

Where to Attend College

Things to consider when deciding what college to attend.

Deciding on a college to attend can be overwhelming. After all, there are thousands of them across the country, all great schools for different reasons. Of course with the price of application fees and entrance essays to write, you need to narrow your selection down to just a few. What factors should you consider when applying to colleges?

COST

The price of tuition at colleges/universities rises every year so it is best to take cost into consideration when looking for a college. Usually public colleges within your state of residence are cheaper since a discount is given to in-state students. In-state students usually get more in financial aid from their state such as grants and scholarships. If you decide to go to an out-of-state school, you may pay more in tuition and you may not get as much in grant money. However if you are offered a scholarship for tuition, then of course that will make tuition cheaper or free so of course you should re-consider your options if you are offered scholarship(s).

LOCATION

You should take location into account when deciding on a college. If you are a homebody who likes to be around your family you may want to consider colleges closer to home. If you are a student who wants to try something new and is not afraid of getting homesick, then go ahead and check out schools further away. Just be aware of travel costs to come home for visits.

It is also helpful to check out the major cities surrounding the college. If you think you may want to relocate to that area after you graduate, then you can check out the job market ahead of time and see what the area is like before you commit to a certain school.

FAMILY ALUMNI

Is your mother or father an alumnus from a certain college? Colleges usually like to see a family legacy in the making and are more open to admitting the children of former students.

FRIENDS

Are most of your friends going to one specific school? Or are they all branching out? Although you shouldn't solely base your decision on where your friends are going, it may be something to consider so you have a friend already when you start your freshman year. You will of course meet new friends, however, it would be nice to see a familiar face on campus.

REPUTATION

Have you checked into the reputation of your intended schools? If the school you had your hopes on is ranked as one of the top academic schools in the country, then consider it as a definite option. If the school you want to attend is known as the number one party school in the country, you may want to think twice. You can still attend the "popular party school" as long as you are not easily distracted so that you can still focus on your studies.

MAJOR

You should have an intended major in mind before applying to different colleges. Some colleges are known for their business programs while others are famous for their education programs. It would be helpful if you researched different schools and found out what majors are offered so that you have your options open.

Remember, it is also wise to apply to enough schools so that you have your first choice, second choice, backup, etc., however it can get expensive and overwhelming if you apply to tons of schools. You are not bound to whatever school you choose in the end. You can always transfer, however you may lose credits that you have already earned or you may have to retake certain classes, so it is helpful if you are content with your decision.