



**EQUIPANDO PADRES**  
**GUIDEBOOK**  
TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

2023



**EQUIPANDO**  
**PADRES**  
SUPPORT YOUR STUDENT'S SUCCESS

**ENGLISH**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Equipando Padres Welcome Letter.....	1
About Equipando Padres.....	2
<b>Module 1: Why College? .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Objective .....	4
The Benefit of a College Experience .....	5
What is a First-Generation-to-College Student? .....	7
What is Engineering? .....	10
The Benefits of an Engineering Degree.....	12
Parent Concerns .....	14
Leveraging Parent Support.....	15
<b>Module 2: How to Choose a College.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Objective .....	20
Types of Universities .....	21
• Public vs Private Colleges.....	22
• Community Colleges.....	23
• Teaching vs Research Institutions.....	24
• Geographic Location & School Size.....	25
• Guiding Questions .....	28
Academics, Admissions, & Cost .....	29
• Admissions .....	31
• Cost & Financial Aid.....	34
Access for Undocumented Students .....	37
<b>Module 3: Preparing for College Visits .....</b>	<b>41</b>
Objective .....	42
Benefits of Campus Tours.....	43
How to Schedule a College Visit.....	44
What to Explore.....	46
Establishing a Budget for College Visits .....	52
<b>Resources .....</b>	<b>55</b>
College Ranking Tool.....	56
Campus Visit Scorecard .....	56
College Visit Budget Template.....	56
<b>Connect With Us.....</b>	<b>57</b>

# WELCOME LETTER

WELCOME TO



**EQUIPANDO  
PADRES**  
SUPPORT YOUR STUDENT'S SUCCESS

**Dear Parent or Caregiver,**

At SHPE, we understand the pivotal role parents and caregivers play in students attending college. Caregivers who have not previously earned a degree may feel limited in their efforts to help their children navigate pathways for education.

When we began this work, we knew there were other parent involvement programs, yet they did not incorporate the needs of Latino families. Most importantly, they did not incorporate their assets – the strengths that drive students and families to continue working towards a shared goal.

Our goal at SHPE is to provide meaningful, culturally appropriate ways to help narrow the information gap and level the playing field for college access and persistence.

We are honored to share your family's journey, and we are committed to seeing you thrive. This guide will serve as your personal ally as you and your family navigate the path to plan college education.

**- The Equipando Padres Team**

We also send a sincere thank you to our founding partners.



## ABOUT EQUIPANDO PADRES

### Purpose

At SHPE, we know parents play a pivotal role in the success of their children while attending college. The Equipando Padres program is designed to fill the available parent programming gap by incorporating aspects critical to Hispanic culture and addressing specific challenges of pursuing an engineering career. As a result, padres and familia are positioned to be integral contributors to their student's success!

### Objectives

This Equipando Padres workbook was created to serve as a guide to help you prepare to support your child as you navigate together the path to college. Use this workbook to outline your ideas, write down any questions or any best practices, and take notes for yourself to revisit while you support your child's success.

What are your biggest dreams for your student?

### NOTES

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MODULE #1

# WHY COLLEGE?



Visit [www.equipandopadres.org](http://www.equipandopadres.org) to access all tools and videos

# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

## YOU WILL LEARN:

- ✕ **What is a First-Generation-to-College Student?**
- ✕ **What is Engineering?**
- ✕ **The Benefits of an Engineering Degree**
- ✕ **The Importance of Hispanic Voices in STEM Careers**

## LESSON 1

### THE BENEFIT OF A COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

As parents, we want the best opportunities for our children.

Attending college is a personally and professionally rewarding experience. Your child will increase their self-esteem, their confidence, grow socially and become a leader who achieves their goals. College students also build a network of lifelong connections of colleagues, advisors, professors and mentors who can support their career growth.

Think of it as one of the most important, high-impact long-term investments you can make. Not only can earning a college degree offer your child a higher income and stable job opportunities, but having a college graduate within your family can also help future generations be successful.

The impact of attending college and earning a degree will start with your child, but will also be felt within your family and your community.

#### 1 Students

**Personal Growth & Increased Self Esteem:** Boosts the student's confidence and sense of achievement.

**Social Mobility:** Pathway to advancement through social opportunities, such as joining student-led organizations to help develop leadership skills.

**Economic Mobility:** Increased income and economic stability.

#### 2 Family

**Generational Opportunity:** First-generation college graduates can serve as trailblazers to their families. After pioneering the higher education space, they become a resource that can help expand opportunities for future generations.

#### 3 Community and the World

**Community involvement:** College graduates are more likely to be involved in their communities through voting, volunteering, and joining organizations (like SHPE) to provide opportunities to future generations.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF HISPANIC VOICES IN STEM CAREERS

People who work in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) do jobs that make the world a better place. In these jobs they use what they learn in college and their life experiences to solve problems, improve processes, products, and services.

Even though Hispanics leaders are the fastest growing group in postsecondary education and the U.S. workforce, we're still underrepresented in STEM careers.

