

Connection Over Presentation: Modernizing College Visits for Counselors & Reps



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Panelists



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Who's Here?

Stand Up If:

- You are an admission representative
- You work directly with students researching and preparing applications
- You have been in this field less than 5 years
- You love dogs
- You have been in this field more than 10 years
- You transitioned roles recently
- You care about shaping future generations of leaders



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Current Barriers

What is your biggest frustration or bottleneck when planning or hosting a college visit?



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Before the Visit: University Representatives





A TIGHT-KNIT COMMUNITY
NESTLED IN THE HEART
OF HOUSTON

CONSISTENTLY RANKED
TOP 20 BY THE US NEWS &
WORLD REPORT SINCE 1988

SCHOOLS OF STUDY

RICE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

VIRANI UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

GEORGE R. BROWN SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTING

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

SHEPHERD SCHOOL OF MUSIC

WIESS SCHOOL OF NATURAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ACADEMICS

With more than 50 majors and minors across seven schools of study and flexible distribution requirements that give you the freedom to take the courses that interest you most, Rice invites you to immerse, explore, question, experiment, combine and create your own path.

66% OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN INTERNSHIPS

45+ RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND CENTERS ACROSS ALL DISCIPLINES

30% OF STUDENTS ENGAGE IN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

50% OF STUDENTS GRADUATE WITH DOUBLE MAJORS OR AN ADDITIONAL MINOR

6:1 STUDENT TO FACULTY RATIO

15 MEDIAN CLASS SIZE

STUDENT LIFE

Each student is placed into one of eleven residential colleges, a smaller community that reflects the rich tapestry of our diverse student body. Each residential college has its own student government, traditions and unique culture!

Most importantly, colleges offer community. A "Core Team" of faculty, staff and peer advisors live alongside students on campus, providing built-in support and helping all students feel at home.

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS & SCHOLARS

THE OISS IS HERE TO SUPPORT RICE INTERNATIONALS WITH ALL MATTERS RELATED TO IMMIGRATION, INTERNATIONAL COMPLIANCE AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION.

#25 BEST QUALITY OF LIFE

300+ CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

#16 HAPPIEST STUDENTS

HOUSTON

Houston is a hub for a variety of fields. Among our many interdisciplinary partnerships, our close working relationship with the Texas Medical Center, the largest medical complex in the world, provides students with opportunities for research, experiential learning and community-building.

THE BAKER INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

THE #1 UNIVERSITY-BASED THINK TANK IN THE WORLD, WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO ENGAGE IN FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC PUBLIC POLICY.

THE 3RD LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES

#1 MOST ETHNICALLY DIVERSE LARGE CITY IN THE UNITED STATES

145+ LANGUAGES SPOKEN

INTERNATIONAL COUNSELORS

- **Review Historical Context:** Review past applicant trends, yield, and scholarship history prior to arrival
- **Loop Local Counselors and other Uni Reps into Travel Schedule:** Ask counselors for date feedback or uni reps if there's interest in joint travel.
- **Send Marketing Materials:** Send student life photos and a short blurb or image for counselors to promote your visit
- **Optimize Packing:** Bring international-specific flyers or financial aid information that would resonate within the market and school community
- **Customize Visit Based on School:** Ask counselors what best meets the needs of the community *at that moment* (e.g., standard info session, specialized panel, or after-school parent workshop).



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Before the Visit: College Counselor Part I

Promote Early In School:

- Alert parents and target student groups as early as possible.

Send Admission Representatives Key Information within 24-48 Hours of Visit:

