

Finding Your Direction:

A Guide to College & Career Planning For High School Juniors



Hickman High School Guidance Office

<http://www.columbia.k12.mo.us/hhs/HHS%20Web/guidance/index.html>

573-214-3008

Director of Guidance - Susan McWilliams

smcwilli@columbia.k12.mo.us

Counselor	Sophs	Jrs/Srs	E-Mail Address
Susan Matthews	A - B	A - C	smatthew@columbia.k12.mo.us
Pam Massey	C - G	D - G	pmassey@columbia.k12.mo.us
Susan McWilliams	H - I		smcwilli@columbia.k12.mo.us
Symone Thomas	J - K		sthamas@columbia.k12.mo.us
Leigh Spence	L - O	L - N	lspence@columbia.k12.mo.us
Paige Reed	P - S	O - Sh	preed@columbia.k12.mo.us
Cheryl Patterson	T - Z	Si - Z	cpatters@columbia.k12.mo.us
Robin Hogan			rhogan@columbia.k12.mo.us
Hannah Wren	Success Center		hwren@columbia.k12.mo.us

Dear Students and Parents,

As you begin to think about life after Hickman High School, you will be faced with many decisions. One of the biggest decisions to make will be where to attend college, and, as with any major decision, having the appropriate information to make the decision is essential.

The college selection process can be overwhelming, but hopefully the important facts, procedures, and suggestions presented in this booklet can help ease some of the burden of this process. Whether you are just beginning the decision-making process or you have already decided where you will be attending college, this information can help clarify questions and be an important resource for you.

It should be stressed that the Hickman High School Guidance Office views the college selection process as just that: a process. Early planning is an integral part of the process. By following a structured process, a student and family will be better prepared to make the right decision and reduce the level of stress that may come with it.

As with any resource, the only way to utilize the knowledge it contains is to read it. You are strongly encouraged to read through this material and write down questions as they arise. In addition, you will find information on the Hickman High School Guidance Website (www.columbia.k12.mo.us/hhs/HHS%20Web/guidance/index.html).

Parents, you should be aware of the decisions facing your son or daughter. If you have already had a child go through this transition, you may already know some of this material, but it never hurts to review it again. Whatever your child decides, you should be involved in the process, as your input will be important. Try to prevent yourself from making the final decision for him or her, but offer encouragement and helpful advice. Having your support will make his or her decision-making process much easier and more comforting. As a parent, you are the number one influence on your child and the decision he or she will make.

Good luck with the process and eventually the decision that you make. Please do not hesitate to contact the Hickman High School Guidance Office for further assistance.

Sincerely,

The Hickman Guidance Counselors:

Susan McWilliams, Director of Guidance

Robin Hogan

Pam Massey

Susan Matthews

Cheryl Patterson

Paige Reed

Leigh Spence

Symone Thomas

Hannah Wren

Junior Planning Checklist for Students & Parents

January/February

1. Continue to focus on your academics and activities:

- Continue to think about what you want to do after high school.
- Begin searches for the college, university or technical school you want to attend; use Missouri Connections to establish a search file.
- If you plan to go to work, continue to take career building classes and build your resume.
- College and military recruiters frequently make visits to our campus in the commons during lunch hours; this is a great opportunity to gather preliminary information about different programs and schools.
- **Activities are resume builders**—get involved and participate in at least one or two extra-curricular activities and/or community activities. Be sure you focus on quality rather than quantity--it is more important to have a few activities that you take an active role in versus several just to list them on paper. Choose areas you are passionate about, and take on leadership responsibilities.

2. Register online for the February 6 or April 10, 2010 ACT at www.actstudent.org

- Registration deadline is January 5 or March 5, 2010
- HHS H.S. Code #: 260720
- Plan to take the June 12, 2010 ACT if your score is not satisfactory - registration deadline is May 7, 2010.
- If you would like additional help with ACT, be sure to participate in Super Saturday on February 27 here at Hickman. Take a practice ACT exam and receive extra help in curricular areas of your choice. Cost is \$10, register in Guidance Office.