By increasing the number of Hispanics in STEM careers, we're helping diversify teams in these fields, and therefore the solutions they implement. More Hispanics in STEM careers will result in solutions with our unique perspectives and values.

Our values of familia make us group-oriented and sympathetic with others. Our perspective and cultural knowledge also make us capable of leading the next generation of engineers and STEM workers. And as parents, we want our children to be successful and have a better life. Encouraging them to consider careers in STEM will open many doors for them in the future.



More Hispanics in STEM careers will result in more solutions with our unique perspectives and values.

First-generation college students are those whose parents did not complete a college or university degree. If you did not attend college or went to college but did not earn a degree, your child is a first-generation student. First-generation students are as diverse as our culture and can look differently depending on the family:

- ✂ Their siblings have college degrees, but the parents do not
- ✂ Their parents or caregivers attended and experienced some college but did not complete a degree
- ✂ Other relatives, such as cousins or grandparents earned a degree but their parents and siblings did not

In all of these examples, the student is still considered first-generation to attend college.

It's important to make this distinction, as being a first-generation college student affects the student's entire educational journey, from learning new cultural norms to adapting to new family dynamics as they become change agents for future generations. There are also resources on campus to help first-generation students succeed.

Your support helping them transition into college life will help ensure your child can take full advantage of the experience.

**FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT CHALLENGES**

**Navigating the Process**

Navigating important college processes such as applications, searching for financial aid, housing, employment and academics may be challenging. Additionally, once they enter college life, they'll also have to adapt to new cultural norms and expectations.

**Expectations**

First-gen students may feel a responsibility to their parents and pressure to succeed because they are the first to attend college. This pressure may prevent them from sharing obstacles they face, especially when it comes to finances, academic struggles, and mental health.

**Family Dynamics and Mental Health**

Some students may feel a sense of guilt in pursuing educational goals while their family is struggling at home, and/or is making great sacrifices so they are able to attend college. They may also be reluctant to ask for help, which could result in developing depression and anxiety.

**Isolation**

Some students may experience culture shock when arriving to college, when, for example, they can't find someone to speak Spanish with. It will also be difficult to express what they are experiencing to their support systems if they're in a new state, or to relate to peers who do not share the experience of being first-gen.

**FIRST-GEN STUDENT ADVANTAGES**

There are also many unique advantages to being a first-generation student! First-generation students are resilient and resourceful, smart, optimistic and can become a change agent within their community.

**Resilient and Resourceful**

Help your child build their own social networks and support systems by encouraging them to seek community. Normalize seeking help from early on and to access the services at college.

**Change Agents**

Although they might not be aware of it, first-generation Hispanic students are joining and building support systems. Organizations like SHPE can offer cultural solidarity along with key resources such as financial resources, leadership opportunities, mentoring, and a familia feeling.

**Parent Emotional Support**

Students who experience parent support during their college career are more likely to persist and complete their degree. Therefore, it is important for parents to be equipped with the tools to support their student to transition into college.

**Smart and Optimistic**

Your student belongs there and deserves every opportunity at that higher education institution. They have worked hard to get there and the shared joy, pride, and unconditional support from their family is a fuel to keep them motivated to pursue their college journey.



## LESSON 3

## WHAT IS ENGINEERING?

Put in simple terms, engineers solve problems. They use science and math to figure out the best way to create new things or improve a product or service.

There are many types of engineering majors. For example, mechanical engineers design, analyze, manufacture, and maintain mechanical systems. If something has any moving parts, a mechanical engineer probably worked on designing it. Professions typically fall in the following four engineering majors:



When considering how to choose an engineering major it's important for your children to determine their talents, identify their passions and consider their ideal work environment.

**CHEMICAL ENGINEERS**

Use their knowledge in science to develop and design chemical manufacturing processes to create products. Engineers continually evaluate, improve, and translate these processes into practical applications.

2020 Median Salary: \$108,540

**CIVIL ENGINEERS**

Solve infrastructure problems through projects they design, build and maintain. They may work in public or private sectors developing bridges, roads, tunnels, water and sewer systems, among other infrastructures.

2020 Median Salary: \$88,570

**ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS**

Design, test and manufacture electrical components, working in industries such as research, manufacturing and telecommunications. They may work with circuits, computers, electronics, fiberoptic networks, or building sensors for cars. This field is quite broad, with many career opportunities in various disciplines.

Median Salary: \$103,390

**MECHANICAL ENGINEERS**

Design, build, and develop mechanical and thermal sensing devices like engines, tools, and machines. Another broad field, these engineers work with various products and use analysis to design and optimize machines to help projects move forward.

Median Salary: \$90,160

Other engineering fields can be explored at the resources below:

1. [Types of Engineering - Salary Potential, Outlook and Using Your Degree](#)



Scan Code and Click the Pop-up

2. [What Are the Different Types of Engineering](#)



Scan Code and Click the Pop-up

# LESSON 4 THE BENEFITS OF AN ENGINEERING DEGREE

There are many advantages to pursuing a career in engineering, such as employability, financial stability, international opportunities, working in a challenging but rewarding field, and the potential to benefit society.

