

# Things to consider when choosing a college

## **Know that brands matter; however...**

Branding matters in today's world. People like to hire students from colleges with strong recognizable brand names too, whether those are regional or national college "brands." However, certain majors can be earned at a decent college and where you earn your Master's or terminal degree is more important.

## **Go where professors care**

When you go to a campus, try to get a sense of how engaged the professors are with the students.

## **Look at schools that are great at what you want to do.**

The reputation or ranking of the school doesn't matter if it is not strong in your particular field of interest. If you think you want to study journalism, find a school that is strong in journalism, not just a "name" school.

## **Look at schools that are also great at your backup career interest**

The reality is that many students change their majors. If you think you might be interested in a couple of different potential majors, pick the school that is good at both. Don't pick a more specialized school that doesn't offer a range of majors unless you're 100% locked on a career path.

## **Surround yourself with excellence**

If you surround yourself with the strongest academic students possible, you are likely to perform at a higher level. If you go to the school where you can coast, you will likely coast. Recruiters know the difference between strong academic schools and party schools.

## **Go where you can stand out**

Think about how you'll stack up against your classmates, and choose the school where you can stand out. This means winning the attention of professors who will write your recommendation letters and give you in-college opportunities that matter to employers or grad school admissions committees. Get to know the departmental staff and faculty.

## **Look at who hires students from your school**

Go to the career center and ask who hires students from your major at the college. Find out how many they typically hire each year. Pick a school that will allow you a range of economic opportunities and the likelihood to pay off your loans after college.

## **Don't forget about social environment**

The reality is that there's a lot more to college than just studying, and you want to be at a school that is also fun. The best school will not be the best choice if you are not happy; if you do not feel like you fit in.

## **Look at the cost of the school, after all financial awards and aid**

Sticker price does not matter. It's the amount you will actually pay that matters.

## **Proximity to home**

Do you/will you want to go home regularly? Is it easy to make this trip?