

Why Should You Visit a College??



- The only way to get a true sense of a university's atmosphere is to visit it yourself. Reading all the college guide books in the world won't be nearly as helpful as spending a day on campus.
- It's unlikely that you would buy a car without driving it, buy a wedding dress without trying it on, or a house without going in. It's amazing, though, that many prospective college students choose schools without visiting.
- Two schools that look identical on paper can be mirror opposites in personality. Each university truly does have its own uniqueness...and that can be a very bad thing if you don't like it.
- How many campuses should you visit? There's no magic number. If you are considering both large and small schools, it's a good idea to visit at least one of each. Some students may visit five or ten schools; others one or two. Brochures and web sites may help you to narrow the field but they can't duplicate an in-person visit.



Before You Visit

- Contact the college - schedule appointments with admission reps and faculty members; go on tours; attend a class; spend the night.
- Allow enough time for your visit.
- Book your travel.
- Be prompt.
- Do your homework.
- Dress appropriately.
- Relax.



While You Are There

- Ask Questions!
- Observe the character of the school:
Are they friendly? Arrogant?
Competitive? Are the students unified,
or is there divisiveness on campus? Does
everyone look like you, or not like you? Do
you feel comfortable?
- Get immersed - try the food, attend a
sporting event, read the school
newspaper and bulletin boards.
- Be realistic - seek comfort, not
perfection.



A Word About Tour Guides...



- You might only have a chance to talk to the tour guide. By and large, the tour guide will be a wonderful advocate for the college. But, remember, tour guides are not chosen, nor do they volunteer, for the task of leading potential applicants around because they have complaints about the school. So expect their prepared remarks to be positive. They will answer your questions honestly, but you can assume that they will also put a positive gloss on their answers. We recommend you keep your eyes and ears open and engage other students in conversation whenever possible.
- You may have a natural tendency to like or dislike a school based on your feelings about the tour guide. Try to restrain this inclination, especially when you're not impressed by your guide. He or she might not always be your type of person, but that doesn't mean you won't find other folks on campus who are. Look around.

After Your Visit

- Usually, only the odd or wacky things stick out in your mind, so right after your visit, write down your impressions about the school. Some people believe in a grading system from 1 to 10 for categories like food, social life, academics, campus, student body, etc. We think it's more helpful to write down the first words that come to mind after your experience. Most often, these words will translate to a summary of your experience. Pay attention to what you write; that will give you insight into what you feel about the school.
- Write a thank you note.