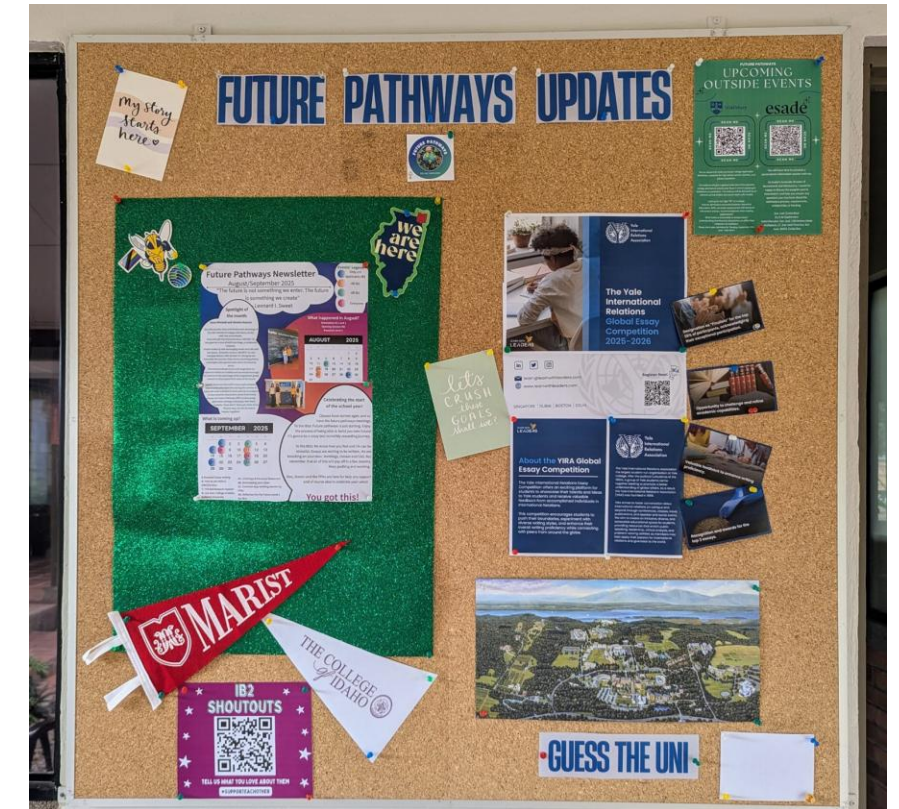
- Digital School Profile & highlight any updates
- Student Population Information: % US citizens, on Financial Aid, First-Gen, etc.
- Share key needs or potential barriers of your community

Provide Logistics & Context:

- Share local travel tips, school parking/gate instructions, and city traffic notes.
- Share general school / child safeguarding / cell phone policies, and any entrance documentation needed.

Serve as a Connector:

- Share if other schools/university representatives are in the area.
- Feel free to provide recommendations on who they could travel with.



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Before the Visit: College Counselor Part II

Set Expectations:

- [Sign Up Sheet Example](#) / MaiaLearning Events
- [ASFM College Fair Look Book](#) for students to explore options

Logistics & Context:

- Prepare the slides and objectives ahead of time
- Meet online 1 week in advance of the workshop

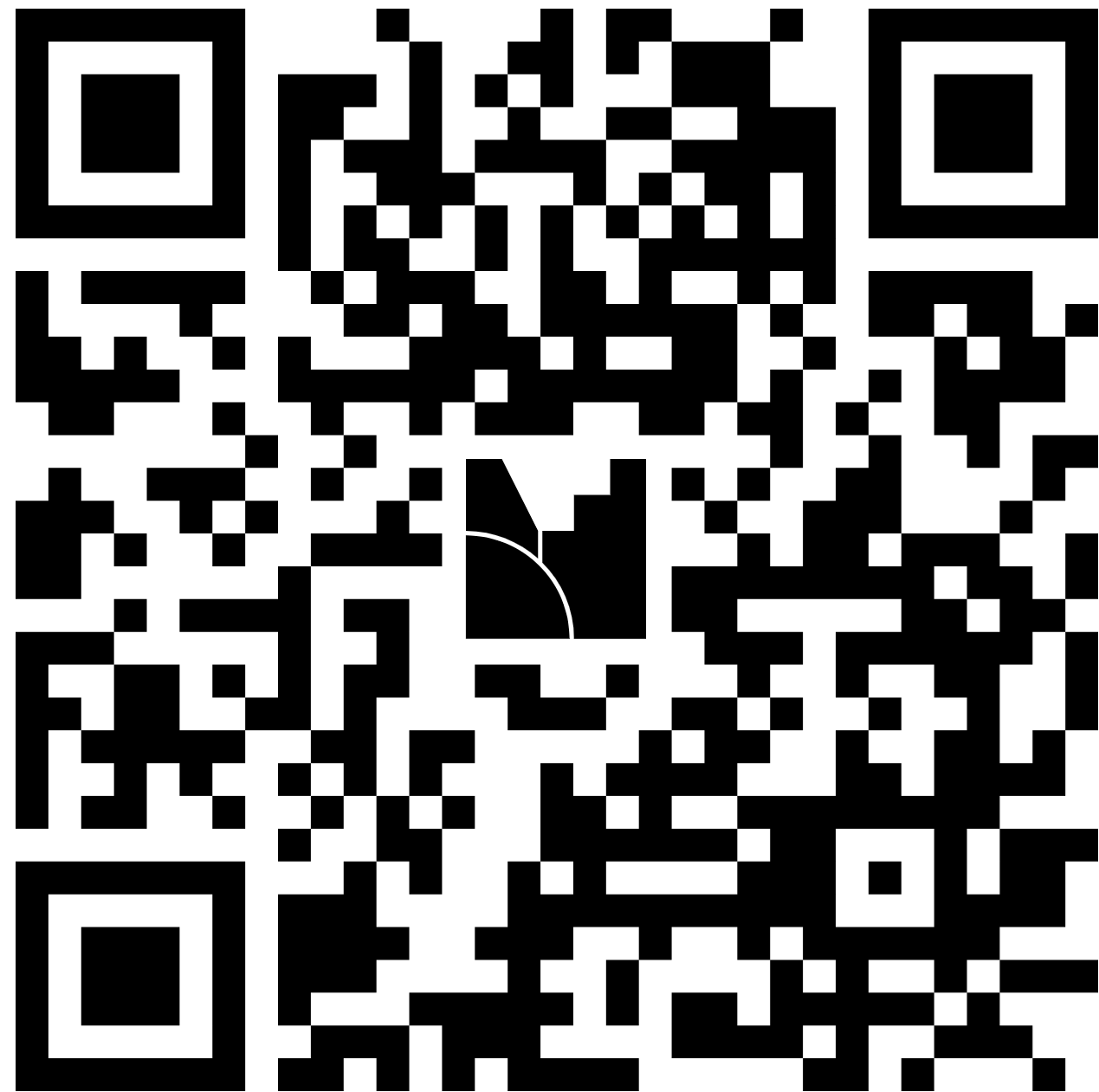
Examples:

