



# Campus Visits

## College Counseling

### **There's no substitute for seeing a college yourself!**

There are lots of ways to find out about a college, from brochures to videos to college fairs. But the bottom line is that nothing beats the test of going to a college and seeing it for yourself. Here are some ideas to help you make the most of a campus visit:

### **Before you go**

#### **Call the admissions office in advance:**

Just as there's no substitute for seeing a college firsthand, there's no substitute for advance planning. When you call the admissions office, tell them the date you'd like to visit and the time of day you expect to arrive. If you want to stay overnight in a residence hall, ask if they can make arrangements. Also, find out about lining up an interview (if they offer them and you'd like one) or attending an information session, visiting classes and talking with faculty.

#### **Read up on the college and think about questions:**

Go back through the information you've collected about the college. Check the resources at your school's guidance office and browse the college's Web site, if possible. This research will help you think of questions to ask and aspects of the college to explore while you're there. The other side of this page has lists of questions to help you get started. As you think of other questions, write them down.

### **While you're there**

#### **Talk to as many students as you can:**

Once you're on campus, try to take advantage of a variety of ways to learn about the college:

- Meet with an admissions officer or attend an information session
- Take a tour of the campus
- Sit in on a class
- Have a meal in the cafeteria
- Pick up copies of the student newspaper and alumni magazine.

Throughout your visit, talk to as many students as you can and don't be bashful about asking questions!

### **Prepare for the Interview**

If you have scheduled an interview, take along your list of questions, so you're sure to cover everything you wanted to find out. You'll probably be asked about your academic background, interests, hobbies, goals and why you're interested in the college, so be ready to talk about that. As with any interview, be on time, or call ahead if you know you'll be delayed.

A campus visit is informative at anytime, but it's best to see a college in action, when students are in classes.

Colleges encourage visits, but their schedules for tours, interviews and overnight stays might fill up early. Call ahead!

Have some extra time during your visit? Stop by the campus coffee shop or grill, read bulletin boards, try to strike up conversations with students, or go to a play or lecture.

Nervous about the interview? That's natural. Try to look at it as a conversation in which you ask questions too. You'll be more likely to relax, be yourself and enjoy it.

People's views about college or university can vary widely. So try to talk with as many people as possible.



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### **Take time to look around on your own**

Take some time to explore the campus on your own and absorb the atmosphere. While organized activities can give you information you can't get on your own, the reverse is true, too.

### **Lots and lots of Questions**

You've probably already thought of lots of questions to ask during your campus visit. Here are some suggestions, but be sure to ask the questions that are important to YOU.

#### **When you talk to students, ask ...**

1. How many hours a week do you study? Is that typical here?
2. Are faculty members interested in students and accessible outside of class?
3. Do many students go home on weekends?
4. Are the athletic facilities open to all students or only to athletes?
5. Is it possible to study in your dorm room?
6. Is the food good?

#### **If you attend a class, ask yourself ...**

1. Are students prepared for the class? Do they seem interested in the material?
2. Do I feel that the students are learning—either new facts or new ways of thinking about a subject?
3. Is there time for questions and discussion? Do students participate?
4. Am I intellectually challenged by what is taking place in the class?
5. Is there good rapport between professors and students?

#### **As you tour the campus, ask yourself ...**

1. Are the buildings in good repair? the grounds well-kept?
2. Are the residence halls pleasant and quiet enough to study in? Are there laundry and kitchen facilities?
3. What's the cafeteria like?
4. Are computers and lab equipment up-to-date and plentiful?
5. What's the surrounding town or city like?

#### **In an interview or information session, you could ask**

1. Does the college have academic programs that fit my interests?
2. Where are computer terminals located? Will I have to pay extra for computer time?
3. Will I have access to special equipment (such as an electron microscope) as a first-year student?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the college's advising system?
5. How many students will there be in courses I'm likely to take in my first year? Are those courses taught by professors or graduate assistants?
6. What kinds of campus jobs are available for first-year students?
7. Will there be any new programs or facilities in the next two years?
8. What are the college's recent graduates doing now?

### **After the visit**

#### **Write down your impressions:**

Were the people you met friendly? Did they answer your questions fully and candidly? What do you think of the quality of instruction and the academic atmosphere? Were the students the kind of people you'd like to get to know? Did you like the social atmosphere? Would you like to spend more time there?

Write down your questions so you'll remember them and can refer to them during your visit.

As you tour the campus and talk with people, ask yourself whether this is a place where you'd feel comfortable and able to learn and do your best.

Are you interested in any extra-curricular activities? If so, ask about them and try to see the facilities.

If possible, write down your impressions of the college while they're still fresh in your mind.



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### College Statistics Comparison and Comments

[what to ask/what to know]

COLLEGE NAME	#1		#2		#3	
	pts.	comments	pts.	comments	pts.	comments
<b>SETTING</b>						
(City, rural, suburb, small town, lake, river, residential, industrial)						
<b>DISTANCE FROM HOME</b>						
<b>SIZE</b>						
undergrad enrollment						
% traditional						
% residential						
student/faculty ratio						
% Ph.D.						
<b>ACADEMICS</b>						
major interests						
counseling/advisement						
graduation rate in 4 years						
calendar (semester, tri-semester, start date, breaks)						
<b>PROFESSIONAL</b>						
career counseling						
job placement						
grad. school placement						
professional organizations						
internships						
<b>INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES</b>						
(Curriculum, foreign study, exchange programs)						
<b>CO-CURRICULARS</b>						
sports (varsity, intramurals)						
music						
theatre						
service						
leadership						
student government						
religious						
social groups						
<b>JOBS ON CAMPUS</b>						
<b>TUITION/ROOM, BOARD</b>						
<b>SCHOLARSHIPS</b>						
<b>% RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID</b>						
<b>ADMISSION CRITERIA</b>						
(test scores, rank, essay, selectivity)						
<b>TOUR</b>						
(time spent on campus, day of week, overnight stay)						



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### Campus Visit Comparison

[what to look for]

COLLEGE NAME	#1		#2		#3	
	pts.	comments	pts.	comments	pts.	comments
<b>TOUR</b>						
<b>FACILITIES</b>						
classrooms						
library						
laboratories						
fine arts - theatre - music						
chapel						
dining/halls/snack bar						
<b>RESIDENCE HALLS</b>						
rooms						
bathrooms						
laundry						
study rooms						
co-ed/hours						
lounges						
kitchen						
<b>RECREATIONAL</b>						
gym						
game rooms						
social areas						
outdoors						
<b>HEALTH CENTER</b>						
<b>CAREER CENTER</b>						
counselors						
workshops						
internships						
<b>COUNSELING CENTER</b>						
academic/tutors						
personal						
<b>FACULTY CONTACT</b>						
<b>STUDENT CONTACT</b>						
<b>GENERAL APPEARANCE</b>						
buildings						
grounds						
<b>OTHER</b>						
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>						

POINTS: 4 (really impressive!)      3 (good)      2 (OK)      1 (poor)      0 (doesn't exist, not applicable)

NOTE: Rate all three colleges in each area.