

## Making the most of your College Visit

Sure, you can check out a college online and even take a virtual tour, but there is nothing like a campus visit to help you decide if a particular school is one that might make it to your 'final list'.

### When to Go

Visiting during the summer is nice because you've got time but realistically, seeing the campus when students are there is the most helpful. Preview Days are also nice because they give a great overview of specific programs but again, on most of those dates current students are not present. Try to walk around campus when students are moving between classes, witness a typical lunch crowd or check out the student union. Try to schedule your visit when you have a break from school but this is important enough to miss some school.

### Be Prepared

Do some research on the college prior to getting on campus. Spend some time on the college's website. Look in to majors and/or departments you might want to explore. Try to find out a little about the area around campus and/or the city. If possible, allow a little extra time to drive around and get a feel for the surrounding area.

### Take an official tour

Even if you know someone who attends the school, be sure to take an official tour. This way you will see a bit about all facets of the university because the tour guide is trained to show you a little bit about everything. Do not rule out a school just because you may not have loved the tour guide or one of the people you met on campus.

### Make an appointment with a Professor

In many instances, you can request a meeting with someone from the department you are considering studying in. If not, don't be afraid to go to the website, seek out the department chairperson and send an email. Let them know when you'll be on campus and ask if someone from the department could meet with you to discuss the program. Ask about research opportunities, interesting courses, internship possibilities and what graduates are doing with their degrees. If you are considering the possibility of going on for more schooling (graduate school, medical program, etc), ask about placement rates in to the top choices of graduate programs. Are students prepared to get into graduate school? Will certain majors help you be better prepared?

### Ask your tour guide questions

\*Why did you choose this college? What other schools did you consider?

\*What has been your best experience here so far?

\*What helped you decide to stay after your freshman year?

\*Is there anything you wish were different about this school?

\*What's your plan for after graduation and what is the school doing to help with that?

Consider writing some of these questions down and bringing them with you. It might help to ask the same kinds of questions at all schools and then you compare how the responses you get help you view each school.

### After the tour

As you drive away, write down some things that really stick out about the campus and college you just toured. Don't wait - do this right away. It might be something that seems unrelated ('I really like the old buildings', or 'Everything looked so clean') or it could be something about the program you discovered (they really encourage studying abroad), or the professors (they called most students by name). It will surprise you what stands out but you will forget those things quickly. After a few tours, you might start to mix up what experience you had on which campus. Keep these notes all in the same notebook.

### Talk to Students

You will often be given the opportunity to get involved online with current and perspective students for that school. Consider going online and asking students how they like the campus, what types of interactions they have with their professors, which residence halls are the best, etc. Current students are in the spot you hope to be in a year, ask away!!!

### Do More Research

Now that you know so much more about the school, revisit the school's website and fill in any gaps. It is not too early to start looking closely at the financial impact of sending a student off to college! Use the Net Price Calculators (every college is required to have one available online).

### Revisit

If the school is still on your list, we strongly encourage an overnight visit where you'll truly experience what being a student at that campus might really be like.