

*The college visit is an important part of the college admissions process, but parents may not be sure how best to participate in and maximize that visit. This article offers some specific suggestions for getting both parents and students started thinking about productive questions to ask during a visit.*

### Some possible questions regarding student concerns:

Here are some suggestions of questions your student might want to ask – or you might want to ask if your student won't. (Remember, there are no right or wrong answers – just information to be gathered.)

- Who teaches most freshman classes? Full professors? Teaching assistants? If there are many teaching assistants, how are they trained?
- What are the most popular majors or programs that you offer?
- How many students enter this school undecided about major? What do you do to help students explore possible majors?
- If I qualify for Federal Work Study, how many jobs are available on campus? How competitive is it to get a job? What types of jobs are there? How/when do you apply?
- Tell me about the different types of living arrangements on campus. Do first year students live in separate housing?
- Are freshmen allowed to have cars? What percent of students have cars?
- How do students get off campus? Is there a shuttle? Where does it go? When does it run? Are there public transportation options?
- What are town/college relations like? Are there joint activities that are attended by townspeople and college students? Does the college get involved in community events? Are there community service opportunities available in the surrounding areas?
- Is there a public safety pick up service available late at night? What if I'm alone and I need to get to the other side of campus? Can I call someone?
- How is advising done? Will I have an academic advisor? How are advisors assigned? Do some advisors advise only first year students? Will I have an advisor in my major? What if I am undecided about a major?
- How diverse is the campus? Where are most of the students from?
- What opportunities are there on campus for first year students? How many first year students work on the newspaper, TV station, theater shows, music groups, student government, and sports teams?

- What are the biggest campus traditions?
- There's somewhere I'd like to see that wasn't included on the tour, can someone take me there?
- I'd like to talk to a student or faculty member in the major that I'm considering. Can someone arrange a meeting for me? (Note: if you want to speak to someone specific, it is best to make arrangements for this prior to your campus visit to be sure that someone will be available.)

## Some possible questions of concern to parents:

There are some questions that will not interest your student, but may be important to you, as a college parent. Don't hesitate to ask some of these. You may need to be sure to address these questions to college personnel rather than students.

- What is the college retention rate? What percentage of students graduate in four years? In five years? If the rate is not very favorable, do you have a sense of why so many students fail to graduate from this college?
- What is your parental notification policy? What will I know if my student is caught drinking or is in trouble of some kind?
- What are your policies regarding FERPA? How do you handle FERPA issues?
- What are the campus safety protocols in case of emergency? How is information communicated to students? To families?
- Did your school participate in the NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) studies? If so, are the results available?
- Do you have a Parent Association? If so, what does the group do? Are they active on campus or do they just raise money? How many parents participate?
- Who is the point of contact for parents? If I have questions or concerns, who do I call?
- Does the college communicate regularly with parents? If so, how?
- Residence Assistants work very closely with students in the residence halls. What types of training do these students receive? How are these students selected? Are they all upperclassmen?

Asking the right questions on a campus visit will help you gather important information as you and your student discuss your student's decision about college. Your student will need to put all of the pieces of information together until they add up to the right fit. You can help your student by asking questions and making the most of your college visit.

## About College Parents of America

College Parents of America is the nation's only membership organization of current and future college parents.

Founded in 1997, our mission is to assist families in the successful preparation, transition, adjustment and completion through college.

College Parents of America provides its members with the advantage of valuable benefits and advocacy that protect and maximize their family's college investment and the resources to support their student's achievement.

For more information about College Parents of America, visit [www.CollegeParents.org](http://www.CollegeParents.org)

