

4 Early College & Career Awareness Activities

4.1 College Visits

The 2005 GEAR UP grant application includes the following statement about college visits:

“For many GEAR UP students, a visit to a large university campus is like a visit to a foreign country – both exciting and overwhelming.”

Ever since GEAR UP began in Montana, college visits have been an important tool to help students picture themselves on a college campus and another way to teach them what is necessary to not only get to campus but to be successful there.

In 2004, Montana GEAR UP conducted focus groups with liaisons, campus officials, and students to learn what worked and what did not in regards to college visits. One GEAR UP liaison made this comment:

“Campus tours are one of the best things GEAR UP does...it is great to hear students talk about the experience and where they are going to college. Exposure to the campuses really does expand students’ options.”

This section presents materials on various decision points and relevant college visit information to ensure that students get the most from the college visit experience.

4.1.1 Pre-Visit Logistics and Activities

Begin to prepare for a college visit by reviewing the Montana College Visit Information for GEAR UP Groups grid (see subsection 4.1.1.1). This grid is updated annually by Montana GEAR UP and includes college visit information for all 24 public and private universities, colleges, colleges of technologies, community colleges, and tribal colleges in Montana. Each college has provided information including the best person to contact on campus to arrange a visit; how much prior notice the college requires for large group tours; what activities are available to groups; what activities are NOT available; the best time for a large group visit; what times are not available; and additional information that might be important when setting up a visit to a particular campus.

Once you are aware of some of the campus specific information, the next tool to review is the College Visit Logistics form (see subsection 4.1.1.2). The first page of the form should be completed by the school's GEAR UP liaison before making contact with the college visit coordinator at the college. By thoughtfully completing the first two sections, 1) Information about the Group; and 2) Requests for the Campus, you will compile necessary information as well as prioritize the activities and options available on campus to best meet the needs of your students. Consider the following:

Selecting which college to visit: Montana has a wide variety of postsecondary institutions ranging from public to private, liberal arts to technical, two-year to four-year, etc., where students can pursue a one-year certificate of completion to a post-doctorate degree. Montana GEAR UP recommends that each GEAR UP school creates a systematic approach to exposing their students to the different type of colleges in Montana. In a "rotating" college visit schedule, each grade will visit a unique type of college/university. Advantages of establishing a rotating college visit schedule are that it 1) exposes students to a wide variety of different college options; 2) eliminates bringing the same students back to the same campus (and thus having them see the same thing) year after year; 3) allows younger students to spend time on smaller campuses; and 4) makes planning and logistics coordinating easier for the GEAR UP Liaison. A sample rotating college visit schedule follows:

- 7th grade – Tribal college or community college closest to the GEAR UP school;
- 8th grade – College of technology closest to the GEAR UP school;
- 9th grade – 4-year college closest to the GEAR UP school;
- 10th grade – 4-year university closest to the GEAR UP school;
- 11th grade – Private college closest to the GEAR UP school;
- 12th grade – The school or type of school the majority of the students indicate as their college choice.

Combining activities: Montana GEAR UP encourages schools to combine college visits with other academic enrichment activities. For example, a GEAR UP school might bring a group of 8th grade students to tour The University of Montana–Helena College of Technology in the morning and tour the Capitol Complex and Montana Historical Society in the afternoon.

Another example would be for a group of 10th grade students to tour Montana Tech in Butte in the morning and tour the Mining Museum in the afternoon.

Schools should also consider adding a college visit to any academic enrichment activity which brings them to a location that has a college or university. For example, many schools bring juniors and seniors to observe the Montana Legislative session as part of its history or government curriculum. Students could spend half of the day at the legislature and the other half visiting Carroll College or UM—Helena College of Technology.

Which students should go on the college visit: Many schools have specific policies to address which students are eligible to attend a college visit or other academic enrichment activities. Montana GEAR UP strongly recommends that *every* student make at least one college visit before 9th grade. Part of the GEAR UP mission is to help students realize that college is possible for them, and college visits are a key component of getting students to “see” themselves on campus. Students who are underachieving (below a C average) and/or have discipline issues are often the students who most need to visit a college campus or engage in another academic enrichment activity to give them a view of life beyond their own school. To achieve the recommendation that *every* GEAR UP student visit at least one college campus before the 9th grade, liaisons may need to seek special permission from school administration and/or the school board. Montana GEAR UP also recommends increasing the number of chaperones traveling with groups that may need more supervision.

Expectations and wishes: The key to arranging a quality college visit is developing realistic expectations for the visit and then communicating those expectations to the college visit coordinator at the campus you wish to visit. Once you have clearly made your request, the college will be able to determine whether or not they can accommodate it. Consider the following questions before setting up a college visit:

- Why do you want to bring this group of students to this particular campus? (Recording an activity in GEARS is not a good enough reason!)
- What do you want your students to learn by visiting this campus?
- What experiences/activities during the visit will teach them this?
- Is this possible, considering time constraints, the college you hope to visit, etc.?
- How does a visit to this college campus tie into the curriculum and the goals of GEAR UP (statewide and in your school)?
- How many students will make this trip?
- What is the grade level(s) of the group?
- What are their interests, attention span, behavior, and expected participation levels?

