



College Visits and Admissions Chances

By Kevin McMullin, Collegewise Founder and President

Carmela asks:

"Will colleges take a decision not to visit as a sign of disinterest? We live on the West Coast and my student is applying to colleges that are in the Midwest and the East. We cannot afford to go on college visits. How do we explain this and demonstrate continued strong interest? She has already had preliminary contact with all the colleges and asked a question about AP tests vs. SAT Subject tests, but we don't want to bombard them with silly questions. We hear that if the answer can be found on the website, don't bug them!"

Good question, Carmela. The short answer? No, your decision not to travel great distances to visit will not hurt your daughter's chance of acceptance.

In fact, the only circumstance where some colleges might question that decision not to visit is for students who live within a short (let's say 1-hour) driving distance. And this is really only a concern with smaller private schools that are selective but not highly selective, because they lose many of their strongest applicants to other schools. A big public school like UCLA gets far too many applications to care (or to even notice) whether or not a student bothered to visit. And a highly selective school like Harvard has the luxury of knowing that most of their admits will take the offer. But a school like Claremont McKenna might wonder why a student who lives just 30 minutes away decided not to visit.

But families shouldn't drive themselves crazy trying to decipher which colleges care about this and which do not. There are many ways to demonstrate interest in a college, and almost all of them happen naturally when a student is legitimately interested. That student will want to make the short drive to see the school. They'll want to attend the information night at their high school. They'll have great answers to the application question about why they've decided to apply to this school. All of those things happen naturally when a student selects colleges that fit them. And none of them are as effective when a student is just trying to appear interested.

Here's a [past post](#) with more tips on how to effectively demonstrate interest to a college.

Also, that inclination not to bug them is a good one! It's certainly not a good idea to ask questions just for the sake of appearing interested, especially when that information is available on the website. Thanks again for your question!

Want more expert admissions tips from Kevin? Check out his blog at wiselikeus.com.