### High Starting Salary

Students who major in engineering can generally expect to earn a high salary when joining the workforce.

### Variety of Career Options

There are many tracks, industries, and opportunities to explore diverse career options once students obtain their degree.

### Self-designed Pathway to Success

There is more than one pathway for an engineering degree! For example, students can begin their degree journey as early as high school with Advance Placement courses or Dual Credit enrollment.

### Opportunity to Further Their Education

Master's and doctorate degrees are not required for many careers in engineering, but these higher degrees can most definitely increase career growth and salary.

### What Does an Engineering Degree Demand from First-Gen Hispanic Students?

Engineering degrees require a strong commitment from the student to see it through.

#### Academic Rigor

- Four to five years of curriculum, and sometimes longer due to the high academic standards
- Development of research, mathematics and technical skills
- Strong communication and problem-solving skills

#### Organization & Time Management

- Students must plan to meet campus enrollment and financial deadlines, while establishing habits that promote health, studying, and self-care
- Many students complete or seek internships, which can help them secure a job offer upon graduation

#### Social Capital

- Social relationships and networks are critical to success in engineering and an asset Hispanic students rely on to leverage their success





## LESSON 5

### PARENT CONCERNS

As parents, we worry about our children a lot, and having them go to college might bring many concerns that are completely normal.

You might worry about their health, safety, what are they eating, or even how they are planning on moving far away from home. Parents may also have concerns about their student's immigration status and how it affects their safety, opportunities, and finances.

As parents, we must understand that there will be an adjustment period for both our student and ourselves. We want to help them, but we also want them to be independent and self-sufficient.

We also need to understand these worries are normal. Focus on what you can control, talk to those who can help, and know your child has support resources offered by the university to help them. As parents, we can help our students navigate the support available to them through their educational institution.

Parents of undocumented students may have concerns about their child navigating a college campus. Undocumented students are resilient. There are many resources for undocumented students, including staff ready to support them. It is important parents research these resources when discussing the best college option. Explore additional information here:

[Parent and Family Guide for Undocumented Students.pdf](#)



Focus on what you can control, talk to those who can help, and know your child has support resources offered by the university to help them.

## LESSON 6

### LEVERAGING PARENTS SUPPORT

Parent support is crucial for a student's academic success as it can help them better cope with the stresses of college life. How can you support your children while they are going to college? It is important to understand there are two types of support: emotional and instrumental.



#### Emotional support

Provided through those expressions of empathy, love, trust, and care that we can offer to our children.

#### Instrumental Support

Involves providing resources and practical help to support your children solve their problems.

Emotional support comes from the love and concern parents have for their children and includes understanding, patience, moral support, and instilling hope. Instrumental support is tangible and action oriented and requires knowledge and tools that can be directly applied to a situation.

Parents that do not have college experience may lack instrumental support, but not emotional support.





# HOW TO CHOOSE A COLLEGE

## YOU WILL LEARN:

-  **Types of Universities**
-  **Academics, Admissions, and Cost**
-  **How to Choose the Ideal College or University with Your Student**

## LESSON 1

### TYPES OF UNIVERSITIES

First of all, congratulations on your child's achievement in their educational journey! College is an exciting next step in their life.

At the same time, we also understand that you might be feeling a bit overwhelmed by the next steps. We're here to help you navigate the road to choosing the right school for them. We want to empower them to realize their fullest potential by finding the best school that will fit their needs.

Navigating through the process of college comes along with its own vocabulary, so we'll start by understanding the different definitions. Terms such as university, school, college, institution, or even campus are interchangeable— they all mean the same thing. The main difference between public and private colleges is the source of funding. However, when researching different colleges and universities, there are many factors to think about in addition to the cost, including size, ranking and variety of programs offered.



Learn the pros and cons! Check out the following page for a comparison of private and public schools!

## NOTES

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PUBLIC SCHOOLS		PRIVATE SCHOOLS
Funded mainly by the state government.	<b>FUNDS</b> 	Supported by their own funding and students' tuition fees.
Lower tuition fees to students, and in-state residents receive favorable tuition rates.	<b>COST</b> 	Generally more expensive, but they may offer more tuition discounts, grants, and scholarships, sometimes making them more affordable than public universities.
Usually bigger than private universities, so the campus environment may be less intimate, but more likely to be well-equipped to meet student's needs.	<b>CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT</b> 	Generally small campuses.
Offers a wide array of degree programs, so freshmen who have yet to choose a major may be better off attending a public university.	<b>ACADEMIC MAJORS</b> 	Offers a narrow range of academic majors. Students who are sure of what they want to study can benefit from attending private institutions that are well-regarded in their chosen fields.
Offer a wider selection of extracurricular activities. The majority of Division I athletic teams are from public schools.	<b>ACTIVITIES/ EXTRACURRICULARS</b> 	Smaller selection of extracurricular activities when compared to public schools.
Demographically more diverse because the tuition is more affordable.	<b>DIVERSITY</b> 	Tend to attract students from diverse geographic locations.
Tend to rank lower than private schools, but still offers high quality education	<b>RANKING</b> 	Graduates of highly-ranked or "prestigious" colleges are typically more sought after in the job market, but the quality of education received at a private institution is not necessarily superior than public school.

