



Visiting College and University Campuses

Introduction

Preparing for postsecondary education takes careful planning on the part of the student, his or her family, school personnel, and college and university staff. For students thinking about furthering their education, one step in planning and preparing for postsecondary life is by visiting college campuses.

Here are a few helpful activities:

Plan early and visit the school campus while in session

It is best to visit while school is in session. This provides the opportunity to experience the ebb and flow of campus life, and many campuses offer guided tours for students and their families. If this is not possible, take a virtual tour. Many colleges offer this option. You can also view the college website along with reading various blogs about college and campus life.

Talk to the experts

Students are the experts, so when possible talk to them. Once on campus, visit with students in the student center, library, dormitories, and classes to find out about campus living. Ask questions about campus culture including academics, social life, security, health and safety issues, and sports.

Visit a class or two

Get a sense of classes by attending one of the classes in your intended major and perhaps one of the required general courses. Talk to the professors.

Visit the financial aid office

Make an appointment with an administrator in financial aid prior to your visit. Prepare a list of questions ahead of time to take along with you. A financial aid administrator can tell you about student aid that is available from the school and other sources, and help you prepare a preliminary budget of costs for attending that particular school. If you are a student with a disability, ask about scholarships, grants and stipends available from Social Security or Vocational Rehabilitation.

Visit disability services

If you are a student with a disability, visit with an administrator in the Disability Services Department. Have a list of questions prepared to ask the administrator. Your questions may include topics such as:

- Accommodations and modifications
- Accessibility around the campus
- Health and safety options
- Off-campus activities and accessibility.

This site offers suggested questions to ask during a visit to the Disability Services Office:

www.thecollegesolution.com/12-questions-to-ask-about-a-colleges-disability-services

Pick up a copy and read the college newspaper

Find a copy of the college newspaper. You can usually read stories about campus life in general. You can also learn about courses of study, safety and security issues around campus, and leisure activities and social life. You may also want to check out other forms of campus media including the college radio station, bulletin boards and the website.

Take pictures and notes

Document your trip by taking notes and pictures of your visit.

Conclusion

Attending college is an enriching and exciting experience. By visiting a college campus you can take an important step in preparing and planning for college life. Campus visits can help you answer those larger questions about pursuing postsecondary education. Visiting college campuses can be helpful when selecting the right fit for you. Take into consideration key factors such as:

- Location
- Costs
- Academic programs
- Diversity
- Extracurricular activities
- Retention and graduation rates
- Job placement rates

References

secure-media.collegeboard.org/CollegePlanning/media/pdf/campus-visit-checklist.pdf

www.thecollegesolution.com/12-questions-to-ask-about-a-colleges-disability-services

www.usnews.com/education/blogs/the-college-solution/2010/07/27/9-alternatives-to-a-college-visit