March

1. Review your course of study and four year plan with your counselor during individual advisement. Make sure your courses reflect your plans after high school.
2. If you are college-bound, make sure you are enrolled in appropriate and rigorous college prep courses your senior year. Obtain course requirements from colleges or training programs you are considering so you can be sure to enroll in courses you need for admission.
3. Ensure that you are enrolled in A+ Tutoring to complete requirements for A+ designation. Check with Ms. Laurie Hoff in the Main Office to verify A+ eligibility (lhoff@columbia.k12.mo.us)

April

1. Take the April 10 ACT exam.
2. If you don't take the April ACT, or want to re-take it, register for the June ACT (deadline is May 7) and/or SAT I or II. Be sure to check with colleges to determine if you need the SAT, and if so, which subject area tests are needed. Highly selective schools have very specific requirements.
3. Obtain pre-application forms for the Military Academies if you are interested in applying.
4. Register with Fast Web www.fastweb.com or other scholarship search websites. (Fast Web and other websites provide FREE information on scholarships, college search, jobs and internships customized to the INDIVIDUAL student profile. See list of websites on page 9).
5. Arrange enriching summer activities early, including volunteering, an interesting job or internship, or job shadow in a profession that interests you. The Guidance Office has information on some junior programs you might want to check out. Many colleges and universities have summer programs geared to juniors.
6. If you are planning to attend college on an athletic scholarship, or are being recruited as a college athlete, you must register with the **NCAA Clearinghouse** and follow specific procedures to ensure your eligibility. Register at: www.ncaa.clearinghouse.net. See your counselor or Hickman's Athletic Director, Mr. Mirts in the Main Office for more information as soon as possible. One detail to remember for student-athletes regarding ACT and SAT scores: **YOU MUST REQUEST A TEST SCORE BE REPORTED DIRECTLY TO NCAA, THEY NO LONGER ACCEPT TEST SCORE REPORTS FROM YOUR HIGH SCHOOL.**

May

1. Develop and maintain a list of 5-10 colleges that interest you using a college search website. Some examples are below:
 - www.act.org/discover/login
 - apps.collegeboard.com/search/index.jsp
 - www.act.org/college_search/fset_col_search.html
 - www.OfftoCollege.com
2. Plan summer college visits by contacting admissions offices at colleges of interest.

Summer After Junior Year

1. Visit colleges, universities and technical schools of interest. Sort your list into “Not Considering”, “Possible”, and “Definitely Applying”.
2. Schedule interviews with admissions counselors.
3. Request applications and financial aid information from these schools. Requests can be made by telephone or online.
4. Check important dates. Some schools have early deadlines.
5. Begin developing a Senior Resume.
6. Check out helpful websites (see attached list).

Senior Planning Checklist for Students & Parents

September

1. Use calendar/planner to stay organized and keep track of important dates.
2. Narrow your college choices; see your counselor for assistance.
3. Request application materials from schools/programs to which you want to apply. (You can pick up applications in the guidance office for some schools & colleges, most are available online).
4. Register for October ACT and/or November SAT I or SAT II tests.
5. Participate in ACT Super Saturday.

October

1. Register for December ACT and/or December SAT I and/or SAT II.
2. Attend the Mid-Missouri Regional College/Technical School Fair.
3. Ask teachers and/or counselors to complete recommendations for colleges that require them. Make your requests at least 3 weeks in advance of due date.
4. Schedule college campus visits and/or interviews.
5. Begin writing essays required on applications.
6. Begin scholarship search and applications. Popular free websites are listed in this packet.
7. Have a frank discussion with your parents/guardians about college costs and how much they're planning to contribute, and whether you should apply for financial aid.
8. Familiarize yourself with deadlines for schools or programs to which you are applying; some deadlines are as early as November 15.

November

1. If you are applying early action or early decision, complete your applications; deadlines are usually between mid-November and December 1. Turn in applications to your counselor or apply online, but make sure all materials are sent completed and on time, with necessary signatures, letters of recommendation if needed, and transcripts and test scores.
2. Give your counselor Secondary School Reports to complete if your application requires them (at least 3 weeks in advance of due date).
3. Continue scholarship search. Many deadlines are in the fall so pay attention to those dates. Local/popular scholarships are posted on the HHS website under the Guidance link. Scholarships are added as the new information becomes available during the school year, so check it regularly.
4. Applications to MU have a December 1 deadline if you are to be considered for scholarships.

