

The College Interview

THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

Admissions officers use interviews differently from one college to another. At some schools, interviews are not available, while at others they may be recommended. Sometimes the interviews are strictly informational. Others are evaluative and are used in conjunction with a student's application as part of the criteria to determine acceptance. If it is possible for the student to engage in an interview we recommend doing so. The interview will rarely work against a student. It is a great opportunity for the student to highlight who he/she is. Admissions counselors understand that students may be nervous and seek to make the student comfortable.

The interview has two purposes.

1. To allow the student to learn about the college.
2. To allow the college to learn about the student.

The interview should not be "twenty questions." Students, should not for example, ask questions such as, "How large is the freshmen class?" Or, "Does the college have intramural sports?"

Since the answers to those two questions are available in the college catalog or by visiting the college website, the implication is that the student was not interested enough in the college to find out on his/her own.

Know what you want to know in advance of the visit.

The interview should be a dialogue.

Students should:

- Be prompt.
- Be neat; appropriate dress is still in an easy way to impress an interviewer and is expected.
- Be well-prepared; read the catalog prior to the interview and prepare questions.
- Answer questions to the best of your knowledge.
- Be ready to volunteer information—know your scores, cum. GPA, latest grades, and what courses you are presently taking.
- Be yourself; do not pretend to be something or someone you are not.
- All interviewers are trained; do not be concerned if it is not the director of admissions.
- Above all, just relax. The interview is meant to be informative.

Thank your interviewer and send a thank you note/email.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ASKING A COLLEGE ADMISSIONS COUNSELOR

Students always want to know what they should ask during a college visit interview or when college representatives visit Harrison High School. It is sometimes helpful to ask the same questions to a series of admissions counselors to see how they each answer. It may provide the student some helpful comparisons.

- What type of student is happiest at your college?
- What type of student is most successful at your college?
- What percentage of students

EMAIL ADDRESSES

Please create a professional email address for corresponding with colleges.

For example:

First-Name.LastName@gmail.com

can be found on your campus during a typical weekend?

- What is special about the campus?
- What do you look for in an applicant?
- What kind of special services are available to assist and support students?
- What resources are provided to assist students in finding work after college?
- What support is offered to assist students in making the transition from high school to college?

A WORD TO PARENTS ON THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

It is preferable for your son or daughter to attend the admissions interview alone. If you wish to confer with the admissions staff, arrange for a separate meeting.

If, for some reason, you are present during the interview, resist the urge to speak unless the interviewer requests your input. If parents influence or dominate an interview it will not reflect well on the student.

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A SAMPLING OF QUESTIONS ASKED BY COLLEGE ADMISSIONS COUNSELORS

Actual questions asked of students during the college interview:

1. What do you think of Harrison High School?
2. What is one of your greatest accomplishments?
3. How would your friends describe you?
4. What can you contribute to our college?
5. If I went to your school and asked your friends and teachers about you, what would they say?
6. If you had two extra hours in each day what would you do?
7. What is the one major problem facing today's generation and how would you fix it?
8. If you could be anywhere right now, money aside, where would you be?
9. Why are you going to college?
10. What do you want out of a liberal arts education?
11. If you were to build a college, what would you build?
12. If you could see yourself in ten years on the cover of *Time*, what would it be for?
13. What books did you read for your US History term paper?
14. Which of your activities, either at school or outside of school, would you like to continue in college?
15. If you could say one thing directly to the admissions committee, what would it be?
16. If you had an afternoon to spend in a bookstore, what genre of books would you gravitate towards and what would you stay away from?
17. If there was one question you wish I had asked, what would it be and what would your answer be?
18. What do you think is the biggest challenge of your generation?
19. If I were a prospective student to your high school, where is the first place you would want to take me and what would you want me to know about your high school?
20. What are you most excited about for your senior year? What are you looking forward to?
21. If you had a free hour in the day and you could do anything you wanted to do, what would it be?
22. What have you done that you are really proud of?
23. What is your favorite activity outside of class?
24. If you could invite anyone to dinner, who would it be?
25. How did your parents influence you?
26. What would you like to discuss during your interview?
27. What responsibilities confront you as a senior in high school?
28. If you were the interviewer, what would you ask?
29. If you could do something about hunger in the world, what would you do?
30. Are you more like your mom or dad, why?
31. How will you feel next year about seeing your parents less?
32. If you were President of the United States, what would be your priorities?

Remember use the questions you are asked as starting points by giving examples and illustrations, and then elaborate. Feel comfortable to talk about relevant school experiences—both academic and extracurricular. Discuss what has particular meaning to you.

Colleges using alumni to interview usually regard this is as an important part of the process. Alumni are trained and take pride in their involvement. Please ensure that you send thank you notes to anyone who takes the time to interview you.