

Tips for the College Fair

Prior to the College Fair:

- Look at the list of colleges attending and figure out which ones you'd like to visit. Do some initial research about these colleges on Naviance so you can ask specific questions about their programs, etc.
- Create labels with your full name, address, email address, phone number, grade level and intended major if you have one. **Also include our CEEB Code: 053197 which will help colleges identify our school easily.** You can also create business cards with this same information. You will be asked for your information by the colleges, so this is an easy and impressive way to have that information ready.
- Plan your outfit. Come looking neat, groomed, and with non-offensive shirts/sweaters. Do not wear college sweaters/shirts! For boys, a nice polo shirt and slacks or jeans are fine. For girls, a nice blouse (no midriffs or low cut attire) and jeans, slacks, or an appropriate length skirt works. As always, uniforms look good as well.
- Prepare 2-3 questions you'd like to ask each college on your list. You should spend no more than 5 minutes with a representative as many other students can be waiting to speak to them as well.
- Know the difference between speaking with an admissions representative who is employed by the university and an alumni representative. Alumni representatives may not know all the details of the campus or admissions procedures, but can give you a sense of what campus is like and the resources available to you as a student.

At the Fair:

1. Students and parents should split up. This will give students the opportunity to approach college reps with their own questions. College reps LOVE it when students are the ones asking questions.
2. Start off with "Hello, how are you?" or "Hi, my name is..." for a relaxed beginning to your conversation. Do not offer to shake a representative's hand, but if they reach out to you, then definitely do so. College representatives visit a lot of schools and have to shake a lot of peoples' hands. They appreciate when students and parents do this to help prevent illnesses while on the road.
3. Try not to ask a vague question like "Tell me about your college," since the rep will have no idea where to start. That can be frustrating for the college rep and the student, because the conversation will have no direction.

4. Be specific with questions by saying things like "Tell me about class spirit" or "Can you give me examples of some campus traditions," instead. Those types of questions will give you a sense of the atmosphere and give the rep something specific to talk about.
5. Ask for a list of majors that you can take with you and look over later. If you have a major in mind, ask questions like "Are there specific requirements for this major? Is it competitive to get into this major? What opportunities would I get within this major, like study abroad, internships, research, etc.?"
6. Ask about the application deadline and the recommendations for taking the SAT or ACT. Some colleges will need scores earlier.
7. Ask if subject scores (like SAT II Math or History) are required or recommended.
8. Feel free to ask if the rep can waive your application fee, but know that this usually works best at private colleges.
9. Ask if there are any scholarship secrets. There are many little-known tricks that differ from college to college, but the conversation doesn't always get around to this in a rushed environment like a college fair.
10. You will want to know the admission requirements, of course, but you may also want to ask whether admissions officers make decisions on numbers, or if they really do consider activities. Some colleges go by scores and grades and follow a formula. Other colleges really give greater weight to activities, experience, and interests.
11. Ask if a student leader can contact you to give you a student's perspective. Provide an email address for this.
12. Go ahead and ask about the food. Sometimes there are many choices and other times there aren't. Remember, you'll have to live with it for four years.
13. Find out the safety history of the campus *and the surrounding town*. Sometimes the campus rests in an area where high crime takes place just outside the area considered the campus. A representative may not mention this. This is also something you should research on your own, before you get too attached to the dream. Be safe!
14. Ask how many of the students drop out, transfer away, or how many stay and graduate. College reps may cringe at this one, because student retention is a touchy issue at many colleges. A low retention rate may be a warning sign, though.
15. Ask: "What's the biggest complaint from current students?" "What do students love most about being at your campus?"
16. Is tutoring available?

