



Seven Suggestions to Help You Map Your Way Through College Selection & Preparation



- Career interests
- Type of school
- Academic programs and degrees
- Location and size
- Costs and financial assistance
- Academic reputation and accreditation
- Sports or extracurricular activities



- Tour the campus; talk with students; visit a class; tour the town.
- Meet with a financial assistance representative.
- Research your academic program with an advisor.
- Verify admission requirements with an admissions counselor.
- Determine the actual cost of attending the school.
- Tour residence halls and eat in a dining hall if you are planning to live on campus.



- See which schools match your program and degree needs.
- Compare information from college representatives, bulletins, and Web sites.
- Find out employment rates for graduates.
- Ask about job placement services.



- Ask your school counselor to explain the options available to you.
- Talk to your parents about your college expectations.
- Visit with professionals working in the field you plan to study.



- Verify and meet early deadlines!
 - Admission and housing applications
 - Required institutional fees
 - Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and other financial assistance forms



- Talk to the financial aid office about:
 - Federal, state, and institutional financial assistance programs
 - Financial assistance processes and tuition payments

- In addition to federal and state sources, check out private sources of financial assistance, too. Remember, you must reapply for financial assistance each year you are in school.
- Stay eligible for financial assistance by enrolling at least half time and making satisfactory academic progress.



- Explore federal, state, and institutional financial assistance before turning to loans. Your goal is to limit the amount of money you may have to borrow by:
 - Using federal loans first because interest rates tend to be lower and are capped.
 - Shopping around for the best interest rates, borrower benefits, and subsidies if you use a FFELP (Federal Family Education Loan Program) loan.
 - Borrowing only what you need and follow an academic plan to reduce unnecessary costs.
 - Remembering you must repay student loans even if you do not graduate, or are unable to obtain employment.

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