

*For Students and Parents*

## **Campus Visits**

Visiting and interviewing at college campuses are vital parts of your college search. The better you prepare, and the better informed you are before leaving home, the more useful the results will be to you in clarifying your likes and dislikes.

We ask you to try to visit a few campuses during spring break of your junior year, to get an idea of what different types of colleges are like. However, most of your traveling and almost all your interviewing will take place over the summer prior to your senior year.

Summer visits and interviews are usually arranged by telephone or online during the spring of your junior year. If you plan to apply to Ivy League or other highly selective schools, be aware that their on-campus interview slots fill up very early—so contact them early in the spring to reserve a time.

You should also know that while a campus visit is mostly for your information, many colleges *expect* prospective applicants to make the effort to see the campus if doing so is at all practical. Therefore, visit as many schools as possible, and be sure to give equal attention to a wide range of colleges - not just those on the top of your list.

Today more than ever, the same can be true for interviews, which many colleges interpret as a sign of interest. Colleges that offer interviews expect serious applicants to make the effort to have one, be it on campus or elsewhere. *Not interviewing has caused strong Lawrence candidates to be wait-listed rather than admitted in recent years.*

### **THE VISIT**

Keep the following points in mind as you prepare for your visits:

#### **Campus visits and scheduling**

If you are planning to visit several colleges in one area, you will find that admission offices can be helpful in assisting you with your itinerary. Look for travel information on the college's website, then call the admission office of the college nearest to home, tell them you would like to visit, and find out when tours and information sessions are available. Make an appointment for an interview. Tell them where else you plan to visit, and ask about travel times between colleges. Remember that tour schedules vary from school to school, so you will have to confirm the information for each. Allow plenty of time between your morning and afternoon visits, particularly if you do not know the area. If you arrive early, you can use the extra time to look around.

#### **Two schools per day**

Realistically, you will not learn much if you plan a whirlwind tour. Do not try to visit 22 schools in a week! You are better off visiting fewer schools thoroughly than trying to visit every campus on a 16-college list. *A "drive-through" is virtually useless.* An interview and tour at two different colleges, along with travel time between them, is almost always enough for one day.

#### **Be flexible**

While college admission offices will try to accommodate your needs and requests, it may not always be possible. The earlier you schedule visits, the better your chances of getting the dates and times you prefer. Even so, when you call, be prepared to be flexible. *Campus tours* are generally easy to arrange, but you should try to plan ahead to schedule an *interview* at each school you are considering seriously.

If you make campus visits during the summer, bear in mind that you can always return in the fall. Colleges offer the opportunity to visit a class, meet with a professor, or have lunch with students. Your mailbox (both electronic and the one next to your driveway) will be full of invitations to fall receptions, visit days, and off-campus interviews. These are great opportunities to learn more about each college and for them to learn about you.

### **Take notes!**

Whenever you visit a college campus, make it a habit to write down relevant factual information as well as all your personal impressions in a notebook that you keep for this purpose. Careful notes will benefit you in two ways: first, they will help you recall the details of a particular school when you have visited several campuses and they all begin to meld in your head (which they will!); and second, they will prove to be a lifesaver when an interviewer asks you, “Why do you want to attend this school?” or when an application contains a similar question. We have learned the hard way that an applicant’s written response to a “Why this college?” question is read very seriously and can have a significant influence on admission decisions. The “Journal” tab on the Naviance Family Connection is a good place to keep these notes.

### **QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK YOUR TOUR GUIDE**

1. How large are your classes? How large are freshman classes? Do you meet regularly with an advisor?
2. What has your experience been with the core curriculum or the distribution requirements? Have you been able to explore different academic departments?
3. 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.?
4. Are there appropriate special services available for students with individual needs?
5. What academic experiences are available beyond the classroom?
6. What percent of students live in dorms? Is housing guaranteed for all four years?
7. Is this considered a safe campus? Are there regular patrols, escort vans, emergency phones, etc., if needed?
8. Is this an openly competitive campus? How are tests and exams administered?
9. Do you meet with professors informally? Have you ever been invited to a professor’s home?
10. How tolerant is this community of independence and diversity?
11. What are the most popular extracurricular activities here?
12. What leadership positions in this community do men hold? Women?
13. What do you like best and least about being a student here?

14. Are there single-sex dormitories? Substance-free dorms? “Quiet” dorms? Any thematic housing? Are there laundry facilities in each dorm?
15. Is there an infirmary on campus? How is it staffed? Is there a college physician with an office on campus?
16. Is there a career guidance service on campus? A placement service? Is the placement service available to alumni?
17. What kinds of internships are available for students?
18. Does social life revolve around the campus, or do most students leave on the weekends? What are the major social activities?
19. What is the role of athletics on campus?
20. What is the biggest campus issue currently?

At the end of your visit, ask *yourself* one very important question:

**“Do I see myself fitting in here?”**