Time availability and constraints: A challenge faced by every liaison and campus visit coordinator is how to include as many activities/experiences in the short time the group is on campus. In Montana, it is not unusual for a group to travel four to six hours to spend only one and a half hours on campus before having to leave. Some time-related questions to ask before setting up the visit include:

- How much time will it take to travel to this campus? What time will you leave your school? Return time?
- How much time will you physically spend on campus?

- What date would you like to visit?
- What is an alternative date?

College visit components: What is available to groups during a college visit varies greatly between campuses. There are several activities that are ‘standard’ requests that most colleges will provide including a tour of campus, a visit with an admissions representative, and a presentation on financial aid. Depending on the group’s grade level, size, interest, and the amount of time on campus, additional activities may be possible. Review the college specific information on the college visit information grid and discuss all the different options with the college visit coordinator, keeping in mind your expectations and priorities for the visit as well as time considerations. College visit options listed on the College Visit Logistics form include:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tour of campus (1-2 hours) | <input type="checkbox"/> Visit with Admission Office (15-30 minutes) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Aid/Scholarships (15-30 min) | <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with a Professor (30 minutes) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend a class* (1-1 ½ hours) | <input type="checkbox"/> Career presentation* (30-60 minutes) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scavenger Hunt* (1-2 hours) | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Panel* (45 min.–1.5 hours) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bookstore Tour (10-20 minutes) | <input type="checkbox"/> Residence Hall Tour* (30 minutes) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meals on Campus** (1 hour) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

*Activities may not be available

**Meals on campus are typically “self-pay”. Check with the college for prices.

Additional activities that may be requested during a college visit include:

- Opening address by a college official
- Presentation by a math or science instructor
- Tour of science labs and sports facilities
- Overnight stay on campus
- Visiting the registrar’s office to learn about registration process
- Shadowing a student
- Student health center visit
- Student Support Services (TRiO) program visit
- Group photo in front of college sign (to be sent to parents, to use in newsletters, press releases, web pages, etc.)

Contacting the college: After you have thought about and answered the questions posed above and you’ve completed page one of the College Visit Logistics form, it is time to:

- Call the College Visit Coordinator at the college you wish to visit.
- Discuss your requests with the coordinator; they may want you to fax the completed logistics form to them.
- Once all the details of your visit have been determined you will receive confirmation from the college.
- If you haven’t heard anything after two weeks, make contact with the coordinator to confirm that the visit will happen.
- Book the bus, if you have not yet done so.

Preparing your students for the visit: Once you've received confirmation and details about your visit from the college and booked the bus to get to campus, there is a great deal you can do to get your students ready for the college visit. When your students arrive on campus for a college visit, they should be well aware of the purpose of the trip; knowledgeable of general college information such as college terms and what they will find on a college campus; and aware of the college's general characteristics and location. It is disheartening to the college official greeting a group and embarrassing for the GEAR UP liaison to hear a comment such as, "But I thought MSU was in Missoula."

Consider some of the following activities to better prepare students for the college visit experience:

- View college brochures, websites, and take a 'virtual tour' of the college if available. Several Montana colleges have virtual tours available at www.ecampustours.com.
- Use the MPSEOC College Guide for a quick reference on the college's general facts. The guide can be found on the GEAR UP website (www.gearup.montana.edu).
- Use the *Top Ten Things to Think About* guidelines (see subsection 4.1.1.3) to discuss behavior expectations during the college visit. For example, have two students work together to act out/do charades to the rest of the class for each item on the list. After the class guesses a point, write it on the board, and have a new pair of students act out the next point.
- Review college vocabulary and general college knowledge by using the *Possible Questions to Ask During a College Visit* (see subsection 4.1.1.4) and *Glossary of Montana College Terms for Students and Parents* (see subsection 4.1.1.5). Make certain that students understand the specifics about the college they will visit (i.e., four-year vs. two-year; residential vs. no on-campus housing; public vs. private; liberal arts vs. technical; etc.). Allow students to brainstorm about the different people/offices on campus who might know the answers to these questions.
- Play "on-the-bus" games in the classroom, log onto Montana Career Information Systems (MCIS), or do other fact finding activities that focus on the college(s) you will soon visit.
- Remind students and chaperones to dress in layers and wear comfortable shoes because the buildings on campus are often different temperatures and far apart. You might also want to discuss how much (if any) spending money each student should bring.

Selecting Chaperones: Select your chaperones wisely, and make sure you articulate their college visit responsibilities clearly:

- Act as positive role models for the students by following all rules applicable to students (stay with the group, leave personal items on the bus, don't talk on cell phone, etc.—see the "Top Ten" list in subsection 4.1.1.3).
- Be attentive and respectful to all speakers.
- Monitor behavior of the students, and take corrective action immediately if there is a problem. Do not rely on campus officials to enforce rules.
- If students are split into smaller groups, at least one chaperone must be with each group at all times.
- Do not engage in conversations about what the group will do after the college tour (i.e., "...and now we get to go shopping," or "as soon as we're done here we'll have some fun," etc.).

