



November

The Campus Visit

The campus visit is a crucial part of the college decision process. It is a time to ask questions, take a tour, sit in on classes, and obtain an overall perspective of the college's atmosphere. Visiting different colleges will give you and your student a better understanding of which college is the right fit. Setting up a campus visit is a fairly painless process. Most all colleges allow you to sign up for a visit on their website or by calling the admissions office. **It is highly recommended that students and parents visit colleges sometime during the junior year, so enough time is given to make informed decisions regarding the best choice school for the student.**

Please note: it is important to communicate with the school any absences a student has due to a college visit. Please inform teachers in advance of the visit and contact the attendance office to excuse the visit. Up to two college visits per year are “exempt” from attendance totals, but the student is required to submit documentation from the college.

Since a student and his/her parents may have various questions about the campus visit, the following should help when a trip is made to a particular school.

How should you prepare for the visit?

Before visiting a college campus, your student should do a little research on the college. He/she should look through brochures and view the college's website to find out basic information. This will give more time on the tour to find out information that is not found in the printed material. A campus visit should be scheduled at least two weeks before you plan to make the trip.

What should you bring along?

There are several items that should be brought along in order to make the campus visit a success. Be sure to bring comfortable walking shoes since you will actually be taking a tour of the campus. Students will also want to bring a journal so they can write down any notes that will help remember the college. Since you may be seeing a lot of campuses, this journal will come in handy if any details about certain colleges are forgotten. Pictures will also help remember particular details about colleges so be sure to pack a camera or cell phone with camera. This will allow you to look back at pictures that can't be found on the college's website or in the brochures.

Who should you talk to?

Try to meet with various members of the campus community. You will definitely want to meet with an admissions officer to discuss the school's requirements, deadlines, and financial aid programs. If possible, try talking to some professors to get a feel of what they expect out of a student. All professors are different so try to talk to as many as you can; you may even want to sit in on some of their classes to obtain a good perspective. Don't be afraid to go up to current students and start a conversation. Find out what they think about the college as a whole. Ask if they are happy with the college choice that they made. Since students are not employed by the college, they will not give you biased answers.

What questions should you ask?

Now that you know who to talk to, you may be wondering what questions you should ask these people. You

will want to ask a variety of questions so you will go home with enough information to help make a decision on where to attend. Use the following questions as a guideline, and if you think of any more, be sure to ask.

Academic Aspects

- What academic factors are considered during the admissions process?
- What is the average class size?
- Are professors accessible outside of class?
- What is the typical way to get in touch with a professor? Email? Phone call?
- Do you usually get in all the classes that you need to register for?
- On average, do professors or graduate students teach freshmen level classes?
- Are there academic scholarships available through the school?
- Are there tutoring services available on campus?
- What are the college's most popular academic programs?
- What is the grading system like at this college?
- What is the attendance policy?

Financial Aspects

- What is the cost of attendance?
- If you have financial need, will you be able to get a financial aid package that meets all of your demonstrated need?
- What percentage of students receive financial aid?
- Are there work-study jobs available on campus? Off campus?
- If you don't qualify for work-study, what other jobs are available near campus that you could apply for?

Housing/Food Aspects

- Are you required to live on campus your first year?
- What percentage of students live on campus all four years? Are the dorms single sex or coed?
- Are there community baths in the dorms?
- What are the rules for students living in dorms?
- Do the dorms have laundry facilities?
- Do the dorms have computer labs?
- What types of meal plans are available?
- What hours may students access food services?
- How many restaurants/cafes are on campus?

Social Aspects

- How do students spend their free time?
- What are the most popular extra-curricular activities?
- What do most students do on the weekends? Stay on campus? Go home?
- Are there sororities and fraternities on campus? How many students participate in Greek life?

Community/Transportation Aspects

- Do you like the surrounding city or town?
- Is the city or town big enough for your taste? Does it have a variety of restaurants, museums, parks, and movie theaters?
- Is the city or town small enough for your taste? Is it rural and peaceful?
- Will you have to have a car to live on campus? Can you walk to most restaurants, theaters, etc.?
- What is the city's public transportation system like?

Athletic Aspects

- Are there athletic scholarships available?
- What sports are played at the school?
- Do athletes have to miss a lot of classes in order to participate in games?
- Do athletes have their own dorms?

Safety Aspects

- How safe is the campus? How often are crimes reported?
- How are safety issues addressed?
- Is the campus well lit?
- Are there emergency phones on campus?
- Is there a pick-up service for students walking at night?

What if you can't visit?

There are always circumstances in which a student cannot visit a college campus in person. If someone is unable to make a campus visit but is still interested in finding out about the college, there are several options. A student can call the school's admissions office to ask any questions he/she may have. Many college representatives travel to interview students in the geographical area assigned to them. Ask the college's admission officer if he/she can arrange someone to contact you. Also, students may be able to talk with recent graduates or current students from the area. Ask the college's admission office if the school is able to arrange such a meeting. Finally, a student can always take a virtual tour of the school. This option is available on many college web sites.

**Information taken from ecampustours.com*

Campus Visit Checklist

Click [HERE](#) for a handy Campus Visit Checklist sheet to print and take with you on any college visits you take.