Choose the College that’s Best For YOU

With 4,000+ colleges and universities in the U.S., how do you find the one that’s right for you? Here are some things you’ll want to consider:

INSTITUTIONAL ELEMENTS

**TYPE**
- PUBLIC OR PRIVATE

**SIZE**
- LARGE
- MEDIUM
- SMALL

**LOCATION**
- RURAL
- URBAN
- SUBURBAN
- INTERNATIONAL

**PROGRAMS**
Available majors and academic opportunities (study abroad, internships, cooperative degree programs, etc.)

**FOCUS**
- Transfer institution offering agreements/guaranteed admission with 4-year schools
- Specialized
  - Professional/industry-focused (culinary, art, aeronautics)
  - Historically Black Colleges and Universities
  - Hispanic-Serving Institutions
  - Tribal Colleges
  - Religious/Faith-based
  - Research intensive vs. teaching focused

ACADEMIC CHARACTERISTICS

**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**
Large vs. small. What is the student-to-faculty ratio? (Be sure to ask how the ratio is determined.)

**SPECIAL PROGRAMS**
Cooperative degree programs, such as combined bachelor’s/master’s programs, guaranteed admission programs from community college to a 4-year school.

**STUDENT SATISFACTION**
Retention and graduation rates. How many students return for their sophomore year? How many students graduate in 4 years? 6 years?

**NEXT STEPS**
How many students go on to grad school? Can the school help me find a job? Where are the school’s alumni working?

**SUPPORT MECHANISMS**
Find out about
- First-year experience programs, freshman seminar classes
- Academic advising and facilities, such as Math Labs, Writing Centers, Disability Support Services, and support for "undeclared majors"

HOW TO GET TO KNOW A SCHOOL

**VISIT**
- Walk around to get a sense of the climate and culture of the school
- Talk to students and faculty
- Eat in the cafeteria

**IF YOU CAN’T VISIT IN PERSON**
- Take a virtual tour
  - Visit the school’s website
  - Subscribe to a school’s blog
  - Engage in a virtual chat
- Talk to students who attended your high school and now attend that college or university

**CAMPUSSFACTORS**

**THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**
Learn about clubs, leadership opportunities, campus culture and tradition, religious resources, wellness programs, and campus safety.

**FINANCIAL ASPECTS**

**MONEY MATTERS**
Factor in federal, state, and institutional or merit aid.

**THE REAL BOTTOM LINE**
Use a school’s “net price calculator.” Every college/university is required by the federal government to provide this on its website to help you figure out how much you will really pay for the school, factoring in any aid and awards.

**YOU DECIDE!**
Your college experience is yours.

Time to shine
Go somewhere where you can thrive and grow.

Friendly competition
The best place for you may not be the same as the best place for your friends.

Attention, parents...
The best place for you may not be the one your mom or dad thinks is best. While finances must be considered, the ultimate choice should be a joint decision.

Remember to have fun as you explore. Then, pick a college or YOUniversity that is truly yours!

ABOUT THAT MAJOR
Your major doesn’t necessarily dictate who you will be or what you will do.

Actor Matthew McConaughey
Pre-law (University of Texas at Austin)

Comedian/host Conan O’Brien
History and American literature (Harvard)

Actress Brooke Shields
Romance languages (Princeton)

Basketball legend Michael Jordan
Geography (University of North Carolina)

About 80% of college students change their major at least once.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

RESOURCES
- College Scorecard, from the U.S. Department of Education
- https://collegescorecard.ed.gov
- NHS college admission planning webinar series; for NHS members and parents
- www.nhs.us/webinar
- NHS Virtual College Fair ➔ www.nhs.us/virtualcollegefair
- NHS Scholar Dollars; a scholarship search tool for National Honor Society (NHS) members ➔ www.nhs.us/scholardollars

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About the NHS Virtual College Fair:
www.nhs.us/virtualcollegefair
To show you’re truly interested in a school, make sure you cite any and all of your engagement experiences when applying. Many schools now look for “demonstrated interest” on your application.