

## Choosing a College

There are many options for students who choose to further their education after high school. One of the first things to determine is what you want to study and what type of school you want to attend. Colleges and universities usually award four year degrees to students and offer a broad range of academic choices. Community colleges are institutions that offer certificates, diplomas, and two-year associate degrees. They may also be called technical or junior colleges. In addition, there are various career colleges that offer educational opportunities.

Several factors go into selecting a college. For many students, cost is an important consideration. When looking at the cost of a school, be sure to include items such as books, room and board, transportation, and other living expenses. You also need to decide what type of campus is right for you: large or small, in a big city or small town, in state or out of state. Other things to consider when looking at a school are the ratio of teachers to students, special programs the school offers, and extracurricular activities in which you may want to participate.

Don't limit your search to familiar institutions- just because dad went there doesn't mean it's right for you. In addition, don't choose a school simply because your boyfriend/girlfriend or best friend is going there. You will be much happier at a school that meets your own criteria. Be sure to examine the financial aid package offered by the school, before you eliminate it just because of cost. You may receive more financial aid at a more costly school.

One of the single most important things that can help you make a decision is to visit the campus. Be sure to visit when classes are in session to get the true flavor of the school. Many schools will even let you stay overnight in a campus dormitory. Ask your admissions representative if you can sit in on a freshman level class. Most schools offer tours guided by current students. This is a great time to ask questions about the classes, living arrangements, and the social life. Be sure to take notes during each visit, and compare the schools. If you do your homework, you're sure to find a good fit.