

College Planning Worksheet

Location	Location is significant for many students (and parents) when choosing their "home away from home" for the next four years. Would a student rather attend a school that is far from home to expand their network or close to home to study in a familiar environment? Aesthetically, is sunny California or Florida a student's ideal environment or do they prefer the snowy winters of the Northeast or Midwest?
Campus Setting	Colleges are found in all environments, from rural towns to bustling metros. Do students want to take advantage of the employment opportunities or nightlife found in cities or do they seek inspiration from bucolic college landscapes with easy access to the outdoors? Would a suburb offer the best of both worlds?
Size	At a small liberal arts school with 2,000 students, a student will likely become familiar with most of the students in their class. By contrast, at universities with undergraduate populations exceeding 30,000, they might see familiar faces in classes within their major, but each walk through campus will reveal fresh new faces.
Professor Accessibility	Some schools insist that their faculty prioritize the undergraduate experience. However, developing intimate relationships with professors at universities driven by research output might require more of an investment of time and energy.
Quality of Academic Program(s) of Interest	Which schools have top programs in the country (as assessed by professionals in the field) for their intended course of study? Some schools offer specialized programs perfect for students with a clear vision of their professional path, while interdisciplinary programs often appeal to students with wide-ranging interests. How important is it for a student to study their first or second choice of major in college?
Research Opportunities	If a student dreams of participating in groundbreaking research, they may be more inclined to choose a school with innovative programs incentivizing undergraduate research and/or faculty mentors who are leaders in the student's field of interest. Does the school have a track record of strong research output? How early in their undergraduate careers can students begin their outreach to professors and labs?
Sense of Community	What is the student looking for out of campus life? Do they want to attend a school with huge school spirit and numerous campus traditions or will they find community amongst others traveling to and from a commuter campus?
Sense of Competition	Students craving a challenge might like the "sink-or-swim" mentality; others might prefer a more laid-back approach to schoolwork.
Demographics	Some schools are traditional while others are progressive. Some institutions welcome specific demographics, like all-women's colleges, religiously-affiliated institutions and Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Other schools work intentionally to attract and support higher rates of international students and historically-underrepresented populations.
Athletics	Some schools really rally around their sports teams while students at other schools may never attend a game in their four years of college. How significant of a role do varsity athletics play in student life?
Cost	It's no secret that a college education is a significant investment. Which schools and universities offer aid or financial assistance programs? Are they need-blind in their assessment? Are international students extended similar benefits as domestic applicants?

School Name	Location	Campus Setting	Size	Professor Accessibility	Quality of Academic Program(s) of Interest	Research Opportunities	Sense of Community	Sense of Competition	Demographics	Athletics	Cost
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