

# Campus Visits

After you have narrowed your list of potential colleges, it is vital that you plan to visit your selected colleges. While view books, websites, and friends can provide you with useful information, an actual visit can give you a better feel for the school. Plan to visit colleges between the spring of your junior year and the fall of your senior year.

Some students like to attend a pre-planned college open-house; others prefer to go when it's convenient for the whole family. You may decide to take several day trips to visit all of the colleges on your list, while your best friend may go on a three or four day odyssey to visit all the schools on her list. However you choose to handle the trip is up to you...just make sure that you visit!!! Very few people buy a house sight unseen -- don't plan to attend a college sight unseen. Oh, and if you're not planning to visit because it's too far away...it's probably too far away to attend.

## Before you leave

*If you're going to miss school...* Stop by the guidance office to pick up a copy of the COLLEGE VISITATION PERMISSION FORM. You'll also want to request a copy of your transcript to bring with you.

*Write down questions...* After conducting research, on a particular school, keep a list of questions you would like answered and make it a point to ask an admissions representative, your tour guide, or other school personnel you happen to meet.

*Schedule ahead...* Contact the admissions office to schedule a visit. Call in advance and request a visit that takes place when school is in session.

*Map out the details...* Get out your road map or log on to map quest to calculate how long it will take to drive to your school -- allow enough time for road construction, traffic, etc.

## While you're there

*Keep a checklist of facilities...* Check out the dorms, cafeteria(s), classrooms, library, athletic center, and any other buildings that you'll be using.

- Are buildings and grounds well maintained?
- Examine labs and studios, note equipment and availability for student access.
- How up to date are the computers? Are the dorms wired for internet access?
- Have a meal in the cafeteria or at a snack bar to spot check quality and variety.

*Talk to students...* whether it's your tour guide or someone you meet in the book store...ask questions!

- What's there to do on the weekends?
- Why did you choose this school? Would you choose it again?
- What do you like best/least about this school?

Above all, try to get a sense of whether the students are happy.

*Safety is important...* As you're walking around keep an eye out for outdoor lighting; ask about crime statistics (you may want to inquire at the security office) and security regulations for dorms and other buildings. Also, how safe is the surrounding community?

*Do the town...* You're not just going to college; you're more than likely moving to another town. Make sure you take some time to walk or drive through the area surrounding the campus.

- What is the community like? Are there banks, movie theatres, grocery/drug stores within walking distance of campus? If you can't walk does the school provide transportation, or do students rely on cars, bikes, etc.?
- Is there a motel/hotel nearby in case your family wants to visit?

*Try things yourself...* Guided tours are a great way to see a campus, but in order to get an unfiltered view branch out on your own. Also, make sure you pick up a copy of the school newspaper and read postings on bulletin boards, etc.

*Be an undercover spy...* As you walk around, pay attention to the types of students that you pass.

- Note their attire and general friendliness.
- Listen to conversations to pick up topics and tone.
- Observe whether students tend to travel in groups or alone.
- Analyze what you can of the student body...is there enough diversity for you?

What did you uncover??? 8Do you think you'll fit in? Do you feel comfortable (at home) in this atmosphere?

## *After your return*

*Review, reflect, reply...* After returning home, write down your positive and negative impressions. If you had a private tour, send a thank you note or e-mail to the guide/admissions representative. If you truly liked the experience and hope to be accepted keep in contact with this person so that you become a face, not just a name.

## The College Interview

College interviews, and their uses, vary widely. Some schools require them as part of the admissions process while others do not even grant them. Some are conducted by admissions staff, professors, or even recent graduates. Either way, it's important to plan ahead and make a positive impression. Preparation for the interview can include the following:

- Study the school's course catalogue and website...generate some of your own questions to ask.
- Consider your attire...you don't need to wear a suit, but be sensible -- a nice sweater, pants or skirt and casual shoes are appropriate. The interviewer should remember you...not your clothing!
- Be sure to arrive about 5 - 10 minutes early for your interview -- call if you'll be late!
- When you meet the interviewer, don't forget to introduce your parents or other persons with you. Everyone should keep in mind; however, that this is *your* interview.

As a rule, the questions asked are an opportunity for you to share ideas and expand on your qualifications. The interview is not an exam, so try to relax and present yourself as *interested and honest*. Answer questions clearly and thoughtfully. You may be asked about the following:

- Academic background
- Standardized test performance
- Extracurricular involvement
- Goals and ambitions
- Books you like to read
- Your interest in this school

Feel free to bring a folder with you containing a list of your questions, a copy of your transcript, and a well organized list of your activities, clubs, and sports participation. Having this information handy may make it easier to answer and ask questions.



**WARNING!!!** You don't have to be in the top 10% of your class or a star athlete to make a good impression. You must, however, be honest in answering all questions and appear interested! Qualified students have been denied admission due to dishonesty and an apparent lack of interest. No joke! ☹