

Making the Most of a College Fair – Podcast Transcript

Opening:

Hi, I'm Elizabeth Younger from the Oregon Student Assistance Commission, also called OSAC for short. Today, I am going to talk about strategies to make the most out of your visit to a college fair.

Body:

College fairs are a great way for you to learn more about colleges that you are thinking about attending while at the same time helping you to find out about colleges that you may not have heard of. College fairs happen throughout the year, so always keep an eye out for one happening near you.

Before attending a college fair, it is important to plan ahead. Prepare to introduce yourself to the college representatives; because during the college fair, not only are students shopping for potential colleges; colleges are shopping for potential students. Make sure you are dressed appropriately and are ready to shake hands, make eye contact, and introduce yourself to start off any conversation with the college representatives.

Also, think about how you use your time while at the fair. Depending on the size of the college fair, you may have a very limited time to spend talking with each and every college representative. If possible, find out which colleges are going to be at the fair so that you can focus your attention on the colleges you want to learn about.

It's also a good idea to write out a list of things that are important to you before you go. Do you want to attend a two- or four-year institution? 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 clubs or sports? Do you want to attend a school in an urban, suburban or rural environment? Remember that you are at the college fair to find out which schools would be the best fit for *you*, so take the time to think about the type of school that you'd like to attend.

Once you've thought about what you need and want in a college education, develop specific questions that you most want to ask each college representative. Don't feel like you have unordinary priorities or weird questions. College reps hear the same questions all the time, so they'll be glad to hear something new. In addition to specific questions that you may have, be sure to ask questions such as;

- What housing options are available for freshmen at the school?
- What tutoring or learning support services are provided?
- Do they offer a program in my area of study?
- What options are available for study abroad?
- What percentage of last year's first-year students returned for their sophomore year?

- What services are available to help me with career planning?
- What percentage of their first-year students eventually graduate?
- Does their college require its own financial aid application? If so, what's the deadline?

No matter what questions you choose to ask, you should always be sure to ask about enrollment deadlines and requirements for any college for which you plan to apply.

Once you've planned which college representative you'd like to talk with and the questions that you want ask, you should be well prepared to attend the fair.

During the college fair it is important to familiarize yourself with the college fair directory so that you'll know where to find the colleges on your list. Take the time to meet with a college representative from each college on your list (making sure to ask questions and take notes) and give each representative your full attention. Take business cards from all of the representatives you talk to so that you can contact them later with follow-up questions or requests for more information. Also, be sure to attend any information sessions or workshops that are offered at the fair. These are great opportunities to learn more about the college application process.

After the college fair, take the time to reflect about the various colleges; weighing their advantages and disadvantages. Follow up with any additional questions that you'd like a college representative to answer and research what you can about the schools. Pay special attention to each school's application requirements and deadlines so that you will be able to plan accordingly.

Conclusion:

College fairs are a great opportunity to learn about colleges and for you to get your questions answered. Take the time to research college fairs that are available in your area and plan to attend at *least* one. Before you go to the fair, make sure to prepare ahead of time. While you're there be sure to introduce yourself and ask questions. Afterwards, follow up with questions for the college representative and do your own research about the schools. If you take the time to find out about the colleges that are out there, you'll be sure to find the best fit for you.

Closing:

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important topic. For more podcast topics, please visit our website at www.OregonStudentAid.gov . From all of us here at the Oregon Student Assistance Commission, this is Elizabeth Younger. We look forward to helping you again soon.