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Another option to look at are community colleges.

For many students, community colleges can be an affordable first step towards an engineering degree. Students can attend a community college for the first one to two years to complete general education classes, such as math and writing, and then transfer to a university to complete their bachelor's degree.

Similar to public and private universities, community colleges come in varieties: some will offer student activities and organizations, residence halls, and competitive sports teams, while others may lack some or all of these features.

**Pros and cons of attending a community college**

<p><b>PROS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower costs</li> <li>• Smaller class sizes</li> <li>• Easier application process</li> <li>• Great way to reduce the cost of a college education and avoid some student loan debt</li> </ul>	<p><b>CONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The transfer process to a four-year university can be complicated</li> <li>• There's a possibility that not every course will transfer</li> <li>• It may take longer to complete a bachelor's degree</li> </ul>
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Community colleges and universities have affiliations called articulation agreements and/or degree pathways to help ensure the courses transfer and meet prerequisites. A prerequisite is a course or other requirement that a student must have taken prior to enrolling in a specific course or program for where your student will transfer. Information about these agreements can be found on the community college's website.

Working with academic advisors can help ease transfer challenges. In addition, when choosing a community college, look for those with a high transfer rate of students to four-year institutions.

**TEACHING VS RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS**

Lastly, let’s look at the difference between research and teaching institutions.

Students who want to do research will want to attend a research university, where they can collaborate with professors and even be paid to complete research in their field of study.

Teaching universities focus less on research and emphasize student instruction, support, and success. Their focus is more on the nurture and training of students, and they may offer smaller class sizes, more accessible instructors, and more practical support.



You can find transfer rates on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) at:

<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>



Scan Code and Click the Pop-up

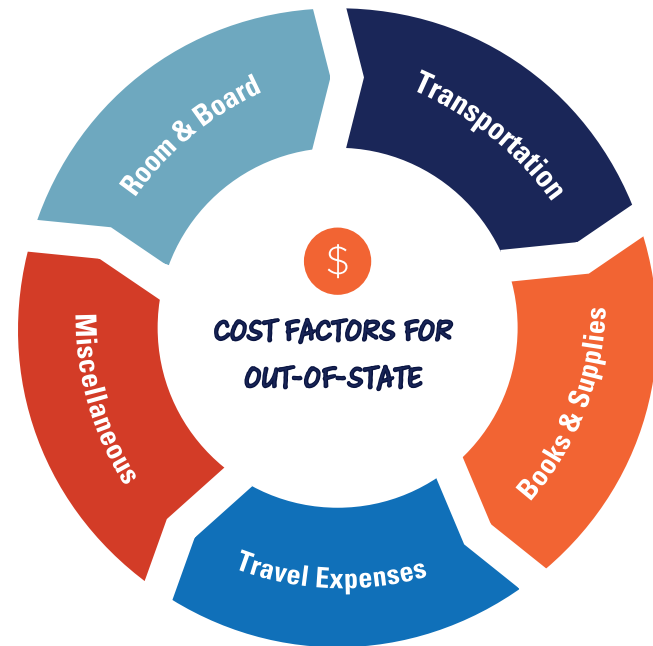
- IPEDS provides basic data needed to describe and analyze trends in postsecondary education in the United States.
- You can search for a specific college and see their transfer-out rate.
- Best community colleges transfer rates are around 30%

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION & SCHOOL SIZE**

In-state or out-of-state, and small towns vs large cities. Choosing the right university or college for your student also is a matter of geographic location and the size of the school.

Attending a college near your hometown usually means paying lower tuition rates. Also, by staying close to family, your student could save money by living at home.

In addition to higher out-of-state rates, when considering a university in another state there are other factors that will affect the overall cost. On top of tuition, you will need to factor room and board, transportation, books and supplies, and other miscellaneous expenses such as student fees when calculating the total cost of attendance.



According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in-state residents attending a four-year public institution paid an average of \$9,349 in tuition and fees in 2019-20, whereas out-of-state students paid \$27,023.

**GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION & SCHOOL SIZE (CONTINUED)**

Many students may also see college as an option to move far away. Although living away from home for the first time may be overwhelming and a little scary, you can work with your student to ensure they thrive in an independent space. Open communication and discussing how often you'll plan to visit will be important.

**SMALL COLLEGE TOWNS VS CITIES**

Schools in large cities may provide a lot of social and cultural activities, not to mention internships with major companies. Meanwhile, small college towns often offer a more intimate sense of community and will allow your student to build strong relationships with peers and professors.

