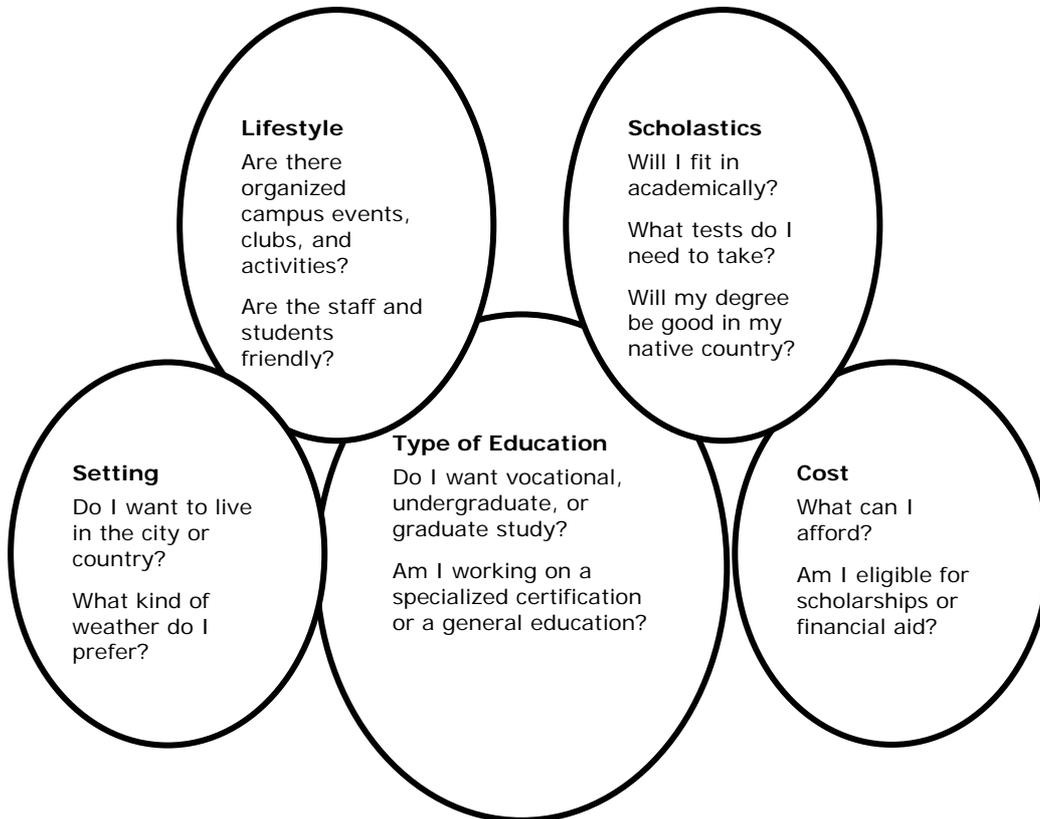# Five Dimensions of Choosing the Right Undergraduate School

What is most important to your students? By prioritizing these five categories, undergraduate degree seekers will have a better idea of where to begin in their search for the ideal college or university in the U.S.A.

Lifestyle

Are there organized campus events, clubs, and activities?

Are the staff and students friendly?

Scholastics

Will I fit in academically?

What tests do I need to take?

Will my degree be good in my native country?

Setting

Do I want to live in the city or country?

What kind of weather do I prefer?

Type of Education

Do I want vocational, undergraduate, or graduate study?

Am I working on a specialized certification or a general education?

Cost

What can I afford?

Am I eligible for scholarships or financial aid?

Different Types of Schools

Liberal Arts Colleges offer a broad base of courses in humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Most are private and focus mainly on undergraduate students. Classes tend to be small and personal attention is available.

Universities are generally larger than colleges and offer more majors and research facilities. Class size reflects the institution's size and classes may be taught by graduate students.

Community Colleges offer a degree after the completion of two years of full-time study. They frequently offer technical programs that prepare you for immediate entry into the job market.

Upper-division schools offer the last two years of undergraduate study, usually in specialized programs leading to a bachelor's degree. You would generally transfer to an upper-division college after completing an associate degree or after finishing a second year of study at a four-year college.

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Keep **deadlines in mind. Nearly every school requires some sort of standardized test, whether it be the SAT or ACT. There may be an English language proficiency requirement as well. It is necessary to complete these tests well in advance of application deadlines****

Helpful Websites

http://www.petersons.com/ugchannel

http://www.studyUSA.com

http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/eduhome.htm

http://www.collegeboard.com

http://www.princetonreview.com/college/default.asp

Most importantly—Know students' goals and preferences, and be honest about strengths and weaknesses. By giving an accurate estimate of each student's academic abilities, a realistic choice can be made!

Sarah Gildea, 2005 Public Affairs Intern, U.S. Consulate General Hamburg