

## Campus Visits

It's the college visit season. High school seniors are fanning out across the country to check out colleges for the last time before they make their big decision.

Visiting campuses during spring break is an annual tradition, but many colleges now offer a variety of visiting options throughout the year: guided campus tours, the daily visit, Saturday Visit, class visit and self guided tours. Many college website also offer virtual tours of their campus before visiting.

Regardless of which schools you visit this spring, here are six ways to make the experience more valuable:

1. **Wander off the path and talk to students:** You don't want to limit your conversations to the tour guide, who is, after all, being paid to present their schools in a positive light. We suggest stopping a few students during your time on a campus and asking them these questions:
  - o Why did you decide to attend this college?
  - o What do you like best about this school?
  - o What do you like least about this school?
  - o If you could change anything about your college what would it be?
2. **Talk with staff and faculty:** You can learn a lot if you arrange to speak with a professor in your possible major. It's been my experience when visiting colleges with my son and daughter that professors are usually quite happy to answer questions and give a tour through their departments.
3. **Take notes:** You might think that you will remember what you saw and heard at a school, but don't count on it, especially if you are visiting more than one campus. It may also be helpful to take photos.
4. **Attend a class:** Ideally, you'll want to sit in on a class in a subject that interests you or that you hope to major in. This will be another opportunity to ask students what they think about their college. [Get 7 tips for narrowing your college list.]
5. **Consider spending the night:** Many colleges will allow accepted students to spend the night in a dorm with a student host if they are given enough advance notice.
6. **Take full advantage of your opportunity:** The stakes are too high to treat your campus visit as a lark. Too many students end up unhappy with their schools because they made rash decisions. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, roughly 1 in 5 students transfer from one four-year college to another. Don't let that happen to you.