

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN RESEARCHING A COLLEGE

Academics

- What is the average class size? Largest? Smallest? Faculty/student ratio?
- What degrees are offered? What are the most popular majors? Do students have to apply for acceptance into certain majors? What special or unique programs are offered?
- What kind of academic advising is available? How are advisors assigned?
- What services are offered to students who are undecided about a major?
- What academic support services are available?
- How easy is it to register for necessary classes?
- Are there required courses? Which ones?
- Are there study abroad programs available and what percentage of students participate in such programs?
- Is there access to computers? Where are the terminals located? Is there a charge?
- How demanding are the academics? How many hours a week do students study?
- Is there an honors program? What are the necessary qualifications for entry?

Admission Requirements

- What high school courses are required?
- Which entrance tests are required? What were the average scores of last year's entering freshmen?
- Is a certain grade point average required?
- Will high school activities and school involvement be considered?
- Is there an essay on the application? Who will read it?
- Is there an early decision or early action plan? Is there rolling admission?
- On what basis are applicants accepted? What are the application deadlines?
- Are personal interviews or letters of recommendation required?
- What percentage of applicants are accepted? Can admission denials be appealed?
- When must accepted students decide whether or not they will attend?

Costs & Financial Aid

- What is the cost for tuition? Room and board? Other fees?
- How much did costs increase from last year to this year?
- Is there a difference in the cost for in-state and out-of-state tuition? Are there reciprocity programs with other states?
- Are accepted students required to place deposits for tuition and housing? Are these refundable?
- Are deposits required each year for returning students?
- What percentage of students receive financial aid based on financial need?
- What percentage of students receive financial aid based on academic ability?
- What would be a typical financial aid package for a freshman?
- What percentage of those who apply for financial aid receive it?
- What are the financial aid procedures and deadlines?
- When are financial aid recipients notified of their awards?
- How long do they have to respond? Is there a tuition payment plan?
- Are campus jobs readily available? Are there off-campus jobs as well?

College Characteristics

- Where is the college located (city, suburb, small town, rural setting)? What is the surrounding community like? What is most distinctive about the school?
- How far away from home is the college and what will the travel expenses be?
- Is the college public, private, church affiliated?
- Is it a two year or four year institution? Are graduate programs available?
- What is the current student enrollment?
- What is the academic calendar (semesters, trimesters, quarters)?

Student Life

- Where do the students come from? What is the average age of students? What is the male-to-female ratio? How culturally/racially diverse is the student body? What percentage of students come from other countries?
- What percentage of students live on campus? What percentage commute? What kinds of housing options are available? Is housing guaranteed for freshmen? Are residence halls coed or single sex?
- What are the procedures for selecting a roommate? What are some of the rules and regulations that govern campus and residence hall life? How safe is the campus?
- What kinds of student services are available (personal counseling, health services, campus ministry, international student services, academic support services, career development services)?
- What kinds of student activities, clubs and organizations are there? Do most students stay on campus over the weekends?
- What percentage of students belong to sororities or fraternities?
- What athletic programs are available? Varsity sports? Intramural? Fitness activities?
- Is the surrounding community supportive of the college?
- Where do students hang out? What cultural opportunities exist on-campus, off-campus?

Facilities

- Are the older buildings in good repair? Are there newer buildings also?
- What is the library like? Comfortable? Quiet? Up-to-date?
- Are the grounds well kept? Is the setting and architecture appealing?
- How current are the science facilities?
- Are the residence hall rooms pleasant? Are there common areas for relaxing and socializing? Laundry and kitchen facilities? What are the dining halls like? Are there a variety of meal plans?
- What recreational facilities are available? Fine arts? Athletic?
- What computer facilities are available to students? Is there Internet hookup in the residence halls?

Outcomes

- What percentage of last year's freshman class returned for sophomore year?
- What is the four year graduation rate?
- What percentage of graduates go on to graduate school? Medical school? Law school?
- What career development services and programs are available to help students plan for their futures? Internships? Job search help? Alumni/ae connections?
- Where are recent graduates employed? What are they doing 5 year, 10 years later?
- How do alumni/ae stay involved with the institution?
- What is the average loan debt of a graduating student?