

COLLEGE CORNER

Tips For Cutting Down On Costly College Visits

(NAPSA)—If your college-bound high school junior is interested in multiple universities, it may be tempting to just yell “road trip!” But campus tours can mean thousands of dollars in travel costs.

Fortunately, there are ways to visit colleges and universities without breaking the bank. Here are a few tips to save money on college tours:

- Work with your teenager to do as much research as possible from home. Read college viewbooks, catalogs, Web sites, newspapers and activity calendars, and have him or her talk to currently enrolled students or alumni about their alma mater to get a feel for the school before visiting. After research, you may find that there are fewer colleges on the list.

- Even if they're not interested in them, have your student check out colleges close to home to compare large schools to small schools. This could help them discover what they don't want and help narrow the list even further.

- Once the school list is finalized, map them out into regions and try to combine a number of college tours into one road trip.

- Before making travel plans, check with college admissions offices for any travel deals or other added incentives at local hotels. For example, now through Dec. 7, 2009, by booking a room at a Hampton hotel at Hampton.com and entering the promotional code “CAMPUS,” you will be entered to win a drawing for \$5,000, which could go toward your student's tuition. If you book far enough ahead, you can take advantage of



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the hotel's Advance Purchase Promotion to receive 15 percent off your stay.

- Take advantage of airline and hotel loyalty programs, such as Hilton HHonors, to use points instead of cash for your accommodations.

- Ask friends if their children are looking into visiting any of the same schools. Coordinate simultaneous trips with them to split the cost of gas and lodging.

- Turn your family vacation into a college visit trip, tacking on an extra vacation day to visit a school or bringing your student on a business trip if there are colleges nearby.

- Look into your student's high school to see if they organize college tours, which may be more affordable, or search online for “college tours” to find a company that provides campus tours, which can save you time organizing trips.

By planning ahead, not only will you save some cash, but your teen will get more out of the trip, allowing him or her to determine which school is a good match.