

A CHECKLIST OF CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE

Academics, athletics and affordability are just a few things to consider when choosing a traditional undergraduate college experience. It may feel overwhelming to review and process all of these aspects in order to find the best fit and ensure your career dreams align with your college decision. As you create your checklist, here is a list of factors to consider:

ACADEMICS

- High quality majors and programs are important, does this school “make the grade?”
- I want the ability to see the world while growing academically; is there a study abroad program?
- Being in an Honors program is important to me, do they have one?
- Does the school have accessible professors with desirable skill sets?
- Can you talk to professors about your faith?
- Do professors connect with students and know them by name?
- Do they offer traditional, online, graduate and doctoral programs?
- Reputation is important, what program(s) is the college known for?
- Will I graduate in four years? Is there a guarantee?
- Are there opportunities to complete internships?
- Are the accreditations and recognitions distinct?
- Does the college offer transformative experiences?
- Is the school student-focused?

AFFORDABILITY

- Managing costs is important; can I afford tuition, room, board and fees?
- What is the “sticker price” and what can I expect to pay?
- What percentage of the student body receives financial aid?
- What is the tuition of private colleges versus SUNY colleges?
- Are there opportunities for scholarships, grants and loans?
- Debt is an important factor for me; how much will I have to pay back in loans?
- Will I get a job after college to help pay back my loans?
- Are students able to pay back loan debt? (evaluated by their loan default rate)

SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

- Is career development, preparation and planning offered over the four years?
- How many students receive a job offer before graduation?
- Are graduates employed and working in their field of study?

CAMPUS

- Does the distance from home meet my needs?
- Is the location of campus close to surrounding cities?
- Can I afford to go home for holidays and visits?
- Consider how you like to spend your leisure time; what are places to visit and things to do nearby?
- How does the local foodie scene stack up?
- Is the environment safe, supportive and fun?
- Being a sports fan is important; how is the school spirit?
- Getting involved is important; is there a wide variety of campus clubs and organizations?

CAMPUS SIZE

- Do you prefer a small or big campus, or maybe something in between?
- Do you thrive in big or small groups of people?
- Do you prefer a 10:1 student to faculty ratio or 20:1?
- Do you want professors to know your name or just be an ID #?
- Learning and growing are key factors; will you be transformed at the campus?

RESIDENCE LIFE

- Does the residence life experience offer the best combination of personalized attention, fun activities, commitment to students and the opportunity for social success?
- Does the residence life staff support students?
- Will you be able to meet new people easily? Are the Resident Assistants accessible and approachable? Are the students friendly?
- Are there experiences and activities for students on the weekend?
- Does it reflect healthy interactions with others?
- Are there opportunities to meet new people, develop relationships and learn from others different from me?
- Do others show respect, compassion and understanding?
- Housing is an important factor when choosing; does the quality and amenities of residence halls meet my needs?

ATHLETICS

- Are the Student-athlete academic success and outcomes strong?
- If an NCAA College; is there a focus on student-athlete academic success through technology, tutoring and access to academic advisors?
- If an NCAA Division college, do they have the ability to give athletic scholarships to players?
- Does the coaching staff make athletes feel comfortable and supported while helping them develop their skills in a sport?
- Do they have state-of-the-art facilities and equipment?
- Are there strong amenities in the athletic complex?

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS

- Do they celebrate their religious legacy and make it part of the learning experience?
- Is it an uplifting and inspirational environment?
- Does the experience help to grow character and faith?

FOOD

- Are the campus meal packages affordable and of good quality?
- Are there accommodations for special dietary needs?
- Do current students like the food on campus?
- "Thumbs up" for the local food scene?

DIVERSITY

- Are there professors and students who look like you?
- Do you see yourself fitting in and being comfortable?
- Does the campus appear diverse when visiting?
- Is there a sense of community?

FRIENDLINESS

- Do people interact with you?
- Do you see yourself meeting friends for life at the college?
- Do people hold the door for you?
- Is the college president genuine?
- Does it feel like home?
- Do you feel like you belong?



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