

College Interviews

The emphasis on college interviews has decreased during the past few years so you will need to inquire about the interviewing policy of each school. The policy will probably be one of the following:

- A. No interviews--group information sessions only
- B. Alumni interviews only--held in Birmingham
- C. Interviews are optional and informational only.
- D. Interviews are encouraged and do become a part of the student's application folder.

If the college does offer an on-campus interview and you are able to visit, please take advantage of the opportunity. It may be very helpful to you.

1. The interview is primarily for you to learn about the college and what life would be like for you as a student on campus. Use it as a tool to assist your college selection. The interview can have a positive effect on your admission--rarely a negative one.
2. Your interview will usually be with an admissions staff member, but it may be with a student, alumnus, or a professional interviewer. Keep this person's perspective in mind. Don't write off the college just because you think you had a bad interview! Interviewers have bad days too!
3. The interviewer is eager to get to know you and is almost always on your side. An experienced person is well aware that you may be inexperienced at interviewing and will try to put you at ease. The interviewer will want to answer your questions but will be more interested if you've done your homework about the school.
4. **KNOW YOURSELF.** An important part of preparation is your own self assessment. In what kind of environment do you work best? Would you take advantage of talking to professors or would you rather learn by the lecture method? Know your rank, your GPA, your test scores, your present areas of interest. If you are undecided about your career, feel free to say so. Seventy percent of college students change their intended majors. It is important, however, to recognize that you are going to college primarily to learn. Think through some areas you would like to explore, competencies you would like to develop and projects or situations that intrigue you.
5. Don't go unprepared! Do your homework about the school to get the obvious questions answered. You don't want to be silent when asked, "What would you like to know about our college?" Questions like "What if I can't decide between two majors? What do students here say about ____? What kind of internships are there and how often do students take them? or "I've

liked art, but don't wish to major in it"--these kinds of questions/concerns show more maturity in your thinking than asking the size of the student body.

6. Some interviewers, as they try to learn about you, may ask questions about your interests, extra-curricular activities/job, books you've read, meaningful experiences, why you're interested in this particular college, life at VHHS, etc.

7. Be honest! Everyone has strong and weak points. Hopefully, college will help you with some of the latter and promote the former.

8. If your parent or friend accompanies you to the college, plan to have your interview alone. Most admissions officers prefer to talk with your parents after talking with you rather than during the interview.

9. Dress neatly and comfortably. Research beforehand (from other students) the appropriate dress (i.e., coat/tie, dress or more casual).

10. After your return, write a thank you note. (Spelling and neatness are obviously important!)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FROM COLLEGE ADMISSIONS OFFICERS

These are samples of the kinds of questions you might be asked by an interviewer. Think about how you would answer them. Even if you are not asked any of these, if you have thought about them you will be well prepared.

1. How do you like your high school? What has been the most positive experience you have had? The most negative?

2. If I visited VHHS for a few days, what would I find is your role in the school community? What would your teachers

say were your greatest strengths as a person--as a student--likewise, what about your shortcomings or weaknesses?

3. What is the most significant contribution you've made to VHHS?

4. What is the overriding consideration in your choice of a college?

5. What are some of your goals--personal and career--for the future?

6. Tell me about a particular class in which you found yourself stimulated intellectually.

7. What is your reason for participating in athletics (or student government, or the newspaper, etc.)?

8. Since you are interested in science and math, why are you interested in a liberal arts college rather than a more technical

institution?

9. How and in what ways do you expect, plan, and hope to transfer your secondary contributions, achievements, activities to

the college level?

10. What has been your favorite subject in high school?

11. What might you study in college?

12. What books or articles have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking? Have you read deeply into any one author

or field?

13. What events, if any, would you deem critical in your life thus far?

14. What pressures do you feel to conform in society? Describe ways in which you "go your own way."

15. How have you spent your summers?

16. What are your reactions to current events, e.g. global warming, war?

17. Describe some issues that you have really become indignant over in the past year?

18. How would you describe yourself as a person?

19. Have you ever thought of not going to college? What would you do?

20. How do you spend your free time?

21. Do you have any questions?

SAMPLE QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK INTERVIEWER

1. Are there any tutoring services available?

2. How much are books and other materials going to cost?

3. What is the school's method of matching roommates?

4. What is the average increase in tuition and other costs and when are tuition increases next expected?
5. What kind of health facilities and services does the college offer?
6. What is your school's policy on dorm room wear and tear?
7. What kind of food does the cafeteria offer?
8. How easy is it to switch majors?