



Self-Evaluation: The First Step to Choosing the Right College

Self-evaluation sounds a lot more complicated than it is. It's really just finding out about yourself. The following questions will get you started.

Do I know who I am?

Before you focus too much on your future, look in the mirror and think about what is best for you. When students know themselves – their strengths, interests, the type of environment that will best support them – then they'll know what they need to thrive.

Why am I going to college?

What is driving your decision? Are going to pursue your dreams? Do you just want to learn more? Do your teachers, parents, and/or friends want you to go?

Do I have a specific goal in mind, or am I going to college to broaden my general knowledge?

Some students know they want to be electrical engineers. Period. Others have no clue where a college degree might lead them; they just know they want to start down that path. Both mindsets are fine. If you don't have a specific goal or a general reason, put some thought into it and develop one.

What would make me comfortable in a college setting?

The climate, makeup of the student body, institution size, location, and course selection are contributing factors to your comfort level at a specific campus. Identify recreational activities, hobbies, and other interests that are important to you. Any reason you come up with is relevant.

What will inspire me to reach my highest potential?

Perhaps you need to be challenged to go beyond what you think you can achieve. You might like the cozy atmosphere of a small rural campus. Or maybe you need the intellectual and social stimulation of a large urban university. Do you want a campus where you immediately fit right in, or would you rather find a place that will force you to adapt to unfamiliar situations?

“Who Am I?” Checklist

Now ask yourself these questions, and you'll have a good idea of who you are:

- What do I do well?
- What are my strengths? What are my weaknesses?
- What's important to me?
- How hard do I want to work?
- What kind of environment will reflect my values?
- Do I need special support of any kind?
- In what kind of setting do I like to live?
- What skills should I learn or develop?
- Am I a self-directed person, or do I need guidance?
- Am I a qualitative person (enjoy working with people, for instance) or a quantitative person (comfortable with math)?
- What do I find satisfying? What do I find tedious?
- Is family part of my support system? Am I part of my family's support system?
- Where do I see myself in 10 years?