**Why visit a college campus?**

You can learn a lot about a college on a visit that you wouldn’t learn from their website and promotional materials:

* What is the condition of the buildings, classrooms, labs, libraries, dorms, etc?
* How about the facilities for your intended major or area(s) of interest - are they newer or older compared to other parts of campus? This will tell you if that program is/isn’t a priority for the school.
* How friendly are students? Do they seem stressed? What kinds of things do you see them doing, taking into consideration if it is a weekday, weekend, summer, etc.
* Are you able to meet with any professors while there? Was it hard to get in touch with them, how did you like them, did they make you feel welcome or did it seem like your questions were a nuisance to them?
* If you choose this school, you will be spending at least 4 years here - do you like the campus? The town? The geography (flat, hilly, mountains, near water, etc) and weather?
* How is the food? Usually visitors can pay to eat in campus dining halls.

**Virtual Tours**

Most campuses offer virtual tours and may have some other virtual events you can sign up for, or short informational videos you can watch. This is a good first step to see if you like the school, especially if you will have to travel far to visit in person.

**When should you visit?**

* If you’re on a trip or vacation near a campus, take time out to visit, even if college is several years away for you.
* Consider attending a sports, music, or science camp in the summer on a campus of interest to you before senior year. Sometimes you can do this as early as middle school.
* Preview days - These are days the university schedules with events particularly for high school students to attend. There will be lots to do and many other visiting students. You don’t have to be a HS senior to attend.
* Visiting schools before you apply may help you shorten the list of schools you wish to apply to.
* Visiting after you are accepted may shorten your list of campuses to visit, and will help if you’re struggling to choose between offers.

**What are some things can you do on campus?**

* Take an official tour - usually there are multiple times M-F and signup is required. These tours are usually led by students who are paid to lead tours. Yes, they have an agenda to make their school sound good, but they are real students and you can ask them questions along the way. They’ll take you places you might not be able to go on your own, tell you things you might not think to ask, and you won’t have to navigate.
* Take a tour of the dorms. You have to sign up for this in advance too, and there are fewer dorm tours than campus tours.
* Walk around campus on your own. There may be a tour app you can use to help you, but it is also worth just imagining you are a student: start at a dorm you might like, walk to several buildings you might have a class in, and go into the library, student union, and other spaces you imagine using as a student.
* Arrange in advance to meet with a professor in an area of interest to you. Bring your list of questions.
* Eat at a dining hall.
* Sit on a bench and try to imagine yourself as a student here. You might be surprised to find this simple activity will tell you a lot!
* Attend a concert, drama performance, or sports game.
* Sit in on a class. For smaller classes you’ll need to arrange this, but you can slip into a large lecture hall and leave when you’ve had enough.

**Questions to ask on a college tour**

Your tour guide may include some of these in their presentation without being asked. But don’t be shy about asking the questions that matter most to you - tour guides like questions!

**The Basics**

* Why did you choose this school?
* What are your school’s strengths?
* What’s your #1 complaint about your school?
* What else could stand to be improved?

**Academics**

* What majors are popular?
* What have been some of your favorite classes?
* Are your professors good teachers?
* How accessible are your professors outside class?
* Are most of your classes taught by professors or teaching assistants?
* Were you able to take most of your first-choice classes?
* What’s the work load like for your major?
* How much collaboration do you do with other students?
* How satisfied are you with academic advising?
* How popular are on-campus tutoring programs or writing centers? Are they free? Is there a wait?
* How big are your classes?
* How engaging are your lecture classes?
* Does your major require an independent study or capstone project?
* Are professors available for research with students?
* How popular is study abroad?

**Campus Life**

* What's it like to be a first-year student here?
* What’s a typical day like?
* How much time do students spend studying per week?
* What do you do when you’re not in class?
* What do you do on the weekends?
* What is the social scene like?
* What kinds of things are there to do in your school’s hometown?
* How’s the food on campus? Are there multiple dining halls, and choices within dining halls? Are there food courts where you can use meal swipes or meal dollars?
* Do most students live on campus?
* How are the dorms?
* Which clubs and student organizations are popular?
* Are there 1st generation student services?
* Are there QSA/GSA organizations? Cultural organizations?
* Are queer and bipoc students safe - on campus? - in the surrounding community?
* Do  lots of students belong to fraternities or sororities?
* What kinds of study spots are there?
* What are facilities like (science labs, libraries, theaters, gyms, etc.)
* What are the options if you don’t have your own laptop? (computer labs, rentals, grants for computers?)
* How is the WiFi on campus?
* Is it easy to get around campus?
* How easy is it to be involved in music, drama, or sports if it is not part of your major or scholarship?

**Student Body**

* Look up campus demographics in advance - ask specific questions based on your interests and what you learned.
* Do you find you’re interacting with people with different life experiences than you?
* How would you describe the campus culture?
* Where have you made most of your friends (classes, major, dorms, activities, other)?

**Career Services**

* Are internships available? How do you find them?
* What kinds of support have you gotten from professors?
* How easy is it to find summer jobs and other kinds of work through your school?
* What kinds of hands-on or practical experiences have you had in and outside of the classroom?
* What opportunities are there to be involved with the surrounding community?
* How often are there job fairs on campus?