

COLLEGE VISITS – WHAT EVERYONE MISSES!



What to look for..... make a first impression that may reduce tuition!

Most families don't realize that the college visit is a two-way street. It's a very important time to get a first-hand look at the university, AND it's a time for you to make important first impressions on the college staff. These may impact acceptance and scholarships!

FIT

- **Research the school first about your Fit** – Do they have your top majors & favorite activities? Then engage the tour guide with insightful discussion and questions. This goes in your file!
- **Sit in a class** or two from your areas of interest. Take notes on what strikes you about the experience and the college in general. Use this in your interview or essay.
- **Do what students do.** Eat in the cafeteria, read the student newspaper, meet people!

FINANCES

- **Request an interview with a department head**, so you can evaluate the department and have someone who can lobby the financial aid office for you. See Full Guide to prepare.
- **Visit the Career Center.** Find out placement rates for your top majors of interest.
- **When you meet with a coach.** Let them know that finances are a big part of your decision.

FAITH

- **Arrange in advance to meet with Campus Ministries** staff and students. See how large the ministries are, check out their websites, and go to a meeting. It's all about support, healthy friends, mission, and good study partners. Find campus ministries at BelieversCollegePrep.com.

ENJOY THE GUIDE!

 **Believer's College Prep**
Securing the Faith, Reducing the Cost

For assistance call 315-480-1232 or email jdecker@BelieversCollegePrep.com



Preparing for a college visit can be exciting! Visiting colleges is the best way to bring them out of the internet & promotional materials and into real life.

Colleges might seem similar on paper: they all have professors, classes, other students, and social activities. When you actually step foot onto the campus yourself, though, you will discover that each college is very different. There are several important things to remember while preparing for and visiting college campuses.

Write down information on each college you visit so that you remember which one was which.

You can even take pictures with your camera or on your phone! Talk with your parent(s) after you leave each college so you can remember pros and cons from each school.

Print out the last page of this guide and bring a copy with you for each visit. Be sure and fill it in on the way home with all of your thoughts and concerns about potentially attending that school. Read on for more college visit tips:



Do your homework about the school.

Find answers to your initial questions before you go, so you don't have to ask the admissions counselor or tour guide something you could've found online.



Sit in on a class or two, if possible.

This is especially important if you have an idea of what you'd like to major in.



Take notes.

It's easy to forget things, so write down all of your thoughts while they're still fresh in your mind. A picture is worth a thousand words, so take your camera!



Stay overnight.

If you can, arrange to spend the night with a current student. You'll get a real-life look at the dorms and can find out what current students like and don't like about their school.



Do what students do.

Eat in the cafeteria, read the college newspaper, find out what students do for fun, and have fun yourself! A college visit shouldn't be boring!



Take a tour.

Be sure to go online and register for an official tour and information session. Also check to see if you can request a tour or meeting with a department head in your area of interest. Once there, ask your tour guide questions about campus amenities, programs, dorms, dining halls and clubs.



Keep an open mind.

You might see things that you don't like, but that will be the case anywhere. No college is perfect. Write down pros and cons for each school.



Visit while school is in session.

You will get the best picture of college life if you are there while classes are in session. If you do visit during a quiet time, if that college makes it to the top 10 be sure and plan a visit again when students are on campus attending classes.

GROWING YOUR FAITH IN COLLEGE!



It's absolutely essential to take steps to make sure you survive and thrive in your faith college! This can be the time of the most wonderful explosive growth in Christ in your life.... Or be like 70% of Christian students who are blindsided and walk away from their faith entirely. The key thing is to be in the community of believers and having some Christians to be your best friends.

The decision to attend a Christian or secular college is an important step of planning and prayer that you and your family need to take.

Advantages of Christian Colleges:

- There will be more believers to become friends with and grow with.
- Networking opportunities for future relationships in Christian service.
- Christian speakers and resources

Potential issues

- There is always some component students who will look like believers but are in fact, far from the faith and often involved in an underground party culture. This can be confusing and can lead to spiritual demise.

