

College Fair Tips

Katelyn Gleason Klapper, an educational consultant at College Options, offers several tips for families to get the most out of a College Fair.

Before arriving

- **Examine the list of programs.**

Review the list of more than 100 colleges and gap programs that will be present at the College Fair to make sure you don't miss any opportunities. The current, updated lists can be found on the college fair websites.

- **Have an open mind.**

Encourage your child to explore a range of schools, even those that neither of you has heard of before.

- **Prepare good questions.**

Work with your student to prepare three or four questions about programs or campus qualities of interest. While long, substantive conversations are not likely at the College Fair, carefully thought-out questions can yield good information.

- **Be ready for inquiry cards.** Many colleges have inquiry cards at the College Fair to request more information about the college. As a great time-saver, prepare 2" x 4" labels for placing on college inquiry cards. Include name, address, email, phone number, high school name, year of graduation, possible majors of study (undecided is fine too), and extracurricular activities. Some fairs have you pre-register on-line (check the fair websites).

Once you arrive:

- **Preview the college list in the brochure.**

Make a checkmark by those colleges you want to be sure not to miss.

- **Give your student freedom to explore.**

Let students explore the College Fair on their own. Trusting your child to take full advantage of the fair's opportunities is the beginning of establishing an expectation that your child - not you - will take ownership of the college search and application process.

- **Fill out the inquiry cards.**

Encourage your student to fill out the colleges' inquiry cards. For schools that track demonstrated interest, this is a great opportunity to show it.

- **Take advantage of alumni expertise.**

Remember, some of the college representatives may be alumni volunteers. Take this chance to ask about their experiences on campus, as well as about programs and admission stats

- **Keep your mind open.**

No one college or post-graduate option is "right" for your child; there are many choices that can be a good match. Try to set aside your own experiences and biases toward certain institutions and keep an open mind. You may be pleasantly surprised to find colleges that you have never heard of that match your interests and criteria.