**NOTES**

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**SCHOOL SIZE AND CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT**

There are pros and cons to both small and large universities. It's also important to examine the campus environment when choosing a college, as personal and professional growth also occurs outside the classroom.

 <b>SMALL COLLEGES</b>	 <b>BIG COLLEGES</b>
Smaller class sizes	More diversity in coursework, activities, and professional resources
Easier access to one-on-one support from professors and advisors	Usually have superior funding, well-stocked libraries, state-of-the-art research facilities
Tight knit community	Typically have nationally recognized sports teams

The best option will depend on your student's needs and preferences!

- Campus life and overall atmosphere
- Social, recreational, and cultural activities in the area
- Activities/opportunities outside the classroom
- Student organizations, like SHPE!
- Diversity on campus
- Sports – if your student values the spirit of sports camaraderie.
- Strong intramural sports organization (if they want to join a sports team)

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**

Together with your future college student, discuss the answers to the following questions to begin the process of determining the right type of university or college for them.

- 1 **DO THEY HAVE A PREFERENCE ON LOCATION OR CITY?**
- 2 **ARE THEY WILLING TO MOVE OUT OF STATE?**
- 3 **WHAT ABOUT CHOOSING A SCHOOL FAR FROM HOME?**
- 4 **CAN YOU AFFORD THE TRAVEL EXPENSES (IF THERE ARE)?**
- 5 **DO THEY PREFER A MORE INTIMATE COMMUNITY FEEL?**
- 6 **HAVE THEY DETERMINED THEIR PREFERRED MAJOR?**

**NOTES**


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Important factors to consider when choosing a college.

**1 PROGRAM OF STUDY MATCHES YOUR STUDENT'S INTEREST**

Think about the engineering fields your student would like to specialize in and make sure the school offers courses and research opportunities in that area.

**2 THE DEPARTMENT HAS THE RESOURCES TO CATER TO YOUR STUDENT'S NEEDS AND AMBITIONS**

For example, does the school offer dual-language programs that will give your student an edge in the job market?

**3 THE ENGINEERING PROGRAM IS ACCREDITED BY ABET**

You should also make sure that the university's engineering program is accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). Accreditation ensures that the curriculum is reviewed by engineering professionals, and therefore that students are getting an engineering degree that meets the standards of the profession. This is also a must in order to register and become licensed or certified after graduation.

**4 PROGRAM CONNECTS THE DOTS BETWEEN INNOVATION AND INDUSTRY**

The best engineering schools will add value to your student's degree by introducing them to various industry leaders. This will maximize the chances of them getting hired by a desirable employer when they graduate!



**5** BALANCES THEORY AND APPLICATION

While many engineering courses are heavily theoretical by nature, these should still explore credible applications to prepare your student for the real world. The best engineering schools help students understand how their knowledge and expertise could be put to practical use.

**6** PROVIDES ACCESS OR RESOURCES TO SECURE AN INTERNSHIP OR CO-OP

Obtaining work experience prior to completing degree requirements typically increases employment opportunities and starting salaries at graduation. Internships provide students with exposure to engineering while enabling the employer to fill short-term project needs; while co-ops are part of their engineering education and students receive academic credit toward graduation.

**Which universities graduate the most Hispanic engineers?**

A university with a large number of degrees awarded to Hispanics demonstrate their commitment in serving their Hispanic students. The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) has identified 569 total HSIs (Hispanic Serving Institutions) in 28 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. An HS is defined as an institution of higher education that has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25% Hispanic.

HACU is the only national association that represents existing and emerging institutions that serve the Hispanic community. If your student is interested in attending an HSI, you can visit the HACU website to see the **current list of colleges and universities that are Hispanic Serving Institutions**.

[2022 List of HSIs.pdf](#)

**ADMISSION PROCESS**

The university admissions process should be about setting students up for success when they reach the campus. Going through the process can also tell you a lot about an institution, as it should reflect the values you want to see in a university.

If you want a supportive atmosphere in college, the admissions process should feel like the university staff is invested in your student's success from the start. Are staff available to help them through the admissions process? Is the university concerned about their experiences and passions as well as their test results?

There are different types of admissions to consider:

**EARLY ACTION:**

A type of early admission offered by some institutions. Early action is non-binding, which means that your student does not have to attend if accepted. Students receive an early response to their application but do not have to commit to the college until around May 1.

**EARLY DECISION:**

Another type of early admission, which offers students the opportunity to hear back from a college sooner than others who apply later. Early decision deadlines are usually in November, and acceptances often come out by December. However, keep in mind that early decision plans are binding, meaning an applicant must enroll if admitted.

**EARLY DECISION II:**

Some schools also have a second early decision deadline, which is also binding. The difference is in the timelines: early decision II deadlines are usually in January, and acceptance letters often come out in February.

