Planning the College Visit

Menlo School
College Counseling

February 7, 2019
Why are these important?

College visits are equally beneficial for students and for the colleges themselves.

For students: A well thought out college tour can help students compare and contrast the many differences between colleges and universities. Through this, they begin to shape their own wish lists.
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For colleges: Colleges want to get to know students, too. For some colleges (especially small and rural schools), this is the first opportunity for students to show interest.
What can I expect from a college visit?

Usually, college visits start with an information session. In the info session a representative from the college will talk about special programs, new initiatives, admit rates, and application types. The info session is usually followed with a campus tour. You should request to customize your visit to campus if you can.
Personalizing the Tour

Tours are great to get acquainted with the campus, but plan to explore areas that would be of a particular interest to you.

- If you’re a fitness fanatic you don’t want to miss checking out the student gym.
- If you’re excited to play lacrosse, try to set up a meeting with the coach or see if the coach can connect you with a student-athlete to ask some questions and see the practice field.
- Go to the library
- Sit in on a class
- School specific tour (ie; Engineering)
When?

Does it matter which time of year I visit a college?

Tulane University: “Summer may be a convenient time for you to check out schools, but it’s not always the best time to get a good feel for a campus. With few students on campus during the summer months, it’s tough to get that solid impression for what the school is like.”

MLK weekend, Ski Week, and Spring Break are all great options.
You can make a summer visit work, too.

Although the student population is sparse over the summer, it is still worthwhile to peruse the spaces on campus most frequented by students in order to get the most accurate sense of what it’s like to be there during the school year. Here is some advice from Tufts on how to make the most of your summer visit:

- Take a stroll through the Tisch Library (aka Club Tisch), grab a snack at the Tower Café, and walk upstairs to the Media Center.
- Make your way down to the Campus Center, eat lunch at The Commons, and challenge a buddy to a pick-up game of ping pong.
- Visit the Steve Tisch Sports Center, check out the facilities in the gym. (Go ahead, test out the treadmills), and cast your eyes upon the trophy case in the front lobby that showcases Tufts’ eight team national championships won since 2010.
- Soak up some sun on the Prez Lawn and crack open the latest edition of Jumbo.
Notice many colleges have different spring breaks!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 14</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Classes begin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 18</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Last day to file an application for May degree</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Last day to add or drop a class without a grade of W</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No Classes - Martin Luther King, Jr., Day</td>
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<td>Feb 1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Last day for undergraduates to finish coursework for Fall grades of Incomplete</td>
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<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Census Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Last day for instructors to submit Fall grades for undergraduates with incompletes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Last day to submit mid-term deficiency grades</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 11-15</td>
<td>M-F</td>
<td>No Classes - Spring Break</td>
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<td>Mar 22</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw from classes or apply for Credit/No Credit grading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No Classes - Cesar Chavez Day</td>
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<td>Apr 17-19</td>
<td>W-F</td>
<td>No Classes - Easter Holidays</td>
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<td>May 3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Last day of Classes</td>
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<td>May 4-5</td>
<td>S-U</td>
<td>Reading Days</td>
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<td>May 6-10</td>
<td>M-F</td>
<td>Final Examinations</td>
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<td>May 11-12</td>
<td>S-U</td>
<td>Commencement Weekend</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Last day for instructors to submit final grades</td>
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When?

My student is a freshman, should we start now?

Haverford College: Sometimes students visit too early... it’s better that kids wait until their junior year because sometimes interviews are incorporated into your visit, and usually students closer to the end of their high school experience have more to say.

The majority of students start visiting colleges the summer before their junior year or some time into the junior year.
How do I sign up and where to I start?

The easiest way to sign up for a college tour is to visit the college’s admissions website.
How?

How can I ensure I get the most out of these visits?

- Make sure to keep a journal of the colleges you visit! A good tip is to make sure you keep a few consistent, guiding questions that you ask of each college (For example: does this college have my major? How popular is it? What are some clubs on campus that interest me? What was the vibe like on campus? etc).
- A short debrief on campus or in the college downtown after the tour is a good time to talk and take notes.
- SCOIR Notebook
COLLEGE VISIT GUIDE

COLLEGE NAME

City
State
Tuition
Average Loan Debt Upon Graduation

ADMISSIONS OFFICER CONTACT

Name
Title
Email
Phone

CHECKLIST

What Did You Do?
- Talk to professors
- Visit the library
- Information session & campus tour
- Sit in on a class
- Eat at the cafeteria
- Talk to an admissions officer
- Read the college newspaper

Rate It

On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the best rate the following)

Community/People
Social life
Academic experience
Dorms
Surrounding city/town
Campus
Food

THOUGHTS ON YOUR VISIT

The Best Part About My Visit:

The Worst Part About My Visit:

QUESTIONS TO ASK

What is your typical day like?
What do students do on the weekends?
Why did you choose to attend?
What would you like to improve in this community?
What was your transition like to go from high school to college here?
What are the requirements for need-based aid and for merit-based aid?

