

The National College Planning Summit

10 Tips for an Effective College Visit

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1. When should students start visiting colleges?

- a. Each child is different.
- b. 9th grade can be a good time to find start finding out “what college is like.”
- c. 10th grade is optimal to start researching and visiting colleges.
- d. Summer athletic campsheld on campus are a great way to get an idea of college.
- e. Academic programslike Model UN can be a great experience.

2. How do students and parents start deciding where to visit?

- a. Start building an initial college list –You are looking for a good fit. The list will change during High School.
- b. Start with academics –What classes do you like in High School?
- c. What High School activities that you are currently doing would you like to continue doing in college?
- d. Are there geographic regions that you might want to experience?
- e. Athletics –Do you want to play andparticipate in any particular sport or just be a spectator?
- f. Research different college websites and go tolocal college fairs.

3. Why do I need to see the campus in person?

- a. The virtual tour is a good introduction to the school or if you can't visit in person.
- b. The in person visits help you get a real sense of the campus culture, environment and community.

4. When should you visit - before you apply or after you've been accepted?

- a. Before if possible! A visit can inspire something that the student can connect with their Application. For example, the college essay frequently asks, “Why do you want to come here?” or “What can you contribute to our school?”

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- b. A visit shows demonstrated interest - colleges like to know that you are interested in their school.
- c. College visits help students figure out if they like "big vs small" or "city, suburban or rural."
- d. Students are more confident filling out their application if they have visited the campus.

5. What homework should the student do before they go on the campus visit?

- a. It is very important to research before you go! Review the college website and campus Facebook page. Prepare questions that you can't find on the website or find elsewhere.
- b. Here are some examples of questions with no easy answer:
 - i. What percentage of students live off campus?
 - ii. Do you guarantee housing for all 4 years?
 - iii. Do you have to apply to a certain college within the university or do you do it once you arrive at the school?
 - iv. How hard is it to change majors once you are enrolled and have taken some classes?
 - v. Are there opportunities for Undergraduate research?
 - vi. Can freshman have cars?
 - vii. What types of programs do you offer to first year students to help them get settled?
- c. Questions help narrow your focus about which school is right for you.

6. Can a student arrange a visit with faculty?

- a. Yes, some colleges will arrange faculty visits through the Admissions Office while other schools will give you the faculty contact info and you contact them directly.

7. If you meet with faculty how should you prepare?

- a. Do your homework and make sure you have specific questions. This can help you when it is time to apply to college. You can compare the academic programs of different colleges.
- b. Here are some sample questions:
 - i. Do students in this major have the opportunity to study abroad?
 - ii. Are there opportunities for internships?
 - iii. What types of guest lecturers come to campus?
 - iv. Do most students with this major go to graduate school?

8. Can students arrange Admission Interviews during the college visit?

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- a. It varies from college to college.
- b. Some interviews are only by alumni and not on campus.
- c. Generally, only Seniors in High School may interview so plan ahead.

9. What should students bring on the campus visit?

- a. Comfortable shoes, an umbrella and something to take notes - (notepad, iPad, whatever is the easiest way to take notes)
- b. Without notes you won't remember everything you saw or what was most important to you.
- c. Take a picture of things you want to remember.

10. What is demonstrated interest?

- a. This shows the college that you are interested in the school.
- b. Colleges want interested students to apply.
- c. The campus tour is a great place to start your visit and it gets you on the college's radar.

11. What should you do after the tour?

- a. It depends on the interests of the student. They should make specific appointments to go to areas of high interest (for example, athletics or fine arts)
- b. Walk around the campus and visit the area outside the campus – what is it like? Is it easy to get to?
- c. Go to the bookstore.

12. Can students spend night in dorm?

- a. This varies from school to school.
- b. This is a great way to get a feel for the campus and can be arranged through the Admissions Office in advance.
- c. May only be available on specific days.

13. Is it possible to visit with the Career Placement or Financial Aid Office?

- a. Yes. Make an appointment ahead of time and do your homework before you arrive.
- b. Decide what you want to achieve from the appointment – Are you looking for general information or specific answers for your family?

14. How involved should parents be on the campus visit?

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- a. Take the lead from your student. If you are on the tour, stay back and give your student the opportunity to ask questions.

15. What follow-up should the student do after they return home?

- a. If they met with any campus official, they should send a handwritten thank-you note or thank-you email.
- b. If you met with faculty and have additional questions, make sure to email them.

16. What are the challenges to arrange multi-day campus visits?

- a. Families have busy lives – Parents don't have the time to plan all the details because of work and family responsibilities.
- b. If the student is looking out of state, the difference in Time Zones can make it difficult. For example, if you are on the West Coast and need to contact the East Coast.
- c. Making all the On-Campus Arrangements – Where do I start?
- d. Travel logistics - How do you get from college to college?

17. How many schools per day can you visit per day?

- a. I recommend only one school per day, two at the most if the schools are close together.
- b. You need time to do all the different things on each campus.

18. What are the 10 tips for an effective college visit?

Tip 1. Do your homework before you go.

Tip 2. Take the campus tour and make sure the university has your contact info.

Tip 3. Ask questions and interact with as many people as possible – university officials, faculty, current students.

Tip 4. Look at areas around the campus and also off campus.

Tip 5. Ask yourself “Can I see myself here?” “Do I feel safe here?”

Tip 6. Make notes about each college during the visit: particularly about things you really liked; people you met; things you didn't like and how you felt.

Tip 7. Walk around the campus: look around at bulletin boards; go to the campus center; pick up the campus newspaper. Ask yourself, “Are there interesting things for me at this college?”

Tip 8. Get business cards of everyone you speak with and write a thank-you note.

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Tip 9.Review all the colleges you have visited and finalize your college list.

Tip 10.Have fun!

19. How do you work with families and how do people contact you?

- a. Custom College Visits focuses on in depth campus visits that are personalized for each student based on their specific interests.
- b. We create a customized itinerary that will get families from place to place with ease.
- c. We have three different packages depending on the family's need –everything from making arrangements on the university campus, to coordinating travel plans, to developing the college list.
- e. We have a Special Offer for College Planning Summit Attendees – a 30 minute Complimentary Consultation. Just mention “Summit” when you contact us. Additionally you can request the “College Visit Student Journal” and “College Visit Checklist.”
- f. Our website is www.customcollegevisits.com and phone is 925-513-5086.