

# College Representative Visits at Your High School

By Susanna de Chenonceau, M.Ed., College Counselor

The person who will be reading your application and deciding if you get in or not usually makes a visit to your high school to present info on their college and gauge your personal interest level. You, therefore, NEED to be at this visit. These visits occur from the first week of school through late November.

Check the list posted outside the guidance office and posted online (check daily - it is updated constantly in the fall, at least daily). These visits are scheduled all year and you can sign up and be excused from class to go. It's free research and a chance to make a good first impression on the person who will very likely be the main reader of your application - this presentation is usually given by the person deciding if you get in or not.

Show up early and talk to them while they wait, or at the very least be on time - do not show up late. You only get one chance to make a first impression. If late is all you can be, it's better to go late than to not go at all. Come in silently and smile sheepishly, then take a seat anywhere or stand in the back if it's crowded. You don't need to say anything. Just smile shyly to let them know you're sorry for the interruption.

Sit up front and make eye contact the whole time. Nod occasionally and look interested.

Dress nicely - "church clothes", not "workout clothes" nor "interview clothes"--you don't need to look too serious.

Take notes - Listen carefully to the presentation and jot down important points. Write down any questions that come to mind. Pay attention to make sure they're not answered later in the talk. This is VERY important because you don't want to look like you weren't listening. Also, the schools can all start to sound alike at some point, and it

can be difficult to separate them in your mind unless you jot down some key details. Stay afterward - most students won't. It is absolutely appropriate to listen while the admissions officer answers other students' questions. Just stand at a respectable distance and don't interrupt.

Shake hands, introduce yourself and make good eye contact - most teenagers won't. Ask some intelligent questions - see attached list; the length of the conversations will vary. Be careful not to ask questions that were already answered.

Stay several minutes at least - peruse the literature and take something. GET A BUSINESS CARD and keep track of it. This person is likely the person who will be reading your application and you want to be able to communicate easily with them in the future when you have questions about your app.

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

Conversely, if they aren't busy - you can have a great conversation with someone who is bored.

FILL OUT ANY CARD THEY OFFER - this will usually go on record and will certainly get you on their mailing list. THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME AND SMILE. You can shake hands again. Send a follow-up thank you email.

## Sample intelligent questions (don't let them see this list)

- What are the strongest programs at 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?
- 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 apply early? If so, when and why?
- Which standardized tests do you like to see from your candidates? (SAT I/II, ACT)
- Do you require or accept SAT II's? Do you prefer any?
- 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 makes your school unique?
- May I send additional letters of recommendation?
- May I schedule an interview?
- Is it possible to schedule an overnight campus visit?
- Would you describe your curriculum as more traditional or innovative?