

# Choosing a University

Choosing the right college is a confusing matter. What are the most important criteria you, as a potential transfer student, should use when preparing to make your move? First, let's talk about why you want to go to college. Most students say they are going to get a degree because they can get a good job and make money. On further examination, most people go because they want to be happy and successful. So your goal is to choose the college which is most likely to prepare you to be happy and successful.

## Reasons NOT to Choose a College

- ▶ Your parents chose it or want you to go there
- ▶ Your girlfriend or boyfriend goes there
- ▶ The weather is nice or the campus is beautiful
- ▶ The football and basketball teams are ranked nationally (unless you are athlete)

Here are some things to consider in choosing a school.

## Choose the college that offers your major

Students are often surprised to learn that not all colleges offer all majors. Do not choose the school first and then try to fit yourself into a major. Choose the major first and then look for a school that offers what you want to study. Also check that the school offers sufficient courses in your area of interest as well as extensive curriculum in other areas you may want to study in case you decide to change your major.

## Choose the best college that will accept you

Once you have chosen your major, choose the best school that you can get into that offers that major. Keep in mind that some universities are very prestigious but other less highly rated universities may have very highly rated programs. Seek the highest rated program for which you qualify and go where you will get the best education in your field.

## Choose the college where you can get the best grades

While the name of the college or university issuing your diploma is important, it is not ALL-important. There is also the matter of your class standing. When you apply to a graduate or professional school, or to a future employer, graduating from a less prestigious school with a high GPA may be more valuable than graduating from a highly competitive school with a lower GPA.

## Choose the college where you will be the happiest

What makes you happy is a very individual thing. Choose a college that feels right. Consequently, it is vital that you visit the colleges you are considering before making a final choice. Some things to consider before choosing are:

What is the college environment and location?

What are the opportunities to participate in the college culture and social life?

What are the size of the classes and how accessible are the professors?

What is the make-up of the student body?

What are the housing arrangements?

### **Choose the college where you can be successful**

While this may sound similar to the last section, it really is different. There are students who may be very happy on a campus partying every night but that is not likely to lead to success. Conversely, you may be successful academically at a school but not happy with the quality of life. Strive for a choice that will allow you to have both; to be happy and successful.

### **Choose College You Can Afford**

There are many affordable colleges and universities. Consider carefully before choosing a very expensive school that will strain the family finances or leave you heavily in debt. Having said that, do not automatically rule out an expensive school. Most schools have financial aid packages that may include grants, scholarships and loans that will assist with the cost of attending.

## **Transfer Tip**

One of the most valuable things you can do in choosing a transfer institution is to visit the campuses you are considering prior to committing to enrollment. Check the Transfer Center for university tours and preview days.

“I can give you a six-word formula for success: Think things through - then follow through.”-Eddie Rickenbacker