**ADMISSION PROCESS**

**REGULAR DECISION:**

Students who apply to regular decision generally hear back from schools in mid-to-late March or early April. Students will have until May 1 to decide which school they will attend and pay an enrollment deposit.

**ROLLING ADMISSIONS:**

Schools with rolling admissions evaluate applications as they receive them, and release admissions decisions on an ongoing basis. These schools will continue accepting students until all spots in the incoming class are filled.

**When deciding when to apply, consider the financial aid implications**

If money is a concern, as it can be for many families of college-bound students, applicants should choose non-binding deadlines: early action and regular decision. This will give families options to compare financial aid offers from multiple schools.

**NOTES**

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**UNDERSTANDING SELECTIVITY**

What is the percentage of students who are admitted to your preferred universities? The lower the percentage, the more selective the school is.

Help your student balance setting up realistic expectations about their chances of being accepted to their college of choice, but don't discourage them from applying to some selective colleges just because they fear being rejected.

**EMBRACE THE ADMISSIONS EXPERIENCE**

Going through the admission process can be an opportunity to grow and learn together with your children. Below are a few tips to help you make the most of the experience.

- **Take the time** to support, encourage, trust and lift one another up.
- **Focus on the things you can control.** Don't focus on what happens "behind closed doors" in college admissions offices hundreds of miles away.
- Think about how you can **help your student handle rejection.** Finding out they weren't accepted to a top choice can be tough on them, so try not to dwell on rejection.
- **Also, help them not to take it personally.** Admissions committees are aiming to create a balanced incoming class.
- **Acknowledge your children's feelings.** Don't skip the grieving process, be there for them and give them time to accept the news.
- **Invest time and energy into getting excited** about the schools that did admit them.

Overall, prepare your student to receive letters that begin with:

"We are sorry to inform you..."

But be encouraged that, when you find a good fit, you will get letters that begin with:

"Congratulations!"

## COST & FINANCIAL AID

You have gone through the admission process, received that coveted acceptance letter and selected your top school choices. Now, it's time to determine which ones are a good financial fit for your family.

To make sure a university meets your financial expectations in terms of the overall cost, you need to consider many elements like tuition, financial aid, payment strategies, and outcomes.

Official financial aid awards are determined after your student has been admitted to the university. One of the first steps to take is to get in touch with the college's financial services, as they will help you have a complete understanding of what is possible at that school. There's a variety of financial aid available for students:

### GRANTS

Grants are a form of financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid. A variety of federal grants are available, including Pell Grants.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships come from many nonprofits, like SHPE, and private organizations. These are often based on academic merit, talent, or a particular area of study.

### WORK-STUDY JOBS

Work-study jobs will help students earn money to pay for school by working part-time. Work-study jobs also help students become better connected to the campus and familiar with the resources it offers.

## COST & FINANCIAL AID

### LOANS

Loans will give you the option of borrowing money to attend college. There are three types:

**Subsidized** are based on need, you don't pay any interest on the loan until after you graduate. The interest doesn't build while you are going to school.

**Unsubsidized** loans don't necessarily require you to show financial need, however, it builds interest and you pay it while you are attending school.

**Direct PLUS Loans** are available for parents who are borrowing money to pay for their child's education. These also don't require demonstration of financial need.

### MILITARY FAMILIES

Military families may qualify for aid programs or additional aid eligibility for serving or for being the spouse of or a child of a veteran.

Many schools offer financial aid from their own grant and/or scholarship funds, so it is important to find out what might be available to your student. Contact your school's financial aid office, and also contact the department that offers the student's course of study as they might have a scholarship for students in that major. Make sure to fill out any applications your school requires for its own aid programs before your school's deadlines.

**The Student Aid Index**

The Student Aid Index is a number that colleges use to determine how much financial aid your student can receive. You can estimate their eligibility for federal student aid through the “Student Aid Index” by using the **Federal Student Aid Estimator**



**Federal financial aid and scholarship options!**

You can apply for federal student aid by using the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form**.



**Make sure you are looking at the whole picture.**

The priority of each criteria may differ by student need. It is critical that your student weigh the importance of each category and how it impacts them.



**College Expenses**

Tuition, Fees, Books and Materials, Rent and Housing



**Transportation**

Travel, Car Repairs, Parking Fees, Gas/Insurance



**Fun**

Leisure and Entertainment, Extracurriculars

Undocumented students have legally guaranteed access to an education in the U.S. public schools through grade 12. Currently, there are no federal or state laws that prohibits the admission of undocumented students to U.S. colleges, public or private.

**It is important that you become aware of the policies universities follow when admitting undocumented students and of any changes in federal or state law.**

Many state colleges and universities charge undocumented students out-of-state tuition fees (even if the student is a longtime resident of the state). Several states have passed the DREAM Act or enacted policies that provide in-state tuition to undocumented students. Requirements vary by state. We recommend you search bills and policies that protect you as an undocumented student.



