

For private and some out of state public institutions, a college admissions interview is an excellent way to learn first hand about a college and provide the admissions committee with things that they would not know by merely reviewing your application, transcript, test scores, and even a student's essay or personal statement.

Generally there are three types of college interviews. (1) On-campus evaluative interview where an admission representative asks a student's responses to questions that become part of the student's admission file, (2) On-campus informational interview that is more informational than evaluative, and (3) Alumni interviews which generally are conducted close to where you live and can be both informational and evaluative in nature.

Whatever type of interview that you have, preparation prior to meeting with a college representative is essential to presenting yourself in the best possible light. Suggestions for preparing for an interview include:

- Demonstrate that you have researched the college.
- Be able to point out specific things that you can bring to the college.
- Be prepared to be able to explain anything in your academic record that might need explanation.
- Practice answering potential questions with a family member or friend to make yourself more comfortable with the interview experience.
- Have questions prepared to ask when the interviewer asks for questions.

While an interviewer can ask any number of questions, the following are areas that could be covered in many interviews:

- Why are you applying to this particular college?
- Tell me something that is essential to understanding you?
- What are you interested in? What do you do for fun or in your spare time?
- What is a contribution you have made to your school and/or community?
- What courses have you liked the most? The least? Why?
- Do you know what you want to study? Why?
- How has living in your community affected you?
- What is your favorite activity? Why?
- How would others describe you?

Regardless of the type of interview or questions asked, there are a number of interviewing mistakes that should be avoided.

- Coming across as cocky. However, be confident and positive about yourself.
- Not having specific questions to ask the interviewer.
- Acting like you would rather be undergoing a root canal than to be in the interview. Try to be relaxed and enthusiastic.
- Neglect your appearance; dress neatly rather than dress down.

- Memorizing responses to questions so that you sound like you are reading from a script.
- Being late or not showing for the interview.
- Inappropriate language.
- Try to be someone you are not.

While the prospect of a college interview may seem daunting, relax. An interview is more of a conversation than a test. Admission interviewers are very cognizant of the fact that teenagers do not have a great deal of experience interviewing.

Finally, writing a thank you note to the interviewer within a few days of the interview is not a practice that ever goes out of style.