Solution

- Contact Believers College Prep for a list of the more intentional student faith organizations on campuses of interest so that you can make these your first set of friends, then navigate from there.

Advantages of Secular Colleges:

- Some secular colleges are larger, more diverse, have more programs, and more professional development opportunities.
- Some fields of study may benefit from more networking opportunities, but remember, if you're going to graduate school you can find those there as well.
- A tremendous mission opportunity

Potential issues

- The secular social scene can often be dangerous for believers if they are prepared in advance. Liberal or anti-Christian viewpoints some professors can be challenging for unprepared students.

Solution

- Preparing and connecting with Christians in advance is essential will be covered more extensively in the following pages.



PREPARING YOUR TEEN

Get the free series

IS THIS A GOOD PLACE TO GROW?



Research by Life Way and Barna demonstrated that **around 70% of students** in church youth groups fall away from the faith in college, most of this being in the first semester. Fortunately, it's been found if they connect in advance with a strong Christian ministry and/or church on campus they nearly always survive and thrive!

Believers College Prep is a partner with Campus Renewal and all the major US campus ministries and some denominations to turn this around in 2017 by connecting all US students in advance. Click the below image to learn how, you can find colleges with great campus ministries and engage with them before making your college decision.

COLLEGE TRANSITION SUCCESS



Black Rock Church in Fairfield CT used to experience the typical 70% loss upon graduation. *"Last year I had all of my high school students participate in the college transition video material. All were greatly challenged to be spiritually ready for college. Most were blown away by the idea that their first 72 hours at college were the most important in staying strong in their faith. As they have started college, they say that much of what they learned from the videos was true about their first days at college. Many of them were able to find Christian roommates and were already plugged into campus ministries through this. The result? All of our graduates continued in their faith and connected to ministries!"* - Jeremy Taylor, HS Director, Black Rock Community Church, CT

Check out College Ministries during your college visit:

- Use this link to find and communicate with them in advance
- Schedule a meeting with a leader or student. Attend an event if possible.
- Ask questions such as:
 - How large is the ministry? Do they have large group meetings? Bible studies?
 - What distinguishes them? Do they send car loads to local churches on Sunday?
 - What is their Facebook page and website?
 - What other ministries are on campus? How large are they?

It's a real plus if you can find a college with many large ministries. This provides more friends, study partners, more diversity in students, and more types of ministries. From a practical perspective, students often meet their future spouse on campus. There are a lot of reasons why more is better!

Explore more at BelieversCollegePrep.com/Preparation



Questions for Admissions Counselors

- What percentage of the freshman class will probably graduate?
- What percentage of graduates find jobs in their major field within one year?
- What percent of students graduate in my major in four years?
- What is the average class size?
- How does the career center prepare students for job placement, resume prep and interviewing?
- Are AP or IB classes an important consideration at your school? When? Why?
- Does the school have any particularly recognized or well-known programs?
- What are the most popular majors?
- How soon into my education should I declare a major?
- Tell me about [your major interest] program.
- How will the student's academic advisor be determined?
- What is the role of the student's academic advisor?
- Do you ever recommend early decision for applicants?
- Which majors have the highest enrollment?
- Which majors have the lowest enrollment?
- What percentage of classes are taught by professors and what percent are taught by TAs, fellows, etc.?



Questions for Financial Aid Officer

- What has been the average percent increase in tuition/room and board per year for the last three years?
- How much should I expect tuition to increase while I'm a student at the school?
- Whom do we contact in this office when we have a question about financial aid?
- When will I know if we qualify for financial aid?
- Are there scholarships available through the financial aid office? How and when do I apply for them?



Questions for Students

- What opportunities do you have to interact with your professors?
- Do your professors and advisors help you in determining if you're on track to graduate in your major?
- What do you think of the food?
- Is there Greek life on campus?
- How easy is it to get into the classes you want and/or need?
- Where do you get your studying done?
- Do you feel safe in your dorm room or on-campus housing? Do you feel safe walking around campus?
- What is the social life like?
- What activities/events/athletics are students most interested in? Do students have a lot of school spirit?
- Do most students go away on weekends or stay on campus?
- Do most students live on campus their entire time, or do they move off campus?
- If you had to choose your college again, knowing what you know now, would you still choose this college?



