

# Tips for attending a virtual college fair

Due to the pandemic, most college fairs have turned to a virtual format. Just because you won't be visiting in person, doesn't mean you can't get a lot out of the fairs. Here are some tips for attending a virtual college fair:

## • The experience will be similar to an in-person fair.

Just like traditional fairs, you'll still need to register in advance for any fairs you want to attend and you'll still be able to interact with representatives of colleges – it will just be on a screen instead of across a table.

"There are various formats including breakout rooms for each college or for groupings of colleges, or often students can sign up for individual meetings much like would occur when a student would stop by a table at an in-person fair," says Judith Stahl, assistant director of college counseling at Detroit Country Day School and president of the Michigan Association for College Admission Counseling. "Providing the information through registration and for individual college interactions also demonstrates an interest in the college and establishes the same connection found in in-person fairs."

• **You'll have to do a bit of planning ahead.** Each fair will have "booths," but how each college staffs its booth can differ, according to Holly M. Markiecki-Bennetts, a school counselor at Mercy High School in Farmington Hills. "Some will have a person in the booth to answer individual questions and [so you can] learn more about the college and the programs that are offered. Others will have a presentation they give during specific timeslots," she says.

Make sure to check out what colleges you're interested in are doing and at what time, so you can plan accordingly. "To prepare for the fair, students should look at the list of participating colleges and decide which ones they want to visit with. Then the student will simply click on the college link to go to their virtual booth," says Markiecki-Bennetts.

## • Take notes during your sessions.

You don't want to forget anything important, so better to take notes than try to recall days later what was said and who said it. "It's easy to confuse schools and information, so write down a few things to help you remember the conversation or what you learned," says Markiecki-Bennetts, who is also the former president of the Michigan Association for College Admission Counseling.

## • Follow up on schools you're interested in.

Make a list of what colleges interested you the most and then do more research on them, advises Markiecki-Bennetts. "Follow the school's social media accounts and reach out to the admission office if you have more questions," she says. "If you didn't like a school, it's OK. With almost 2,500 four-year schools in the country, there are schools that will fit you better than others."

Finally, don't freak out if you weren't able to attend a virtual fair or engage with a school you wanted to. "Even if a student doesn't visit with a school at a fair, there are plenty of opportunities to schedule virtual visits and tours with schools," says Markiecki-Bennetts. "Simply visit the school website to learn more."

## Find a fair

Looking for a virtual college fair? The National Association for College Admission Counseling offers a series of fairs. Find out more at [nacacfairs.org](http://nacacfairs.org)

The Michigan Association for College Admission Counseling will also be offering virtual fairs on April 25 and 27. Find out more by visiting [macac.org](http://macac.org) and clicking on "Events."



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## 9 questions to ask at a college fair

Not sure what to ask campus reps when you're attending a college fair? Here, Mercy High School counselor Holly Markiecki-Bennetts shares nine questions to consider:

1. What percentage of students have employment in their field of interest at graduation?
2. What research opportunities are available to students?
3. How do you assist students in finding internships?
4. What do students do for fun?
5. Do students tend to stay on campus on the weekends?
6. What are favorite campus traditions?
7. (For undecided students) What programs do you have to help me decide what I want to major in?
8. (For pre-med majors) What is your placement rate into medical school?
9. (For pre-law majors) What is your placement rate into law school?