

I have a **Question...**

Recently, NACCAP had the opportunity to chat with a few member institutions and discuss many of the top questions that seem to be on the minds of students and their parents as they start the college decision making process.

Chant Thompson, Executive Director, NACCAP
Krista Meckling, Communications Director, NACCAP
Amanda Slaughter, Associate Director of Admission, Belhaven University
Aaron Mahl, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Trinity International University
Rose-mary K. Smith, Assistant VP for Enrollment, Northwest University
Stacy A. Bartlett, Director of Admission, Atlanta Christian College

1 *When should a student start the process of searching for a college?*

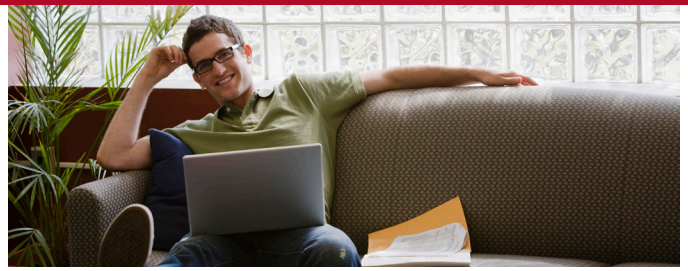
It is never too early to start the process. Generally, we see students start during their freshmen year in high school with a basic college search and planning to include college prep courses into their high school curriculum. Browsing websites and attending college fairs is a great first step in narrowing

your choices. Doing this may provide academic motivation for students and may also help them set goals.

2 *Why do you think a student should consider attending a Christian college/university?*

Christian colleges and universities are committed to the integration of faith and learning in the classroom and on campus. Not only will students receive the academic preparation and many hands-on opportunities they need to succeed in their careers or ministries, but they will also be able to learn within a framework of faith. Christian institutions are specifically designed to graduate Kingdom professionals who are well-versed in their fields of study. The four years spent in college are very formative years in a young person's life. It is during those years that a student takes ownership of his/her faith. While there are no guarantees, attending a Christ-centered school allows students to ask the difficult questions in an environment where truth matters.





3 *What do you think is the first step students should take when looking for a college?*

Visit websites like NACCAP.org or CCCU.org. These websites provide you with tools and resources in the college search process. It will also give you information about Christian colleges and universities in different regions, upcoming college fairs in your area, and college contacts to request more information. Never hesitate to call the college's Office of Admissions!

4 *What role do you think parents should have in the college search process?*

Parents should be partners in the college search process. Many times the college search process is a family affair. Parents should give students opportunities to discover and research for themselves while offering guidance and support. Students searching for a college should do three things: seek God in prayer, seek God through his Word, and ask godly people around them for advice and take their advice seriously. As a parent, you know your student better than they know themselves. Therefore, it's important that you be involved in their search process. It's more than just being the chauffeur to and from campus visits. It's about intentionally investing in their future and leading them as they search for the school that is the right fit.

5 *Can a Christian college be affordable?*

Simply stated...YES! Most Christian colleges offer a lot in scholarships and institutional aid in addition to what a student may qualify for in Federal and State aid. Students should never rule out Christian colleges based on the "sticker" price, but should pursue financial aid opportunities for Christian colleges that they feel will be a good fit for them. Attending any college should be viewed as an investment for your future.

6 *What are the top things about college that parents and students should consider when choosing a college?*

There are lots of questions you can ask yourself to help you narrow your college search. Does the school offer the majors or programs of study that I'm interested in? Can I see myself as a student at this institution? Do the schools' academic programs challenge students to prepare for a lifetime of service in their respective fields? Am I looking for a large school? Small school? Where in the country/world do I want to study? Near a city? Near family? After we see the financial aid package, will it be affordable to our family? Most importantly, is this a place to grow and further define God's calling? Students should look for a college that is the "right fit". Make a list of what you want in a college, including everything from academic opportunities to student life experiences. How many roommates will I have? What are the campus activities like? How is the cafeteria food? Is there opportunity for growth spiritually? What do students do on the weekends? Are there opportunities for jobs on/off campus? These are just a few suggestions. We know there are lots of questions when you search for a college, and the admissions offices are here to assist you through that process.

7 *What do colleges look for in a student?*

We look for well-rounded students. By this we mean: academically challenged through their curriculum in high school, involved in their community and/or church, and who have a desire to pursue education and personal growth.

8 *How important is visiting a campus?*

Absolutely important! Students can only get so much of an understanding from brochures, internet information, etc. Students can experience campus culture and whether that is the right environment for them. However, just showing up is not enough. For students to get the most out of their visit, it is important that they come prepared. We recommend giving schools 2-3 weeks notice of your intended visit and then ask for everything. Ask for meetings with professors, coaches, and admissions staff. Be sure to attend a chapel service and a class. We also recommend staying the night in the dorm before you make your final decision. Think of it this way: you wouldn't buy a car having never driven it. Your education is the only purchase you make that will appreciate over time, so it's vital to have as much information as possible about this all-important investment. Colleges have a variety of campus visitation options. Contact the schools individually for more information.

9 *Will I be able to find a job after I graduate from a Christian college?*

The Job Placement Office assists students in finding part-time and full-time employment. Students need to know what a college's job placement rate is and how the school assists students in finding jobs. Be sure to ask colleges where their grads are ending up in the job market. Ask for specific names of companies and professions. You'll also want to explore the school's internship programs and how those programs help with job placement. These questions should not only be posed to admissions officials, but also to the college's Career Development office. The Career Development office maintains a list of job opportunities and will gather information to aid in the job search. The job resource library contains job and career resource material readily available for student review. Christian institutions also provide dedicated faculty and mentoring opportunities to better prepare graduates.

10 *Are all Christian colleges the same?*

Although all Christian colleges are going to give you a great education with a faith-based curriculum, it is up to you as a student and family to search for a college that is the best fit for you.

We know that finding a college can be a difficult task. We hope we have answered a few of your questions and helped you down the road to finding the right college for you.