



Simplifying Your College Search

It's no surprise that most students and their parents are pre-occupied with the college search process throughout high school. With more than 4,000 colleges and universities to choose from, many are bewildered by the selection process. In addition to academic skills acquired, college life will have an effect on social and professional opportunities and relationships.

How should a student choose a college?

Size: School size is important but it should not be the exclusive criterion.

Location: A student should ask himself/herself the following questions: Do I prefer large metropolitan areas or small college towns? Do the distance and the frequency of visits home matter to me?

Degrees and Majors: Review offerings and get a sense of a school's emphasis - liberal arts, science, engineering, etc.

Reputation: The admissions selection process, success of graduates, and prestige of faculty all play a part in a school's reputation and popularity.

Degree requirements: Students should compare the extent of graduation requirements; some institutions require students to adhere to a specific core curriculum while others permit a considerable degree of flexibility in fulfilling requirements.

Policies regarding advanced placement examinations: Institutional policies vary some schools accept a score of three for credit while others only allow credit for scores of four and five.

Diversity of the student body: Students should consider diversity, including the percentages of males and females and the number of out-of-state students.

Costs: With current economic conditions, students and their families are particularly concerned about educational costs.

Prioritize which criteria are most important to you. Keep an open mind.

Once you have developed a fairly long list of possible choices, narrow it down by considering how each institution fits your criteria.