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College Search-Factors to Consider

The goal of your college search is to find approximately ten colleges that would be a “good fit” for you. A good fit college is one where you will be successful and happy. It will help you define and meet your academic and career goals. Colleges are not all the same. They have differing qualities and characteristics. Some of these characteristics will be right for you and some will not. Here are some factors to consider throughout your college search.

As you read about each factor, remember that we are making some generalizations about colleges. That can be helpful. But, it is also helpful to remember that these are generalizations and they will not be true for all colleges.

Size

Where would you learn best? Where would you feel most comfortable?

Small colleges may have:

1. More accessible professors
2. Emphasis on learning by discussion
3. Good access to extra help and tutors.
4. A close-knit student body

Large colleges may have:

1. Less accessible professors
2. Emphasis on learning through lectures.
3. Less access to tutors and extra assistance.
4. The student body is less of a “family” environment.

Academic Environment

Which of these factors are important to you?

1. Rigorous academics
2. Highly intellectual student body
3. Access to internships and work experiences (Co-op program)
4. Freedom to choose your courses
5. Writing center and/or academic assistance and tutors
6. Hands on learning
7. Learning through solving real world problems



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8. Number of credits per semester.
9. Academic calendar (two semesters? Trimester? 4-1-4?)
10. Study abroad options
11. Undergraduate research opportunities
12. Personalized academic advising.

Services

1. Counseling center
2. Accessibility/Disability services
3. Tutoring
4. Math center
5. Writing center

Students

Some factors to consider are:

1. Campus vibe
2. What do students like to do at this school?
3. Do students live on campus
4. Spectator sports/Big games
5. Greek life
6. Politically and environmentally active student body
7. Intramurals?
8. Weekend activities?
9. Food?
10. Safety
11. Dorms
12. LGBTQ
13. Multicultural
14. Beautiful campus
15. Clubs?
16. Leadership opportunities?
17. Religious life?
18. Activities that you are interested in



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Location

Where do you want to go to school?

1. Where in the country?
2. Urban, rural, suburban, college town

Selectivity

Are you likely to be admitted?

Big Name School vs. Good Fit School

Is a known school important to you?

Cost

How will you pay for college?

Have you talked to your parents about the cost of college?

Ethnicity

How important is it to you to be with students who are the same ethnicity as you?

How important is it to you to study on a diverse campus?

Co-ed or Single Sex

Do you know the benefits of attending a women's college?

Your Own Criteria

What do you need to succeed and be happy at this school?