17. If class size is important, ask about it. Keep in mind, however, that class sizes are less important when good individual tutoring is available.
18. Find out if tutoring is free.
19. Ask for a **direct** phone number for an admission counselor and a financial aid counselor, to avoid getting caught up in an automated phone quagmire at some point. Smaller colleges will be happy to provide this, but larger colleges may not. It's always worth a try. Get their business cards.
20. Find out if the administration listens to student concerns. This is one of the things you might want to ask a student leader.
21. Ask if you'll have to pay for parking or if you'll have to walk a million miles from parking lot to classes.
22. Ask how the food plan works.
23. If you are very conservative or very liberal in your thinking, ask about the political/social climate. This is one of the things that could cause a feeling of discomfort or alienation down the road. It's not a silly question.
24. What percentage of students return for sophomore year? (retention rate)
25. What percentage of students graduate in 4/5/6 years? (graduation rates)
26. How competitive or collaborative is the culture?
27. What's the availability of tutoring and extra help? How common is it for students to hire tutors?
28. What types of resources and special programs are available? (e.g. Writing Center, Undergraduate Research, Career Planning, Internships, Seminars, Honors, Learning Disabilities) How popular? How are students selected for various programs?
29. What are the general course and graduation requirements? How can students transfer between programs? (e.g. business, nursing, liberal arts, engineering) Is there a language requirement?
30. What is a typical freshman academic schedule? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the freshman curriculum?
31. Who typically teaches freshman classes? (e.g. graduate students, professors)
32. When and how do students select a major? What are the most popular majors? How easy is it to double major? What are the reputations of the various departments? What guidance is available to students who don't know what they are interested in studying? Are there any new or expanding majors?

33. How easy is it to enroll in classes? How often are courses full? How does the wait list priority system work?
34. Do many students attend summer school?
35. Are there special pre-med, pre-law, pre-business programs? What percentage of students go to graduate or professional school?
36. What percentage of students find work directly after graduation? What role does the college play?
37. How accessible and supportive are the faculty?
38. What kinds of activities are available? What's popular? How involved are most students? How much time do students typically spend per week studying? Are there specific clubs and activities?
39. Are there honors courses, learning communities, special programs? How popular?
40. What are typical weekend activities? Do students stay on or near campus?
41. How is technology used in the classroom, libraries, eating areas and dormitories? Is there WiFi throughout the campus? Is the technology up-to-date?
42. How do students interact with others who have different political / social / intellectual views and religions? Is there a prevailing culture or attitude?
43. How common is study abroad? Does the school sponsor or recommend specific programs? How do the credits transfer?
44. What's the policy for AP / IB/ AICE credit and for courses taken at other colleges?
45. What types of events are sponsored by the college? How often?
46. How strong is the school spirit? What activities are offered to encourage school spirit?
47. Where do students typically live? (e.g. dormitories, on-campus apartments, etc) Does that change after freshman year? Are the dorms clustered or spread out around the campus?
48. What are the dorms like? (coed, single sex, lounges, cooking, laundry and bathroom facilities) How are dorms assigned? How are roommates chosen? Is housing guaranteed? Are the facilities well kept and in good repair?
49. How do students get around? Are cars permitted?
50. Are students welcome in the surrounding community? What is the surrounding area (town, city) like?
51. What is the "Greek" influence? Can you have a good social life without joining a fraternity or sorority? What percentage of students join fraternities and sororities?
52. How do students typically dress? (e.g. designer clothing, casual)

53. What is the weather like during the school year?
54. How happy are students with the education and college experience? What do they like most and least? Why did they choose the college?
55. How often do students typically go home? Where are students from? (e.g. local area, in-state, international)
56. What role does athletics / arts / religion play on campus? What activities are available?
57. What percentage of students participate in intramural sports?
58. Are athletic and recreational facilities open to all students?
59. What is the cost of attending? How has that changed over the past few years? What is the expected price increase? Are there additional fees for computers or anything else?
60. What types of health and counseling services are available?
61. How friendly are the students / faculty? How do students interact with others of different backgrounds?
62. What types of students are most compatible with the college's social and academic environment?
63. Does the school offer career planning assistance following graduation?
64. Is there an active alumni association?