



NEW MEXICO  
SIMON SCHOLARS

## College Research Tips

As you research various colleges and universities, we recommend keeping the following questions in mind:

Mission/Philosophy of the college or university: What is distinct about the mission? What sets it apart from other colleges and universities? What does it imply about the kind of experience you might have there?

Location: Where is it? Is it in a *city, suburb, or rural* setting? What is the community like? What opportunities does the college's proximity to a city/town present to students (internships, service, recreation, culture/entertainment)?

Student Population: How many students are there? Is the school considered *large, medium, or small*? Are there only *undergraduate* students, or also *graduate* students? Is the college/university *coed*? Where do the students come from geographically? *In-state? Out-of-state?* How diverse is the student body (diversity of region, ethnicity, culture, etc.)? What proportion of the student body are *first generation* students? Are there international students?

Academics: What types of *degrees* (BA, BS) are offered at the college/university? What *majors* are offered, and which are the most popular? Can you design your own major? What resources or programs will allow you to pursue your graduate school goals (pre-law, business, pre-med, pre-nursing, etc.)? What is the school's *student:faculty ratio*? How many students return for their second (sophomore) year? How many students graduate within 6 years?

Residential Community: Is the college/university primarily a "residential" or "commuter" community? Do students live in dorms? What proportion of students live on campus their freshman year? Does the college/university have "living and learning" communities that allow you to room with students who have interests and goals similar to your own? Are there *fraternities/sororities*? What percent of students participate in "Greek life?" What do students at this college report about their experience?

Extracurricular Opportunities: What kinds of organizations, clubs, and sports exist at the college/university? Which of these would be of specific interest to you? Is the campus politically active? Is community service important? Is there a *study abroad* program? Is it required? What proportion of students study abroad? Where do students go?

Admissions Requirements: What is required/important for admission to the school? Is the college/university a **Common Application** school? If so, are there additional essays required for admission? What kinds of and how many *letters of recommendation* are



NEW MEXICO  
SIMON SCHOLARS

required? What expectations are there for high school grades and ACT/SAT scores? Are ACT/SAT scores even required for admission (is the school *test-optional*)? Is an interview required for admission? What percent of students who apply to the school are admitted (how *selective* is the school)?

Costs and financial aid: What is the cost of tuition? How does the cost differ for in-state versus out-of-state students? What percent of student need is met *on average* at the college/university? What percent of applicants have their *full need* met by the school? What financial aid and scholarship possibilities are available at the college/university?

From your perspective: What are the advantages and disadvantages of this particular college/university? Can you see yourself at this particular school? Why or why not?