

COLLEGE & CAREER FAIR: 101

College Search

Don't be overwhelmed by the number of colleges at the fair! There are lots of factors you should consider to help you narrow down your college list:

- Size
- Location- *region of the country, state, city*
- Setting- *urban, suburban, rural*
- Distance- *location, cross-country*
- Academic Programs/Majors
- Cost- *public or private*
- Academic competitiveness... *be realistic!*
- Athletics- *to play or just to watch*
- Special Programs- *ROTC, study abroad, services for students with disabilities, pre-professional programs, accelerated programs*
- Campus Facilities- *housing, parking, dining halls, classrooms*
- Type of School- *college/university, fine arts, single sex/coed, military, HBCU*
- Social Life- *clubs, activities, greek life, ethnic/religious groups*

Questions for Colleges

Don't be shy- this is your chance to get some insider information! Below are some questions you might want to ask.

- How strong is school spirit on your campus? Are there any campus traditions?
- What is the percentage of students graduating in four years?
- What is the average class size for first year students and introductory classes? What is the student-faculty ratio?
- Can I have a car on campus?
- Which departments are your strongest?
- What research/internships are available to me?
- Does the college offer academic or merit scholarships? Is this a separate application process?
- Does the college have an honor's program? How are students selected for this program?
- Does the school have a career services center? What services do they offer? Where are students typically employed after graduation?
- Is housing guaranteed? All four years? Is living on campus required?

When you walk up to a table...

Below you will find some suggestions for College & Career Fair etiquette.

- Don't stand too far away. Sometimes it can be very hard to hear during a fair, so step right up to the table!
- Make eye contact with the recruiter/rep, introduce yourself, and shake the his/her hand.
- Don't let your parents/family members ask all the questions. This is your future!
- After you have asked your questions, let your parents/family members ask their questions too!
- Make sure you take any materials from the table that may be helpful in your search.
- Only fill out an "inquiry card" or "student information card" if you are interested in receiving more information from the institution.
- Ask the rep/recruiter if s/he will be the admission counselor you will be working with and if s/he will be the one reading your application. If so, ask for a business card.
- Always thank the rep for their time.

Military Recruiters

Military recruiters are here to help you decide if the military is a good fit for you. Below are a few questions you may want to ask to help you decide.

- Where is the closest recruitment center?
- What type of people are good candidates for the military?
- What are the benefits of joining the military?
- How does the military help you get an education? Help you get a job? How can the military help me reach my goals?
- What are typical duties of a person in this branch of the military?
- How do I enlist in the military? What are the steps?
- What is the difference between enlisting, joining the reserves, or being a part of ROTC?
- What are the steps I need to take to join the military?
- What happens after I enlist?

Careers

The following questions are things you may want to ask at a career table. They will help provide you with insight to what the job entails, how to be a better applicant, and whether or not this is a good fit career for you.

- What is a typical day like in this career?
- What type of training or education is necessary in this career?
- Does this career offer growth? What is necessary to move up in this field?
- What is the average salary/wage in this career?
- How would I apply to this career?
- What skills would I need to be successful in this career?
- What do you look for in the people you hire?
- Are there any special skills or requirements for this job?

After the College & Career Fair

As you leave the fair, you may feel overwhelmed and exhausted, but it is important to review all the information you have gathered while it is still fresh in your mind. Ask yourself the following questions: What is my best option after graduation- college, career, or military? Has your opinion on this changed at all- why? What was the most surprising/disappointing part of the night? It's a good idea to have this discussion together as a family.

Here are your next steps:

1. Review materials you have collected. It will be really tempting to never look at them again, but you should look through the pile to find the materials from the colleges, careers, or military reps that made the most impact. If you are considering college, these are the schools you will want to research, visit, and maybe even apply! If you are considering careers or military, you will want to hold onto their contact information to contact them when you are ready to apply or enlist.
2. If you are thinking about college, you will want to enter these colleges of interest into Naviance under "Colleges I'm Thinking About" to help keep track of them and help with your research.
3. Make an appointment to visit the Future Planning Center to talk about your college search. We can meet with you individually or with you and your parents.