



Questions for you to ask to find the right college

Academic questions

1. Is there a core curriculum? If so, what are the distribution requirements?
2. How extensive is faculty academic advising?
3. What is the return rate for second-year students?
4. What percentage of students graduate within four years?
5. As a follow-up, ask about the main reasons why students leave without graduating.
6. Is there an Honors Program? If so, what does it consist of?
7. To what extent do undergraduates participate in faculty research?
8. Is there a writing center to help with student essays?
9. Is tutoring available?
10. How many students will be in my first year courses and introductory courses?
11. Are those courses taught by full-time faculty or by graduate assistants? (Note, if this is an undergraduate college only, this question shouldn't be asked because there are no graduate assistants.)
12. What is the percentage of students who, after graduation, go to work, go to graduate school, do something else? What else are they doing?
13. What are the principal reasons students leave or transfer out?

Facilities

1. What are the dorms like?
2. Will I be living in a single, double, or triple room?
3. Are the dorms wired for the Internet?
4. Can I have a car on campus, and how convenient is parking?
5. What does parking cost?
6. How far is the campus from an airport or train station?
7. How available are computers for student use on campus?
8. What are the library and computer lab hours?
9. What is the quality of the specific facilities that are most important to me?

Describe the college's resources for first-year students – computers, library, access to special equipment, such as in labs, etc.

Health, Safety, and Security

1. How is the student health program organized?
2. How far away is the nearest fully equipped hospital?
3. How well does the college accommodate the physically challenged?
4. Are substance-free dorms available?
5. What does campus security consist of?
6. What is the most frequently reported on-campus crime?
7. Have there been any serious incidents of on-campus crime in recent years?
8. How are campus security personnel trained and credentialed?

Social

1. How extensive is Greek life on campus?
2. What social activities does the college sponsor?
3. What social activities are available in the surrounding community?
4. What do students typically do in their "down time"?
5. Is this a "suitcase college?" (A school where most of the students leave on weekends. If you are not one of the students leaving it makes for a very quiet, dead, campus on weekends)
6. What distinguishes this school from others?
7. Among extracurricular organizations at the college, which seem to be the most active, the most vital?
8. What kind of person would be happy on this campus? Unhappy?
9. What are the current issues of concern among the students?
10. How active and effective is student government?
11. What are the opportunities for participating in intercollegiate or intramural sports?

12. What type of housing is available to first-year students?
13. How are roommates chosen?

Financial Aid

1. What kinds of work-study jobs are available?
2. What percentage of students receive financial aid and what does the typical package provide?
3. Are there academic/talent scholarships available?

Admission questions

When you visit a college, never be afraid to ask an admission officer detailed questions about the evaluation process. Ask them if they recalculate GPA, and if so, how.

Ask them, under the recalculated scale, what kinds of GPAs generally get admitted to the college. Even when guidebooks report average GPAs, there's no way for you to know if the school is reporting recalculated GPAs — unless you ask.

Would I have been accepted last year? Whether or not you get into a selective college depends mainly on whom you're competing against. Since admissions officers can't predict the exact mix of applicants in any given year, asking about last year makes it easier for them to assess your chances.

Questions of professors

1. How much homework do you assign each week?
2. How many tests and papers do you give each semester?
3. Do you teach any classes with over 50 students?
4. Are you available to give students individual help if they need it?
5. What are your office hours each week?
6. What common mistakes do freshmen make in their first semester classes?

Questions for students

1. Is it difficult to get an appointment with a professor?
2. If you are not doing well in a course are the professors willing to talk to you about how you can improve?
3. How would you rate the teaching skills of your professors?
4. What was your favorite class your first year? Why?
5. What was the biggest class you took your first year?
6. What was the smallest?
7. Were you able to get enough individual attention in the larger classes?
8. How easy is it to get into the classes you want?
9. How much time do you spend doing homework each night?
10. How many papers and tests do you have in a semester?
11. What did you do last weekend? Do most students stay on campus during the weekends?
12. What is the most important social event of the year?
13. What type of individual would not be comfortable at this school?
14. How do you like the food?
15. Do you and your friends feel safe on campus?
16. What are the residence halls like?
17. Do the students take an active part in the discussion in class?
18. What other colleges did you apply to?
19. Why did you apply to this college?

Other Questions

What is distinctive about your school? Try to get beyond the usual platitudes about academic excellence. Each school has a different idea of its mission, which tells you a lot about its character.

What sets students here apart from those at similar schools? If this is the Western Michigan University, ask about the differences between the Ferris State University and Central Michigan University. You'll probably be considering those competing schools (and the interviewer will know it). Try to zero in on where each one stands in relation to the others.

What are the most common career paths for graduates? Find out whether the aspirations of past graduates match yours. Is this school a feeder for Wall Street, or does everyone want to join the Peace Corps after graduation?