- Blind/Reverse College Fair
- [Networking 101](#)
- [How to Uni Visit](#)
- [Holistic Admission Case Study - Need Blind](#)
- [Financial Aid Level 1 - Need Aware](#)
- [Reflection for the Future Level 1](#)



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Current Wins



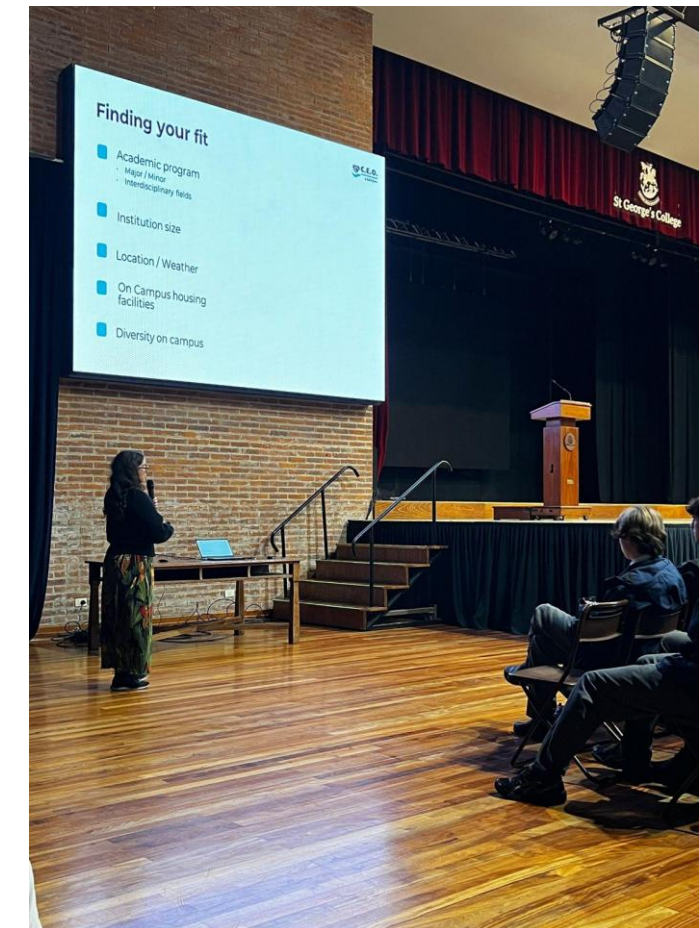
What is one tactic currently working well during college visits at your school or institution?



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During the Visit: University Representatives

- **Move with the room**
 - If something is not working, don't be afraid to pivot from your memorized talking points based on feedback or body language
- **Be as human as possible**
 - Talking with an official representative can be scary for high school students, break the ice and share vulnerably (if comfortable)!
- **Play with Format**
 - It doesn't always have to be a presentation format. It gets repetitive for you and it gets boring for students!
- **Center Transparency**
 - Whether it's about competitiveness of your institution, what you look for, or your financial aid review process, lead with honesty for all parties involved



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During the Visit: College Counselor

Build the relationship & a moment to breathe before the visit.

- Offer lunch or snack,
- Share a bottle of water upon arrival or a place to fill up water bottle.
- Share where the nearest restroom is.
- Where to plug in your phone.
- Transportation to next destination.
- Take attendance to share later.
- Build student confidence to step up and talk, humanizing.
- Tour - Future Pathways Ambassadors who can welcome them and give a tour
- Interviews - opportunities for students and reps to meet one on one

Observe & share insights!

