

If you visit a college campus on a school day during the academic year, you may count it as an excused absence as long as you fill out a Campus Visit Permission Form and turn it in to the college counseling office two weeks prior to the visit. You may have up to two excused absences a year. The permission form can be obtained in the college counseling office or downloaded from the school website.

Here are some tips for visiting college campuses:

- Try not to visit more than two schools in one day. If you do, you will increase your chances of arriving late. Also, after a while they all start to look the same!
- Schedule each tour you plan to take online at least two weeks in advance.
- Understand the realities of visiting during the summer. Many schools do not have a summer academic session, and therefore many aspects of these colleges will not be visible. In such cases, classes will not be available and you will not meet many (or any) students. Student rooms in the dorms might not be occupied, and dining halls might not be serving meals. The summer months provide a great chance for you to see a campus, but certainly plan to visit during the academic year if possible in order to experience the full range of academic and social possibilities.

Regardless of when you visit, try to do the following:

- Arrive on time, and call ahead if you will be unavoidably late.
- Dress appropriately. ***Do not use cell phones during the tour!!***
- Interact with current students, even working some time into your schedule to wander around and talk to students who do not work in the admissions office.
- Attend a group information session, if available.
- Know your SAT and/or ACT scores.
- Attend a class, if available.
- Talk with a professor and/or coach.
- Eat a meal in a dining hall.
- See a dorm room.
- Collect the business cards of the admissions representatives you meet with and send thank you notes.

The following is a long list of questions to consider on a campus visit. It is not necessary to answer all of them. You may want to sit down as a family and figure out which ones are important to you before you go. The ones that aren't answered during the tour can be asked by the student at the end of the tour.

- What academic support systems are in place to assist freshmen during their transition from high school to college life? Is there a freshman year experience, freshman seminar, etc.?
- What student affairs support systems are in place to assist freshmen in their adjustment to dormitory living? Is there an orientation program and how long does it last?
- How are freshmen advised? Who advises them and describe the process? Is advising more than just a process through which to schedule and register for classes? Does counseling occur during the first year only or during all four years?

- Describe the relationship between students, faculty and administrators. Is the college a student-friendly environment?
- Who teaches freshmen in lectures and lab courses – professors or teaching assistants?
- What is the standard class size for introductory classes?
- Who assists students with the selection of a major? When must a student declare a major? How difficult is it to change a major?
- What are the most popular majors?
- Is it possible to have a double major?
- Is it possible to have a double major and still graduate in four years?
- Are minors available?
- Are academic facilities sufficient to support study in your major field?
- Are the information technology systems and services sufficient to support communications among students, faculty and staff as well as research and study efforts?
- How many students graduate in four years? How many students return after freshman year?
- How are students supported in their efforts to apply to and become selected for admission to professional and graduate schools? How many students apply and are admitted to such programs?
- What national fellowships have students of the college received?
- What options are available for study abroad? How many students study abroad each semester? What financial assistance is available to those students studying abroad?
- Does the college have a language house/houses?
- Does the college support students in their efforts to participate in internships? What percentage of students have internships?
- Are undergraduate students allowed to work with faculty to do research?
- How are students supported in their efforts to explore career options and gain employment? Do the students have access to community mentors?
- What recreational facilities are available for students on campus?
- What residence hall options are available? (traditional residence halls, suites, apartments, etc.) Are freshmen required to live on campus? Is there a residency requirement beyond the freshman year? What percentage of students live on campus?
- What amenities are available in the residence halls, including internet connections, cable connections, microwaves, refrigerators, washers and dryers, study lounges, etc.?
- Are there visitation hours? Quiet hours?
- Can freshmen have cars on campus?
- Are there fraternities and sororities on campus? What percentage of students are affiliated? Can students live in the houses? Are the houses nationally affiliated? When do students pledge? What is the cost to join? How are students' social lives affected if they do not pledge?
- What campus organizations does the college have?
- Describe the organizations and activities supported through campus ministry.
- What varsity athletic teams does the school have? What recreational sports are available through intramurals and club sports? How many student are involved in varsity sports, club sports and intramurals?
- What dining facilities are available on campus? What meal plans are available?
- Are there performing musical and theatrical campus-based groups? Are there open auditions for parts in these performing groups?
- Are there special lecture and performance series brought to campus?
- What are the traditions of the school?

- Define the relationship between the college and the town or city in which it is located. How do administrators, faculty, staff and students interact with the community?
- What types of service learning opportunities exist and are supported by the school? What campus organizations support community service projects? How does the school support the development of a sense of student commitment to community service?
- Define the profile of students: geographical distribution, academic profile, ethnic diversity, religious diversity, and gender balance.
- What are the criteria for admission to the college and what importance is placed on each?
- Are admissions personnel aware or unaware of financial need of applicants as they make admissions decisions?
- What scholarship and financial aid opportunities are available to applicants? What are the criteria for obtaining these?
- Determine priority deadlines for admission applications, scholarship applications, and financial aid applications.
- Determine the distance from your locale, time required for travel, and the options for transportation to the college.

When you talk with current students, ask:

- How many hours a week do you study? Is that typical of students here?
- Are campus jobs readily available?
- Are faculty members interested in students and accessible outside of class?
- Do many students go home on weekends?
- Is the food good?
- Is it possible to study in your dorm room?
- What's the library like as a place to study?
- What do you like most about this college?...least?
- How easy is it to get the classes you want at registration?
- If you had it to do again, would you still choose this college?

If you attend a class, ask yourself:

- Are students interested in the material?
- Is there time for questions and discussion? Do students participate?
- Are students prepared for class?
- Am I intellectually challenged by what is taking place in the class?
- Do I feel that the students are learning – either new facts or new ways of thinking about a subject?
- Is there a good rapport between the professor and the students?
- Would I feel comfortable as a student in this setting?

When your visit is over, try to write down your impressions of the college while they're still fresh in your mind. These questions may help you assess your visit.

- Were the people you met friendly and did they answer your questions fully and candidly?
- Did you feel that the students were the kind of people you would like to get to know?
- Did you sense that the college was interested in having you as a student?
- Did you like the social atmosphere?
- Did the campus itself impress you in any way?
- What did you think about the quality of teaching?
- How do you feel about the academic demands?
- Would you like to spend more time there?