

How to Choose a College: Important Considerations

TRANSFER AND CAREER CENTER

Kentfield Campus Student Services Building, Room 206
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PAGE 1 OF 2

Deciding on which schools to apply to transfer to is a big decision. Many students think the best schools are the most prestigious schools, but really, students should choose schools that best fit their needs. To figure that out, reflect on the following:

Location:

1. Do you want to live on or near the campus, or live at home and commute to school?
2. Would you prefer to stay in the same area of the country, or move to a new area?
3. Given that most colleges and universities offer a variety of social and cultural events and activities, is the additional stimulation and variety offered by a city also important to you?
4. Do you have a particular academic interest, career interest, or hobby that might make easy access to a city desirable?
5. Do any of your interests suggest that a rural environment might be preferable?
6. Do factors such as personal medical considerations or other personal matters dictate a particular environment?

Size of School:

1. Is it important to you to know most of your classmates?
2. Would you prefer to be in a situation where you are always seeing and meeting new people?
3. Do you prefer having mostly small classes? Even if your chosen school is large, most of the classes for your major may be small. Ask a representative from that school to know for what the average class size is for transfer students in your major.
4. Would you like the intimacy that is associated with smaller colleges?
5. Do you prefer the relative anonymity possible at a larger college or university?
6. Do you want to have regular interactions with your professors? Look for schools with a low student to faculty ratio.

Student Body:

1. Would you like a single sex school? A coed school?
2. Do you prefer that most students come from your geographic area?
3. Do you prefer that the students come from all parts of the country and/or world?
4. Would you prefer a school with a particular religious affiliation and students of that religious belief?
5. Is it important to you that there be a significant socioeconomic mixture of students? If so, you may want to check the percentage of students receiving financial aid and the average award.
6. Do you prefer a competitive academic environment where most of the students are at or above your own level of ability and achievement?
7. Would you feel more comfortable in a less pressured academic environment where you would be at the high end of the admitted students in terms of ability and achievement?
8. What type of campus culture do you prefer? To know, visit the schools! The Transfer Club hosts campus tours every semester.

Campus Life:

1. Are fraternities/sororities important to you?
2. Would you prefer a school with specific extracurricular activities (e.g., publications, athletics, student government, clubs, professional organizations)?
3. Would you prefer a school with a large and varied extracurricular program?

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PAGE 2 OF 2

Educational Philosophy:

1. Do you prefer a school that is dedicated to the pursuit of one particular field of knowledge?
2. Do you prefer a school that has a fairly comprehensive selection of courses and majors so that you can interact with other students in many different fields?
3. Do you want a school that is dedicated solely to undergraduate teaching without graduate, professional or research divisions?
4. Or, would you prefer a school whose mission includes not only undergraduate education but also graduate education and research?
5. Do you prefer a faculty whose primary or total interest and responsibility is in undergraduate teaching and who, therefore, may be more easily accessible to you outside the classroom and office hours?
6. Or, do you prefer a faculty whose responsibilities may include both undergraduate and graduate teaching as well as research, and who may not be quite accessible outside the classroom and office hours, but who bring ongoing research into the classroom?
7. Do you mind if some of your classes are taught by graduate students instead of full professors?
8. Are you interested in innovative programs that allow for independent study, study abroad, individualized majors, working experience for academic credit, or the like?
9. Do you require specific services to better facilitate your learning?
10. Research the career center, what internships are available? What employers recruit at that campus? What majors are they recruiting for? How many students are employed from your major? Where are they employed? How many go to graduate school?
11. What does a student in your major study and work on? Are there opportunities to work on special projects in your major's department as an undergraduate student?

Cost:

1. Make sure the schools you have chosen to apply to are eligible to provide federal financial aid.
2. Use the school's financial aid calculator on their website to get an estimate of the aid you are eligible for. All schools that can offer federal financial aid are required to have these calculators available online. Just google search the school's name and "financial aid calculator".
3. Research institution specific scholarships - right away! Often times the scholarships will be due before or at the same time as the application to the school. Don't let the deadlines pass you by.
4. Do not dismiss a school simply because you feel it is too expensive. There is a big difference between the advertised price and the price many students actually pay. You will not know until you receive your financial aid award letter, after you apply. So, apply to 3-5 schools, then choose the one that best fits you and your needs, including financial needs.

Consider these points, and you will find the school that is the right fit for you.

Need more help? Check out the resources on the Transfer and Career Center website under **Choosing a University**, or stop by the center to browse through other resources.