

The College Visit and Interview

Suggestions for College Visits

Some colleges require an interview as part of the admission process, but most do not. It is still important for you to visit the college at which you may spend four years of your life. The visit or interview may help you in your selection of a college or to verify your choice.

If you visit before you send an application or before your school reports arrive, you should take a copy of your transcript. A copy of an unofficial transcript can be obtained in the Guidance Office with sufficient notice.

When making an appointment for a college visit, keep the following suggestions in mind:

- ◆ If possible, plan time when high school is not in session, but college is.
- ◆ In your inquiry, request a definite date and time.
- ◆ Request an alternate time if this is inconvenient for the admissions office.
- ◆ Unavoidable delays require a telephone call to the admissions office.

If it is at all possible, make arrangements to stay overnight in the dormitory. You can get a good sense of the student body by eating in the college snack bar or cafeteria. Attending several classes is also an excellent idea. **BE SURE TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS IN ADVANCE.**

Timetable for College Visits

- ◆ Visit Colleges starting as early as April of your junior year.
- ◆ Return in the fall to those you are most interested in for a day of visiting classes, talking to students, staying overnight, etc.
- ◆ Using a map, plan your trip roughly to visit no more than two (2) colleges per day.
- ◆ In order for you to have the best choices, a good rule of thumb is to call four to six (4-6) weeks ahead of time, and add two weeks, for example, six to eight (6-8) weeks for July, eight to ten (8-10) weeks for August, etc. College interview and tour spots fill up remarkably quickly. The more popular colleges are full through January.
- ◆ It is always nice to visit when a college is in session, but the demands of the fall of senior year do not always make that practical or possible. A summer visit is generally more relaxed. Not only do you have more time, but the admissions staff often do also. Save the return, comprehensive, overnight visit in the fall for your very few favorites. While overnight lodging and class visits are being offered at more and more colleges, not all do so. Do not assume that this is available.
- ◆ If you would like to see a coach or faculty member in an area of interest, mention that when you call. Colleges do their best to accommodate you.

The Interview Process

- ◆ Learn as much as possible about the college before your visit. Be prepared both to answer and ask questions.
- ◆ Give some advance thought to the things you want to look for and ask about. Having a list of questions with you is encouraged.
- ◆ Go alone rather than with a friend or a gang. Mom and Dad go along for the drive, but they do not participate in the admissions interview. Parents are sometimes invited to speak with the officer following the interview.
- ◆ Arrive on time or a few minutes early.
- ◆ Be yourself at all times - be honest, sincere, interested.
- ◆ Know your background and experience. Be prepared to present it in an orderly manner. An opening question may be, "Tell me about yourself".
- ◆ Be prepared to tell why you have chosen this particular college and what you expect to get out of your four years there.
- ◆ Be ready to answer questions about your SAT I scores, class rank, latest grades, and courses you have taken.
- ◆ Smile! Speak distinctly. Look at the interviewer when you are speaking.
- ◆ State and defend opinions only if asked. Do not be argumentative. If you don't know something, admit it. Don't try to bluff.
- ◆ Dress neatly and appropriately.
- ◆ Relax! Interviews are meant to be informative to both parties. Try to get as much out of the interview as you put into it.
- ◆ Thank your interviewer for his/her time and consideration.

Interview Follow-Up

Make notes on the interview and the college as soon as possible after the appointment.

- ◆ Likes
- ◆ Dislikes
- ◆ Important points to remember
- ◆ Name and title of the interviewer

Write a letter of appreciation.

- ◆ This shows thoughtfulness, courtesy, and maturity.
- ◆ It reinforces the admissions officer's memory of you as an individual.

Some Questions to Ask at the College Visit

Visit when the college is in session so that you will be able to talk not only with the admissions officer, but also with the students who attend the college.

Some questions you might wish to have answered:

- ◆ What are the strongest departments at the college?
- ◆ What sizes are classes generally? For freshmen? For upperclassmen?
- ◆ How do I compare academically with students already attending this school?
- ◆ What do students do after they graduate? Do they go on to post graduate studies? What percent are employed upon graduation?
- ◆ What kinds of cultural, sports, literary activities are offered on campus?
- ◆ Must one join specific organizations to be a part of the campus life or is there room to be included in other ways?
- ◆ How do students date and mix with the opposite sex?
- ◆ What percentage of students remain on campus during weekends?
- ◆ What kinds of living accommodations are there? Dorms? Foreign Language houses? Private apartments? What percentage of students live in each?
- ◆ Can freshmen select their own roommates?
- ◆ Are sports available for the average player? Ask about specific activities which interest you.
- ◆ What kind of student is generally the most successful/happy at this college?
- ◆ If a student were to be successful/happy here, at what other colleges would he/she be likely to succeed as well?
- ◆ What percentage of the students receive financial aid?
- ◆ How much importance is placed on social activities and other extracurricular activities?
- ◆ What is the institutional policy for reporting security incidents? How safe is the campus?
- ◆ How large is the library? Is it open stack for freshmen? Is it open stack to any undergraduate? What are its special features or resources?
- ◆ What support services are available to students? General counseling? Psychotherapy? Post-graduation planning? Free health care? Tutoring if needed? Help finding off-campus employment during the school year and during the summer? Junior year abroad or at another United States institution?
- ◆ Are cultural facilities such as musical instruments, movie or video cameras, “little” magazines, and so forth easily available on a relatively informal basis to undergraduates?