December

1. You should try to finish your ACT and/or SAT testing by the end of this month.
2. Turn in completed applications to Guidance Office for mailing. If you are applying online you still must have a transcript sent from our office. If we are mailing your application please be sure to include a check for application fees if needed.
3. Do not expect counselors or teachers to write recommendations or see that your applications are mailed after school is out for Winter Break. Some applications have January 1 deadlines; remember school is not in session until AFTER January 1.
4. Visit with recruiters if you are planning to join the military after graduation.
5. Visit colleges during Winter Break.
6. Begin to work on your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and/or CSS/Profile so you can complete is as soon as possible after January 1.

January

1. Complete your FAFSA and/or CSS/Profile as soon as possible. This is required to be submitted online: www.fafsa.ed.gov, <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp>
2. Give you counselor your Mid-Year School Report forms if required for the schools to which you have applied.
3. Continue your scholarship search.
4. Attend the Financial Aid Seminar.

February

1. Sign up for AP exams to be given in May.
2. Continue scholarship search.
3. FAFSA deadline in Missouri is usually the end of March, so be sure to be familiar with the information needed to complete it on time.
4. Attend College Goal Sunday (FAFSA Frenzy) for assistance with FAFSA. Check www.collegegoalsundayusa.org for exact date and location.
5. Begin job search if you are looking for full time employment after graduation.

March

1. Receive and complete housing information.
2. Continue scholarship search.
3. Polish resume for job search.

April

1. Receive college admission decisions.
2. Compare financial aid package offers; sometimes you can re-negotiate.
3. Decide on your college choice and send in your deposit (usually non-refundable).
4. Continue scholarship search.
5. Interview for jobs.

May

1. Take AP exams.
2. Request final transcript is sent to chosen college/program.
3. Prepare for final exams; remember colleges will see your final transcript and GPA.
4. Find a summer job.

June

1. Start summer job.
2. Start full time employment.
3. Prepare for college, or other training program, or boot camp.

College Planning Websites

College Information

- The College Board: www.collegeboard.com
- The National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC) - A good resource to an array of links: www.nacacnet.org/memberportal
- ACT - Includes test registration and test-prep information: www.act.org
- Peterson's -Links to the companies many resources: www.petersons.com
- US News and World Report -Be wary of the rankings, but there is much to learn at this site. The "school comparison" feature is great:
www.usnews.com/sections/rankings
- Colleges That Change Lives - Site based on best-selling, highly regarded college advisor, Loren Pope. Insights about some wonderful and sometimes overlooked places: www.ctclonline.com
- College View - A good source for information on all colleges:
www.collegeview.com
- College Quest – College Search: www.collegequest.com
- College Newspapers - A great way to find out what's really going on at a campus:
www.studyworld.com/college_newspapers_online.htm
- Wisemantech - An amazing array of useful web links from the counseling staff at Carl Sandburg H.S. in Illinois. If you can't find it here, you probably don't need it:
www.wisemantech.com/guidance
- Student Gateway to the Government - a multi-purpose site with info. College, careers and the government: www.students.gov/STUGOVWebApp/index.jsp
- CollegeNET - On all-purpose site with a host of useful links and programs:
www.students.gov/STUGOVWebApp/index.jsp
- Fiske Guide Books -From the author of the reliable and popular guidebook comes a full array of college admission-related resources:
www.fiskeguide.com/index.html
- Princeton Review - Test prep, college search and other college-related info:
princetonreview.com
- Mapping Your Future - General info site with 20 variety of information includes a sign-up for monthly e-mail reminders and a newsletter:
www.mappingyourfuture.org

Application Services

- The Common Application - 200+ schools accept it and you should use it. We have the paper copy as well: www.commonapp.org

- Princeton Review - Direct link to on-line applications for 700+ schools: www.princetonreview.com
- Historically Black Colleges Common Application - Find applications for 29 different institutions: www.eduinonline.com

