

COLLEGE BOUND

YOUR APPLICATION MENTORSM

Optimizing your College Visit

March, 2009

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Free Parent/Student Upcoming Seminars

Colleges and Post Secondary Options for Students with Learning Differences and/or

ADHD: Making a Successful
Transition from High School to
College.

March 18, 7:30
Edison Intermediate School in
Westfield
(LD Fair)

March 24, 7:30 pm
Scotch Plains Library

QUICK TIP FOR COLLEGE FAIRS

*Bring pre-printed labels with
contact information, e.g. Name,
Address, Phone, E-Mail,
Graduation Date, and High
School*

Spring break is an ideal time to visit colleges and many of you already have your trips planned. I put together some tips below on how to make the most out of your visits. I also included a section on "virtual college tours" because the cost of visiting schools, especially those far away can be prohibitive.

The key in visiting schools is to get a better understanding of your needs and to also show colleges that you have a genuine interest in their school. This year, in particular, colleges are having a hard time knowing who is really interested and who has just added the application as an afterthought. They've even given it a term; they call them "stealth applicants". Those are students whose first contact with the college is in the form of an application. Colleges are uncertain how to gauge interest among "stealth applicants", particularly because so much research can be done online. To take yourself out of the "stealth applicant" pool and into the interested pile, it's important to have some form of contact, even if it is over the phone or by e-mail.

Finally, Diane has written some tips on visiting schools for students with an LD and need extra support.

THE COLLEGE VISIT

There are two phases of the college visit. The first stage is to help you determine which type of school is best for you in terms of size, location and curriculum. I recommend you visit 2-3 schools that are close to where you live including one large state school and one smaller liberal arts college. The second stage is to target schools that seem like they would be a good fit and focus on the following areas:

- 1. Academics** How are the majority of classes taught? Are they lectures or class discussions? How intense is the work load? Is there a core curriculum that all students are required to take? How difficult is it to meet these required classes? Does the college have a strong program in your intended field of study? How much time do students spend studying?
- 2. Student life** What are the students like? Do they seem like people you would be friends with? What do the students do for fun? Are they more artsy or athletic? More studious or more interested in partying? Are the fraternities and sororities? How much do they dominate the social scene? What percentage of kids stays on campus over the weekend? What percentages of kids participate in sports? Theater? The Newspaper? You fill in the blank for your passion.
- 3. Campus** How does the campus make you feel? Can you see yourself here

RATING SYSTEM FOR SCHOOLS

1. Top Choice
2. High Interest
3. Medium Interest
4. No Interest

TYPES OF SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE

- Note-takers
- Distraction free/or distraction reduced testing
- Use of calculators
- Adaptive technology (Kurzweil, Inspiration)
- Extended time for assignments/tests
- Support groups
- Priority registration
- Professional vs. peer tutors
- Academic advising

for the next four years? What are the dorms like? ? How easy is it to get to town or a nearby city? What amenities does the campus offer kids in terms of a gym, theaters, transportation to town or local attractions? What is nearby and are they things you enjoy doing?

4. General Learning environment What is the general feel of the campus in terms of learning and community? Are professors accessible? How so? What is the political climate, are all views accepted or does the campus lean more towards conservative or liberal views? Is the curriculum more focused on liberal arts, hands-on learning, pre-professional programs, etc.? How does this type of learning style match your own?

5. Financial How much does it cost for tuition, room and board? What percentage of students receives aid? Is it needs based or merit based aid? Are there merit based scholarships available? How many students receive them and do you think you would qualify?

After your visit write down your overall impression of the school in about 2-3 sentences and determine if you want to keep it on your list. Also, make sure you sign in with admissions, so that they can note that you have visited the school.

The Virtual Visit: How to show an interest if you can't visit the school

Call or E-mail someone from admissions

You can call and speak with someone from admissions and explain that you do not have the time or money to visit the campus right now, but you are indeed very interested in learning more about the college. Have a list of questions ready to ask about the school. You may also e-mail someone from admissions and ask the same questions or see if they can put you in contact with a current student or alumni from your high school or area. I have had some students develop an ongoing relationship with an admission person and this has helped the admissions person get to know the candidate well. It also shows initiative on your part.

Participate in a local College Fair

There are local college fairs at various high schools throughout the year and many representatives from colleges also visit high schools. If you do not have any information at your school, call the college of interest and find out when someone from their school will be near where you live. Make it a point to speak with the representative (it is often an alumni or the admissions person who handles your area). Fill out an information form. *Tip: when you go to a college fair bring pre-printed name, address, phone and e-mail to give to colleges of interest.*

Participate in a Virtual College Fair

Check out this new venue to visit schools. College Week Live is hosting a virtual college fair on March 25th and 26th. Check out this link.

<http://www.collegeweeklive.com>

TIPS FOR VISITING COLLEGES FOR STUDENTS WHO NEED EXTRA SUPPORT by Diane

If possible, try to set up a meeting with the director of disability service to make sure that your needs can be met. Often there are different departments for physical disabilities, psychological disabilities, learning disabilities, and ADHD, so be sure to set up a meeting with the division that meets your personal needs.

If they say that they do not set up meetings with prospective students, ask if you can just stop by to see where their office is located and perhaps when you arrive you can ask if there is someone who can speak with you for a few minutes. Sometimes, just speaking with the secretary can give you some sense of how they staff their program and the institution's commitment to the program. Below are some example questions that will help you optimize your visit.

1. Is there a fee for services? If so, how much is it?
2. How are accommodations granted? What documentation is required?
3. What accommodations and services are available?
4. How long has the program been in existence?
5. How many students are receiving services?
6. What is the application process for your program or services? (This varies widely from school to school)
7. Does your institution offer substitutions or waivers for foreign language or math courses? If so, what documentation is required? What is the process?
8. How often does the student meet with their advisor/counselor?
9. Is there informal coaching?
10. Do you offer study skills and/or learning strategies courses? Are they offered for credit?
11. Do you expect any changes in your support services in the near future?

[If you haven't already, please call to set up a sophomore or junior consultation.](#)

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