Reddit, Instagram, and More: How to Research Colleges During Covid-19

It can feel like everything has changed during Covid-19. Sports are cancelled, your classroom is actually your living room, and your friend-group hangouts take place on…well, Google Hangouts. One thing hasn't changed, though: thoughtful college research is still your best bet at being happy and fulfilled at your next educational stop.

College Research

First, answer some key questions.

- What kind of experience are you looking for?
- What is absolutely necessary, and what is a deal-breaker?
- Are the any limitations (distance, size, majors, etc.)?

Next, conduct some basic college research. Find out where the college is and what it looks like by searching with Google Maps and Images; going to youvisit.com; and watching videos on YouTube or Campus Reel. Get a feel for what it might be like to walk through the quad. Think about whether that bell-tower has enough "zing" for you.

Finally, look at the cold, hard numbers. What's the average salary of graduates? What percentage of students receive academic aid? How much can you expect to pay? Research using websites like collegenavigator.gov or the College Board's Big Future. You can also use guides like Princeton Review's Best 385 or the Fiske Guide.

College Research Part II

Once you've got the basics out of the way, delve deeper into life at college. What's happening at the university? Find out by accessing the student newspaper, department websites, or news stories that mention the college. Follow your favorite colleges on social media – it's a great way to find out what they're proud of and want to highlight.

Finally, use – with caution – college rankings. There are lots of college rankings out there, from the ever-present US News & World Report to a ranking of "dumbest mascots." Carefully review the questions we asked at the beginning, and find a ranking system that emphasizes what's truly important to you.