Financial Aid

- The Financial Aide Information Page: www.finaid.org
- Missouri MOST Program: www.missourimost.org
- Missouri Department of Higher Ed: www.dhe.mo.gov
- US Department of Education: www.ed.gov
- Hope Scholarship & Lifetime Learning Tax Credits: www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/PPI/HOPE/index.html
- **The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** - A must for anyone applying for need-based aid. You can apply on line: www.fafsa.ed.gov
- CSS/Profile – College Board- A national, not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp>
- Get your PINs for the web-FAFSA: www.pin.ed.gov
- Sallie Mae - Information about loans and payment options: www.salliemae.com
- Nellie Mae - Information about loans and payment options: www.nelliemae.com
- How Stuff Works - Interesting and comprehensive site with loads of details and helpful tools: money.howstuffworks.com/college-financial-aid.htm
- Comparing Financial Aid Awards - A US News and World Report product that provides helpful charts enabling you to line up and compare awards: studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student_guide/index.html

Scholarships

- www.scholarships.com
- www.fastweb.com
- www.gocollege.com
- www.OfftoCollege.com
- www.collegeanswer.com
- www.embark.com
- Scholarship Scams - A Federal Trade Commission-run site. It is always good to check on what you learn about on the web: www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/scholarship

Special Interest

- The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA): www.ncaa.org
- The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA): www.naia.org

- Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life: www.hillel.org
- Black Excel: The College Help Network - Designed to help African-American students navigate the college admission process: www.blackexcel.org
- Historically Black Colleges: www.blackhighereducation.com
- Jesuit Colleges: www.ajcunet.edu
- Macleans - For those looking into Canadian schools, this is an invaluable resource: www.macleans.ca/universities
- Canadian Colleges - A general and very helpful site: www.canadianembassy.org/studyincanada
- American Indian College Fund: www.collegefund.org
- Learning Disabilities Association: www.ldanatl.org
- Students with Learning Disabilities: www.nclld.org
- Association on Higher Education and Disability - Host of information posted by international, multicultural organization of professionals committed to full participation in higher education for persons with disabilities: www.ahead.org
- Children and Adults with ADD: www.chadd.org
- Mindplay - Special education resources "learning from the RIGHT side of the brain.": www.mindplay.com/resource.html
- American Association of University Women: www.aauw.org
- LD Online - Interactive learning guide on disabilities for parents, children and educators: www.ldonline.org
- Attention Deficit Disorder Association - Resources on huge array of ADD/ADHD-related issues: www.add.org
- Missouri College Guidebook for students with learning disabilities: www.moahead.org/Guidebook/GuidebookIndex.htm

Career Information

- ASVAB Career Exploration Program - Developed by Department of Defense; free, comprehensive career site: www.asvabprogram.com
- Missouri Career Guide: www.missourieconomy.org/occupations/career_guide.stm
- US Department of Labor – All the numbers one could possibly hope for in career planning in the Occupational Outlook Handbook: www.bls.gov/k12/index.htm
- Department of Commerce – Gov. Site with host of info on government jobs and other data: www.fedworld.gov
- Mapping Your Future – Multi-lingual tool kit on career planning: www.mappingyourfuture.org/planyourcareer/
- College Job Planning: www.monster.com
- Military Career Guide Online: www.militarycareers.com
- Career Centers Around the Globe – Provides links to career development offices at colleges across the country. What services do your colleges offer?: www.careerresource.net/carserv

- Career & College Information: www.skill-ed.com
- Career Key – An interest inventory program based on Dr. John Holland’s work at NC State University: www.careerkey.org/english
- Internship Programs – Listings of +7800 programs and 200,000 positions: www.internshipprograms.com

Alternative and Year-Off Programs

- Time Out – Are you looking for options for taking some time off before heading off to school?: www.timeoutassociates.com
- Study Abroad: www.studyabroad.com
- AmeriCorps – National Service Program: www.americorps.org
- City Year – National Youth Service Organization: www.cityyear.org
- Dynamy – An urban experiential education program in Worcester, MA: www.dynamy.org
- Gap Year – A host of travel and work ideas for students prior to heading off to college: www.gapyear.com
- Global Routes – Cultural Exchange and service trips: www.globalroutes.org/college.main.html
- Earthwatch Institute – Info on this research, conservation and education organization: earthwatch.org
- Eurolingua Institute – Info on language immersion study abroad programs: www.eurolingua.com
- Global Quest Programs – Innovative study abroad program in Thailand: www.gquest.org
- Outward Bound – Link for adventure-based environmental program: www.outwardbound.org
- Taking Off – Resources for gap year programs all over world: <http://www.takingoff.net>
- World-Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms – Dedicated to helping those who would like to volunteer on organic farms internationally: www.woof.org

