



PARENT'S GUIDE TO A VIRTUAL COLLEGE VISIT

COLLEGE TOUR CHECKLIST

Taking a tour is just one way to help your student decide where to go to college. When visiting campuses isn't a good option, use this checklist to virtually experience each campus and help make your decision.

■ TAKE AND EXPAND A VIRTUAL TOUR

Many colleges have technology that allows you and your student to tour campus virtually. Others offer videos and interactive maps. Beyond the official tours, there are other ways to expand your perspective. Jump on Google Maps and check out the surrounding neighborhood. Treat it like you're planning a vacation. Are there restaurants, music venues, coffee shops and stores nearby?

■ CHAT WITH CURRENT STUDENTS

Talking with current students is a great way to get a sense of how your student will fit in on campus. Not only will they have perspectives to share on classes, they're the best group to ask questions about student life, athletics, organizations and other aspects of the college experience. Contact the admissions department at each college to connect with current students.

■ JOIN AN ONLINE CLASS

With all classes temporarily online, your student can ask the admissions department to virtually sit in on a class so they can experience what it's like. This is their best chance to get a sneak peek at their major of interest. And even if they're undecided, joining an online class will give them a first-hand idea of discussions, assignments and lecture styles at that college.



COLLEGE TOUR CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)

■ SPEAK WITH A PROFESSOR

Another important way to get a feel for academic life at a particular college is to virtually meet with a professor. They can talk to you about the program your student is interested in, how to best support their goals and interests or even help your student choose a direction if they're undecided.

Professors are not only good sources for academic information, your student can also use the opportunity to ask them about their favorite things on campus, why they chose to teach at that particular college and more.

■ DO THOROUGH ONLINE RESEARCH

Now more than ever, it's important for your student to carefully read through a college's website. They should take their time researching programs offered, internship opportunities, extracurricular activities and organizations that align with their interests and goals.

Then go beyond the college's official site and use Google to find out if there are student-run blogs, news articles or ranking websites that might broaden their perspective on the school.

■ CHECK OUT THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Social media offers yet another way to interact with your student's college of choice. They should take a look at what they're posting, then go beyond their main Twitter, Instagram or Facebook pages. Do they have accounts dedicated to your student's interests and passions? Can they look at hashtags or location tags to see what their students are posting about?

■ TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OTHER ONLINE OFFERINGS

Be sure to also schedule virtual meetings with admissions counselors or financial aid officers. During those meetings, you can find out if they are offering any online panels, webinars or live discussions that you can join.

AFTER YOUR VIRTUAL VISIT

- Sit down with your student and review notes.
- Reach out to the people you spoke with on the tour with any follow-up questions.
- Chat with your student about their financial plan.

