

The College Search Amid Covid-19



Determining which college to attend has always been a daunting task even under normal conditions. The lack of in-person visits due to Covid-19 has posed a unique challenge for rising seniors as they try to navigate the confusing world of college applications remotely.

In-person visits allowed prospective students to experience the campus firsthand, speak with current undergraduates, learn about the school itself, and, most importantly, taste the food in the dining halls.

“Nothing can simulate you going to a campus”, said Max Monson, a rising senior at Joel Barlow High School. “ You hear people saying they visited a school and just knew that’s where they wanted to go, but that isn’t possible online.”

Students must somehow manage to find the right place for them using these new online resources. Most colleges offer information sessions using platforms like Zoom to host students and share a holistic look at the school, as well as video chats about specific programs. However, students find these sessions to be difficult to find, repetitive, and uninspiring.

“You cannot tell the difference between information sessions,” Monson said. “It is obvious it is some guy reading from a prompt.”

A more user-friendly website, YouVisit, provides virtual tours narrated by a current

student. A similar website, Campus Reel, offers day-in-the-life videos filmed by students that give a more unfiltered perspective of the school. The blog videos featured on Campus Reel go even more in depth than a traditional information session including dorm tours, information on the local area, night life, campus traditions, and study-abroad programs.

The website Niche also gives a brief overview, including rankings, admission statistics, cost estimates, popular majors, student polls, and reviews.

Although these resources do not allow you to “get a feel for the school,” as Barlow rising senior Miah Cooper said, “A positive is that you can visit multiple schools in one day, so it’s quicker.” The cost-effectiveness and convenience of virtual tours also ensures students can visit more schools than they could have under normal circumstances due to scheduling restraints.

Along with the help of Barlow’s guidance counselors, rising seniors are taking the initiative to learn about colleges using these free online resources. The current health situation has forced future seniors to more deeply explore the college’s programs and opportunities rather than basing their decision on the beauty or location of the campus.

Although nothing is more informative than a physical tour, the internet has proven to be an invaluable source of information to find important details about colleges and universities. The internet, and the ingenuity of soon-to-be seniors ensures that the Covid-19 pandemic will not obstruct their bright futures.