Miscellaneous

- Personality Tests –Have fun with this quirky site. Interesting way to find out more about YOU: www.2h.com/Tests/personality.phtml
- Campus Online Tours: www.ecampustours.com/careerexploration/default.htm
- Greek Life – Site dedicated to fraternity and sororities: www.greekpages.com
- Selective Services: www.sss.gov
- Test Prep Resources: www.testprep.com

ACT & SAT Registration Information

2009–2010 ACT Test Dates

Hickman Code: 260720 (www.actstudent.org)

For the United States, U.S. Territories, Puerto Rico, and Canada

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Fee Applies
September 12, 2009	August 7, 2009	August 8-21, 2009
October 24, 2009	September 18, 2009	September 19 - Oct. 2, 2009
December 12, 2009	November 6, 2009	November 7-20, 2009
February 6, 2010	January 5, 2010	January 6-15, 2010
April 10, 2010	March 5, 2010	March 6-19, 2010
June 12, 2010	May 7, 2010	May 8–21, 2010

2010–2011 ACT Test Dates

Sep 11, 2010	Oct 23, 2010	Dec 11, 2010	Feb 12, 2011	Apr 9, 2011	Jun 11, 2011
--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	-------------	--------------

2009–2010 SAT Test Dates

Hickman Code: 260720 (www.CollegeBoard.com)

2009-10 Test Dates	Test	U.S. Registration Deadlines	
		Regular	Late Fee Applies
Oct 10, 2009	SAT & Subject Tests	September 9, 2009	September 23, 2009
Nov 7, 2009	SAT & Subject Tests	October 1, 2009	October 15, 2009
Dec 5, 2009	SAT & Subject Tests	October 30, 2009	November 12, 2009
Jan 23, 2010	SAT & Subject Tests	December 15, 2009	December 30, 2009
Mar 13, 2010	SAT only	February 4, 2010	February 18, 2010
May 1, 2010	SAT & Subject Tests	March 25, 2010	April 8, 2010
June 5, 2010	SAT & Subject Tests	April 29, 2010	May 13, 2010

Missouri Connections

Follow the login instructions below to begin.

Member Login:

- Direct your browser to www.missouriconnections.org
- New users register by clicking on the **NEW USERS** button. Existing members enter your member name and password in the **RETURNING USERS** fields.
- Create a unique member name and password. Be sure to write own your member name and password in the space provided for future reference if needed.

Member name: _____

Password: _____

- Complete the member and optional information.
- Click **REGISTER**.
- Welcome to your Missouri Connections Career Portfolio.

Take an Assessment:

- Enter the appropriate Batch Code foe the assessment you plan to take under **TAKE AN ASSESSMENT** on your Portfolio Home Page:
 - Career Search with Person Match - **Batch Code: I943788JRK**
 - Skills Assessment - **Batch Code: S943792RSZ**
 - Super's Work Values Inventory-Revised - **Batch Code: V943789RRX**
- Click **GO**.
- You may now begin taking the assessment. Follow these instructions for each assessment you take.

Choosing a College

Choosing the right college can seem like a rather daunting task. After all, your college education and overall experience will affect the rest of your life.

With over 3000 colleges and universities in the country, it can become overwhelming to narrow your focus to just the few to which you want to apply for admission. If you do not have an absolute priority like an unusual major, a special learning need, or a unique talent, your choices are wide open.

There are many factors to consider when choosing a college, but the following are some of the key factors you should consider:

