

## **THE COLLEGE VISIT**

We strongly encourage all students and their parents to visit colleges. This should begin in the winter/spring of a student's junior year and continue through senior year. On a college visit you will learn invaluable information that will help you make an educated final choice and reduce the chances that you will be unhappy with that choice once you attend the following fall.

### **FHS has a policy and a procedure regarding college visits.**

- Both juniors and seniors are allowed to take two days off from school per year to visit colleges. As long as the procedure is followed, these absences are not counted on their attendance profile (i.e. they are considered excused absences).
- At least one day prior to the scheduled college visit, the student must bring to his or her guidance counselor a signed note from a parent or guardian stating where and when the college visit will be taking place. If there are no attendance issues or other complications, the guidance counselor will sign the note and the student will turn the note into the main office.
- Students must obtain a signed note on the college's letterhead with the date of the visit. A signed admissions counselor's business card with the date of the visit and the student's name is also acceptable. It should be returned to the student's guidance counselor.

### **What you should do:**

Visit the college's website and look for something to do with visiting campus. Typically a college offers information sessions followed by campus tours. Do both if you can. Some colleges also offer over nights and/or the option of sitting in on a class.

The following are some questions you might want to consider asking during the information session and during the tour. Tours are almost always given by students so they often have insightful information.

- Ask about safety. What is the protocol for entering the dorms? Are there people available to walk you or transport you to your dorm if you have a late night studying in the library or where ever? If the campus is spread out across a big city and safety is important ask them how they deal with this.
- How late is the library open?
- Are there quiet hours in the dorms?
- How easy is it to switch your roommate in the event you do not get along? How do they match you up in the first place?

- How available are professors? Do they have regular office hours or do you have to make appointments?
- Do I need a laptop?
- How and where do I do my laundry?
- Ask about food and meal plans. Every college has a different way of doing food.
- If you interested in a certain kind of club or activity ask about it.
- Same holds true for sports both intramural and the school teams.
- Is there tutoring or academic support?
- Summer internships and/or study abroad. Where and how much? Will your financial aid package still apply if you study in another country for a semester or a year?
- What if I'm struggling emotionally or feeling a little homesick. Where do I go for a little help and where do I go if I need more than a little help?
- Do I have to live on campus and/or are freshman guaranteed housing?
- Can I have a car?
- What is there to do once the studying is done?

This list isn't meant to be exhaustive, but only to get you going. Once you are there you will find that other parents/students have similar questions and concerns and even some questions that you hadn't even known you wanted the answers to!

**Keep a college visit journal.** Write down some thoughts and impressions. If you visit several colleges, some of the details and differences become a little fuzzy after a while. When it is time to make your choice, review your notes.

Sometimes it makes sense to set up an appointment with someone in admissions or with someone in the major or field of study you will be going into. Do this when you are trying to compare specifics about programs between different schools. (This is usually not something you should do for general information about a school, however.)

If you have been accepted into a couple different schools and you are having difficulty deciding, it may make sense to meet with their admissions staff. Minimally, you should consider visiting both schools again. See if the college will allow you to do an overnight and shadow a student in the major you are considering.

Parents if you have other children consider bringing them along to some of these visits. They will hear from someone other than you about how important it is for them to do well in school. It could be the perfect motivational experience!

It's a scary, but fun time. Take it all in and enjoy!