

College Fairs Navigating the Crowded College Fair

College fairs can provide you with a great introduction to a wide array of colleges and give you a chance to talk to an admission counselor or an alumna/us. College fairs can ALSO be busy, bustling, loud and overwhelming.

Here are some tips to think about to make the experience helpful and manageable.

1. Take a look at the list of **colleges who will be attending**. Are there specific schools or types of schools you want to see? This is time to investigate and learn so don't worry if you don't know where to start. **Stop by and pick up some materials from a variety of schools**. For instance, talk to a few college representatives from large state schools and a few from small private liberal arts schools and maybe a few from medium sized colleges. OR look at schools in places you might be interested in living in: Big city? Coastal town? Far away? Close by?
2. **Sign up to receive more materials IF you want more information**. Take a return address label to make it fast and easy. Or just include your name, graduation year, and email to get things electronically.
3. **Think about something you might want to ask each school to get some basic information**. Maybe ask the college what you should be doing right now to decide on a list of colleges. What advice do they have for you as you begin to look at schools? You may get a lot of great insight by asking this one question of the many reps you meet! Are you involved in something you may want to do in college? For example, are in theater and want to continue in college? Ask about their performing arts. What musical and play are being performed this year? Are you an avid tennis player but don't want to play a NCAA sport in college? Ask about club or intramural sports. Are you really interested in studying economics in college? Ask about the department? Size of classes, popular internships, where do graduates end up? Just think of one or two questions you may want to ask.
4. **Many of the college reps are alums and they love to talk about their experience**. What did they like best about their college? What made them choose that school?
5. **Use this time to get familiar with the process**. This is not time to think about "your list"-use the time to educate yourself and get started by understanding how many different types of schools are out there for you to consider.
6. **Have fun**. But be prepared for crowds. The later you can go, the less crowded it will be.

Laura Burrell Baxter
Director of College Advising

lbaxter@keyschool.org
The Key School