The ideal ratio of chaperones-to-students will vary depending on the grade level of the group, the experience of the chaperone, and the dynamics of the group. However, at a minimum, schools should bring one chaperone for every ten students. The number of chaperones should increase as the grades/ages of the students decrease (i.e., a middle school college visit should have more chaperones than a high school college visit). You may want to ask parents to serve as chaperones if your school allows it so they, too, can have a first-hand look at college. However, only do so if the parents would be willing to complete the chaperone requirements.

4.1.1.1 College Visit Information for GEAR UP Groups

| | Blackfeet CC | Carroll College | Chief Dull Knife | Dawson CC | Flathead Valley |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| Campus Contact for GEAR UP Visits | Darlene Peterson Student Services (406) 338-5421 x241 or x242 d_peterson@bfcc.org | Erin Dininny Campus Visit Coordinator (406) 447-4384 or 1-800-992-3648 edininny@carroll.edu | Rowdy Alexander Transition Counselor (406) 477-6215 x153 rowdy@cdkc.edu | Kortney Eiker, Recruitment (406) 377-9458 eikerk@dawson.edu Teresa Mooer, Admissions (406) 377-9411 tmooer@dawson.edu 1-800-821-8320 | Beth Kelly Admissions Representative (406) 756-3847 bkelly@fvcc.edu |
| How much notice? | 2 weeks | 2 weeks; 3-4 weeks preferred | 2 weeks | 2 weeks | 3 weeks preferred |
| What activities are available to groups? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour • Classroom visit • On-campus scavenger hunt • Mock admissions, financial aid, and career search (3 weeks notice) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour • Admission and/or financial aid presentation • Classroom visits for small groups of juniors/seniors • Lunch (self-pay) • Faculty presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour • Classroom visit • Admission and/or financial aid presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour • Admission and/or financial aid presentation • Lunch (self-pay) • Faculty presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour • Career center visit – showing national trends & a career aptitude test • Sample classes/lessons • Meeting with faculty • Lunch (self-pay) |
| What is NOT allowed/available? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight housing • On-campus meals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight housing • Class visits for large groups (over 12 students) • Time in the P.E. Center due to varsity and intramural sports schedules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight housing • On-campus meals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight housing |
| Best times for GEAR UP tours? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Thursday • 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September and October (except Fall Break) • Mid-morning through early afternoon | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday – Thursday | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring or early fall |
| What times are NOT available for visits? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays • Spring break (late April) • Finals week (2nd week in December & 1st week in May) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-March through April. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday and Friday • Holidays • Late in the afternoon | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays • Weekends • Finals week • Late afternoons. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September and early October |
| What other information is important to know? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native American Week is the 4th week in September • Days of the Blackfeet TBA in Spring semester | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaperones need to be active participants, monitor student behavior, and make sure that the students understand the rules and help enforce them when necessary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaperones need to be active participants, monitor student behavior, help students with the rules and enforce them when necessary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCC hosts campus View Days in the spring and summer. Call for details. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaperones need to be active participants, monitor student behavior, help students with the rules and enforce them when necessary • Must reschedule if more than 30 minutes late |

| | Fort Belknap | Fort Peck CC | Little Bighorn | Miles City CC | MSU-Bozeman |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| Campus Contact for GEAR UP Visits | Mary John Taylor Dean of Academics (406) 353-2607 x263 | Lee Melbourne Assistant Registrar Student Affairs Office (406) 768-6326 lmelbourne@fpcc.edu | Tina Pretty On Top Admissions (406) 638-3116 tina@lbhc.cc.mt.us | Loren Lancaster Admissions Representative (406) 874-6211 1-800-541-9281 lancasterl@milesc.edu | Brenda Truman Campus Visit Coordinator 1-888-MSU-CATS (toll-free) (406) 994-1989 (direct line), bstruman@montana.edu |
| How much notice? | 1-2 weeks | 2 weeks | 2 weeks | 3 to 5 weeks would be ideal | 2 weeks; 3-4 preferred |
| What activities are available to groups? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour • Admission and/or financial aid presentation • Meet with advisors • Presentation on student activities and organizations • Cultural Center Tour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour • Just about anything can be set up • Games, lectures, icebreakers • Financial aid presentations • Lunches can be arranged | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour • Admission and/or financial aid presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quite varied • Could have the president, financial aid, and program directors talk to the group • Tour of campus and resident halls • Students may sit in on some classes, depending on time of year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour • Residence hall tour • Admission and/or financial aid presentation • Facilities tour (specialized labs, demonstrations, sports areas, etc.) • Lunch (self-pay) • Museum of the Rockies or a planetarium show |
| What is NOT allowed/available? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight housing • Food service • Recreation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight housing • Food service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food service in the summer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of lunch or museum fees (may negotiate reduced fees) • Overnight housing for large groups |
| Best times for GEAR UP tours? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Friday • Before 3:00 p.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Friday • 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October – November and February – March are best | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Friday • All year • Spring semester visits preferred |
| What times are NOT available for visits? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays • Weekends • Midterms & Finals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays • Weekends | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays • Weekends | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September • Summer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays • Finals week |
| What other information is important to know? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The college has several academic organizations including Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, American Indian Business Leaders Chapter, and American Indian Science and Engineering Organization • Visit Immersion School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups should be open to the cultural diversity of the campus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New buildings on campus include a classroom building, and cultural center • Currently under construction is a new library and archive building • For the first time at the college, LBHC will offer junior league basketball for men and women | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miles Community College is an open admission college with small class sizes and significant resources to help students succeed • New residence hall built in 2003 and on-campus fitness center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups should plan to spend at least half the day on campus • MSU hosts MSU Friday, a campus visit day three times a year which includes informational sessions, sample classes, lunch, & meetings with academic and financial aid representatives • Due to the tight visit schedule MSU will have to cancel the whole visit and reschedule if the group is more than 30 minutes late for the visit |

