

So you want to go to college...

Things to think about when researching schools:

- Don't choose a school based on its name. Look at the programs it offers and see if they fit in with what you want.
- If you want to study abroad, does the school offer that?
- What is the size of the school? Do you want a small school (~2000 students), mid-size (5000-10,000) or large (20,000+)
- Do you want a school in a city or in a rural setting?
- Should the school be close to home or is it ok to be far away?
- What will be your cost to go to a school?
- If you are interested in being in a fraternity or sorority, does the school have Greek life?
- Public university or private college?

Things to ask about on college tours: (Make appointments with admissions, financial aid, and professors in your area of interest)

- Can you graduate in four years?
- Is the acceptance rate different for different majors?
- Does the college offer support for transitioning into college?
- What study abroad programs are offered? (Note that if you study abroad during the school year, your tuition covers it. If you study abroad during the summer, the cost is extra, on top of regular tuition.)
- How important is being in a fraternity or sorority? (What percentage of kids take part in Greek life?)
- What is dorm life like? Are there study rooms in the dorms? Are there common areas?
- What are the class sizes? Who teaches lower level classes, professors or teaching assistants?
- How hard is it to register for classes that you want?
- Does the school take AP credits?
- How is the food in the cafeterias? If no cafeteria, where do students eat?
- What are the housing options? Do students live in dorms all four years?
- What is town like beyond campus?
- How often do you go off campus?
- What are the transportation options for going off campus?
- Are there team or intramural sports?

- What is a typical day like?
- Ask students on campus what they like and what they do not like about the school?
- Do professors take attendance?
- Do most students go home on the weekend?
- Why did you choose this school?
- How do you get involved on campus?
- How much do you read and study for each class?
- Does the school have printers (and/or computers) for students to use? How much does it cost?
- Ask if there is an academic support center
- Is there a career services office? What is the post-graduation success? Are students able to find good jobs quickly? Can you get internships through the college? Are there on-campus job fairs and interviews? Does the school prepare you for life after college?
- Ask about the campus health and counseling services

Cost of college:

- Each college website will have cost of tuition, room and board, fees, books, etc.
- Factor in costs for fraternities and sororities, Uber use, plane flights home, eating out, bookstore purchases, entertainment, etc.
- Federal financial aid: Your student (with your tax info) will have to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). This can be found at fafsa.ed.gov. You can estimate how much aid you might receive by filling out the FAFSA4caster. It is on the above website under the heading "Thinking About College?". **Note: Federal student aid is first come, first served. The earlier you apply, the better.**
- Colleges are now requiring students to have health insurance. Your insurance policy may or may not cover them while in college. You should contact your insurance company to see what is covered. Colleges like for the students to be completely covered, both inpatient and outpatient visits as well as E.R. Ask for a waiver to avoid paying an extra \$2700 per year for your student.

Final Thoughts:

- Use your summer wisely and work on essays and your personal statement
- Brainstorm about awards and honors you have earned and write them down so when you work on your applications, they will be at hand.
- Look online for scholarships. Every little bit helps!

- Remember that one of the main goals of college is to help you develop marketable skills. Pick a major with an eye toward getting a job in the future. You don't want to pay a lot of money or take on a lot of debt and not be able to get a job to support yourself after college.
- Spend the night with students at the college you are interested in if you are able to. This will give you a good inside look at what college is really like.
- When filling out applications, don't just make the case that you are great, make the case that you are a great match for that college.
- Rejection from a college is not personal (even though it really feels that way)
- College is not the rest of your life
- "Where you go is not who you are"
- What you do at a school is more important than where you go