

College Trip Planning Guide For High School Students

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The start of a new school year offers a prime time to research and plan college visits for the prospective college student. College trip planning provides students and their parents the opportunity to learn a lesson in setting up a college visit itinerary. This is an educational experience that improves with each successive visit and is an important part of the college search process. Prior to the planning stage, a fair assessment of the schools to visit should be agreed upon to make the ultimate journey productive. Once the preliminary college list has been established and suitable matches are identified, college visits should be arranged efficiently by geographic regions so that multiple schools may be viewed consecutively. Students and their families can then structure visits to properly assess each school's merits in relation to personal preferences and the features that fit within a specific college wish list.

Preparing for each college visit includes thorough research to build a frame of reference so that students can survey schools with a critical eye. Valuable steps include reviewing each school's website, taking the virtual tour, surveying college guide books, learning about program offerings and the specific departments that pique your student's interest. These simple steps promote efficient planning and aid in creating a more educated framework for assessing schools. Scheduling in advance is important, along with taking the campus tour and information sessions. While in the admissions office, fill out personal information and contact cards. Introduce yourself to your region's admissions officer. These practical steps build your demonstrated interest in a school and help to identify an authentic desire to attend.

Once completed, record each visit within a personal college visit journal that might include both a narrative and a data chart of vital facts and impressions. With each contribution, a reassessment can take place to gauge the relative merits of each school. As time passes, the college visit journal will help rekindle impressions and contribute to the decision-making process. Finally, follow up with a potential decision maker, such as your regional admissions officer. An email with a genuine inquiry and a comment about your recent visit and interest in the school sets a positive tone.



College Trip Planning Recap

1. Initiate college visits once you have established a well-thought out student preference profile. This self-assessment and interest inventory will provide a solid foundation from which to investigate schools.

2. Prepare by reviewing school websites, take virtual tours, survey college guide books, learn about program offerings and specific departments that pique student's interest.

3. Participate in all of the admissions offerings, including an information session, campus tour, interview, open house, personal data survey, website email sign-up, etc. Introduce yourself to the admissions officer for your region. Demonstrated interest in a school helps to separate your student's application from the competition.

4. Seek to cluster visits with other targeted colleges in a geographic region.

5. Follow-up with a potential decision maker, such as your regional admissions officer. An email with an authentic inquiry and a comment about your recent visit and interest in the school sets a positive tone.

6. Make both an anecdotal and data record of each college visit for future reference. A college visit journal will help rekindle impressions and contribute to the decision-making process.

Tony Moschella is an independent educational consultant serving the needs of high school students engaged in the college search and admissions

process. Following 32-years as a school psychologist, Moschella started University College Advisors to polish student profiles through college interest and major assessment, essay and

interview prep, college list building, financial aid review and college admissions guidance. Visit www.UniversityCollegeAdvisors.com for more information.

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