| | MSU-Billings | MSU-Billing COT | MSU-Great Falls COT | MSU-Northern | Montana Tech |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| Campus Contact for GEAR UP Visits | Sarah Sherman Campus Tour Coordinator (406) 657-2888 1-800-565-6782 ssherman@msubillings.edu | Stephanie Cowen New Student Support Specialist (406) 247-3012 scowen@msubillings.edu | Joni Gordon Information Specialist (406) 771-5132 (406) 771-4300 joni.gordon@msugf.edu | Nicole Knowlton Admissions Office (406) 265-3704 1-800-662-6132 x704 nknowlton@msun.edu | Vicki Cazer Campus Visit Coordinator (406) 496-4178 vcazer@mtech.edu |
| How much notice? | 2-4weeks | 2-3 weeks | 2 weeks | 2 weeks | 2 weeks |
| What activities are available to groups? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tours • Visit with admissions counselors and financial aid representatives • Other activities as requested | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tours • Observing lab classes • Lunch (self-pay) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tours • Educational Opportunity Center • Student panel • Information about the campus, program information, etc. • Lunch (self-pay) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour led by staff or students • Meeting with faculty in areas of interest • Lunch (self-pay) • Financial aid, student life, educational options • Class observation • Meet with coach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tours • Workshops • Lunch (self-pay) • Meeting with faculty in areas of interest • Visit with Admissions Counselors • We will try to accommodate special requests |
| What is NOT allowed/available? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically, we do not have classes available for large groups to sit in on • Food service | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight housing | | |
| Best times for GEAR UP tours? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Friday • 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. • Will make exceptions if needed, but we want students to see campus during school hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-October – Early December • February – Mid-April • Mid-mornings and early afternoons (9-11 a.m. or 1-3 p.m.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afternoons after 1 p.m. • During the middle of the semesters • 1-2 hour visits work best | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Friday • 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. • During regular school session | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Thursday • All year • Mid/Late morning • These preferences may change based on campus events |
| What times are NOT available for visits? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above answer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finals week • Weekends • Holidays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekends • Beginning of the semester | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekends or holidays • Any time the campus is closed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekends • Friday afternoons • Holidays • Finals week |
| What other information is important to know? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage chaperones to stay with students during the whole visit and participate during the tour • Need accurate number of students for planning • Please arrive on time • Call if you will be late | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We encourage groups to visit our campus and the senior campus (full day) • We prefer visits to be while classes are in session so students can be seen in the labs and classrooms • Times will be dependent on staffing availability for that day | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the ages, interests, and number of students coming in advance, so we can prepare for the students • Chaperones are required to be active participants • Students must be respectful of presenters | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaperones must be present at all times • Need accurate number of students for planning • Need grade levels of students • Please arrive on time • Certain activities or the entire tour may need to be rescheduled if the group is more than 30 minutes late |

