

Choosing the Right College

Use the checklist below to identify the characteristics that matter most to you. Ask your parents to do the same. Then compare and discuss your answers. Search for schools that match your key criteria and fit you academically, socially and culturally:

My Top Criteria

- athletic offerings
- campus safety
- campus setting (urban, suburban, small town or rural)
- diversity of student population
- extracurricular organizations and events
- faculty experience and expertise
- financial aid availability and deadlines
- geographic location
- housing availability and cost
- length, time and location of classes
- number of students enrolled
- percentage of graduates employed within one year
- percentage of students who graduate
- percentage of students who return the following year
- programs of study (majors and minors)
- school facilities and equipment
- school or program reputation
- student-to-faculty ratio (class size)
- support services (meals, counseling, job placement)
- transportation availability and cost
- tuition and fees

My Parents' Top Criteria

- athletic offerings
- campus safety
- campus setting (urban, suburban, small town or rural)
- diversity of student population
- extracurricular organizations and events
- faculty experience and expertise
- financial aid availability and deadlines
- geographic location
- housing availability and cost
- length, time and location of classes
- number of students enrolled
- percentage of graduates employed within one year
- percentage of students who graduate
- percentage of students who return the following year
- programs of study (majors and minors)
- school facilities and equipment
- school or program reputation
- student-to-faculty ratio (class size)
- support services (meals, counseling, job placement)
- transportation availability and cost
- tuition and fees

If you're still having trouble identifying what's important to you, ask yourself:

- Why do I want to go to college?
- What do I want to get out of college?
- How will college help me work toward my goals?
- Which college will best/least help me work toward my goals?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of going now rather than later?
- Does it matter how many students are enrolled with me?
- Do I want to be with students who have diverse ideas, viewpoints and backgrounds?
- In which type of campus setting am I most/least comfortable?