

5 Ways to Make a College Visit Valuable

We learn by experiencing. We learn by seeing, touching, listening, and gaining an up-close look. Especially when it is a significant purchase. So, choosing to enroll in the right college is the same. Visiting a college is one of *the* most important ways of gaining valuable insights about a college while also showing a student's interest.



Plan Your Visits

College visits can occur at any point in the college planning process. During the search and evaluation phase, once applied and before decision time.

- If you have never visited campus, start by registering and attending an Information Session & Tour.
 - Check the college's website for their monthly, weekly, and daily schedule
 - Register ahead- Let them know you are coming!
- After a few, you can add your own self-guided or walking tours.
- You should also sign up for invites and announcements for special events on campus or in your area. Academic, performing, or visual art, or athletic. Register and attend
- Common Questions about visiting:
 - When should I visit? – Best when classes are in session, Fall/Winter/Spring-Summer too!
 - How often can I visit? – As often as you like, especially if it helps with the final decision.
 - Can I schedule a meeting? Yes, with Admissions, Coaches, Faculty, Advisors, and Financial Aid. Email or call weeks in advance
 - How many campuses can one visit in a day? Generally, two- morning and afternoon; consider overnight to investigate areas and bundle schools in the same geo area.
 - Who should go? Parents, siblings, and interested family members. But remember, it is the student's visit but a family affair

Prepare Ahead

- Dress appropriately; it's not a wedding, but not a trip to the beach.
- Consider changing weather.
- Arrive on time. Thirty minutes before is on time.
- Consider traffic, construction, and if your GPS is breaking.
- Check out on-campus parking rules in advance; ask upon arrival if unsure.
- Plan for two-hour visits.

Eyes Wide Open

The Admissions staff conducts information sessions. They provide details on eligibility requirements, deadlines, financial aid, and the application process. Campus tours are scripted and led by student ambassadors. Visitors will peak in a [clean] dorm room, see a classroom, walk through the Student Center, and maybe the Athletic Facility. But, while on campus:

- Go to the dining hall, and try the food. Ask about dietary needs & gluten-free.
- Talk to students – Ask them questions:
 - Why do they like going to this college?
 - How are the academics? Rigorous and relevant to their major?
 - What do they do during their free time? Go home, Work, Socialize
- Do not be shy – Introduce yourself to school representatives;
 - Upon arrival, check to see if your Admission Representative is available
 - Say hello to the faculty and administrators walking by-might be the College President.
- College is a significant purchase; it needs to fit. Check your vibe!
- Parents can be curious, but do not be helicopters!

Take Notes

You will pick up informational material and viewbooks, but it is essential to take notes. You will not be able to remember everything.



- How did the food taste?
- What about their clubs and organizations?
- Can you see a vibrant & active campus or dull and uninviting?
- What makes the college's academic programs attractive?
- How is the area around the college? Shopping, entertainment?
- Who did you meet?
 - Admissions Counselor
 - Coach
 - President
 - Academic Advisor
 - Department Heads
 - Financial Aid Officer
- Record names, titles, phone numbers, and email addresses. You will need them when you come to a calling!
- Take pictures

Relax

Yes, searching for, selecting, and investing in a college to attend is a huge decision. Starting early and taking time to navigate the college planning process will make the experience exciting for students, parents, and family members.

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