



# QUESTIONS TO ASK COLLEGES

College reps, as well as college students, admissions counselors, and faculty, genuinely enjoy talking to high school students. They like to share their ideas about their college, and they all appreciate students who have thought about the college and want to know more than is in the course catalog, in the viewbook, or on the Web site. They like thoughtful questions, and their answers can help you make a good college match. Ask questions of interest to you in the following categories:

## **Students**

- How would you characterize the majority of students?
- From what economic background are the majority of students?
- Are there clubs, activities, or housing that are minority related?
- What do students like most about the college? Like least?
- Has the student government made any real contribution to the school? How do you get into student government?
- What political, social, or academic issues concerned students last year? How did the administration react? What was the resolution?
- Where do students end up after graduation? Which graduate schools and employers.

## **Social life and campus activities**

- What do students do for fun?
- What is the role of fraternities and sororities on campus? If I didn't want to join, could I have a satisfactory social life?
- What are the dominant social groups on campus? Do the groups get along with one another? Have there been any problems?
- What role do team sports play in the social life of the college? What happens on football or basketball weekends? If I didn't want to join in, would I find kindred spirits?
- What percentage of students participate in intramural sports.
- Is there a good balance of academics, social life, and extracurricular activities?
- What were the social or cultural highlights last year?
- What is the role of the campus newspaper?
- Is there an alcohol problem and, if so, how is the college handling it? What is the incidence of binge drinking? Do students feel safe on campus?
- Are activities in music, theatre and fine arts limited to students majoring in those areas?
- Are there opportunities for community service projects?

## **Campus facilities**

### **Housing and dining**

- Is there something I should know about housing that would help me in my choice?
- What are the types of food plans? All you can eat? Vegetarian? Kosher?

### **Activity centers and athletic and recreational facilities**

- What kinds of facilities does the student center have? Is it a magnet for student activities? Are there other hangouts?
- Do you think the college pays attention to its appearance?
- How would you rate the fitness center?

### **Health, career counseling, special student services, and security**

- Is there a doctor, nurse, psychologist, or career counselor on campus? What is the waiting period for appointments?
- What career planning, internship experiences and job placement services are available? How early can this be accessed?
- How good is the security on campus?

### **Library**

- What have been students' experiences with the library? Have there been complaints?
- Is the library well equipped with computers and copy machines?

## **The community off campus**

- What is there to do in town? How would I get there?

## **Academics and faculty**

- What is distinctive about education here? What is the educational philosophy of the college? Has it changed much in recent years?
- What type of evaluations (i.e. exams, papers, discussions) do faculty members use the most?
- Is the honor code working? How widespread is cheating?
- What is the most popular major on campus? Why?
- Do you think that students are generally enthusiastic about their classes? Do people talk about their courses outside of class?
- How would you characterize the academic pressure and workload?
- Are there research possibilities with the faculty? In what areas?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the advising system? Who assist students with course selection
- What is the quality of student and faculty relationships? Is the faculty interested in and accessible to students after class? Do faculty members participate in student activities?
- Are curriculum changes in the works? How will that affect my college years?
- Are any departments being cut back or discontinued? If so, why?
- Are any new programs scheduled for the next four years?
- What percentage of students study abroad. What study abroad opportunities are there.
- Are there required first year programs and culminating senior experiences?
- Are students able to access courses outside of their majors.

Source: Adapted from *Campus Visits & College Interviews* by Zola Dincin Schneider (College Board, 2002). This book has many more questions you might ask of college representatives, plus chapters on every aspect of the interview and campus visit. and from the *Colleges That Change Lives* brochure.