



Going On a Trip to College? Here are Six Underrated Ways to Decide If a School is Right For You.

Colleges with active admissions programs provide many scheduled opportunities for you to learn about their schools, from open house events to overnight stays to campus tours. You can learn about these activities before your trip to college when you plan visits with Go See Campus (see <http://goseecampus.com/college-trip-planner>.)

Still, your college decision might come down to factors that cannot be calculated, scheduled, or planned. Below, we outline some great ways to get a feel for if a school will be a fit. We recommend getting the permission of a university beforehand so that school officials are aware that you are on campus as part of the college search.

Read on now for our advice!

1. Check out university newspapers during your trip to college.

School newspapers and other student publications provide a voice for the community, and through that voice, you can learn what the major issues are that concern the campus.

If there have been persistent problems with crime, if the faculty or staff are non-responsive to issues that concern you, if funding for your favorite activities is lacking, or if you disagree with the political or social leaning of the newspapers, this might factor into your decision.

Remember to read a variety of publications! Some universities fund competing newspapers or journals so that students can present multiple viewpoints.

2. Visit the Office of Student Programs.

At some schools, the Office of Student Programs is the hub of student activity. These offices may be adjacent to rooms in which student organizations do their planning, which can give you a sneak-peek at activities in which you might be involved.



If you decide to make this part of your trip to college, it is a good idea to check with student programs staff before knocking on the doors of each organization. Not only will they be able to steer you in the right direction to groups that interest you, but they can usually provide literature that describes the different organizations on campus. Plus, if you are staying overnight, staff may be able to connect you with the leadership of a student organization so that you can join in their plans for the evening.

3. Meet with Academic Support Programs.

As you can probably guess, a good portion of your time in school will be spent in and preparing for classes. “Academic support programs” are a variety of services that can assist you in your studies. During your trip to college, it is a good idea to schedule time with offices that provide these services (some may be open to an informal drop-in.)

There are a variety of support options you may want to consider

- Students with learning or other disabilities may want to speak with campus representatives about accommodations available to them.
- Some universities have established centers for improving specific skills, such as writing, research, or speaking.
- Tutoring may be available for areas of content pertaining to your studies, like biology or mathematics.

4. Dine on campus and sit with students.

You can expect students to gather in the dining hall for lunch between classes. Pick a group and introduce yourself as a high school student who is on a trip to college. Then, ask if it is okay for you to join the table and if the students have time to talk about the school.

If you are visiting campus on your own, use good judgment before revealing a lot of personal details about yourself (after all, you are sitting down with a table of strangers.) For ideas and conversation-starters, see our article, “What to Ask During a University Tour”, at <http://goseecampus.com/What-to-Ask-During-a-University-Tour>.

5. Explore the student center and library.



Chances are good that a campus tour will take you through one or both of these facilities. If not, be sure to take a look. These areas will be a key part of your life at the school.

Walking through the student center on your trip to college will give you a glimpse of activities that are being planned, being promoted, or underway. Often, current students will be seated at tables along the corridor to advertise their events and to register new members. This gives you a chance to see which student organizations are active on campus. Plus, it is usually easy to start a conversation with them about the school.

The library gives you a different perspective on the college. Try to see:

- Is it a quiet place for study or is it lively with conversation?
- Are there meeting spaces for study groups?
- How up-to-date is the research equipment and computer facilities?

Remember that larger universities will have many libraries that offer different study options and resources. You can discuss your options with a librarian or student assistant.

6. Stop by the Career Center.

You may be a high school student now, but it is a good idea to explore your options for after college. For many universities, the career center is the place to go for internships, part-time jobs, summer programs in the U.S. and abroad, and eventually, full-time jobs.

If you visit the center during your trip to college, ask for information about where alumni have gone on to work. Try to learn about personal advising, resume referral services, and job interview training.

One important thing to ask: what opportunities are there to utilize the alumni network? You will want to know how accessible alumni are and how you can reach out to them as this network can be an essential part of a future job search.

--

What are some other things you think a student should look into during a trip to college? Let us know at <http://www.facebook.com/goseecampus>.