

## **Visiting Colleges – what to consider**

Colleges are each special and unique. Students are looking for a match between what they care about and what the college has to offer. During the process of visiting colleges, students are able to “try on” an atmosphere and gain more clarity on which characteristics they are looking for in a college.

Here are some **tips** to help with the process:

- Review the college website for pertinent visiting information before going to the college. Learn what you can on-line first and formulate your questions, if any.
- Read college profiles or catalog carefully.
- Meet with your CVU house counselor to clarify purpose of the college visit, identify questions, and request an unofficial transcript.
- Obtain the names of high school alumni who attend the college.
- Schedule an appointment at colleges of interest at least two or three weeks in advance, if you wish to speak with someone individually. This may be done by calling the admissions office.
- Call the Admissions Office if you wish to stay overnight, visit with students or attend classes. Not all colleges offer this.
- Schedule an interview, in advance.

## **A Zillion Questions to Choose From to Ask on a College Visit**

Remember, do not ask questions whose answers are readily available on the website, unless your perception is different than that information.

### **About Academics**

1. To what extent do they consider the following elements in the admission process, grades, GPA, SAT/ACT scores, class rank, interests, essays, recommendations, interviews, extra-curricular activities, community service?
2. Is the college/university accredited? Is the major I am interested in also accredited?
3. What is the returning rate from freshman to sophomore year?
4. What percentage graduate in four years or less?
5. Which academic programs is the college or university most noted for? Which are the most popular? What is the trend for other programs?
6. Does the college offer programs and courses in the major(s) I might be interested in?
7. How easy is it to change majors?
8. Does the college/university accept AP or other college credit? Up to how many credits may be transferred in?
9. What is the largest class size to be expected freshman year? Sophomore year? How many large classes might one expect?

10. Who teaches freshman classes or introductory classes? Are there Teaching Assistants, grad students, and tutors available? How difficult is it to get contact and attention from them?
11. How easy is it to fit the required courses into a schedule? If I take a semester off or abroad, will it be difficult to stay on schedule?
12. Is there an Honor Code? How is it used and enforced?
13. Is there an Honors Program? What are the qualifications for enrollment?
14. What percentage of students applies to graduate school? What percentage of students continues on to graduate school here

### **About Career Planning and Future Employment**

1. What career planning services are available?
2. Is there a career planning office to help with finding internships and employment?
3. What does the school do to help graduates find jobs? Is there a job placement service? What is the fee, if any?
4. What percentage of students finds jobs within six months of graduating? How do you know?
5. What percentage of students finds jobs in field they are interested in?

### **About Student Life and Social/Recreational Opportunities**

1. Are there any special support services if I need it? How do these support services function and is there an additional cost to accessing them?
2. What percentage of students are commuters?
3. What portion of the student body lives on campus?
4. What percentage of students is here on campus for weekends?
5. Are the dorms open during breaks?
6. What activities do student participate in during free time?
7. What recreational facilities are available? Is there an added cost to using these? Are the hours amenable to student schedules? Are they closed when school is closed?
8. Do students participate in activities or get involved in organizations off campus, in

- the outside community?
9. What student organizations are active on campus?
  10. What are popular extra-curricular activities or organizations?
  11. To what extent are there intramural sports or club teams? Is it difficult to play on a club team?
  12. What are the common gathering places? What is the Student Center used for?
  13. Can freshman have cars on campus? Is it difficult to find parking? Are there additional fees for parking?
  14. What transportation options are available to and from campus?
  15. Is it easy to get around on campus? Is it easy to get around in the surrounding community?
  16. How difficult is it to bike here?
  17. Are parents and siblings invited to special events?
  18. Is there a process for having guests stay in the dorms?
  19. What is the presence of the Greek fraternity and sorority system? What is the impact of that on student life, campus life?

### **About Auxiliary Support Services**

1. Are counseling services provided for academic and emotional support? Is there a writing center to help with research papers and MLA or APA format?
2. Is there an orientation for freshmen? Does it include decision-making skills coping with stress, substance abuse on campus and an introduction to all college support services?
3. Where do students go if they have a medical emergency?
4. What tutoring and academic support services are available? Is there a charge?
5. What are the available computer/tech services?
6. What is the quality of the library services? Is there research assistance offered?
7. What is the computer access on campus? Are there computers in every dorm, in the library? Is there wi-fi on the entire campus?
8. What laundry facilities are available?

9. What are the safety issues most prevalent on campus? How are they addressed?
10. Is there a campus police force?
11. Are there on-going construction projects around campus? If they are building a new dorm, next to the one you will be living in, you would want to know this.

### **About Housing/Food Services**

1. Is campus housing guaranteed for all four years? What percentage of students lives on campus all four years?
2. Is there housing available in the community, off-campus?
3. What types of dorms are there (Honors, themed, single-sex, co-ed, abstinence, Greek, etc.)?
4. How hard is it to find off-campus housing? What is the expected rent in this area?
5. What are the meal plans? Are there kitchens in the dorms?
6. Does food service provide for vegetarians, lactose-intolerance, gluten-free, sugar-free?
7. What hours may student access food service? Is there always a dining hall or café open?

### **About Financial Services**

1. Are there any ways to cut corners on cost? Are some dorms less expensive than others, textbooks available on-line, or limited meal plans?
2. Does our ability to pay have any impact on the college's decision to offer me admission?
3. Are there any financial aid forms specific to this college/university?
4. What percentage of freshmen receives financial aid? What percentage of sophomores?
5. If my status changes, is my financial aid reconsidered?
6. Will outside scholarships affect the amount of aid the school offers to me?
7. What types of payment plans exist for paying the Estimated Family Contribution?
8. How easy is it to find a job on campus? How easy is it to find a work/study job on campus?
9. What kind of refund can I get if I have to suddenly drop out or cancel some of my courses?

## About School Climate

1. Do the college students seem happy?
2. How do they treat visitors?
3. What is the prevalent attitude about studying? Do you see students studying or reading in the student center or in the dorms?
4. Does the student body represent a healthy cross-section of society?
5. Is the campus appealing?
6. What security measures are in place? Does the campus have the “blue light system,” locked dorm doors, adequate lighting?
7. Is the college located in an area where one’s particular needs for theater, museums, shopping, cultural events, the out-of-doors, recreation can be met?
8. Are the buildings in good shape? Are the grounds well-kept? Are new facilities planned? Is there construction on campus or planned construction?
9. Are faculty and staff members approachable and available? Is there a student assessment system for giving feedback to professors?
10. Is the overall spirit friendly, but purposeful?
11. Is the library well-used, well-staffed, and well-equipped with convenient hours for student use?
12. Are the signs and notices posted on campus an indication of an alive, open, and responsive community? What is going on? What is being done? Who is coming there to speak or to perform?
13. What types of events and activities or organizations are posted on bulletin boards?

***Bring a camera. After a couple college visits, it is hard to keep them straight in your mind.***

**Tip: Take time when visiting a college to review bulletin boards, hang out in the student center, attend a class and/or visit a dorm. Don’t hesitate to contact an alumnus from your high school for added perspective.**

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