

College Fair Guidelines for Students

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The college fair is a great way for you to learn about many colleges by talking to their admissions representatives all in one place. Here are some tips to make the most of this terrific opportunity:

Register online so you don't have to write your name everywhere. They will scan your nametag at each table, so pre-registering is the way to go.

Don't go alone--if it is at all possible, go with a parent or one friend (one friend is preferable, as more than that can be a distraction and might cause you to giggle/look unprofessional). The reason for not going alone is simple: you will each hear and remember different pieces of the information. Since this day can be an information overload, it is best to have multiple ears at work.

Dress nicely--"church clothes", not "workout clothes" nor "interview clothes"--you don't need to look too serious. No ties.

Take a backpack or bag--you will collect many flyers, pamphlets and applications

Show up early or on time--the fair usually lasts only 3-4 hours and you want to have as much leisure time as possible.

Take a list of schools in which you are interested--have a preliminary list of schools ready based upon the list of attending schools published online. Research the list beforehand and decide upon your target schools to visit at the fair. At the door you will get a map, and in just a few simple moments you can chart an efficient course for yourself. Save your energy in every way you can.

Do browse--don't pass a table just because it's not on your list. Take your time and follow your curiosities. Explore.

Take your time--don't rush from booth to booth. Relax and have fun. This is part of the dreaming process!

Shake hands, introduce yourself, and make good eye contact--most teenagers won't. Talk--if you are with your parents, YOU need to be the one doing most of the talking. Parents need to try to listen and not talk as much.

Take notes--after you leave each table, jot down a few important points. This is VERY important because the schools can all start to sound alike at some point, and it can be difficult to separate them in your mind unless you have some key details.

Ask questions at the table--this is especially important if you are terrifically interested in a particular school. You must look interested; just make sure you don't come across as bizarre in your interest. "Fixation" is classified as bizarre. You need to look open minded and rational in your interest, and do not be pushy at the table. Be polite to the other students.

Stay several minutes at least--peruse the literature and take something.

Ask some intelligent questions--see attached list, the length of the conversations will vary.

Do not monopolize the admission officer's time--this is critical if the booth is very, very busy, because you can actually make a bad impression if you seem insensitive or selfish.

Look for booths that aren't busy--you can have amazing conversations with someone who is bored and you can discover great schools!

FILL OUT ANY CARD THEY OFFER--this will usually go on record and will certainly get you on their mailing list. If they offer to scan your nametag, YES.

THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME AND SMILE. You can shake hands again.

Sample intelligent questions:

- Do you offer _____? Could you tell me about the program?
- How can I best prepare a strong application for your school?
- Is it to my advantage to declare a major on my application, or is it best to wait?
- What areas of your application are most important?
- Is it to my advantage to apply early? If so, when and why?
- Which standardized tests do you like to see from your candidates? (SAT I/II, ACT, AP, IB)
- Is it possible to characterize the student community at your school?
- What are class sizes like at your school?
- What is the professor-student relationship like at your school?
- What are the two strongest programs at your school?
- What makes your school unique?
- What does your school value?
- What kind of student would be happiest at your school?
- May I send additional letters of recommendation?
- May I schedule an interview?
- Is it possible to schedule an overnight campus visit?
- What are most students doing on Tuesday night? Friday? Sunday?
- Would you describe your curriculum as more traditional or innovative?