1. **Distance from Home:** Do you want to live close to home or live far away? Being close to home can hinder your ability to experience independence, but being too far away may make you lonely.
2. **Size of School:** Do you learn better in a smaller learning community or would you like to be in a large lecture hall? Small schools will offer you more personal involvement, a community atmosphere, and smaller classes, whereas the larger schools tend to be more impersonal, make it easier for you to be anonymous, and have much larger classes.
3. **Setting:** Do you want to be in a rural area, in the heart of a large city, or at least have access to a larger city?
4. **Academics:** Consider the majors, academic support services, and honors programs each school has to offer. Do you have any special education needs?
5. **Campus Life:** Consider the diversity of the campus, residence halls, campus clubs and organizations, fraternities and sororities, and religious programs and opportunities.
6. **Overseas Study Opportunities:** Are you interested in studying for a semester or year in another country? Do you want to study abroad as part of a university-led tour group or independently?
7. **Admission Criteria:** Do you have the required standardized test score and grade point average needed for admission? What is the percentage of students admitted? What courses are required or strongly recommended for admission?
8. **Cost:** Do you have the flexibility to consider an expensive private or public institution or are you limited to a less expensive school?
9. **Scholarships and Financial Aid:** Will you qualify for any institutional academic scholarships for which you can apply?
10. **Reputation:** What are the strengths and weaknesses of the institution?

Applying to Colleges

One of the most commonly asked questions is, “How many colleges should I apply to?” This is no universal answer to this question since each individual is different. Some students only apply to one or two schools while others may apply to eight or ten. Neither approach is best. After carefully investigating your requirements of a college, you should be able to narrow your choice to approximately 4 to 6 schools that provide the services you desire. As you are narrowing your choices, you may want to consider placing schools into the following categories:

“Reach Schools”

- These schools may be “long shots” based on your credentials, the admissions selectivity, and the overall cost of the university; however, consider stretching yourself and taking the risk to apply to these institutions.

“Good Match/Target Schools”

- These schools should possess significant features you want in a school, and it should be realistic that you will be admitted.

“Safety Schools”

- These schools will have many of the features you are looking for, and admission is highly likely.

While there is no hard and fast rule regarding these categories, including one or two schools in each category is sufficient. You want to make sure you apply to at least two “good match” or “safety” schools to insure you will be accepted and be able to make a choice when the time comes.

Resources to Help Identify Schools

1. College Fairs

- This is a good way to gather information from a variety of institutions and talk to admission representatives. Watch the bulletin boards, newsletters, and announcements for information on these fairs and others in the area.

2. Admission Representative

- Admission representatives visit your high school. These visits should be treated as a way to gather information, not as a replacement to the campus visit. Colleges recruit heavily in the fall (September - November) and less so in the spring (February - April). In these meetings, you are able to meet an admission representative, receive literature and an application, and ask questions. To make these meetings most advantageous, you should know which schools you want to meet with that have programs in which you are interested. Check the Hickman High School website for dates and times of college visits.

3. College and University Files

- In the Hickman High School Guidance Office there are filing cabinets full of information about many of the colleges and universities across the United States. You are welcome to take any of the information as you need it. For the most part those files are updated yearly.

4. College Resource Books

- In the Hickman High School Guidance Office there are a number of resource books to help you with your college selection process. Stop in and check with the Guidance Office if you are interested in checking any of these books out.

5. Navigating the Web for College Bound Students

- Many of the search engines posted on the internet will generate lists of schools based on how you answer specific questions. They are helpful for general information and will have links to the individual college websites if you want further and more concise information. See the Hickman High School Guidance website for a list of useful websites (www.columbia.k12.mo.us/hhs/HHS%20Web/guidance/index.html).

The Campus Visit

General Information

1. You should contact an Admissions Office **at least two weeks prior** to when you want to visit. This should give them ample time to get everything set up for you. If you are interested in meeting with a professor, attending a class, meeting with a coach, or spending the night, be sure to mention this when you call to set up your appointment. Some college campuses have set visit times whereas others are able to accommodate your schedule. Be prepared to be flexible.
2. You may want to **schedule two visits**, perhaps at a different time of the academic year. The summer is much more relaxed for you and the Admissions Offices. However, you miss seeing what it is like when students are present. Thus making two trips will enable you to see the differences. Summer visits are especially good for first-time visits. If you like a school and it is still on your list you want to apply to, you should consider visiting again during the school year.
3. It is best to **avoid an unscheduled drop in** to an Admission Office. Many times the admission representatives will already be booked and unable to meet with you and a tour may not be available. You may get lucky and find out that they can accommodate you, but “dropping in” is discouraged and not a productive way to visit.
4. Most college campuses have **“Visit Days”**. These are group visit days that allow you to take a tour of campus, see an admission presentation, possibly meet with professors in major areas you are considering, and meet current students. These types of visits are a good way to get a general overview of the campus. If you like what you see and hear it is probably best to go back for a more in-depth visit.

The Campus Visit

Questions to Ask

Speaking from personal experience as a former admission counselor, the worst college visit is one where the prospective student is not prepared and does not say anything in the admission interview. It is best to go with a list of prepared questions. It makes a great impression. In addition, when asked a question, answer thoroughly and with more than a simple “yes”, “no”, or “I don’t know.” The following are some questions to consider asking when going on a campus visit:

Academics

1. What are the admission requirements?
2. Do certain majors require an additional admission process (e.g., audition, portfolio, review, etc.)?
3. Do you accept advanced placement credit or dual enrollment?
4. Is there an honors program or college?
5. Who teaches the classes: graduate assistants or professors?
6. What academic support services are available?
7. Is there a foreign language requirement for admission and/or graduation?
8. What kind of access is there to computers and technology on campus?
9. Are there opportunities to study abroad?
10. What kinds of services are available for students with undecided majors?
11. What features of their major make it special, unique, or particularly strong?
12. What is the average class size as a freshman and then in future years?
13. What is the student-faculty ratio?
14. How are academic advisors assigned? What kind of interaction will I have with my advisor?

Cost, Scholarships and Financial Aid

1. Including living expenses, what is the total estimated cost for one academic year?
2. Does it cost to park on campus? How do I apply for a parking permit? What scholarships are available? What was the average academic scholarship awarded last year? Is there a separate application for scholarships? If so, how can I get those applications?
3. Are the scholarships renewable? If so, is there a GPA requirement to maintain?
4. How many students receive some sort of aid?
5. What is taken into consideration for financial aid?
6. What types of work-study jobs are available?

Student Life, Housing, and Other Services

1. What extracurricular activities are available? What leadership opportunities are available?
2. Are there fraternities and sororities on campus? What percentage of the campus is Greek?
3. What is the diversity of the student body?
4. How do I get athletic and event tickets? Is there a cost for students?
5. What type of cultural opportunities are available on campus?
6. What percentage of students live on campus?
7. Am I required to live on campus?
8. Do students stick around on the weekends?
9. How are roommates assigned? If you have a problem with your roommate, how is it resolved?
10. Can I request a certain roommate?
11. What are the differences among the various residence halls?
12. What kinds of services are available for students with learning or physical disabilities?
13. What kinds of personal counseling and health services are available?
14. What is the university doing to make the campus safe?
15. Do I need a car to get around campus? Are basic services close to campus? Is there a public transportation system?
16. What is the surrounding community like?
17. What kinds of services are available for students who wish to take advantage of additional tutoring or extra help?
18. What kinds of internships, career counseling, and placement services are available?

The campus visit should be considered a time to look at a school and ask questions about programs, activities, cost, and to see the setting which will help you make a well-informed decision if this may be the place for you. The campus tour is one of the best times to ask candid questions about issues the Admission Office may have only touched on.

Many tour guides are current students who can give you insight from a student perspective. Take advantage of the opportunity to ask them lots of questions.

Financial Aid Tips

1. If you're a financial aid candidate, fill out the financial aid form (FAFSA and/or CSS/Profile) and send it in as close to January 1st as possible.
2. Always apply to colleges in groups of two. In other words, two colleges of equal caliber. The reason being is, if you get into both of them, and one gives you a \$10,000 grant and the other gives you a \$7,000 grant, you could ask the \$7,000 grant school if they can raise it up to \$10,000 (if that's the school you really want to go to). Really, what you're doing is playing off financial aid packages, and many times, it works!
3. Have the STUDENT call the financial office if there are questions or negotiations- it shows maturity. Financial aid officers are always more impressed when the kid calls and not the parent.
4. Do a "dry run" of your FAFSA form when your child is still in 9th, 10th or 11th grade so that you will have an idea of what your Estimated Family Contribution is going to be, and so you can plan ahead for it.
5. Always complete a FAFSA and/or CSS/Profile form, even if you think you might not qualify for aid-you might be surprised. A private school looks at a parent's \$100,000 income as only "middle class".
6. Complete the FAFSA and/or CSS/Profile forms as soon as possible after January 1st – **do not wait until tax returns are done**. Estimate your FAFSA form based on last year's info as long as your income has not changed drastically in the last year.