

# Researching Your Colleges

Adapted from Researching Your Colleges at Walnut Hills High School, Cincinnati, OH (<http://whhs.cps-k12.org>)

Listed below are a number of factors that enter into the college decision.

## Geographic Location

- Area of the country (East coast, Midwest, West coast, urban, suburban, rural)
- Convenience and cost of transportation between college and home
- Climate
- Social and cultural facilities near college environment
- Unique enrichment opportunities - co-op programs, study abroad, Washington semester plans, internships, work and field terms
- Independent study opportunities
- Graduation rate/% graduating in 4 years

## Size of the Institution

- Number of students
- Average class size
- Faculty-student ratio

## Aims and Philosophy of the College

- Instructional services and equipment
- Religious affiliation or sponsorship
- Research orientation
- School calendar (semesters or quarters)

## Physical Plant

- Campus housing: guaranteed, sororities/fraternities, single sex, coed dorms, off-campus options
- Dining hall; food service
- Library facilities
- Computer availability, network/internet access, wireless connections
- Recreational and athletic facilities

## Finances

- Scholarships - need based, merit and honor
- Financial aid opportunities
- Campus, part-time job opportunities
- Work/study options
- Student loans

## Academics

- Academic pace, expected course load
- Major fields of study; interdisciplinary programs
- Degree requirements for various majors
- Grading policies
- Strength of department in which student intends to major
- Accessibility of faculty to students

## Extracurricular Opportunities

- Sports - intramurals
- Clubs and organizations of various interests

## Social Atmosphere

- Diversity of student population
- Ratio male/female
- Ratio commuter/resident

## Admission Requirements

- Grades, class ranks
- Tests – SAT, ACT, SAT II
- Advanced Placement, recognition and credit
- Early admissions/early action dates/rolling admissions
- Recommendations and interviews

## National Rank and Reputation

- Achievements of alumni
- Percentage of students entering graduate or professional school

Remember that you will probably be spending the next four years of your life on the campus. Will you be happy there? Will you be challenged? Will you be in over your head? Consider all factors in making your decision. However, there is no **one** right college. Keep an open mind as you wait for the decisions from the colleges and believe that the right door will open for you.