

Finding the “Right Fit”

Consideration When Choosing a College



College Locations

Area of the Country

- Weather and distance from home (most common factor for many students)
- Culture of people and life style
- Proximity to future career locations
- Recreational opportunities

College Community

- City – city schools offer accessibility to a broad range of cultural, employment, and recreational opportunities. The city is a feature of the campus.
- Suburban – suburban schools offer the best of both worlds in some cases. They are a close commute to the inner cities' wide range of activities as well as found within a well developed town themselves. Offering students access to jobs, recreational activities and more.
- Small Town Rural – small town schools usually offer a wide variety of outside of class activities right on campus. Campus is the central focus.

Cost

Tuition/Room and Board

- The cost of a college education varies from about \$9,000 to over \$57,000 per year. When considering colleges, cost should be seen from the viewpoint of out of pocket expense, i.e. financial aid package.
- A tool to aide you in estimating out of pocket expense, is the NET – PRICE calculator found on college websites. These calculators can guide you to identifying colleges and universities that are a “financial fit.”

In-State Public vs. Out of State Public Costs

- In-state public schools are often less expensive.
- Some out of state schools offer highly qualified Illinois students financial incentives to attend. Ex: Google Midwest student exchange program.

Private Schools

- Charge the same tuition for in state and out of state students
- Many private schools have more private funding to offer additional financial aid and scholarship to bring down the NET-PRICE.

Transportation Costs

- Families should keep this additional cost in mind when considering college locations.

College Size

Large Schools

- Enrollment usually over 10,000 students
- Usually larger libraries and more laboratory facilities
- Usually large class sizes for general education classes in first 2 years
- More diverse curriculum and more options in specialized study
- More anonymity and privacy
- Greater variety of extracurricular activities and organizations

Small Schools

- Enrollment generally below 3,000 students
- More personal, warm atmosphere
- Usually smaller classes throughout the four years of college
- Less bureaucratic and more flexible with students
- Greater chance for participation in athletics and leadership positions
- Teachers expected to have more direct involvement with students and academic process.

Mid- Sized Schools

- Enrollment is 3,000 to 10,000 students
- More personalized approach than larger schools
- More options than small schools

Atmosphere

- A nebulous term but very important factor in college selection.
- The feeling as students walk on campus that makes them say, “I am comfortable here and feel I fit” or “I could see myself coming here”.
- The intangible that makes the college a home away from home.