| | Montana Tech College of Technology | Rocky Mountain College | Salish Kootanai | Stone Child College | University of Great Falls |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| Campus Contact for GEAR UP Visits | Leslie Dickerson Assistant Director of Admissions (406) 496-3716 1-800-445-TECH ldickerson@mtech.edu | Rita Pumphrey Admissions Coordinator (406) 657-1141 pumphreyr@rocky.edu | Juan Perez Director of Student Life (406) 275-4978 Juan_Perez@skc.edu Merrie Lewis, Recruiter (406) 275-4847 Merrie_Lewis@skc.edu | Cory Sangrey SSS Counselor (406) 395-4313 clsangrey@yahoo.com | Paula Highlander Director of Admissions (406) 791-5222 phighlander01@ugf.edu |
| How much notice? | 2 weeks | 2 weeks | 1-2 weeks | 1 week | 1-2 weeks |
| What activities are available to groups? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tours • Experiential learning • Meals • We'll try to accommodate special requests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tours • Observing lab classes • Lunch (self-pay). Must have accurate lunch count 1 day prior to visit • Information session with Admissions Counselor • Maybe a SAS program, American Indian Affairs divisions, career services, or athletics presentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour • Mock registration (maybe) • Student panel (maybe) • Lunch (self-pay) • We'll try to accommodate requests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour • Maybe science class and cafeteria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tours • Information session with Admissions Counselor • Classroom visit for small groups • Lunch (self-pay) • Visit to the Center for Academic Excellence/TRIO Program • We will try to accommodate special requests |
| What is NOT allowed/available? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many courses are too full to accommodate a large group's visit into the classroom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational activities • Overnight stays | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not able to visit most classrooms or the business office | |
| Best times for GEAR UP tours? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mornings, but any time is okay with advance notice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday or Thursdays • Between 1:30-4:00 p.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Friday | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Friday at 10 a.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All year |
| What times are NOT available for visits? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above answer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday • Weekends • Holidays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finals week • Holidays • New Student Orientation • Registration days | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday after 3:00 p.m. | |
| What other information is important to know? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaperones must stay with the students during the entire visit • Also plan to visit Tech's North Campus • Please arrive on time • Call if you will be late • If late we may omit certain activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would like to know academic interests of students prior to their arrival in order to best meet their needs in our information session | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please be specific as to number of students and time available on campus • Call food service department at (406) 275-4718 to arrange lunch | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEAR UP groups are welcome to sign up for Campus View Days and can attain RSVP forms by contacting any one of our Admissions Counselors. We ask that RSVPs be sent in prior to attendance. |

| | University of Montana | UM-College of Technology | UM-Helena COT | UM-Western |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Campus Contact for GEAR UP Visits | Emily Ferguson Steger Enrollment Services-Admissions 1-800-462-8636 (406) 243-6268 emily.steger@mso.umt.edu | Alan Fugleberg Admissions (406) 243-7888 1-800-542-6882 alan.fugleberg@mso.umt.edu | Cherry Beatty Admissions & New Student Services (406) 444-6826 beattyc@umh.umt.edu | Janet Jones Admissions Representative (406) 683-7331 1-866-UMW-MONT j_jones@umwestern.edu |
| How much notice? | 2 weeks | 2 weeks | 2 weeks | 2 weeks |
| What activities are available to groups? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tours • Classroom visits • Lunch • Outdoor activities • Admissions and Financial Aid presentations • Special interest presentations • Student panel • Interactive student registration activity • Scavenger hunt • Combined visits with COT and UM Mountain Campus. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tours of East and West campuses • Classroom visit (if interest known ahead of time) • Observing lab classes • Lunch (self-pay) • Admissions and Financial Aid presentations • Career services presentation/counseling • We will try to accommodate any needs or requests of a group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tours • Classroom visits • Admissions and Financial Aid presentations • Lunch (self-pay) • Experiential learning • Please note: We define experiential learning as an opportunity for the students to shadow classes together, not separate opportunities for all of the students to attend different classes throughout the day on their own | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tour • Classroom experiences • Any event happening on campus • Admissions and Financial Aid presentations • Lunch (self-pay) |
| What is NOT allowed/available? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational activities | |
| Best times for GEAR UP tours? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Friday • 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Friday • Between 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Friday • Between 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday – Friday • 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. • When classes are in session |
| What times are NOT available for visits? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays • Weekends • Orientation • Finals Week | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays • Weekends | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays • Weekends • Summer • Finals week | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays • Weekends |
| What other information is important to know? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaperones must stay with the students during the entire visit • Also plan to visit UM-COT • Please arrive on time • Call if you will be late • If late, we may alter schedule to accommodate • Please provide specific numbers when scheduling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would like to know the number and academic interests of students prior to their arrival in order to best meet their needs in our information session | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We prefer students visit campus when classes are in session • We will try to accommodate any needs or requests • We can also provide workshops on financial aid or filling out college applications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If under 18, must be accompanied by an adult |

4.1.1.2 College Visit Logistics Form

College Visit Logistics



Date pre-planning began: _____ (please allow at least four weeks for group tours)

Information about the group:

GEAR UP School: _____ GU Contact: _____

Mailing Address: _____
Address City State Zip

Phone Number: _____ Alternate Phone Number _____

Email Address: _____

Number of students in each grade planning to attend the college visit (If possible, bring groups of similar grades):
7th grade = _____; 8th grade = _____; 9th = _____; 10th = _____; 11th = _____; 12th = _____

Total number of students: _____

of Adult Chaperones _____ Chaperones will be with the group at all times Yes No

Is this an overnight trip? Yes No If yes, where will you be staying? _____

Pre-Visit Preparation of Students: _____

Has this group visited this campus before? Yes No If yes, date of visit: _____

What other colleges has this group visited? _____

Expectations of the visit (what do you hope your students will learn/experience by visiting this campus?)

