

Narrowing Your College Choices

Finding the right college can be a difficult decision. One bit of advice is to research more than one school. Some students have their hearts set on a specific school. There is nothing wrong with that...unless you are not accepted to that school. Then what choice are you left with? With some careful research and planning, it is not hard to find colleges that will appeal to you. The following are some examples of areas you might want to look into when considering your college choices.

1. Academic Reputation

- * What is the school's general reputation?
- * What is the reputation of your intended major?

2. Curriculum or Program

- * Is my intended major available?
- * Is there a strong liberal arts program?

3. Academic Support Services

- * Are special services such as tutoring available?
- * What services do you need?

4. Class Size and Teaching Approach

- * How big are the classes?
- * Do professors keep regular office hours?
- * Are classes taught by professors or teaching assistants?

5. Affiliation of Institution

- * Public * Private
- * Religious * Vocational
- * Two-year * Four-year
- * Single-sex * Coeducational
- * Military

6. Academic Facilities

- * Computer labs and facilities
- * Science labs and facilities
- * Library

7. Retention, Graduation, and Placement Rates

- * What percentage of students return for their sophomore year?
- * What is the graduation rate of entering students?
- * What percentage of students is placed in jobs in their field?
- * What percentage of students go on to graduate/professional school?

8. Size of Undergraduate Student Body

- * 7,500 +
- * 5,000—7,499
- * 2,500—4,999
- * 1,000—2,499
- * Less than 1,000

9. Location

- * Anywhere in U.S.
- * Anywhere in multi-state region
- * Anywhere in state
- * Immediate area (75—100 miles)
- * Commuting area
- * Foreign country

10. College Setting

- * Large city
- * Medium city
- * Small city
- * Suburban
- * Small town
- * Rural

11. Campus Environment

- * Is the campus community lively and spirited?
- * Are people I meet on campus friendly?
- * Is the faculty accessible?
- * Is there a diverse student population?
- * How present is security on campus?
- * Is undergraduate housing comfortable?
- * How is the food?

12. Activities

- * Sports
- * Community/religious activities
- * Social opportunities
- * Cultural activities

13. Costs

- * Costs of tuition, room, and board
- * Availability of grants/scholarships
- * Availability of loans
- * Availability of part-time jobs