

THE COLLEGE SEARCH AND VISITING COLLEGES

This process has to begin with you. It comes from the inside out, based upon the interests and requirements you have established. It can start early on, but you should be narrowing your choices during the 11th grade.

- Make use of computer searches such as the College Board's College Match Maker, www.collegeboard.com. All colleges have a website that you can access.
- Make good use of college fairs and school-sponsored trips.
- Request information provided by colleges directly through their websites.
- Research colleges that interest you before you visit.
- Take a college tour when you visit. Contact the admissions office to find out about discounted motel rates and other cost-saving options, or spend a night on campus and eat in the dining halls.
- Check with the college to find out if an interview is required and schedule an interview when you visit, or request names of local alumni(ae) who can interview you in your area.
- Speak with students and professors in the major you are considering.
- Carpool with other students visiting the same colleges or combine college visits with a family vacation.

WHEN YOUR VISIT IS OVER

Write down your thoughts of the college while they are still fresh in your mind. Students who have done this, particularly if they visit several months before making their final college decision, have found their notes valuable when it comes time to choose a college. Whatever you decide about a particular college, send the admissions officer a note of thanks for the time and interest in you. If you are particularly interested in the college, say so; colleges like to admit students who want to be there.

Selecting the College That is Right for You

If you have developed a clear idea of what you want, the criteria for choosing and comparing colleges will present themselves naturally. Use the selection criteria here as a starting point, but be sure to add whatever else is important to you.

- Program of study (major)
 - Location (climate, urban, rural, etc.)
 - Distance from home
- Size (small, medium, large)
- Class size and teaching style (lecture, conference seminar, etc.)
 - Female/male ratio
- Admission requirements—do you meet them?
 - Cost of attendance
- Financial aid—available? Available all four years?
- Housing arrangements—first year, upperclass years, special living options
 - Food
- Student clubs and activities
 - Sports programs (varsity, intramural, recreation leagues, facilities, etc.)
 - Campus health services
- Academic support services (study skills, tutoring career services, writing center, etc.)

A visit is important, at least for the one or two schools you are most serious about. If you wouldn't buy a car without a test drive, why would you choose a college without one?