Requests for the Campus:

College Name: _____ Location: _____

College Contact: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Proposed Date of Visit: _____ Alternative Date: _____

College Visit Components: **Check all that apply keeping in mind the time requirements for each activity. Times are approximate and will vary between campuses. Indicate special requests on the line below the activity.**

Tour of campus (1-2 hours) Visit with admissions (15-30 min) Financial aid/scholarships (15-30 min)

Meet with a professor (30 min) Attend a class* (1-1 1/2 hours) Career presentation* (30-60 min)

Scavenger hunt* (1-2 hours) Student panel* (45 min.-1.5 hours) Bookstore tour (20 min)

Residence hall tour* (30 min) Meals on campus** (1 hour) Other

*Activities may not be available

**Meals on campus are typically "self-pay;" check with the college for prices.

THE TOP TEN

4.1.1.3 Top Ten Things to Think About Before Visiting Campus...

College visits are a great way to learn about campus life, get your questions answered, and to get excited about attending college someday. To get the most out of this trip, we ask that you please observe the following guidelines:

Be on time for all sessions!

Be considerate of each other and those that you meet during your visit.

Remain on campus during the entire program and attend all sessions.

Ask questions so you can learn as much as possible.

Please wear nametags while visiting campus if they are provided.

Be respectful to workshop presenters, tour guides, and other campus members.

Keep all personal items (headphones, toys, basketballs, backpacks, Gameboys, cell phones, Walkman/Discman, etc.) on the bus.

Do not bring food or beverages to workshops, classrooms, or activities.

The use of controlled contrabands (alcohol, drugs, tobacco, etc.) is considered a serious offense and appropriate action will be taken.

Enjoy the beautiful surroundings and what the campus has to offer you!

Remember that you are a guest while on campus. Please set a good example as your behavior will determine if your school and/or other schools will be able to go on campus visits in the future.

*Montana GEAR UP ~ www.gearup.montana.edu
Thanks to MSU-Bozeman New Student Services for providing this information.*

4.1.1.4 Possible Questions to Ask During a College Visit

During a college visit you have a golden opportunity to gather information about the college that won't be presented in recruiting publications! Rose Rennekamp, vice president of communications for ACT and mom of two college-aged students explains, "Can you imagine buying a home or a used car after just seeing a photo in a newspaper ad or on the Internet? Most of us hesitate to make a major purchase or decision without some investigation. One of the first major decisions for a young person is selecting a college, and it shouldn't be made solely on information such as the school's reputation, a guidebook, or a website. In order to find out what a college is really like, students should take a personal tour of the campus."

So to make sure you get the information you need to make an informed decision about your future college, use the following questions as a guideline, and if you think of other questions, be sure to ask.

Academic Aspects

- What academic factors are considered during the admissions process?
- What is the average class size of a freshman level class?
- What is the average class size of an upper level class?
- Are professors accessible outside of class?
- What is the typical way to get in touch with a professor? Email? Phone call?
- Do you usually get in all the classes that you need to register for?
- On average, do professors or graduate students teach freshmen level classes?
- Are there academic scholarships available through the school?
- Are there tutoring services available on campus?
- What are the college's most popular academic programs?
- What is the grading system like at this college?
- What is the attendance policy?
- _____

Financial Aspects

- What is the cost of attendance?
- If you have financial need, will you be able to get a financial aid package that meets all of your demonstrated need?
- What percentage of students receives financial aid?
- Are there work-study jobs available on campus? Off campus?
- If you don't qualify for work-study, what other jobs are available near campus that you could apply for?
- _____

Social Aspects

- How do students spend their free time?
- What are the most popular extra curricular activities?
- What do most students do on the weekends? Stay on campus? Go home?
- Are there sororities and fraternities on campus?

- How many students participate in Greek life?

- _____

Housing/Food Aspects

- Are you required to live on campus your first year?
- What is the percentage of students who live on campus all four years?
- Are the dorms single sex or coed?
- Are there community baths in the dorms?
- What are the rules for students living in dorms?
- Do the dorms have laundry facilities?
- Do the dorms have computer labs? Internet connection in rooms?
- What types of meal plans are available?
- What hours may students access food services?
- How many restaurants/cafes are on campus?

- _____

Community/Transportation Aspects

- Do you like the surrounding city or town?
- Is the city or town big enough for your taste? Does it have a variety of restaurants, museums, nightclubs, parks, and movie theatres?
- Is the city or town small enough for your taste? Is it rural and peaceful?
- Will you have to have a car to live on campus? Can you walk to most restaurants, nightclubs, etc.?
- What is the city's public transportation system like?

- _____

Athletic Aspects

- Is the college considered an athletic school?
- Are there athletic scholarships available?
- What sports are played at the school?
- Do athletes have to miss a lot of classes in order to participate in games?
- Do athletes have their own dorms?

- _____

Safety Aspects

- How safe is the campus? How often are crimes reported?
- How are safety issues addressed?
- Is the campus well lit?
- Are there emergency phones on campus?
- Is there a pick-up service for students walking at night?

