

TIPS FOR VISITING COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Visiting college campuses is an essential part of the process as you build your college interest list. A campus visit gives you the opportunity to get a “feel” for a place. It is amazing how much insight you can get into a campus culture just by visiting, even if it is only for a few hours!

Planning College Visits

Schedule a tour and information session – Do this many weeks ahead of time to find out when tours are offered. You should be able to do this directly through a school’s website. If not, call the admissions office to schedule your visit.

Visit during a prospective student weekend – Many colleges offer in-depth visits over the course of an entire weekend. Check out the colleges you are interested in to see if they offer this kind of visit.

Interview with an admissions representative – If a school offers an interview, take advantage of it! Schedule this 4-6 weeks ahead of your visit.

Arrange to visit classes – If you are visiting a school while in session, arrange to sit in on a class through the admissions office or directly through a professor.

Allow plenty of time for your visit – Plan to spend 2-3 hours at each college and surrounding towns. Leave yourself time to explore the campus after the official tour or eat lunch in a dining hall.

Take pictures and take notes – Record your impressions via photos and journaling. If you go on multiple college visits a day, they may all start running together!

Get a map of the campus and locate the admissions office – Admissions Offices are often the most picturesque buildings on campus, but they aren’t always the easiest to find!

Questions to ask as you research and visit colleges:

Living Environment

- Tell me about some of the popular student organizations on campus. (Ask about specific organizations you may be interested in).
- What do students do on the weekends?
- Do you offer intramural sports? If so, what sports?
- What is the athletic program like? Do students attend games?
- Is there school spirit?
- What is the arts program like?
- Are there opportunities to be involved in the performing arts?
- What is the dorm life like? What percentage of students live on-campus? Is housing guaranteed?
- What is the food like?
- What types of housing options are available?
- Do many students have cars? Is parking available?

- If the university is near a city – Does the university provide transportation into the city? What is the public transportation like?
- Are there fraternities and sororities? What percentage of students are members?
- How politically active are the students? Are the students and faculty open to various points of view? How does the campus lean politically?
- How socially conscious is the student body? What kinds of volunteer opportunities are available?
- Is there an Honor Code that students sign?
- What is the alcohol and drug policy at the school?

Learning Environment

- What is the student to faculty ratio?
- How many large, lecture style classes (50+) can I expect to take?
- What is the average class size? What is the average class size for junior/senior classes?
- Is there a core curriculum that everyone must take? What are the core requirements?
- What percentage of classes do graduate students teach?
- What research opportunities are available to undergraduates?
- What are the relationships like between faculty and students? How well do students get to know faculty?
- What kinds of electives are offered? Not offered?
- What kinds of study abroad opportunities are offered?
- What kinds of internships do students get?
- When do students typically do internships?
- Do you help students find internships?
- Can students receive credit for internships?
- Can I test out of any classes?

Spiritual Environment*

- What are the Christian student groups on campus? How active are they? How large are they?
- Are there churches near the campus that students can attend? Is transportation provided?
- If it is a secular school:
 - Is the campus culture welcoming to the Christian worldview? Is it hostile? Is it indifferent?
- If it is a Christian school:
 - How seriously do students at this school take their faith?
 - Is there a weekly Chapel service? Is it mandatory?
 - Is this school affiliated with a specific denomination?
- How will you be challenged to continue your growth as a Christian at this specific campus? What opportunities on campus/off campus are there to find Christian community?

**If you are visiting secular schools, the average tour guide will not have detailed answers to these questions. Your best resources for learning about the spiritual environment at a secular school are Christian students or recent alumni. If you don't know any students or alumni, reach out to one of the Christian groups on campus to see if they can connect you with someone. You should be able to find information about the Christian groups through the college's Clubs and Organizations webpage.*