**MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR COLLEGE VISIT**

Visiting prospective colleges can be a big help in your college selection.  Its value is in providing a first-hand impression for you and your family about people, programs and facilities.  Your presence on the campus and your readiness to talk about yourself and your college plans are indications of your serious interest in the college.  Seeking and exchanging information with college officials is all part of the process in the campus visit.  (*If you absolutely cannot travel, check if any schools offer virtual tours online.)*

Seniors are allowed to take 2 college days during their senior year. You must get the permission form from the office, obtain the appropriate signatures, and return it the day after your visit, with the college representative’s signature as well.

**TIPS**

* Discuss your initial ideas about college with your family and guidance counselor.
* Make a list of prospective colleges and write to them.  Be specific concerning your interests.
* Contact colleges you plan to visit well in advance.  Make appointments at least two or three weeks before your intended visit.  Experts recommend that you visit during the academic year to get the feel of the campus in full swing.
* Research the colleges you plan to visit.  Colleges want candidates who are educated about their campus programs and facilities.
* Take an unofficial copy of your transcript.  Request a copy from the Guidance Office a few days prior to your visit.
* Evaluate your record so you are able to answer general questions about your academic performance in high school and your scores on standardized tests.
* If possible, arrive on campus in the afternoon and take a late afternoon guided tour.  Plan on staying for dinner and spend the night in the dorm.  Include a social, cultural, athletic or special event during your visit and attend some classes the next morning.  You may also want to arrange to speak to faculty members or coaches in your field or sport of interest.
* Be prompt for tours and appointments.
* Pick up an application form, scholarship information and a campus map.
* Don’t hesitate to discuss finances and ask about scholarship, loan and work opportunities.
* Campus “musts” to see:  the library, academic facilities, living quarters, and talk to students when the official tour is over.  It is important to get some idea about the kind of people you will live and work with on campus.
* Visit the neighborhood where the campus is located.  Look for transportation facilities.
* Parents are always welcome on college campuses.  Prospective candidates, however, should have an opportunity to interview alone with the college official.  Parents are often invited in after the interview to ask questions and obtain further information.
* Remember the sunshine factor:  a beautiful sunny day can make the campus seem terrific; a rainy day can dampen your and your interest.  Try not to let the weather affect your judgment.
* Campus tour guides are not all alike:  some are lively, interesting students who are reliable spokespersons for the school while others may not be as well-versed or informed.  Don’t judge a school solely by the one student tour guide.  Meet many others students to get a true picture.
* Check to see which colleges require and which only recommend an interview. While on campus, try to schedule the interview.  The interview is primarily for you to learn about the college and what life would be like for you as a student on campus.
* Your interview may be with an admissions staff member, a student or alumnus.
* Read the catalog and do your homework about the school before the interview.
* Dress comfortably and neatly…RELAX.
* Know yourself.  Going into an interview, it is essential that you have evaluated your personality, interests, abilities, skills and values.
* Ask about your chances for admission; this is why it is important to bring a copy of your transcript or give the admissions officer an accurate profile of your high school record and test scores.  Most admissions officers will be able to give you some idea of your chances of being admitted, but don’t expect a definite answer.  Usually that can only come later when the college has more complete information on you and its overall admissions competition for that particular year.
* Remember:  the interview can have a positive effect on your admission – rarely a negative one.
* After your visit, make some notes on your reactions to the college.  They may be helpful later when you are trying to remember and evaluate each institution.
* If questions come up after the visit, don’t hesitate to contact the people you have met.
* If you are definitely interested in the college, follow through by filing your formal application as soon as possible.  If you are not interested, don’t consider your visit a waste of time.  Chances are you will have learned about the kind of college you do want, and about what other colleges are likely to expect from you.
* Send thank-you notes to those with whom you had appointments.