

7

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE



1 • ARE YOU READY TO LEAVE THE NEST?

There's tremendous pressure to join the millions of recent grads who move away from home for "the college experience." Ask yourself if you're really ready to live on your own. Everybody matures at different rates, and it's entirely possible that spending the first year commuting to a nearby state or community college makes sense.



2 • ARE YOUR PARENTS STILL TRYING TO RUN YOUR LIFE?

Parents want the best for their children, but too many steer students into colleges and universities that only address parental dreams, desires and regrets. Just because your dad always wanted to become a lawyer doesn't mean you should be forced into a pre-law program so he can live your life vicariously. Stand up to your parents now.



3 • HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

Attending college is expensive, and for most families money will be a primary concern. Carefully evaluate all opportunities for loans and financial aid. And remember: No matter how good a college is, the earning power of any degree is affected by how much debt you're stuck with after four years.



4 • WHERE IS THE COLLEGE LOCATED?

Do you want to live in an urban environment or out in the boondocks? For some of you, attending college in an environment that closely mirrors your hometown could be important, while for others it won't matter. Make sure you know yourself well enough to decide.



5 • IS THIS COLLEGE ACADEMICALLY WORTH THE MONEY?

Check out whether graduates in your field of study are considered top-shelf candidates once they enter the job market. Just because a college offers a degree in a field of study is no guarantee that you'll be employable after graduation.



6 • HOW BIG IS THE SCHOOL?

A closely related issue is whether you'll be more comfortable as a big fish in a small pond or a small fish in a big pond. This affects not only accessibility to professors and other academics, but your social life, as well.



7 • WILL YOU FIT IN?

Social life isn't just whether you're invited to pledge for a fraternity or sorority or get invited to hot parties. Equally important are the relationships you build during your college career. Do not underestimate this aspect of college, as these networks can affect how successful you are the rest of your life.