- _____

4.1.1.5 Glossary of College Terms for Students and Parents

- ACG:** Academic Competitiveness Grant. Also referred to as the “get in, get out” grant, these grants are awarded in addition to the Pell grant to students who take the ‘rigorous academic core’ in high school and stay on track in college by completing a specific number of credits in their freshman and sophomore years.
- Accreditation:** Recognition of a college or university by any of the regional or national accrediting bodies, indicating that the institution has been judged to be meeting its objectives.
- ACT Assessment/Test:** American College Test is a group of tests required or recommended by most colleges as part of the admission process. The tests measure educational development in English, mathematics, reading and science reasoning. ACT scores range from 1-36.
- Admissions Officer/Counselor/Representative:** A professional staff member in the admissions or enrollment services office who provides information and advice for prospective applicants, parents, counselors and others.
- Admissions Standards/Entrance Requirements:** Academic requirements for admission to Montana’s 4-year public colleges based on GPA, test scores, writing proficiency score, and completing the Regent’s College Prep courses.
- Advanced Placement (AP):** A test given to high school students, usually at the end of their junior or senior year, after they have completed certain AP or Honors courses. Many colleges give advanced standing and/or credit for these tests if a student earns a score of 3, 4, or 5.
- Aid Package:** A combination of financial aid (possibly including a scholarship, grant, loan or work) determined by a college financial aid office.
- American Indian Fee Waiver:** This waiver covers tuition and registrations fees at any MUS institution for Indian students who meet specific eligibility requirements.
- Associate Degree:** A degree granted by a college or university for a program that requires two years of full-time study.
- Associate of Applied Science Degree:** A degree granted by a college or university for a program that requires two years of full-time study in a technical, hands-on program.
- Bachelor Degree:** A degree granted by a college or university after satisfactory completion of a four-year program.
- Calendar:** The system by which the institution structures its school year. Three common types are semester, quarter and the trimester.
- Catalog:** A general reference publication providing information about the school. It may also be referred to as the Bulletin or Register.
- Class Schedule:** A publication containing information on the courses and sections to be offered for a given term, including names of instructors, days, hours, places of meeting and credit designation.
- COA:** Cost of Attendance. The total estimated amount, including tuition, fees, books, transportation, and personal expenses that it will cost to go to college. It is usually expressed as a yearly figure and is used to calculate financial need.
- College Goal Sunday:** An event held in February to assist students and families in seeking federal financial aid by completing and submitting the FAFSA form.
- College of Technology:** A two-year, technical college affiliated with either The University of Montana—Missoula or Montana State University—Bozeman. COT’s may offer general education transfer courses in addition to technical programs.

Community College: Montana has three community colleges (Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell; Miles Community College in Miles City; and Dawson Community College in Glendive) which are funded and governed by their local communities. The Montana community colleges are associated with the Montana University System.

Credit-hour: A unit of academic credit that often represents one hour of class time per week for a period of study.

Deferment: 1) if referring to admission, deferment permits an accepted student to postpone enrollment for a certain length of time; 2) if referring to financial aid, deferment is a postponement or delay or payment obligation on a student loan.

Deposit: A fee payable within a specified date of acceptance for admission verifying their intention to enroll. The fee may or may not be refundable.

Early Action: An application whereby you apply early, receive early notification, but you do not need to accept the admission offer prior to May 1.

EFC: Expected Family Contribution. The amount that your family is expected to contribute toward your education.

Faculty: The person at a college or university who is engaged in teaching, research, service or related administrative responsibilities.

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. A federal law designed to protect the privacy of education records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their education records, and to provide guidelines for the correction or inaccurate data.

Fee Waiver: Permits eligible low-income students to submit college applications or test registration forms without the fee. The waiver may be granted by a high school or college.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The primary form used to determine your eligibility for financial aid.

Grade Point Average (GPA): GPA is figured on class letter grades (A=4, B=3, C=2, etc.) multiplied by credits, divided by total credit hours taken.

Grant: An award of money which does not have to be repaid. Typically grants are based on financial need. For example, the amount of a **PELL grant** is determined by a student's **EFC**.

Honors program: Any program offering opportunity for superior students to enrich their educational experience through independent, advanced, or accelerated study.

Loan: Borrowed money that must be repaid with interest.

Major: The subject of study in which the student chooses to specialize; a series of related courses, taken primarily in the junior and senior years.

MUS: The Montana University System (MUS) consists of 11 publicly-funded colleges and universities. The MUS is governed by the Montana Board of Regents and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE).

Open Admissions: Two-year campuses of the Montana University System (community colleges and colleges of technology) maintain an open admissions policy. High school graduation (or the equivalent) **and** proof of immunization are required for admission.

Orientation: Events planned by the college to help students adjust to college life.

Pre-professional: Courses which prepare students for later specialized or technical training. For example, "premed" includes pre-professional courses in chemistry and biology which are prerequisite for later specialization in medicine.

Prerequisite: The beginning course in a series. It must be taken and passed before enrolling in the next class.

