

College Search Websites and Worksheet

The first step in thinking about college is a self-evaluation. What motivates you? What kinds of things do you like? In what kind of environment do you learn best? These are all things that need to be considered.

Using College Match by Steven Antonoff, complete the surveys in chapters 3 and 4. Then get a quick analysis of your personality type by going to the following website:

www.collegetrends.org

This is the website for PICS – a personal inventory of college styles. It analyzes a student's personal style based on eight different dimensions and gives the student insight on the types of colleges that may be a good match. While you have to pay for the matching process, I recommend that students take the survey, get their results, and print them out without going further. The printout will give them further information when trying to choose among schools.

Adding the information from College Match to the PICS results, go to another website to get a free preliminary list of possible matches.

www.princetonreview.com Go to the section for Counselor-O-Matic and complete the questionnaire. Have Counselor-O-Matic generate a list of schools for you. Use this list to begin filling in a comparison worksheet of college options. Pay attention to the attributes of each school that are relevant criteria for you. Things like size, location, faculty/student ratio may be important to you as well as Greek life or religious affiliation. Make sure the most important attributes for you are listed on your worksheet. Remember each student's worksheet will be different since each of you have different things that you are looking for in a college. Don't forget to include information about the school's admission standards. That information will help you decide if the school is considered a reach, safety or good fit.

Find out more about schools that interest you. Use Fiske, Princeton Review Best 351 Colleges, Peterson's and other guides to get more information on each school. Remember to add any information you think is important to your worksheet.

The next step is to evaluate the schools by comparing the information from one to another. If you feel that you need more schools on your list, or that the ones listed don't meet enough of your criteria, try looking at the overlaps listed in Fiske and Princeton Review for other possibilities. Remember, no one school may be perfect-you are just trying to narrow down options and decide what you like at this point. To get an idea of what the school looks like try:

www.collegeview.com

This site will link you to virtual tours of campuses and other information to aid you in narrowing down your list. While nothing can take the place of actually visiting the school, sometimes having an internet tour can help you identify questions you may have when you make your college visits.

Looking at your list, try to decide which campuses you might like to visit. Since this is just an initial visit, pick a few schools from your list that have different environments- a rural setting vs. an urban one; a small school vs. a very small one; maybe an all-women's college vs. coed. The idea is to get a feel for each of the different environments. Identify things that you would like to learn more about. Perhaps you have read that the Greek system is large at one of the schools, but you are not sure how that impacts the campus or whether or not that is something you would be interested in. Make sure you find out about that when you visit. Perhaps the students at that school rate the accessibility of the professors as medium when compared to the other schools on your list. That would be something to find out more about, if that is an important criteria for you in choosing a school.