- Treat your rep so nicely they want to come back!



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Current Buffaloes

What's something positively surprising that you have seen or done during a visit?



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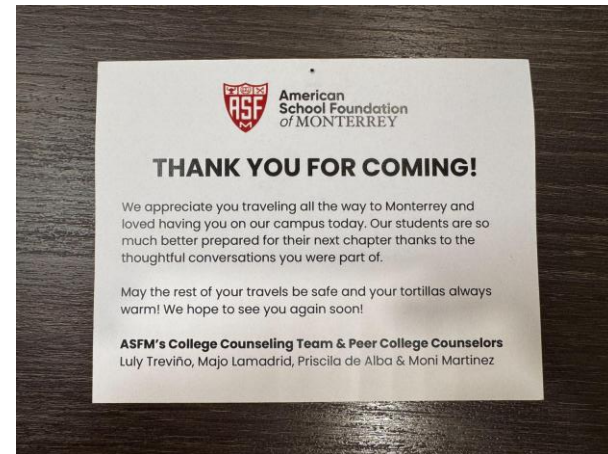
After the Visit: University Representatives

- **Check-in with the HS Counselor**
 - Thank them for the visit
 - Ask what they observed during the session
 - Share if any students were standouts and how to best support them
- **Continue the Relationship**
 - Email/call/reach out if you have questions about an applicant
 - Start emails with greetings and remind counselors of your last interaction/visit before immediately connecting or needing something from them
- **Recognizing the Needs of the Community**
 - Redirect students and counselors in the direction of your incredible university reps if they're asking about a program you don't offer



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After the Visit: College Counselors



- **Data Sharing:** Counselors share student attendee interest lists; reps track ROI beyond mere inquiry counts.
- **Debriefing:** Share immediate feedback on factors that impacted the visit (e.g., unexpected schedule changes).
 - What went well
 - What might you change
 - What if (Dreaming outside constraints of what currently exists)
- **Relationship Building:**
 - Offer local food recommendations
 - Suggest group travel routes/partners for future visits

UWC COSTA RICA

Feedback 2026 - With Caro and Feli

- Went well
 - Table challenges
 - Timing
 - Opportunity to speak directly to students
 - High energy from students
 - Bouncing ideas off one another during the session
 - Distribution of students in alpha was positive
 - Huge groups talking to universities after
- Can make better
 - Balance better
 - The universities did an elevator pitch, and we explained a lot, how can we balance that out more
 - If our goal is to plant the seed about philanthropy and the funding model, how can we connect that to what they need to know about university
 - Alignment of our goals - happy people selling things vs normal and known people explaining processes
 - Especially if we have a lot of information and they speak little
 - More focus on new information to keep their attention and engagement
 - Potentially by deleting slides 10-12
 - Building a habit of writing things down by starting with taking notes in some way shape or form
 - Slide that says here are the steps to visit
 - Do your research
 - Attend the pitch
 - Look for networking/finances, etc
 - Then follow up
 - These are with first years, so the most participatory are those with the highest levels of ingles
 - Could we have the presentation in spanish or bilingual, so that more students can access the information effectively
 - Consider using a microphone, so that we can control participation more and allow for those with less vocal power to be heard
- What if
 - Are there other spaces in curriculum that are more natural fits for development partnership
 - Maybe it could be a session before university visits with just us
 - Utilizing most recent alums before they leave -
 - How do you engage with visit opportunities on campus



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Think, Then Share!

What's one thing you can change or add next week?



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Key Takeaways

Counselors:

- **Set yourself up for success!**
 - Use a template that you update before each visit to share information
 - Schedule-send your messages.
- **Don't be Afraid to Ask and Think Outside the Box**
 - Admission folk have so much insight and you know the needs of your students. Connect the two!
- **Lead with Empathy**
 - Reps are working round the clock in countries they don't know well, from hotel rooms.
 - Aim for ease and clarity.

University Representatives:

- **We are part of the counseling process!**
 - Whether they attend our institution or not, our interactions shape their college application process
 - Important to center their success in your recruitment strategy → increases positive interactions with your institution
- **We have flexibility in how we present**
 - There are core talking points and strengths to highlight, but how we share them with students, parents, and counselors can be fun, spontaneous, and innovative!
 - Consider sharing market insights with your team and creating INTL-specific flyers or materials that can assist you during recruitment.

Ultimately, both our roles rely heavily on relationship building and networking; lean in to opportunities, ask questions, and be a resource!



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Thank You!

**We welcome any questions, share-outs,
or comments!**



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