

For Students:

What if I'm not ready for college just yet?

One choice that a few students consider each year is to delay entering college after graduation from Lawrence—taking a “gap year.” Colleges and universities almost always support students who do this, because they find that when students return to academic life, they do so with renewed energy, enthusiasm and focus.

If you do consider a gap year, the first thing you must understand is that in all likelihood you will eventually go to college. Therefore, along with exploring alternative-year options, you must plan on going through the selection and application process during your senior year. Why? First, you might change your mind in May and decide you want to start college after all. Second, applying to college as a senior is buying “insurance” for the future; most colleges, once they have accepted you, will allow you to defer attendance for a year. That doesn't mean you are forced to attend that college, but you do have the option. Third, the application process will be easier for you while you're still at Lawrence, with the counseling staff available to help you.

Parents often fear that children who do not start college immediately after high school will never go. This fear, while understandable, is unfounded, at least in our experience. To our knowledge, every single Lawrence graduate who has taken time off in the last thirty or more years has gone on to college, usually within a year.

So if a gap year has been on your mind, talk with a counselor about it--and share your thoughts with your parents! The College Counseling Office has information on alternative programs that have been successful for Lawrence Academy students in the recent past, and we can direct you to professional consultants who help students plan such interim periods.