



# Campus Visits



## Tips for setting up a campus visit:

- When setting up a visit to a college or university, it is important to set up your visit at least two weeks in advance. Surprise visits are usually not productive visits for you or the college.
- For many schools, you can schedule a campus visit online through their website. You can also call the admissions office to schedule a visit.
- Before you contact the school you plan to visit, check out their web page and see if there are certain areas of campus that you are especially interested in seeing, for example: the work-out facility, library, etc.
- Ask if you are able to meet with a faculty member in the area that interests you.
- Ask if you are able to meet with a coach.
- Ask if you are able to attend a class.
- Find out if it is possible to stay over night in one of the residence halls.
- Find out if lunch is provided during your campus visit. Remember, you are going to be at this college/university for at least four years so you want to make sure the food is edible!
- Try and meet with the admissions counselor who works with your high school.
- Find out about internship and research opportunities students have completed.
- It can be very beneficial to visit a college or university when school is in session. You want to get the feeling of what the campus is like with students there.

## What to do while you are there:

- Stop a student and talk to them, ask them questions about what they like and don't like about the college.
- Introduce yourself to everyone you meet — make connections
- Pick up a campus calendar or newspaper to see what events and hot topics are taking place on campus.
- Talk with the admissions counselor and ask them questions. Such as:
  - What impresses you the most in a student's application?
  - What are you looking for when you read students' essays?
  - What are some of the things you hate to see in an application?
  - Are admission decisions need-blind?
  - What kind of student does well here? What kind of student doesn't do well here?
  - What do you think your school is best known for?
  - What changes do you see taking place on campus in the next five years?
  - Are there on-campus jobs available for students?
  - How are roommates assigned?
  - How do meal plans work?

## Final Thoughts

- It is hard not to, but try not to let the weather (especially bad weather) impact your impressions of the school.
- Don't worry that everyone will think you are a high school student, you will fit in just fine.
- Ask yourself: "Can I see myself here?"
- Consider visiting a school more than once if you really like it. Your opinion of a school may change as you go through the process.
- Can't make it to campus? Try taking a virtual tour of the school's campus. Go to:

<http://www.campustours.com>

<http://www.ecampustours.com>

<http://www.youniversitytv.com>



# Questions to Ask Colleges

- What are the majors and best programs offered at your school?
- How easy or hard it is to change your major? At what point do I need to declare a major?
- What are the entrance requirements at your school? (average GPA, ACT/SAT).
- How and when can I apply to your school?
- What is the cost, including tuition, room and board, books and supplies, etc?
- How accessible and supportive are the faculty? What percent of classes are taught by professors?
- Does the University have an honors program? Describe.
- What is the four-year graduation rate at your school? Five year? What is the retention rate of students from first-year to sophomore year?
- What is a typical freshman academic schedule? How does the school help freshmen adjust to college?
- Are first-year students required to live in the residence halls? Do most upper class students live on or off campus? Are residence halls co-ed?
- What is the average class size? How many classes are taught by teaching assistants?
- How would you describe the typical student here?
- What role does technology play in the curriculum?
- What is the social life like on your campus? How often do students typically go home? What activities are available on the weekends? How do students get around?
- Do you have fraternities/sororities? Student organizations?
- How common is study abroad?
- Are there Division I, II or III athletics at your school? Are there club or intramural sports? Do you have athletic facilities available for student use?
- What changes do you see taking place on campus in the next five years?
- What makes your school different from other colleges that are similar in size and reputation?
- What percent of students receive financial aid? What is the average financial aid package? What information is needed beyond the FAFSA?

## Journaling

During the college search process, you will take in a lot of information in a short amount of time. So, it is important to document your thoughts about a school immediately after you visit. What did you like about the school? What didn't you like? Try and pinpoint the things that provoked a positive, or negative reaction. You can take pictures or make lists of the positives and negatives of the school. Do whatever necessary to be able to accurately remember the important things about the schools and how you felt about them —just don't become too involved in documenting your visit that you don't really experience the college!

## Questions for tour guides:

- Why did you decide to go here?
- What was your biggest surprise about the school?
- What would you change about the school?
- What do students do on the weekend here?
- How is the food?
- Do students stay on campus or get involved in activities in the surrounding area?
- Is the campus considered safe at night?





# The College Search

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There are thousands of colleges and, for most students, there are many schools that can provide a happy, satisfying, productive experience. Students need to find a “good match” and then work to make it their perfect school.

Far too many students start the search process backwards; they ask what the school wants from them. Before looking at any schools, it is important to start out with some introspection. Make a list of the things that you are looking for in a school. As you consider many factors, you will find that some are essential to you, some fit in the “it would be nice” category, and some things just won’t matter to you.