TIPS for Your Visit

1. Students, take the lead.
   You are the one who will be attending college, so take the lead during campus visits. Your parents will probably be with you during the visit, but make sure you do most of the talking. Don’t take the easy way out and let your parents do all of the work for you.

2. Have an open mind.
   Treat every college the same when visiting. You may have a ranked list based on everything you know about the colleges, but your feeling may change after walking on campus and getting a real feel for the college.

3. Do your homework.
   Do some research on the college in advance so that you have some basic information on the school before you visit. Don’t waste your time on campus by asking questions that could have been easily answered by doing a quick search of a school’s website, publications, blogs, or social media. You’ll be able to get more out of a visit by asking specific questions.

4. Schedule your visits well in advance.
   Group information sessions can fill up very quickly during spring and summer breaks. The general rule of thumb is to schedule your visit at least three weeks in advance. It’s always best to visit a school while it’s in session.

5. Be thoughtful about logistics.
   Leave plenty of time for parking, info session, tour, a meal, and just walking around the campus. It’s best to leave time for lunch after your morning information session and tour. After a morning of walking and talking on campus, you’re sure to build up an appetite!

6. Take notes and pictures.
   Be ready to take notes and pictures of campus. Chances are you will be visiting more than one school on the same trip and it’s easy to forget what you saw at each college or university. Colleges will start to blend together after visiting a few. We advise visiting a maximum of two colleges in one day.

7. Pick up a student newspaper and look at bulletin boards around campus.
   See what the hot topics on campus are. Bulletin boards are a good indication of the types of activities happening on campus.

8. Meet the students.
   Talk to (former Menlo) students enrolled at the college. Don’t leave the campus without talking to students. They’ll tell you the good, the bad, and the ugly about school you’re visiting.

9. Talk about it.
   Discuss your visit with your family, counselor, and/or other trusted sources—be specific about what you liked and didn’t like about particular campuses.

10. Have fun!
    Talk to currently enrolled students at the college. They’ll be honest and tell you the good, the bad, and the ugly about the school you’re visiting.
Where?: Where are some good places to visit?

The geographic location is very important, yes... but the diversity of colleges within that location is equally as important.
North Carolina Tour - Example

Day 1: Fly to Charlotte, get rental car, check into hotel, sleep

Day 2: Visit Davidson in the AM, High Point in the afternoon, drive to Winston Salem, check into hotel

Day 3: Visit Wake Forest, drive 50 min to Elon, visit Elon, drive 40 min to Duke, visit Duke, stay in Durham

Day 4: Drive to UNC Chapel Hill, visit, drive to airport, fly out of Raleigh
Visit to Los Angeles Area

Day 1: Fly to Los Angeles, visit USC

Day 2: Visit the Claremont Colleges (Scripps, Pitzer, Harvey Mudd, Claremont Mckenna, and Pomona) and Occidental College

Day 3: Visit Loyola Marymount University and drive around UCLA and then fly home that evening.
Who should I talk to while I’m there?

Students on the quad is a great place to start… ask them what their favorite part about their school is, and their least favorite part. Students are nice! They’ll be honest.
Who should I talk to while I’m there?

If you’re interested in a particular major, oftentimes admissions can schedule a visit with a professor, or perhaps you can even sit in on a class.
Who should I talk to while I’m there?

If you’re interested in playing a sport, ask to talk to some current student athletes and coaches.
Who should I talk to while I’m there?

Menlo alums are a valuable resource! Feel free to reach out on social media, and if you aren’t sure if you know anyone, we keep an alumni list with contact info we are happy to share.
How do I learn about colleges without visiting campus?

Bay Area Receptions - Visits to Menlo School - Menlo Alumni - Virtually
SCOIR has partnered with YouVisit to allow students to visit campus virtually.
Remember: This should be fun!!!
After the visit: Check in with your college counselor to provide feedback
Thank you!