

YOUR JOURNEY TO COLLEGE

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE



LOCATION/SETTING

What do you prefer: an urban, suburban, or rural setting?

What type of setting did you grow up in? Do you want something similar or different?

Do you want to live on a college campus or to commute?

Do you want to live minutes or hours away from home?

How often do you plan on coming home?

Is Greek life (sororities/fraternities) important to you on campus?

Do students leave the college campus on the weekend and it appears vacant?

What is the community like outside the college campus?

Is the college public, private, or religious affiliated?

Which setting will you be part of: beach, skiing, lakeside activities, urban center, countryside or college town?

Is the campus diverse? Is that important to you?

How do you feel about co-ed dorms/floors?

Is the college safe? What are the statistics? Do they have campus police, escorts, ID checks, and/or call boxes?

MAJOR/DEGREE

Does the school offer the major(s) that you are interested in?

How is the reputation of the department in the area that you would like to study?

Are there plenty of options for majors that you are interested in? If undecided as many students are, is it easy to change majors or curriculum?

Is it possible to design your own major? What options are there for double major or minor?

Can you take courses at neighboring colleges?

Is the curriculum liberal arts based or more focused? Which style do you prefer?

Do the courses run on semester or trimester schedules?

Are there separate requirements for the major you are interested in?

If you do not meet those requirements as a freshman, can you apply for them at a later date? What is the percentage of students that do this successfully?

How flexible is the general curriculum? Does it allow for exploratory classes?

Are there any special/unique programs offered at the college?

Does your degree require student teaching/internship?

Is it easy to switch majors?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

What high school courses are required for admission?

What grade point average/test scores are acceptable? What is the academic profile of the average student? How do you compare?

What are the testing requirements (if any)? Does the school accept the SAT, ACT, or do they require SAT Subject Tests? Will they accept the ACT sub scores in place of SAT Subject Tests?

What is the application filing date?

Is Early Action and/or Early Decision an option?

Does the school accept the Common Application?

Is there a separate application/filing date for the Honors Program?

What percent of freshman are accepted? How large is the upcoming freshman class?

Can admission denials be appealed?

Are in-state applicants given preference in the admissions process?

Is there a limit of how many students get accepted from out-of-state?

Do activities, extracurricular involvement, essays, letters of recommendation or community service play an important part in an admission decision?

ACADEMICS/STUDENT SERVICES

What is the percentage of students returning after their freshman year?

Do most students graduate from the college after four years? Five years?

What is the procedure for orientation, registration and class scheduling?

How is the faculty assigned to classes? Are there specific professors or teaching assistants that teach most of the core classes that you need in your degree program?

What type of career planning, job placement or internships are offered? What about for students who are undecided in a major?

What is the job placement rate?

How important to you is the reputation or prestige of the school?

What types of services does the school provide at no cost? (Tutoring, personal/career counseling, job placement, study skills/reading workshops, health center)

What clubs or activities are available? What is most popular?

Is the school known for their athletics? Are you interested in collegiate sports?

What study abroad programs are available? What year do students take advantage of this mostly?

Is there an option for you to take courses at other colleges/universities for the same tuition?

Is credit awarded for college courses or AP exams? What is the policy?

SIZE

How many students are undergraduate students? Graduate students? How big is the freshman class?

How large is the campus itself? Are the buildings close to one another or spaced far apart?

How many students live on campus vs. commute to school?

How big was your high school? Do you like the size, or do you prefer a smaller or bigger population on a college campus?

Do you like being in a place where everyone knows you or do you like the anonymity of a crowd?

What is the average class size?

Are many core classes offered in large lecture halls? How do you feel about having hundreds of students in your class?

How do you learn best and will the school/class size impact this?

What is the student-to-faculty ratio?

Do you prefer a larger school with the possibility of a better library, research facility, performing arts theatre or recreation center?

Do many TA's instruct classes?

How accessible are the professors?

Are the courses that you need for your degree/program difficult to get into?

COST/FINANCIAL AID

What are the fees for tuition/room & board? Are there any additional fees?

How much is the tuition in-state vs. out-of-state?

Are enrollment deposits refundable?

When do the bills need to be paid? Is there a payment plan?

Are there part-time job positions or work-study programs available on campus or in the surrounding area?

How much will it cost to travel home? What would the travel arrangements entail?

What percentages of students receive merit-based scholarships, grants and financial aid?

If the school offers merit-based scholarships, what is the criterion for keeping the scholarship each year?

Is the FAFSA form and/or the CSS Profile required for the schools that you are applying to?

Over the last 3 years, what has been the annual increase in tuition and cost for the college?

There are a number of factors involved in the process of selecting the right school for you. The decision process can actually be enjoyable if you take the time to figure out what you prefer and require in a school and if you do the research to find matches for your talents, abilities, interests, and strengths. View this process as an opportunity to explore the world of colleges and envision the next phase of your life. Most importantly, trust your instincts and gut feeling. Remember your impressions when you are visiting the different campuses and evaluate each school and how it makes you feel. If the school feels like a wrong fit, but looks good on paper or to someone else, it is probably not a place for you! Remember as well, that it is a myth that there is one perfect college for you - there are a number of colleges and universities that will be a good match!

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