Making the Most of Your College Visits

Name of College Night

Name
Title
Office
School
The college visit is an opportunity to learn about a college beyond what’s advertised in its glossy brochures. It’s also an opportunity to get a sense for the intangibles.

While the final decision as to where a student will go to college should involve the entire family, the college admission process should be led by the student. College visits, in particular, are a great way for the student to show his or her independence and readiness for college.
Types of Visits

- Admission interview
- Self-guided visit
- Off-campus reception
- Information session
- Campus tour
- Open house
When to Visit

- It is generally not best to visit campus...
  - During college breaks and holidays
  - Over the weekend
  - During finals
  - During summer
  - Right before an admission deadline

- It is generally best to visit campus...
  - During spirit week, a big game, or another big campus event
  - At the end of junior year or beginning of senior year
  - During cold-weather months (for winter-weather schools)
Local and Far-Away Visits

- **Local**
  - You should try visit every school to which you are applying that is within a three hour drive.

- **Far-Away**
  - It is sometimes best to wait until you have already been admitted to visit a far-away school.
  - If you are going to visit far-away schools pre-admission, plan to spend a whole week doing so (road trip!)
  - You should attend the school’s reception in your area, if one is offered.
  - If you cannot visit a school or attend a reception pre-admission, show your interest with a brief email to your admission counselor.
Call Ahead

- Call ahead if you want to...
  - Attend a prospective student program
  - Schedule a meeting with an academic representative or admission counselor
  - Sit in on a class
  - Visit a dorm
  - Receive any special accommodations
Do Research

- Know the basic facts about the school including...
  - The location
  - The size of the student body
  - What type of school it is (private, public, liberal arts, research, etc.)
  - Whether it offers your major
  - Whether it has programs to support any special interests or special needs you have
  - Basic admission information
Get Organized

- He or she should also create a visit binder that includes:
  - Appointment confirmations
  - College information and evaluation form
  - College map
  - College mission statement
  - Directions
During the Visit

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<th>To Do</th>
<th>Not To Do</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Arrive early</td>
<td>• Wear another college’s shirt or sweatshirt</td>
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<td>• Wear comfortable clothing and shoes</td>
<td>• Ask questions that are not relevant to the larger group (i.e. do you have an intramural all-women’s ice hockey team?)</td>
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<td>• Ask lots of questions that show you are informed</td>
<td>• Let your parents ask your questions for you</td>
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<td>• Be courteous and respectful</td>
<td>• Buy expensive apparel from each college you visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Take pictures</td>
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<td>• Pick-up business cards and literature on special programs</td>
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Enhancing the Visit

- Visit the campus center
- Read the school newspaper
- Check-out the bulletin boards
- Meet up with a current student (spend the night?)
- Walk around separate from your tour
- Visit on-campus libraries, museums, or performance venues
- Eat in the main dining facility
- Visit the religious or multicultural center
- Attend an event (i.e. concert or lecture)
- Walk or drive around the neighborhood
After the Visit

- Fill out the evaluation form
- Send a thank you note, if appropriate
- Try not to compare your thoughts with friends
Final Thoughts

- Have fun but make sure you get all the information you need. This might be your one chance to do so.
- Focus on your connection with the school, not just with the professional staff members you encounter.
- Trust your gut. If it doesn’t feel right, it’s probably not the place for you.
- Always put your best foot forward.
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