

# Making the Most of a College Fair

Walking into a field house filled with hundreds of colleges, and not having any idea how or where to proceed can be an overwhelming experience. We are providing you with some helpful hints, so that you can make the best use of your time, and get the most out of the experience. While some of these suggestions may seem basic or obvious, they are designed to make life easier for all involved.

A college fair is a great opportunity to get more information about colleges that interest you and to ask questions of college representatives. Getting the most from a college takes some advanced planning, and here are some suggestions:

## 1. DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Find out which colleges will be at the fair, and target which schools you know you want to hit. When you're done with those, then you can "wander around" and look at some other schools. Most college fairs arrange the schools in alphabetical order, so you'll know where to find Abilene Christian University vs. Youngstown State. If it's crowded (it **will** be crowded), you may want to approach in the reverse alphabetical order. Those schools at the end of the alphabet may not be as busy, especially early in the evening. Prepare a list of questions that are important to you as an individual (cars on campus, a radio station, meal plans, internship opportunities, etc.).

## 2. BRING SUPPLIES

Carry an empty knapsack. You'll acquire catalogs, view books, videos, applications, pennants, etc., and you'll want something to comfortably carry it all home in. Also, bring a notebook and a working pen to jot down notes, names, addresses, web sites, phone numbers, and answers to your specific questions. You may also write down some of your general impressions of the school and/or the representative that you spoke with.

## 3. ASK QUESTIONS

Ask those questions that you prepared earlier. They shouldn't be questions that are easily answered in the college's literature. You have a live person to speak with—ask them the tough questions.

## 4. BRING YOUR PARENTS

No, you don't have to hang out with them all night. Split up, but make sure you hit the same schools. Then you can compare notes afterwards.

## 5. MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION

The college rep's are going to see hundreds of students and parents that night, so they may not remember all of them. However, if you plan on meeting with a rep at a school that you are sincerely interested in, and you plan on asking them a lot of questions, make an impression on them. They could be the person who reviews your application and/or the one who conducts your admissions interview. A three piece suit isn't necessary, but look good. If the representative has a business card, ask for one. You can send them a nice note thanking them for their time.

## 6. HAVE FUN!

Get the job done, and then go look at some schools that you've never heard of. You may find yourself interested in a school you never considered.