

Several Aspects To Consider When Choosing A College

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Choosing what college or university to attend is perhaps one of the most important decisions one can make. College is not only a place of higher education but it is also a place where contacts for future employment can be made; lifetime friendships will be made and memories of which will be stored forever.

There are several other aspects to consider when choosing a college. (Information from "Planning Your College Education" by Dr. William A. Rubinfeld. The first is:

Cost: In his book Rubinfeld suggests families sit down and make out a financial statement or budget. The procedure should include "...student's savings, an approximation of possible summer earnings, income from other employment sources, clothes and transportation, allowances and hidden costs." For those unforeseen expenditures he suggests adding \$500 or \$700 more to the total.

The most expensive schools are usually private colleges. Tuition rates may range from 6,500 to 7,500 a year and room and board expenses vary from \$1,800 to \$2,800 a year. And don't forget cost of books, pocket money and entertainment. State universities, state colleges and some municipal colleges usually offer the lowest tuition rates according to Rubinfeld and students limited incomes should consider these.

All Male, All Female vs. Coed: There are those who argue that all male or all female colleges offer greater opportunities for self expression and better career preparation - more time is concentrated toward studies according to Rubinfeld. On the other hand the author continued "Most psychologists would readily dispose of this problem by stating that it is better for students to secure an education in a normal setting, "...and having the two sexes together is by far the more natural...students are prepared for community living and...coed classes enable them to receive both the male and female point of view."

Commuting vs. living away from home: Rubinfeld suggests "...If there is any possibility of living on campus, the students should make every effort to do so." Even most counselors are also in favor of living away from home.

Large vs. Small College: First let's review

the definitions of college and university. A university is an institution of higher learning with several professional graduate schools and faculties. A college is an institution of higher learning affording a general or liberal rather than technical or professional training.

It's interesting to note that a college may be within the bounds of a university. "The college within the university may be much smaller than an independent small college," Rubinfeld informed. Smaller colleges may offer easier social adjustment, greater opportunities for participation in activities and students are able to develop many more intimate acquaintanceships according to Rubinfeld. Opportunities for meeting instructors and professors seem to be greater as well. The disadvantages of a smaller college are as follows: there may be fewer course offerings and limited faculty, i.e., you may have the same professor for several courses.

Larger institutions may offer more courses, more specialty programs, larger libraries and better research facilities. It is not necessarily true that if you attend a large university that you will have a better chance in being selected to graduate schools. This conclusion was made by a study completed by Rubinfeld and his colleagues. Universities, on the whole have more prestige than colleges, but Rubinfeld added "...individual colleges may be far more renowned than individual universities."

Ratio of Students to Faculty: In considering a small or large college the institute with the lowest ratio of students per teacher should have smaller classes. Smaller classes mean more individual attention and greater opportunity for self expression. A good thing to do before attending a college or university is to visit each and ask the students on campus "Why do you like this college (university)?"

Accreditation: "Accredited" is described by Webster's New World Dictionary as the following: "...to certify as meeting certain set standards (colleges may be accredited by regional associations). One such association in New England is the New England Association in the middle states area it is the Middle States Association and the northeastern part of the U.S. is the Northeastern Association. Seems simple enough.

What might not be so simple is preferring a college then finding out that it is not accredited. Rubinfeld suggests one attend an accredited college. Even though this may not prove that a good education will be provided, in the majority of cases there will be many benefits, he explained. Also if one is preparing for a certain career it is important to check to see if the department is accredited by the professional bodies. For example the National Architectural Accrediting

Board in the field of architecture or by the American Bar Association in the field of law. These accreditations virtually insure superb education. If the profession you have chosen entails taking a state examination for licensing make sure the students from your chosen school will be allowed to take the examination.

Library: Check the library on the campus of your perspective schools. Colleges have from 10,000 to five million volumes. Many may not have over

100,000. Look for the college with a good library. While visiting beforehand notice how many people frequent the library and this may give you a good idea as to the academic level and curiosity of the student body.

Hopefully these clues on how to choose a college or university will help guide you to the institute suited especially for you. When viewing these various aspects remember that there are early admissions.



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