**Your student, like every other student, deserves to have access to an Engineering degree!**

**States supporting In-state tuition for Undocumented Students**

STATE	BILL/POLICY	YEAR ENACTED	ACCESS TO FINANCIAL AID
California	AB 540	2001	Yes
Florida	HB 851	2014	N/A
Illinois	HB 60	2003	N/A
Minnesota	SF 1236	2013	Yes
New Mexico	SB 582	2005	Yes
New York	SB 7784	2002	N/A
Texas	HB 1403	2001	Yes

Source: <https://citizenpath.com/college-education-dreamers/>





# PREPARING FOR COLLEGE VISITS

## YOU WILL LEARN:

- ✕ **How to Schedule a College Visit and What to Expect**
- ✕ **Establishing a Budget for College Visits**

## LESSON 1

### BENEFITS OF CAMPUS TOURS

Visiting a college campus is one of the most exciting steps (and a very important one too!) in choosing a college. This will be an opportunity to see for yourself the campus' facilities, get a taste of what college life will be like, and meet some of the staff and even hear from other students about their experiences.

Guided campus tours can also help your student feel more comfortable with the transition to college. Plus, many schools track what is called "demonstrated interest," so a visit can help your student solidify their interest in attending the college or university.

It is recommended to visit colleges before your applications are due. That way, you can compare what the college experience would be like in each, and it will help you feel confident that it meets everyone's desires and expectations when you're evaluating your options.

Some colleges extend an invitation to spend a few days on campus to their accepted candidates before the reply date to encourage them to enroll. If you're planning to wait to visit colleges until after you've received acceptances, keep in mind that you may have only a few weeks to visit and make your decision.

Throughout the next several lessons, we'll help you make the most out of campus tours to ensure these visits bring you and your student closer to deciding which college to choose.

#### What to Expect During an In-Person Tour

Visits will generally include an information session and a tour of the campus itself.

Information sessions will focus on an overview of a university's academics and culture. They will cover their strengths, resources, and what makes them unique. This is the perfect chance to ask questions and learn about the history, traditions, and facts that are specific to that school.

The tours are usually led by campus students with firsthand knowledge of college experience.

## LESSON 2

## HOW TO SCHEDULE A VISIT

Guided university tours make it easier for you and your student to not only see the campus, but also hear important information about that college. To make sure you have a productive visit, plan it well ahead of time!

Here are several steps to schedule a productive tour.



### Finding the Best Time to Visit

It's best to go when the college is in session. That way, you'll get to see it when classes are meeting, and day-to-day activities are taking place.

Although summer might be a better time for your family to travel, fall visits may offer you a better idea of what that college is like. Many colleges begin their fall semester as early as August. The goal of the visit is to see as much as possible how life would be on that campus, so keep in mind that most campuses aren't fully operating during the summer. If you visit during the summer, many of the services that are offered may not be available.



### Picking The Right Day

Mondays through Thursdays are best for visits since campuses are fully working. Depending on the institution, visiting on a Friday may not be as practical as students, faculty, and staff might be busy with social activities starting Friday afternoon. Student services representatives, admissions staff, or tour guides will all provide valuable information so it's very important to go on a day they're available.



### Dates to Avoid

Look through each of the colleges' website for their academic calendar to find out when breaks, reading periods and exam periods are scheduled. Colleges are not in session during Thanksgiving weekend, Christmas week, Winter and Spring breaks, and summer, unless there is a summer session. Other days to avoid are reading periods, exam weeks, and Saturdays and Sundays. The admission office may also be closed to visitors at certain times, such as between April and May, as that's when they're reviewing applications.



### Making a Reservation

You'll find information on how to make reservations for a campus tour at the college's website, on the admissions, recruitment, or the prospective student section. There will be multiple tours to register for, including tours for on-campus housing options, and specific tours of the College of Engineering.

Student organizations on campus such as the School of Engineering and SHPE may also be able to offer separate tours upon request. You can also request detailed information specific to your student's major or schedules for upcoming tours, as well as get added to a prospective student email list.



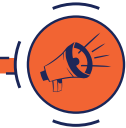
## LESSON 3

### WHAT DO YOU NEED TO EXPLORE DURING A CAMPUS VISIT?

It's important to have a strong plan for your visit, so create a schedule of the activities that are a priority for you prior to arriving. You can also help prepare for the day by finding a campus map and getting familiar with the size and layout beforehand. On your plan, make sure you include:

- ✓ Talking to financial aid counselors
- ✓ Setting time aside to explore the campus on your own
- ✓ If possible, your student can plan to attend a class, eat at the dining hall, or spend the night on campus
- ✓ Connect with important people who may be part of your application process, and also with members of groups, clubs, and/or organizations your student is interested in
- ✓ See important locations, like the dining halls, library, student center, and examples of classrooms and residence halls
- ✓ Encourage your student to connect with any current students they might know, and keep their contact info. This will help get their own perspectives on academics, facilities, dining services, or student life
- ✓ Explore academic departments
- ✓ Spend time looking around the city in which the college is located
- ✓ Document your visits, as many university layouts can appear similar and pictures or notes can make it easier to discuss what you liked and disliked about the campus

### Lesson 3: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO EXPLORE DURING A CAMPUS VISIT?



Use social media to get a better feel for the campus. Their Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts to keep you up to date on school news and what may be going on around campus during the time of your visit. This will also give you a feel for a school's level of informal interaction with their students.

