

Choosing a College

The College Search

When considering college options, students should review the coursework, extracurricular activities and/or community service that they have found most interesting throughout high school. The following offers some additional suggestions for items that you may want to take into account when choosing a college. You don't necessarily have to consider each factor. Decide what is important to you as an individual.

Size of the college and the classes - Do you like to know everyone on campus or would you prefer to see *new* faces. Would you be *more* comfortable in a small class or a class of 300? How do you learn better, in a lecture-style class or a smaller discussion-style class?

Location - Would you prefer to live in a suburban, urban or rural setting? In what geographical location do you wish to live? What type of climate do you prefer? How far away from home do you want to go?

Type of Institution - Do you want to go to a two-year, 4 year, or community college? Are you interested in a vocational/technical school? What is the college academic calendar? Is it semesters or quarters? Are there block plans or year-round calendars?

Academic programs - If you have a decided major, does the college offer it? Is the department well-respected in the discipline? If you are undecided, are there a *variety* of majors offered at the college?

Campus life - What types of social events are popular on campus? Do the students stay on campus on the weekends? Are there fraternities and sororities? Are the athletic events popular? Are there clubs or organizations on campus of interest?

Diversity - Do the students come from your state or other states? Is there a mix *of* ethnic backgrounds?

Cost and financial aid availability - Is the school affordable to you? What is the financial aid package the school is offering? Do not automatically eliminate a school from your list because of cost. Compare the financial aid packages from the schools you are considering. Sometimes, the more expensive schools are able to offer a financial aid package that may make it as affordable as a less expensive college.

Facilities that are available - Are there adequate computer labs? What are the athletic facilities like? Is the library up to date? Will the health center and other student services meet your needs?

Living accommodations - Do most of the students live on or off campus? Is there adequate housing available? What are the dormitories like?

Safety on campus - Is campus security readily available? What types of security programs, such as safe-ride or emergency phones, are in place? Request a campus security report *to* see what type or crime occurs on campus.

Academic standards - What are the GPA requirements? What are the average SAT or ACT scores? Do not be discouraged if the average test scores are above your own score

Length of time it will take to earn a degree - Ask about the average number of years students take to earn their degree at the institution.

Placement rate or graduation rate - What is the retention rate of the college? Do a high percentage of students graduate and find a job in their field? Do they get into graduate school? Is the career placement office helpful?