## Here are a few things to consider:

- Location: Do I want to live at home? If not, how far away from home do I want to go?
- Size: Do I find a large school exciting – or frightening? Do I find a small school comfortable – or confining? Larger schools can usually provide a wider range of experiences. Smaller school can usually provide more personal support.
- Programs: Am I looking for a wide-ranging liberal arts experience, or am I more focused on a specific course of professional study? Does the school offer special programs that interest me... honors, special seminars, internships, study abroad?
- Atmosphere: It is not just about academic studies... a great deal of the college experience is what happens outside the classroom. Some campuses are very social. Some emphasize religion and morality. Some campuses are more politically active than others and may be liberal or conservative. Some emphasize sports and other extracurricular involvement.
- Competitiveness: Students often ask “Can I get into [College X]?” This is the wrong question. The correct question is “Would I be successful in [College X]?” People respond differently to challenge. Do I want to start off as one of the smartest students in my class? Do I rise to a challenge and seek to be surrounded by students who find learning easier than I do? Do I do my best work when I start off near the middle of my class?
- Public or Private: Public schools tend to be larger and less expensive. Private schools tend to be smaller, with smaller class sizes and more personal support. The expense difference can become a complicated calculation, depending on individual family circumstances.
- Admissions: Though not the most important factor, at some point a student needs to be realistic about admission standards. Don’t give up on a school automatically because you don’t think you will be admitted; if the school meets all your other criteria but you think you

## The Best Resources for Conducting Your College Search

- Conference with your counselor
- The College and Career Center
- College Visits
- Naviance — <http://connection.naviance.com/wayzata>  
Login using your Family Access Username and Password
- Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) — <http://mncis.intocareers.org>  
Username: Wayzata Password: Trojans

## Create an Initial List of Priorities

Ask important questions about yourself such as:

- Name three values that are most important to you.
- What is your favorite thing to do?
- What inspires you?
- What makes you happy?
- What are the first words that come to mind when asked to describe yourself?
- Are you a morning or night person?
- Do you like peace and quiet or hustle and bustle?
- What are you known for in your family?
- What teacher do you have an important relationship with and why?
- What has been your greatest challenge in high school?
- What are your weaknesses academically?
- What subjects have you excelled in?
- Do you prefer a large lecture class or a small discussion group?
- Is it important to you to have close relationships with your teachers?
- Why are you going to college?
- Is there a career you are intent on pursuing?
- If you took a year off before college, what would you do?
- What balance of study, activities and social life are you looking for?
- Is there an activity you insist on pursuing in college?
- Are you ready to live far from home?
- Do you like being around people like yourself or do you prefer a more diverse community?

### TIPS:

Think about the “why” of each of your answers.  
Actually write out your responses to the questions.  
Be sure to distinguish between wants and needs.

## Turn Your List of Priorities Into a List of Colleges

- Notice the trends in your responses to the questions above, and search for schools that match those priorities.
- There is no magic number of schools to apply to:
  - 3 is often too few and doesn't cover your bases.
  - 12 is often too many making it difficult to know the schools well.
- Make sure you have a variety of schools in terms of cost and selectivity on your list.
- Can you picture yourself being happy at all of the schools on your list?

“You like your good friends for some reason. It may not be an objective reason. It's often subjective. There's some sense of compatibility, a kind of intuition, a match, a common sense of values, what you like to do, how you think — those are the things that really bind people together. It's similar with college. You don't want to spend four years with a college who isn't really your friend.”

-Jennifer Rickard

*Dean of admission and financial aid, Bryn Mawr College*

## School Comparison Worksheet

<b>School Name:</b>			
<b>Location:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distance from home.</li> </ul>			
<b>Size:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrollment.</li> <li>Physical size of campus.</li> </ul>			
<b>Environment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type of school (2 or 4 yr, Public or Private)</li> </ul>			
<b>Admissions Requirements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deadline.</li> <li>Tests required</li> <li>Average test scores, GPA, rank.</li> <li>Special requirements.</li> <li>Notification.</li> </ul>			
<b>Academics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is your major offered?</li> <li>Special requirements.</li> <li>Accreditation.</li> <li>Student/faculty ratio.</li> <li>Typical class size.</li> </ul>			
<b>School Expenses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuition, room and board</li> <li>Estimated total budget.</li> <li>Application fee, deposits.</li> </ul>			
<b>Financial Aid:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deadline</li> <li>Required forms.</li> <li>% receiving aid.</li> <li>Scholarships.</li> </ul>			
<b>Housing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residence hall requirements.</li> <li>Availability.</li> <li>Types and sizes.</li> <li>Food plan.</li> </ul>			
<b>Facilities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic.</li> <li>Recreational.</li> <li>Other.</li> </ul>			
<b>Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clubs, organizations.</li> <li>Greek life.</li> <li>Athletics, intramurals.</li> <li>Other.</li> </ul>			
<b>Campus Visits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When.</li> <li>Special opportunities.</li> </ul>			
<b>Other Things that Stand Out:</b>			