

Exploring College Options

It's important to examine yourself and think about your interest and the things you want to get out of the next four years in life. The type of college and its location will have a lot to do with whether or not you will enjoy learning there.

Research

Most college websites offer a vast amount of information about their school and many include virtual tours. Printed college guides are also a good source of information because they compare colleges. Understand that each guidebook has its own point of view and biases.

College Representative Visits

These visits are an important way for you to find out information about a college and to establish a connection with someone on that campus.

Evening Presentations

Some colleges, either individually or in groups, have presentations in the evenings for students and parents. These can be very informational about the individual school and the college admissions process in general

College Fairs

Each fall CAC sponsors a college fair along with the other independent schools in our area. It is held at the Jack Stephens Center on the UALR campus.

College Visits

When you consider that a college education is one of the most expensive purchases you will make in a lifetime, it stands to reason that there should be firsthand exposure to the potential purchase.

Colleges look on campus visits as an opportunity for enlarging a candidate's understanding of what four years of university life can be like. Many colleges now have visitation weekends with special events planned. These weekends are a great opportunity to get a lot of information and meet a lot of people but they also have their drawbacks. You are not experiencing normal everyday college life and opportunities to get questions answered one on one are limited. Once you have narrowed your college choices down to those that really interest you a more personal visit is beneficial.

All seniors are allowed two school days for college campus visits. You will need to bring a signed letter from the university back to the main office verifying your visit.

Planning the Visit

- Schedule your visit in advance through the admissions office and request to attend a class, meet with a professor, a coach and someone in the financial aid office. Many schools have a place on their website to schedule visits.

- Review a map of the campus so you will have a sense of where you are on the tour.
- Research the college before you go and prepare a list of questions to ask

On the visit

Remember the impression you want to leave is that of a self-confident young person.

- Ask questions, especially of the student tour guides.
- Take pictures, it will help you remember specifics about the campus.
- Check to see if the college has an Honors Program and what unique opportunities it offers
- Visit a dorm and eat in the student cafeteria. Check out the freshman dorm options.

What to Look For

- How are students spending their time: studying, socializing, exercising...
- Do students appear happy?
- How are students dressed? (Do they look like you? Is it a “jeans and T-shirt” campus or “khaki and polo” campus?)
- How friendly is the campus? (eye contact/offer to help)
- If possible check out a dorm room. Look at what students have in their rooms and how they’ve arranged it (e.g., computer, TVs).
- What’s available off campus? Restaurants, theaters, museums, public libraries, job opportunities?

What to Ask

Social Concerns:

- Are there fraternities and sororities on campus?
- What other kinds of activities are available for students to participate in?
- What activities, such as concerts and speakers does the college sponsor?
- How good is the food in the dining facilities?
- What do students do on the weekend?
- Is there a study abroad program?

Academic Concerns:

- What is the application process? Are essays or interviews required?
- What is the acceptance rate?
- What is the retention rate?
- What percent of students graduate in 4 years?
- Is there an Honors Program and what unique opportunities does it offer?
- What are the most popular majors?
- Is the faculty available to students after class?

The Facilities:

- Can you stay in the dorm for more than freshman year? Can you have a single room or must you share? Is living off campus allowed?
- Are there enough parking spaces? May freshmen have cars on campus?

Student specific questions:

- How many hours a week do you study?
- Is it easy to get help if you need it?
- What do you like the most about this college?
- What was your biggest surprise, good or bad, when you got here?

College Visit Checklist

College Name	Location
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Admission Contact:

Name	Email	Phone number
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Type of school (public or private)	Undergraduate student enrollment
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Admission Information

Deadline	Average test scores	Average GPA	Tests required
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Specific coursework requirements

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Majors offered you have an interest in

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Expenses

Tuition and fees	Housing	Meal plans	Total Cost

Residence Hall Requirement

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Questions I want to ask:

After the visit you want to note your impressions and record the answers to your questions while everything is fresh in your mind. Try not to let the weather on the day of your visit affect your judgment.

Things I'm impressed about:

Things I have doubts about:

The best part of my visit was:

The worst part of my visit was:

Can you see yourself on this campus? Yes No

Other Comments:
