Visiting college campuses in person can be one of the most helpful activities during your college search. To schedule a college visit, simply go online, or call and inquire into the times for tours, information sessions, and interviews (if appropriate). These visits do not typically require an appointment, but occasionally they do, so call ahead.

Students are expected to complete the majority of their visiting prior to returning to school in the fall of the senior year. Some families become frustrated by the fact that their first visits may be during times when current students are on vacation. However, realistically the demands of the senior fall do not allow much additional time in which to travel to colleges. Families and students often report that summer visits are still helpful, so make use of that time.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR VISIT

1. Call or check online for tour times or to reserve a spot on the tour and in the information session.

2. Many colleges have a formal information session at a specific time of the day. We recommend you attend this as well as do the campus tour.

3. Call ahead to see if the college offers on-campus interviews and try to arrange one (at least 2 weeks in advance). **We recommend interviewing during the summer** since it is often difficult to return to campuses during the fall. Spring of junior year, however, is too soon to interview. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of interview requirements and deadlines. College Kickstart can help.

4. If possible, attend some classes and also try to spend some time walking around the campus alone, to taste the flavor of the place. Often, visiting the dining hall and the student center, and listening to students talk, are good ways to get a sense of the school’s atmosphere.

5. Explore the areas of campus (and the surrounding area) where you think you will spend the most time. Walk around the academic departments that interest you.
6. Take notes during your visit -- some colleges can begin to look and sound alike very quickly. Use the “College Research and Visit Journal” pages found in the back of this book to record your thoughts, first impressions, and the names of people you met while on campus.

7. Even if you are not required to RSVP for a tour or information session, check in with the admission office receptionist when you arrive. You may be asked to complete an “Inquiry Card” or sign in to officially record your visit. Some colleges consider your campus visit “demonstrated interest,” which is more important than you might expect, especially at many smaller, liberal arts colleges.

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**THE CAMPUS TOUR**

Below are some sample questions you might want to consider when you visit a college and take a campus tour. Remember that the tour is an important opportunity for you to talk with a current student (the tour guide) and learn more about the student experience at the college.

1. How large are your classes? How accessible are your professors?

2. Where do you study? Is the library a good place to work or study? What hours do students have access to libraries, computers, labs, etc.?

3. What academic experiences are available beyond the classroom?

4. What percent of students live in dorms? Is housing guaranteed for all four years?

5. Is this considered a safe campus? Are there regular patrols, escort vans, emergency phones?

6. Is this an openly competitive campus? How are tests and exams administered?

7. What did you do last weekend?

8. Does your community embrace diversity?

9. What are the most popular extracurricular activities here?

10. What do you like best and least about being a student here?

11. Are there single-sex dormitories, substance-free dorms, or “quiet” dorms? Any thematic housing? Are there laundry facilities in each dorm?

12. Is there a career guidance service on campus? Is the service available to alumni?

13. Does social life revolve around the campus, or do most students leave on the weekends?

14. What is the biggest campus issue currently?

At the end of your visit, ask yourself two very important questions:

“Do I see myself fitting in here? Am I comfortable here?”