

Tools for Making College Decisions Amid COVID-19

Recommended Article from Forbes: [How to Choose a College During a Global Pandemic](#)

[Colleges That Have Changed Their Decision/ Deposit Deadlines to June 1, 2020 or Later](#)

CSU Specific Resources:

- [Consolidated CSU Admit/ Open House Day Information](#)
- [Search & Compare CSU Campuses Tool](#)

UC Specific Resources: [UC Specific Post-Admit Tools \(March 2020\)](#)

In response to the Coronavirus, colleges across the nation have moved to virtual learning. This move impacts not just current students but prospective students as well. By April 1, high school seniors will receive college admissions decisions and will be making final selections on which colleges to attend next fall. High school juniors may have flights and hotel rooms booked as well for college visits this spring. While online research and virtual tours can't replicate in-person experiences, there are abundant resources available for students to compare and evaluate colleges from home.

Below you will find a collection of resources that can help high school students make decisions while they Shelter-in-Place.

Virtual Tours:

Many colleges offer virtual college tours on the sites below. Also check individual college websites to which you've been admitted to see if they have virtual tours available for their campuses.

- <https://www.campusreel.org/> - CampusReel is the only College review website with Campus & Dorm video reviews and video walkthroughs from real students.
- <https://www.campustours.com/> - View thousands of virtual college tours and interactive maps.
- <https://www.youvisit.com/collegesearch/> - 360 degree and virtual reality tours. has UC campuses, many CSU campuses and many more private/ out-of-state universities.
- <https://www.collegeweeklive.com/> - Online College Fair. It has big virtual two-day college fairs in March and in November with hundreds of colleges plus speakers on various topics. Between the two major college fairs, CollegeWeekLive features specific colleges and regional or other themed days.

Social Media:

Facebook may not be your platform of choice, but most colleges have Facebook groups for admitted students. Join these groups to connect with other admitted students and read the discussion. If you “meet” someone you connect with, you can always move the chat to your preferred social media. Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat are resources as well. Search for YouTube videos on your colleges of interest and you’ll find plenty of students sharing information and experiences about their colleges.

College Admissions Offices:

Look for announcements for organized virtual tours and admitted student days from the colleges. Reach out to your regional admission representative via phone or email to inquire about their plans. Ask for their recommendation on how best to experience the college virtually. See if they can connect you with a student ambassador or faculty member in your area of interest through virtual platforms.

Make a Pros and Cons List:

Practice your spreadsheet skills by making a pros and cons list or comparison chart of the colleges’ features and data. How does your financial aid package or merit scholarship award compare? What are the graduation and retention rates? Were you admitted directly into the business or engineering school? Were you admitted to your first or second choice major? If you took AP tests, compare how the colleges award credit. Were you admitted to an honors or scholars program with special perks?

- **Data Resources:**

- Common Data Set - The CDS contains general information about the university, including enrollment, admission, academic offerings and policies, student life, annual expenses, financial aid, faculty and class sizes, and degrees conferred.
 - Google “Name of College” + “Common Data Set”, e.g, “Arizona State University Common Data Set” to access information about schools you want to explore.
- [College Score Card](#) - US Department of Education site to research average cost of attendance, graduation rates, average salary after graduation, and more.

College Websites:

Do a deep dive into the websites. Look at curriculum requirements and co-curricular opportunities for your prospective major. If you’re undecided, investigate advising resources for students with undeclared majors. Head to the section on student life and learn about

student organizations and club sports. There is a wealth of information behind the landing page of every college website.

Get Insights from Current College Students/ Alumni:

Turn to older peers, neighbors and family members to ask about their experience if they attended colleges you are considering or ask if they know current students at those institutions with whom you can connect. Arrange a phone call or Zoom/ WebEx session to discuss their first-hand experience.

- A high school student from California created this [Google Document](#) with entries from current college students who share insights of their current college campuses to help the class of 2020 who cannot tour colleges.

Financial Considerations:

Many families are suffering financial setbacks due to COVID-19. Call the financial aid offices at your accepted universities to see if they have any plans in motion to adjust financial aid offers/ consider financial aid appeals. Consider applying to your local community college so you have a back up plan.

Important update regarding Financial Aid:

The FAFSA form remains open until June 30, 2020. Any student or family who has not yet completed a FAFSA may still do so.

For those who have completed a FAFSA, and whose financial circumstances have changed considerably, please reach out to your institution's financial aid office. Financial aid administrators are afforded a degree of professional judgment under the law for state and federal aid, as well as for institutional aid, and can work with students and families whose incomes have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For other questions related to the COVID-19 outbreak and federal financial aid, visit <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus>