

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF A COLLEGE FAIR

A College Fair is a rare opportunity to meet with college representatives without involving the time and expense of a road trip or plane ride!
Much like a campus visit, to get the most from a College Fair, it is wise to do a bit of planning.

BEFORE THE FAIR:

- **Check online to see if Pre-registration is available:**
***Register before heading to the fair and bring your registration with you. This saves LOTS of time!!!!

www.WACACCollegeFair.com for WACAC fairs.
<http://www.gotomyncf.com/nacac.asp> for NACAC fairs.

IF preregistration is not available:

Create Address Labels – (Doing this will save you a great deal of time.) – Most colleges ask students to complete contact cards at the fair. Make labels that can be attached to the contact cards. Labels should include the basics: name, address, e-mail, phone number, school name and code (see your counselor for code), your year of graduation (example, 2011), and your intended major (if you know it).

- **Develop Your Target List:** Check out the list of colleges attending the College Fair and build your Target List. Do a bit of research on college web sites to familiarize yourself with their offerings. Make a point to also visit colleges that you are not familiar with. By reading and visiting college websites, you will discover what options are available to you and you can begin to build your list of criteria.
- **Create your Criteria List:** Decide what is really important to you in a college.
 - Do you want to attend a two- or four-year institution? Public or Private?
 - What size school do you want to attend?
 - What programs of study are you considering?
 - How far from home do you want to go?
 - Do you wish to participate in any specific extra-curricular activities or athletics?
 - Do you want to attend a school in an urban, suburban or rural environment?
 - Do you require any special services (i.e. tutoring, note takers, readers, TDD or interpreters)?
 - With research, you will discover what criteria you want, so DO YOUR HOMEWORK!
- **Make a Positive Impression** – Dress respectfully. Don't just grab and go. Introduce yourself. Ask thoughtful questions. You will be meeting college admission officers—often the same ones who will read your application. Make a good impression.

- **Attend Information Sessions** – Check on whether any information sessions, such as financial aid, are being offered at the fair. Interested? Budget your time.
- **Work the Room** – Don't get stuck waiting to talk to an admission officer for a half hour. Come back later if there is a crowd.
- **Take Notes:** Take a pen and notebook with you. Write your most important questions down so you don't forget them. Write down responses. It will be too difficult to remember the responses when you get home.
- **Get Accustomed to Talking to Representatives-** Relax in the environment. Talk with a rep or two before talking with your first choice college. But do not wait until the end of the fair when they are packing to leave! Visit the representative early, before the crowds arrive, when there will be an opportunity for a brief chat. (Ask for their business card!)
- **Do not Travel in a pack.** This is something you need to do as an individual. You need to talk about yourself and ask questions that are important to *you*, not your friends.
- **Limit Your Time at the Fair to a Couple of Hours-** (any longer than that will be overload for most students.) You will prevent the sensory overload that may leave both students and parents stupefied.
- **Attend College Rep Presentations at Your School.** College Reps may come to your high school. Show your interest by attending their presentation.

FOLLOWING UP: By the time the fair is over, you should have a bag filled with information about colleges--and a possible case of information overload. Don't succumb to the temptation of just piling all those brochures in some obscure corner of your bedroom. If you're feeling overwhelmed, take a day or two away from the college search. Then get out all of those brochures, along with your notes and read through them. You may find that some colleges aren't as interesting as you first thought. Others will look better the more you research them. For those colleges, follow up by contacting the admissions office to ask further questions and, if possible, plan a visit to the campus. Keep track of the College Rep's coming to your campus and attend their presentations.