

Getting the Most from Your College Visits

When should you visit?

- Make plans early. Visits during the school year are the best; summer visits are better than no visit!

How do I arrange a college visit?

- Since it's your visit, students should make the calls.
- Call ahead. If you want to arrange meetings with coaches or professors, meet with special program personnel, or stay overnight, make arrangements at least 2 weeks, preferably a month, in advance. Ideally, an overnight Friday-Saturday stay will afford an opportunity to visit classes and assess social life on campus.
- Try to schedule no more than one or two colleges per day. Use a college visit comparison chart to record your observations.

Where to stay?

- The best place to stay to sample dorm life and meals is one of the residence halls that accommodate freshman during the school year. Many campuses have overnight-stay programs to match prospective students with a current "student ambassador."

What should you bring?

- Letter from campus confirming date and location of interview/tour/prospective student orientation
- List of questions
- Copy of unofficial transcript (if requested by college)
- Campus map
- Parking permit (if necessary)
- Letter or e-mail confirming overnight residence hall visit
- Confirmed reservations @ accommodations (if not staying on campus)
- Camera
- College comparison charts/notebook
- Comfortable shoes
- Copy of your activities resume (if interview scheduled)

What should you do and what areas should you investigate during a campus visit?

- Many of the answers may be contained in view books or other campus publications you have received prior to visiting. Read them?
- Academic Environment
 - Sit in on freshman classes.
 - Meet with professors in areas/subjects of interest.
 - Speak informally with several enrolled students-not just your tour guide.
 - Examine adequacy of academic and computer resources in libraries, labs and dorms.
 - Examine classroom buildings and facilities for adequacy, state-of-repair and being up-to-date.

- Assess academic climate (level of competition, intellectual level of students).
- Determine accessibility of faculty members to students and how introductory courses are staffed.
- Determine how academic experiences extend beyond the classroom. (Internships, community services, etc.).
- Determine what type of academic advisement program is established. Who does the advising?
- Social Environment
 - Determine the availability of extra-curricular activities, intramural, etc.
 - Examine the availability and accessibility of recreational opportunities.
 - Ascertain the relationship between the campus and surrounding community.
 - Determine the diversity of political/cultural values on campus.
 - Evaluate cultural events and resources.
 - If applicable, determine the extent of influence of fraternities and sororities on campus social life.
- Student Services
 - Evaluate personal/social counseling availability.
 - Evaluate career development and placement services.
 - Evaluate graduate school advising.
 - Evaluate special services pertaining to your unique needs (mobility, learning disabilities services, tutorial options, etc.)