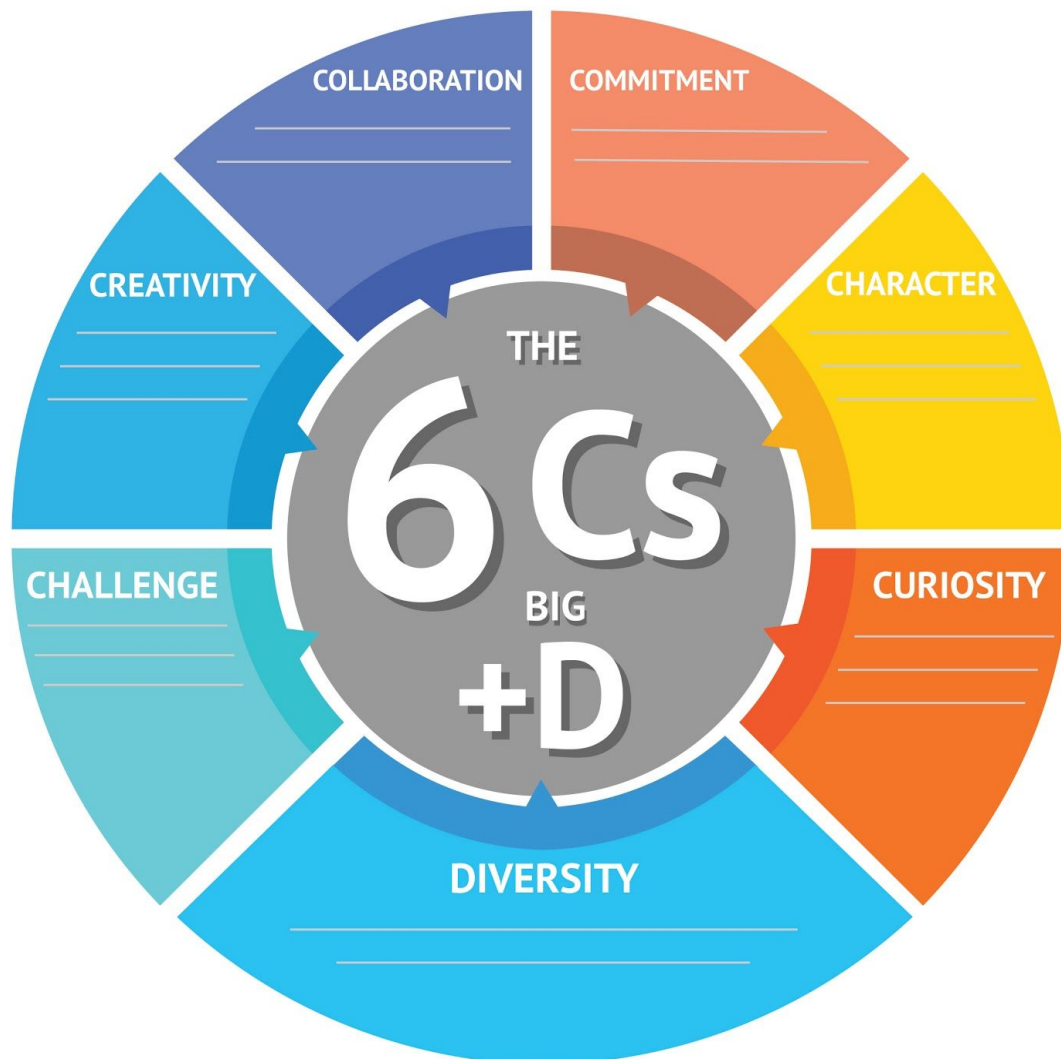


Identifying Key Personality Traits Important to Top Colleges

When we ask students what personality traits they think colleges care about, they pretty much always give the same wrong answer: being hardworking. Wrong, wrong, wrong! But why? Well, first of all, if everyone says the same thing about themselves – that they are hardworking – no applicant stands out. Second, colleges already expect applicants to be hardworking.

Colleges look for additional personality traits when making selections. Which ones? We've located seven key personality traits – the 6Cs and Big D – to give you concrete guidance. Here's the good news before you even get started: you probably already possess some of the traits top schools look for! Hopefully, this first step in your college planning journey will feel reassuring for you. Are you ready? Make notes on how you can demonstrate each trait in the corresponding section of the diagram below.



Congratulations! You made it through a very important first step – a personal traits inventory. This is not an easy exercise. So take a moment to pat yourself on the back for getting to this milestone. Deep breath. Inhale, exhale. A few times.

At this point, you are probably feeling affirmed and maybe even a little calm about the examples you've already written down. You should! That's because they show you the strengths you already bring to colleges. You are probably also feeling nervous about the examples you couldn't come up with. That's okay.

Part of becoming a young adult is feeling confident about what you already have to offer while also working on the areas that need strengthening. It's best not to be too positive (overly confident) or too negative (self-critical) about your traits.

This new framework can also help you choose future activities. Will a certain activity bring out one (or some) of the Seven Key Personality Traits? If yes, then it might be a good choice. We hope you find this new framework helpful!