

# How to choose the best program once the offers of acceptance come in

You've gone through the process of selecting the programs of study that interest you most and have completed and submitted the applications. Now, the offers of acceptance are coming through and it's decision time. Determining the program of study that's best for you can be a challenging task when there are so many factors to consider.

Educational consultant, Susan Lawson, has helped students navigate the process of selecting the program which is most suitable to them. Bottom line, she says is that this is your decision and it must be the best fit for you. Although others may offer their opinions, you need to focus on your own criteria to make the final decision.

She offers these questions as a starting point to help you select which university or college will best match your personal and academic needs and desires.

- Look closely at the curriculum and determine how it jibes with your learning style and academic needs. Do you want lots of freedom in course selection or a very structured program. Do you like hands on learning or large lectures?

- Consider class size. Smaller classes make getting to know your professor easier. Is that important to you?

- Do you prefer a smaller environment where you know everyone or are you happy in a large setting? Smaller college versus large university.

- How comfortable are you being away from home? Do you need to be a car, bus or train ride away or are you fine hopping on a plane to return home?



- If you are commuting to and from campus, consider how easy it will be for you to get involved and feel like you are part of things.

- If you will be in residence, consider what the weekends will be like. Do kids go home or stay on campus?

- What do you do in

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your spare time or during times of stress? Do you wander city streets or hit nature trails? Do you need to be near water? Do

you like shopping and restaurants? Find out if the campus location has those amenities that will help you feel grounded and whole.

- Do you want to be in large city, small city or rural setting?

- How important is diversity to you and does the campus have the diversity that you are looking for?

Be honest with yourself when answering these questions. Perhaps your closest friends have decided to go to a particular university or college. Try to resist the urge to join them for fear of being the odd person out. Think hard about your goals, your personal preferences and what type of environment will bring out the best in you. Last of all, trust your instincts.