Interviewing may give you a leg up on competing students.

Prepare for Your Interview

When visiting a college, you may have an interview with an admissions counselor. If you don't have an interview scheduled during your visit, call the college and ask if you can set one up. Some colleges require interviews as part of their admissions process, but there are many benefits

to interviewing, whether it is required or not. Interviewing may give you a leg up on competing students, because you have been able to give a personal impression. It may also give you a better idea of the people at the college so you can decide if you would be happy there or not.

Before the interview:



- ...do your homework.
- ...prepare a list of questions you have specifically for that school.
- ...practice how you will answer questions (with a parent, relative, etc.).
- ...try to think of questions the interviewer will ask you.
- ...dress neatly, modestly, and cleanly.
- ...arrive 15 minutes early.
- ...leave your parents in the waiting room.

During the interview:



- ...shake hands firmly and make immediate eye contact.
- ...be yourself.
- ...act energetic and confident. Sell yourself.
- ...tell the truth.
- ...sit upright and act interested; don't slouch or yawn.
- ...maintain eye contact throughout the interview.
- ...use the interviewer's name frequently.
- ...intersperse your questions with the interviewer's to get a dialogue going.
- ...express interest in the college and the programs it offers.
- ...ask at least one or two questions to show your interest in the college, but don't ask questions that can be found easily on the website.
- ...don't mention your failures or weaknesses without also mentioning how you'd like to overcome them.
- ...don't text or check your cell phone.
- ...don't use slang or inappropriate language.
- ...don't chew gum.





After the interview:



...give a firm handshake with eye contact.

...thank the interviewer. Confirm the next steps with a statement:

“I will be sending in my application, financial forms, etc.”

...acknowledge the other office staff as you depart. Tell the administrative assistant or secretary, “Thank you,” “It was nice meeting you,” “Have a great day,” etc.

...send thank you notes! It’s important that the interviewer remembers you and remains impressed. Send the note within a couple of days, preferably the same or next day so you will be fresh in the interviewer’s mind.

Practice, Practice, Practice!

It's a good idea to practice before you go. Have one of your parents or a relative ask you some of these questions so you can think about your answers ahead of time. Don't ask your friends to help you, because you might not be able to give serious answers. If you don't have anyone to help you, practice in front of a mirror so you can have someone to make eye contact with while you are responding.

Here are some questions you might hear at your interview:

- Why do you want to go to this school?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What other colleges are you considering?
- What are your goals in life?
- How have you prepared to meet these goals?
- What is your opinion on [insert current event]?
- What has been your biggest achievement in life?
- What is the most difficult situation you have faced and how did you overcome it?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- How has your family contributed to who you are today?
- What do you like about this college?
- What do you dislike about this college?
- Why did you choose the major that you've chosen?

We've also included a handy page for you to print out for each college you visit. This will help you stay organized and keep your thoughts clear so all of your college visits don't run together in your mind.

Join us for a free personal college coaching call – real help from our experience with over 7000 students!

- Proven ways to reduce cost, regardless of income.
- Clarifying life direction, major, and career.
- Ways to optimize fit and minimize cost.
- Which kind of college is right?

LEARN MORE 

Contact Us

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Name of College: _____ Date of Visit: _____

Did you take an organized tour? Name and contact information of tour guide: _____

What were your initial reactions to the school? _____

What did you like? _____

What didn't you like? _____

Was it easy to get around the campus? _____

Did the campus feel safe? _____

How did you feel about the dorms/student housing? _____

How did you feel about the food on campus? What about the food off campus? _____

Were the students friendly? Did you feel like you fit in? _____

Will you need a car? Can you have a car on campus? _____

Does the city/town seem like a place you could spend 4+ years? _____

Other thoughts/impressions: _____