



## College Visit Helpful Tips + Questions List

There is no better way to learn about a university, their faculty, facilities, spirit, innovation, campus atmosphere, academic prestige, and student values than to visit the campus when college is in session.

Visiting college campuses in person provides an in-depth view with your own eyes rather than relying on outside views from alumni, friends, family or undergraduates who may have a bias toward the schools you are interested in.

### These visits can be considered your “educational insurance”:

- Would you buy a car without test driving it or a house without viewing it first? Let's hope not.
  - Think of college in the same manner: this is a great investment and you want to assure you have met your match for the next four years.
- You are more likely to choose a college that is matched to your needs.
- You can observe where you will eat, sleep, study, worship, attend classes and take part in campus activities.
- You are likely to perform better work if you are in an environment that agrees with your value system and needs.
- You will have an opportunity to evaluate what students wear, how they live, and more.

### **\*\* Here are key tips to getting the most out of your college visits\*\***

#### 1. Preparation with the college choices

##### **a. Arrange your visit with Bishop McGuinness first!**

- i. BMCHS allows **three (3) days of excused absences** for college visitation.
  - ii. You must arrange this through your counselor at least ONE week in advance of your absence.
  - iii. The proper form must be signed by your teachers, parents, and counselor before being filed in the Main Office with the attendance clerk before you leave.
  - iv. After your visit, obtain a proof of attendance from the college to submit to your counselor either in paper form or through email.
- b. Arrange for your visit in advance by setting up a campus tour online or with the college rep.
  - c. Allow sufficient time for the visit; plan to be on campus for a full-day; half-days aren't ideal.
  - d. Ask for additional appointments during your day-long visit with the financial aid office, an in-session classroom visit, an academic college tour w. Q&A, and/or an admissions counselor meeting

- e. Avoid a “happy drop-in” with the college as they appreciate providing a great experience for you during your visit, especially during busy times of the year (fall and spring breaks, holidays, etc.)
- f. Familiarize yourself with the college by reviewing their web site. This ensures you will have intelligent questions to ask during your scheduled visit.
- g. If you schedule an appointment with an admissions counselor, bring an updated resume summarizing personal data (interests, awards, activities, test scores, transcript, rank, etc.).
  - i. You may not be asked for it, but it is great to have your resume with you. Your admissions counselor will be impressed with your forward-thinking and preparation.
  - ii. Inform your admissions counselor of academic and personal interests, activities, service and if you plan to apply to the college.
- h. Pay attention to your appearance and conduct; first impressions hold a great meaning. Take notice of grooming and attire.
  - i. This is the moment for the admissions counselor to “put a face with a name”, thereby allowing you the opportunity to connect outside of your application.
  - ii. Notes are often made after this first impression and placed in your application file.

## **2. During your college visit:**

- a. Visit several classes, if allowed.
- b. Talk with students on campus. Ask them about their academic and social lives on campus. Ask them why they chose that college.
- c. Take pictures and take notes. After your visit, make notes on your feedback form attached while the information is fresh on your mind.
- d. Keep a list of names and titles of officials you visited. Send an email or card thanking them for their time.
- e. Have lunch in the dining hall or popular place on campus.

## **3. Questions to consider asking while on the campus visit:**

### **a. Classes**

- i. Average class size of incoming freshman? Entire student body?
- ii. What is the student to faculty ratio?
- iii. Are freshman courses taught by graduate assistants, professors or both?
- iv. Level of degrees that majority of faculty have?
- v. Accessibility to advisors? Is it 1:1 and is it a requirement before scheduling courses each semester?
- vi. How many hours is considered a full course load?
- vii. Flexibility with the degree program of interest, such as available course offerings, majors and minors, special opportunities, studying abroad, summer internships?
- viii. What are the top three programs offered at the university?

### **b. Campus**

- i. Does the college campus appeal to you? Are the buildings aesthetically pleasing?
- ii. Does it feel too large or too small?

- iii. Is campus mobile for students? Bike share programs? Are vehicles allowed on campus? Parking constraints?
- iv. Is it a college town, or do students engage with the community outside of the college campus? Are there areas to eat and places to shop?
- v. Do students take pride in the upkeep of the college?
- vi. What makes this school different from other colleges?

**c. Housing & Food**

- i. Are freshmen required to live in the dorms on campus? Other freshman living options?
- ii. Cost of housing and meal plans?
- iii. How is the housing assigned? Is there a separate housing application? Is there a deadline and/or deposit?
- iv. How many students per room? Are there super suites (3-4 in one room)? Are there single room options?
- v. How are roommates assigned? Are there co-ed options? Gender neutral options?
- vi. How are rooms furnished?
- vii. Campus dining options?
- viii. What percentage of students live on campus?