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**

As the tour date approaches, make a plan as to who will be asking questions. Your student may be embarrassed or unsure of what to ask, or not feel comfortable asking questions. There are questions that you as a parent may want to ask. Have a discussion with your student before visiting. Having this conversation before your tours ensures everyone will be on the same page.

Here's a list of questions you might like to ask during your tour:

**What is the average class size for courses in their major of interest?**

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**Are most classes lecture based or discussion based?**

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**What type of career services do you have?**

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**Do you have a learning community or other freshman experiences?**

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**Do most freshmen live on campus?**

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**What is parking like on campus?**

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**What is your four-year graduation rate?**

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**How do students interact with professors outside of class?**

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**What is the campus approach to student safety? Federal law requires colleges to release information related to crime on and around campus, so check annual security reports.**

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**GUIDING QUESTIONS CONTINUED**

**Do you have any advice on ways to get around campus?**

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**What does academic advising look like for students?**

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**What clubs and organizations do you have on campus?**

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**What and where are the best places to eat on campus?**

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**What do students typically do in their free time?**

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**What facilities are available? (Like gyms and libraries)**

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**Make sure to obtain contact information of people you've met**

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After your visits, have a conversation with your student and write down what you both heard. This might lead to follow-up questions that could be asked via email or phone, and it's a great way for you to talk to your student in case you heard different things.



Check out the **Campus Visit Scorecard** on our website: [www.equipandopadres.org](http://www.equipandopadres.org)

**ADDITIONAL NOTES**

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Visiting the college your student is interested in is very important, however, it can get expensive. Here are some options to best budget your money during this time.



#### — Start with virtual tours

Virtual tours can be helpful in narrowing down your decision for which schools to visit in person. Although virtual tours can be limited, when available, you and your student can check out everything from the student union to the building of their department in 3D detail. Visit the college's website to find if they offer virtual tours.



#### — Visit only your top colleges

Use our college ranking tool to select and visit those colleges that rank high.

Ready to go? Here are some practical tips to help you cut costs:

- Call the admissions office and ask about fly-in programs. Fly-in programs cover airline costs, hotel discounts, or free meals in the dining hall and depend on financial need, talent, or academic performance of the student.
- Another option is to book your student on an organized college tour, which offers trips for students to visit several schools. They might include various regions of the country in well-organized trips to many colleges. Organizers for these tours will have more knowledge about what questions students should ask various departments than we have as parents.

- Lodging and traveling to the college, unless it's within 100 miles or so, usually is the largest expense in college visits. Try to visit colleges on your student's list that are in the same regions on the same trip to save on airfare.
- When traveling as a family, look for travel specials on discount travel sites and decide who will be traveling from your family.
- Be sure to use an incognito internet browser window when searching. Multiple visits might make the prices go up for airlines, car rentals, and hotels.
- Try to remain flexible with dates and always try your best to avoid peak travel times during June - August.
- A lodging site may give you options that are not just hotels.
- Book airline tickets as soon as you know your visit dates.
- Don't be misled to book flights with budget airlines that may have complicated policies, like extra fees for choosing a seat, or bringing a carry-on luggage. Make sure that you inform yourself on return or change policies for airline tickets.
- When it comes to car trips, try taking the quickest routes. Attempt to rent the cheapest vehicle that fits your family.
- Once you arrived at the campus, try to walk as much as possible, this will help reduce gas and parking costs. Try picking hotels close to campus, which will also help reduce gas costs.
- Visiting other campuses that are close by might be useful even if it's not on the top of your list. It can give you and your student ideas of what you like and what you don't.
- Take public transit instead of driving once you arrive. Campus parking for visitors can be difficult to figure out and adds cost to your expenses.
- Consider planning your own vacation around college tours.





## College Ranking Tool

This easy-to-use tool allows parents, caregivers, and their students to rank colleges and universities based on the criteria that is most important to them! Some examples include location, campus size, university rankings, campus cost and campus safety!



## Campus Visit Scorecard

As you begin identifying your favorite colleges and universities, you may need some help keeping track of the things you like about your research. This scorecard allows families to capture information during college visits and online searches. You can use the scorecards to fill in the college ranking tool when you're ready!



## College Visit Budget Template

Interested in visiting a college campus? The college visit budget template allows families to plan for all costs associated with a campus visit.



Scan Code and Click the Pop-up

Please visit our website at:

[equipandopadres.org](http://equipandopadres.org)

for updated information on our College Ranking Tool, additional resources and glossary!

# CONNECT WITH US



If you have any questions, please contact us at:

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