Private Colleges/Universities: These institutions are funded by student tuition and private donations rather than state and federal money. Montana's private colleges are Rocky Mountain College in Billings, Carroll College in Helena, and the University of Great Falls in Great Falls.

Regent's College Prep Courses: Fourteen courses that students who plan to attend a four-year Montana college must take from 9th to 12th grade.

Registrar: The administrative officer of a college or university who maintains the academic records.

Residency status: In public institutions, the classification of a student as a resident or non-resident of the state in which the school is located.

Rigorous Academic Core: Seventeen courses that students take to meet admission standards at Montana's 4-year colleges without taking the ACT or SAT test. The rigorous core also qualifies students for consideration for the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG).

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP): A financial aid requirement which requires students to pass 2/3 of attempted credit hours. After four college semesters, a student must have a 2.0 GPA.

SAT: Scholastic Aptitude Test is a test of verbal and mathematical abilities given by the College Entrance Examination Board. The test is required or recommended by many colleges as part of their admission process.

Scholarships: Non-repayable awards to students based on merit or merit plus need.

Semester: Half of an academic year, usually fourteen to sixteen weeks.

Student Aid Report (SAR): The information you will receive approximately 2-4 weeks after your FAFSA has been processed. It will report your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

Student Support Services (SSS): Funded by a federal grant, these offices are located on college campuses to provide academic and emotional support for first-generation, low-income college students.

Transcript: The official record of high school or college courses and grades, generally required as part of the college application.

Tribal College: Federally recognized and tribally governed colleges offering 2- and 4- year degree programs. Seven tribal college are located in Montana—one on each Reservation.

Verification: A random selection of FAFSA forms are selected by the Department of Education to be verified.

Wait list: A term used by colleges to describe a process in which they may initially delay offering or denying admission, but rather extend the possibility of admission in the future.

Work-study: Money you earn while enrolled in school that will help pay your educational expenses. Specific jobs, both on- and off-campus can qualify for work-study positions.

4.1.2 During the College Visit

Most schools will have several hours to drive before arriving at campus. This is a perfect opportunity to play on-the-bus games to review college information, answer student questions, review the college visit schedule, and review conduct rules for students and chaperones.

Be on time: Traveling in Montana can be an adventure in and of itself, but it is critical that you are on time for all college visit appointments. One piece of information provided by the college (see page two of the College Visit Logistics form, subsection 4.1.1.1) is the person and phone number the group should call if they are delayed. Of course, it is best to be on time, but if you will be late, make certain you call and let the campus know when to expect you. Any delay may significantly change the on-campus activities available to your group.

Conduct: Keep in mind that the GEAR UP liaison and chaperones – not college personnel – are responsible at all times for the conduct of their students. It is not acceptable to rely on college personnel to monitor student behavior. If your group is divided at any time during the visit (tour, visiting classrooms, etc.), make certain that chaperones accompany each and every group of students.

Remain flexible: Even with advanced planning, attention to detail, great weather, and an attentive group, it is not uncommon to encounter bumps along the way. All will work out if you remain flexible and communicate with the college official identified in the pre-visit logistics phase of the process.

Have fun and learn a lot: Educational benefits aside, a college visit is a lot of fun as you meet new people, explore a beautiful campus, and see dreams glowing in the eyes of your students. Make sure you take a group photo in front of college sign or some notable college landmark. The photo can be sent with a thank you note to the college, shown to parents, or used in newsletters, press releases, and web pages.

4.1.3 After the College Visit

In order for the college visit experience to be more than just a day out of school, students need to learn something meaningful which can be applied to their present and future lives. Because of the lengthy bus trips most GEAR UP schools take to get to the college, the return trip is the perfect time to begin the discussion about what the students learned from the college visit.

On the Bus:

- Get the students talking by asking questions such as:
 - “What is the most surprising thing you saw (learned) today?”
 - “What is one thing you now know about this college that you didn’t know at breakfast?”
 - “What would be the best thing about attending this college?”
 - “What would be the most challenging thing about attending this college?”
- Use “on-the-bus” games to reinforce facts about the college.
- Compare-Contrast this college with others the group has visited.
- Distribute and collect student and chaperone evaluations.

In the Classroom:

- Tie the college visit to a class assignment and/or activity to help students process the information and the experience:
 - Have students create written and oral reports summarizing the institutional values, mission, program offerings, social aspects, etc.
 - Do a creative writing project where the student writes a story about ‘a day in the life of a student’ attending the visited college.
 - Videotape the visit and have the students edit the video. The video could become “pre-visit preparation” for next year’s visit.
 - Have each student write a thank you note to a campus official or student that helped with the college visit.
 - Send the thank you note along with a photo of the group at some campus landmark.

After everyone is home safely and things have settled down, it is always a good idea to write up an overview summary of the experience from the liaison’s perspective to be reviewed when setting up the next college visit to this or another school. Please pass along concerns, suggestions, and positive experiences to the Montana GEAR UP office. These will be reviewed for possible best practices to share with others.