

# Craft Your College Visit: Stand out!

Your demonstrated interest in a college can improve your chances for admission. Express it in two vital ways: a campus visit and your response to the popular essay question, “*Why are you applying to our college?*” Do not recite a litany of facts from the web about quality of education, class size, research, and extracurricular/cultural opportunities. Be specific: explain why the college is a great match, how you’ll take advantage of college-specific opportunities and contribute to campus culture. Schools admit students for whom they’re a great match, and the best way to convince them is through this thoughtful essay! From your campus visit, you’ll get information you need to write a convincing essay.

**Your campus visit can be the deciding factor, so...**



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# 1

**Register in advance  
for an information session  
and campus tour**

Schedule several weeks in advance by calling admissions or registering online. Most colleges offer group presentations and tours weekday mornings and afternoons. Ask if you can schedule an admissions interview or spend overnight in a dorm.

# 2

**Research the college  
before you visit**

On the college’s website, explore areas of interest, from academics to extracurriculars. Having pre-knowledge will lead to a more productive visit, even though you can’t expect to learn everything when you’re there. Ask insightful questions during your visit. Be sure to spend at least ½ day at a college.



# 3

## Actively participate in the admissions information session

Group sessions are typically led by an admissions counselor. Sit in front, take notes, make eye contact with the presenter, and be engaged. Ask questions whose answers you can't easily find online. Stand to introduce yourself and address the speaker by name. After the session, get your presenter's business card and send a thank-you note.



# 4

## Take the student-led campus tour

Ask your tour guide questions about campus life, such as these: *Why did you select this university? What do you like most? What would you change if you could? What's the academic environment like? What do you do on weekends?* Take pictures and post some on social media with positive words about the college.



# 5

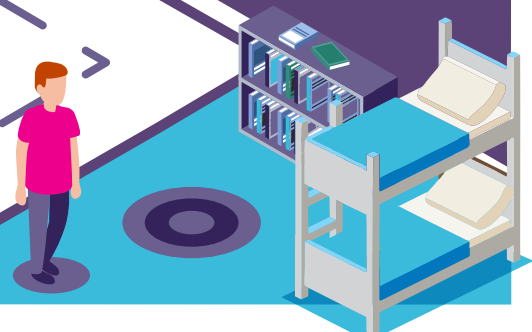
## Evaluate the campus environment and surrounding neighborhood

Really observe the campus. Is it friendly and welcoming? Do students say hello to you or your tour guide? Are groups of students actively engaged in conversation? How do you feel about campus size? How easy is it to get around campus? Do campus activities, combined with opportunities in the local town, offer enough for you, or would you feel isolated? How easy is it to get to and from the local airport?

# 6

## Check out the dorms

Find out about the dorm options, such as all-freshman, co-ed floors, long hallways with double rooms or suite-style. Picture yourself in a dorm as you walk through it. Are you comfortable with its location on campus and proximity to academic buildings, the library, and the student center? Perhaps you'll be lucky enough to spend the night in a dorm.



# 7

## Meet with a professor, student, coach, activity director – even a former graduate of your high school

Ask campus community members about opportunities based on your interests, skills, and personality. Keep a contact record, then send thank-you notes. Making connections on campus can translate into “demonstrated interest”!



# 8

## Sit in on classes and check out the library

Introduce yourself to the professor, then sit in back. It’s a golden opportunity to carefully observe classroom interactions, including rapport between students and professor. Afterwards, thank the professor and ask for a business card (or email address) so you can send a follow-up note. At the library, how easily accessible are books? Explore the multimedia technology. Are there quiet places to study? What are the library hours? Check the bulletin boards for campus activities.



# 9

## Ask to meet with your area representative after the tour

Most colleges read applications by geographic region; your area rep is likely the first person to review your application and make an initial recommendation about your admissibility. Asking the rep how the college can satisfy your academic and extracurricular interests may transform the rep into your advocate. Get your rep’s business and send a personal thank-you note card; follow up with some additional, meaningful communication.



# 10

## Look into life beyond academics

Check out large and small classrooms, athletic facilities, theater/art studios, student center, fraternity/sorority houses, and career center. Read notices posted on bulletin boards around campus. Peruse the college newspaper to learn what’s “hot” – and what’s not. Can you see yourself yon campus?

# 11

## Eat breakfast or lunch in the food court and watch student interactions

Ask in the admissions office where you can eat while you're on campus. Some admission officers may give you a coupon to pay for your meal. Engage with students to get their view of the campus experience. Do you see yourself reflected in the community? And how's the food?



# 12

## As soon as you leave campus, transfer your handwritten notes, impressions, and pictures to your laptop

Visiting 4, 8, or 10 campuses? Yeow! After a while, they'll blur together. So, immediately organize your thoughts. Use a spreadsheet to list each college's pros and cons for easy comparisons. Use column headings for factors important to you, such as campus, size, diversity, dorms, athletics, social life, admission criteria, etc. To identify your "best-fit," and for fast access to facts and impressions for a convincing essay, your spreadsheet, notes, and pictures will work wonders.



# 13

## Dress to make a difference

Don't look like every other student visitor; wear a bright color shirt, blouse, or sweater! During the information session, the presenter's eye will be drawn toward a bright color—you—especially after you stand to introduce yourself, address the presenter by name, and ask insightful questions. The presenter will be happy to meet you after the information session to answer more personal questions. Remember—this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Make the most of it!



**We can elaborate on these points – and more! – based upon our years of experience scouting out campuses around the country & helping students shine during campus visits. We'd love to help you!**

**Call us to schedule an appointment to prepare for the most effective campus visits.**