



7 Tips for Choosing the Right College

Choosing the right school for your undergraduate education is the first important decision of a person's life. For some it's an easy decision—they'll just go to the same school as their parents or older sibling. For others, it's a decision that requires countless hours of pensive reflection. This list is by no means complete, but the importance of this advice ranks up there with The Ten Commandments:

1. Don't go somewhere because your best friend is going there. I really hate to burst your bubble, but 99% of the friendships you made in high school won't exist by the time you graduate from college.
2. Big school or small school? There will be more things to do at a large school, and there are definitely more possibilities for networking; however, many small schools boast very tight-knit communities. Decide early on if you're more of a "big school" person or a "small school" person.
3. You don't have to know what you want to do with your life before you apply, but it definitely helps to have an idea. Many schools are renowned in certain fields of study. Some schools offer very specific programs you can't find anywhere else. You'll be ahead of the curve if you know what career you want to get into. The earlier you have a plan, the more you can tailor your education to tie in with your future.
4. Don't get too excited about leaving your parents. Before you know it, you'll be eager to go back home to visit them. You're not going to be independent from them until you start making your own money. Know this.
5. Don't go to a school just because you want to party. If your main interest in college is having a good time, then you need to sit back and re-evaluate your priorities. If you spend four years partying and not focused on school, you won't get a good job after college. You'll be passed up for people who partied a little less and studied a lot more.
6. Choose a school that feels right to you. Don't let anyone else tell you what school will be good for you—not your parents, not your friends, and not your guidance counselor. After you visit a few schools, you'll get an idea of what you want out of a school. Each school has its own personality that's created by the people there.
7. Get to know some people from the schools that interest you. If you can, spend a few days or nights at a school to feel it out. The students make the school what it is, and if you feel like you fit in, then the school is a good match.

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