

Contacting and Visiting Colleges

Contact: Via telephone, e-mail, web site or mail

Colleges welcome contacts with prospective students, many keep track of all contacts, respond promptly to it and are happy to answer questions you may have. Do not hesitate to be in contact with the admissions and financial aid offices. Keep all names, telephone numbers, electronic and other addresses in your files. The quantity and quality of your contact with colleges is often seen as an indication of your interest.

Catalogs, Viewbooks and Brochures:

Most of the information you need to know can be accessed online, through brochures and other written resources. Occasionally you will have a question that will require phone telephone contact. Store all gathered information, dates of contacts and the name of the person you spoke to in a three ring binder for easy and reliable access.

Visits and Interviews:

Some colleges require interviews as a part of the application process. Prepare ahead of time for the interview by asking your School Counselor and/or Career Specialist for guidance on what the experience may be like and the type of questions that may be asked. Before you accept an admission offer from any school, be sure the visit the campus. Nothing can replace the first impression you will experience from walking around the campus, meeting students and staff, seeing dorm rooms set up and eating in the cafeteria/restaurant.

When you have a desire to visit a campus:

- Call the office of admission at least two to three weeks in advance of the day you would like to arrive to schedule yourself for both a campus tour as well as an information session
- Plan ahead and plan no more than two college visits in one day
- If an interview is required for admission, schedule the interview for the same day as your tour
- If you plan to apply for financial aid, it may be worthwhile to schedule an appointment with a Financial Aid Officer to ask questions about the process and your needs
- Print or ask for directions to the campus and the parking lot where you will be parking your car. Verify the name of the building or location where to check in upon arrival

Do your homework before the visit:

- Read all you can about the college. Be familiar with the programs they offer, their values and mission, etc.
- Create a list of questions that were not answered on their website, in brochures or other publications
- Locate the names and email addresses of anyone you want to make contact with while you are on campus: athletic coaches, professors, marching band director, etc. so you can make a request to meet with them also. These individuals may be particularly interested in connecting with you as well and can even become advocates for you should you apply

Day of visit:

- Wear comfortable, yet presentable clothing and shoes. Save tank tops for the beach, shirts with advertisements for your friends and texting or social media for your personal time after the visit has ended
- Plan to arrive 10-15 early to allow enough time to check in and fill out any documents needed
- Relax as you walk about campus as a visitor with parents in tow- you're neither the first nor the last to be accompanied with your parents and most students saw the campus in the same manner
- Take pictures to refresh your memory when you need to recall specific details
- Take notes and place them in the three ring binder, next to the publications and other campus documents you have/will accumulate
- Talk to current students and ask them what they like about the school and what lead them to choose it in the first place, ask them if they feel safe and what they see as some of the downsides to the campus
- Take a copy of the campus newspaper, read what's on the bulletin boards, visit the bookstore, etc. See and experience all that will help guide you when it is time to make a selection
- Can you picture yourself attending school there for four years? Can you see yourself thriving in that environment? Does the campus and extended community/city have to offer what is important to you?

Why? Or why not?

The Interview:

- Expect a conversation, not a confrontation. Stay relaxed and comfortable because you want them to see who you really are and not some facsimile thereof. This is a good time to ask the questions you compiled, and be sure to write down the answers
- Make sure you write down the name of the interviewer so you can write her/him a thank you note the same day. Your interviewer may also be the best person to call if you have further questions as you move through the application process

Afterwards:

- Write a thank you note to your interviewer; not an email or a text, but a handwritten note
- Reflect on the visit and write down overall impressions
- Place all of your notes, photos, business cards, etc. in the three ring binder and be sure to have separator tabs for each college as the details will begin to merge in your memory unless you keep track of your documents and notes