**d. Religion**

- i. Is there a wide range of religions offered on campus? Is there a church of your denomination nearby?
- ii. Is chapel attendance required? Are there opportunities to connect spiritually outside of chapel?

**e. Social/Extracurricular**

- i. What do students do on the weekends? Do students stay on campus on the weekends, or do a lot of students go home for the weekend?
- ii. What is Greek (fraternities and sororities) life like? What percentage of students belong to a Greek-affiliated organization? Are there opportunities for non-Greek students?
- iii. Is there a student union?
- iv. Is there a sports atmosphere present? Are there opportunities for participation? Are there intramurals? Do students actively support athletic events?
- v. Is there an abundance of leadership opportunities?
- vi. What are the study abroad opportunities and what countries are these programs located?

**f. Admissions Criteria**

- i. When is the best time to start applying for college?
- ii. What is the admittance and graduation rate? What is the retention rate for freshmen-to-sophomores?
- iii. What is the evaluation process for admitting a student?
- iv. What criteria are used during the admissions process?
  - 1. ACT/SAT/PSAT Scores
  - 2. GPA (weighted and/or unweighted)
  - 3. Class rank
  - 4. Area of study
  - 5. Recommendation letters

- 6. Activities and Engagement outside of the classroom
- 7. Other subjective factors that may impact admission
- v. Is the college a demonstration school (where they count the interactions with the school made by the student)?
- vi. Is the admissions office aware of the caliber of high school you attend?
- vii. What is the enrollment and composition of the student body?
- viii. What are the application deadlines?
- ix. What are the scholarship deadlines?
- x. What is Early Action, Early Decision, Regular Decision or Rolling Admissions? What admissions decisions are offered at that college?
- xi. How do AP classes help in the admissions process? How do AP classes and exams impact college credit?

**g. Scholarships and Affordability**

- i. Is there a separate application for scholarships? Are there departmental scholarships? Is the FAFSA required, or just highly suggested?
- ii. Are there merit-based scholarships offered? Competitive based scholarships? Athletic scholarships? Need-based scholarships? Work-study opportunities?
- iii. What percent of students receive a scholarship and financial aid their freshman year?
- iv. Housing and Food costs?
- v. Is there a flat-rate tuition? Are fees wrapped into the tuition cost? Are there locked in tuition rates?
- vi. Do you allow additional test scores for an upgrade in scholarships?
- vii. What is the average student debt rate upon graduation?

**4. After your college visit:**

**a. Report back to McGuinness the following school day with feedback**

- i. Keep a copy of the feedback form attached as a reference to make a few notes. You will return this to your counselor upon return.
- ii. Be sure to bring back proof of your visit with you from the campuses you attended (either a paper copy or a forwarded email will suffice).
- b. Begin narrowing down your options and preferences of colleges to attend.
  - i. Continue the college search conversation with your grade-level counselor.
  - ii. Make note of the impactful moments you had while visiting. These could be decision-makers in the long run.

## College Visit Evaluation Form

College: \_\_\_\_\_

### **DORMS: ★★★★★ (Overall Rating)**

Things to Consider:

What did you think of the size of the rooms? How are the other amenities? What did you think about the bathrooms? Size? Location? Is there a common area? Study area? Do all freshman live together or near each other?

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### **FOOD: ★★★★★**

Things to Consider:

How many cafeterias/food spots are there on campus? How was the quality of the food? If you have any specific allergies or food requirements, can they accommodate you? Details about meal plans.

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### **STUDENT BODY: ★★★★★**

Things to Consider:

If you spoke with anyone, what were their thoughts? Could you see yourself with the students? Did you get a sense of school spirit and pride?

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**CLASSES/PROFESSORS: ★★★★★**

Things to Consider:

If you were able to sit in on a class, was it as you expected? Better? Worse? How engaged were the students? How did the classroom look and feel? If you were able to speak with the professor, what did you discuss?

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**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: ★★★★★**

Things to Consider:

Did you learn about any clubs or activities that might interest you? Did you notice any signs on bulletin boards with interesting events? Were you able to attend a sports game? How active was the student body?

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**CAMPUS: ★★★★★**

Things to Consider:

Did it feel too small? Too big? Just right? Did you like the style of architecture? Why or why not? What transportation services are available? Did the campus feel safe? Are classes within a major located in a specific area?

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**OVERALL: ★★★★★**

How would you rank this college on a scale of 1-10, 1 being absolutely not and 10 being your dream school? \_\_\_\_\_

*Keep a copy for yourself and bring these thoughts to your counselor! Thank you!*