

COLLEGE CORNER

Getting The Most Out Of Campus Visits

(NAPSA)—It's never too early for families to start planning and visiting colleges. That's the advice of admissions experts who say that college campus visits are among the best ways to learn about a school and eventually decide what college to attend.

Given that there are more than 3,000 colleges in the U.S., the advice may be helpful to parents and students in making a choice.

"I tell parents: Listen to your sons and daughters. They're the ones who will ultimately enroll in a college. It's important for students to determine whether they can see themselves on campus, attending classes and taking advantage of social opportunities. Similarly, students should listen to their parents. They have some wisdom and their children's best interest at heart," says Eric Kaplan, Lehigh University's Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid. He offers these additional tips for making campus visits efficient, effective and enjoyable:

- **Take Your Time**—Visiting at a leisurely pace lets you take advantage of structured and unstructured activities. Information sessions and tours are important, but so is casually chatting with students or having lunch at a local hot spot.

- **Take A Break**—Don't try to see too many campuses in one day. Often, families race through one visit to get to the next. Instead, take the time to enjoy the experience and "debrief" each other between one campus and the next.



Visiting 101—Schedule enough time for you to see the campus and to talk to students and faculty.

- **Take Notes**—Bring along a small notebook and write down five or six points about each campus visit. Make a note of whether the campus felt personal and how you felt about the students and faculty you met.

- **Is It A Good "Fit"?**—Items that make a good "fit" include campus size, campus life, academic programs, extracurricular activities, location, and cost vs. value. Decide what features of a school are most important to student and parent.

"If you plan carefully and allow you and your son or daughter to enjoy each campus visit, you will both get more out of the experience. That will allow you to make decisions that you'll be happy about for years to come," says Kaplan.