – Internet Access to Course Information (Cont.)

(a-1) A curriculum vitae made available on the institution’s Internet website under Subsection (a) may not include any personal information, including the instructor’s home address or home telephone number.

(b) The information required by Subsection (a) must be:
   (1) accessible from the institution’s Internet website home page by use of not more than three links;
   (2) searchable by keywords and phrases; and
   (3) accessible to the public without requiring registration or use of a user name, a password, or another user identification.

(c) The institution shall make the information required by Subsection (a) available not later than the seventh day after the first day of classes for the semester or other academic term during which the course is offered. The institution shall continue to make the information available on the institution’s Internet website until at least the second anniversary of the date on which the institution initially posted the information.

(d) The institution shall update the information required by Subsection (a) as soon as practicable after the information changes.

(e) The governing body of the institution shall designate an administrator to be responsible for ensuring implementation of this section. The administrator may assign duties under this section to one or more administrative employees.

(f) Not later than January 1 of each odd numbered year, each institution of higher education shall submit a written report regarding the institution’s compliance with this section to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the presiding officer of each legislative standing committee with primary jurisdiction over higher education.

(g) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board may adopt rules necessary to administer this section.

(h) Institutions of higher education included in this section shall conduct end-of-course student evaluations of faculty and develop a plan to make evaluations available on the institution’s website.
House Bill 2504 links

- Texas State University HB2504 [http://hb2504.txstate.edu/]
- UTSA Bluebook [https://bluebook.utsa.edu/]
- Texas Tech University [http://www.ttu.edu/courseinfo/]
- UT at Austin [https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/student/coursedocs/nlogon/]
- University of North Texas [https://faculty.unt.edu/]

- Texas State’s HB2504 Info can be accessed from a link on the homepage.
- Browse by Professor’s name or by Department.
- Find Syllabi or Professor’s reviews.
Example course evaluations

Now, you try it.

- Pick a major you are considering.
- Go to the department section.
- Choose a professor that works in the department.
- Pick a semester and class and look at the student perceptions.
  - Example: Browse Courses > GEOL > Petrology > Spring 2015 > Instructor Smith

- What are your thoughts? Would you want to take that class from that professor?
Ratemyprofessors is the commercial version of student evaluations.
Take with a grain of salt.
Also, consider if what people are scoring on is what you value – “easiness” may NOT be a good thing.

What did you find out?

Look up a professor in the HB 2504 site and Ratemyprofessors.com. Are there any differences?

How about the comments? Are there any helpful or interesting comments?
A syllabus is an outline and description of a course. It usually contains:

- Location and times of class and any lab
- Required textbooks
- Recommended books for class
- Grading policy
- Grading rubric
- Instructor contact information
- Dates for exams and papers
- Classroom behavior expectations
- Attendance policy
- Information regarding plagiarism/honor code.
Sample Syllabus

PSY 3312: Adolescent Psychology
Course Syllabus (Fall 2014)
Section 002
TR 5:00-6:20p in AVRY 404
http://api.hb2504.txstate.edu/py/getsyllabus.py?class=151014635

Where is it located? Why is this important?

Now, you try it.

- Go back to the HB2504 website.
- Choose a class and print out the syllabus.
Plagiarism and the Honor Code

What is Plagiarism?
What can we do to avoid plagiarism?

Texas State University Honor Code

- [http://www.txstate.edu/honorcodecouncil/](http://www.txstate.edu/honorcodecouncil/)
- All students are required to abide by the Texas State University Honor Code. The pledge for students states:

  Students at our university recognize that, to insure honest conduct, more is needed than an expectation of academic honesty, and we therefore adopt the practice of affixing the following pledge of honesty to the work we submit for evaluation: I pledge to uphold the principles of honesty and responsibility at our university.
Compare Colleges

Online resources to help compare colleges

- Compare College TX
- College Search by College Board
- Princeton Review
- Peterson's
- College Navigator
- College Atlas
Library Books to Help Choose a College

- **College Handbook 2014 by College Board Staff**  Call Number: LB2351.A1 C6
- **The best value colleges, by Princeton Review**  Call Number: L901 .A62
- **The College blue book. Degrees offered by colleges and subjects, by Gale Cengage Learning**  Call Number: L901 .C676
- **Best Colleges 2015 by U.S. News & World Report**  Call Number: LB2331.63 .A46
- **Choosing the Right College by John Zmirak (Editor)**  Call Number: L901 .C576 2011

How to Find Money for College
Financial Aid Websites

- College for All Texans
- FAFSA
- Fastweb
- Student Aid
- TxState Financial Aid
- UNT Financial Aid

Library Books on Scholarships

- Scholarship Handbook 2015 by College Board Staff
- How to Get Money for College: Financing Your Future Beyond Federal Aid 2013 by Peterson's Publishing Staff
- Scholarships, fellowships, grants and loans. by Gale Cengage Learning
- Scholarships, Grants and Prizes 2013 by Peterson's Publishing Staff
- Paying for College Without Going Broke by Princeton Review
Find a Scholarship

Studying for College Prep Tests
Library Resources for College Prep Tests

- **LearningExpress Library**  An interactive online learning platform featuring over 770 practice tests, tutorials, and eBooks including practice exams for GMAT, LSAT, GRE, MCAT, TExES, TOEFL, ACT, AP, NCLEX-RN, military service, civil service, and real estate licensing. Also includes Computer skill tutorials, workplace skills improvement, US citizenship and more.

- **Testing & Education Reference Center**  Prepare for the GED; civil service and military entrance exams; licensing tests for law enforcement, real estate, the postal service, and many other fields; plus college and graduate school admissions exams. Includes guides for CLEP, AP, TOEFL, ASVAB, GRE, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT, ACT, SAT, NCLEX-RN & PN, and many others. Must create an account to take practice exam.

- Other resources – see [http://guides.library.txstate.edu/college-info/collegepreptests](http://guides.library.txstate.edu/college-info/collegepreptests)