



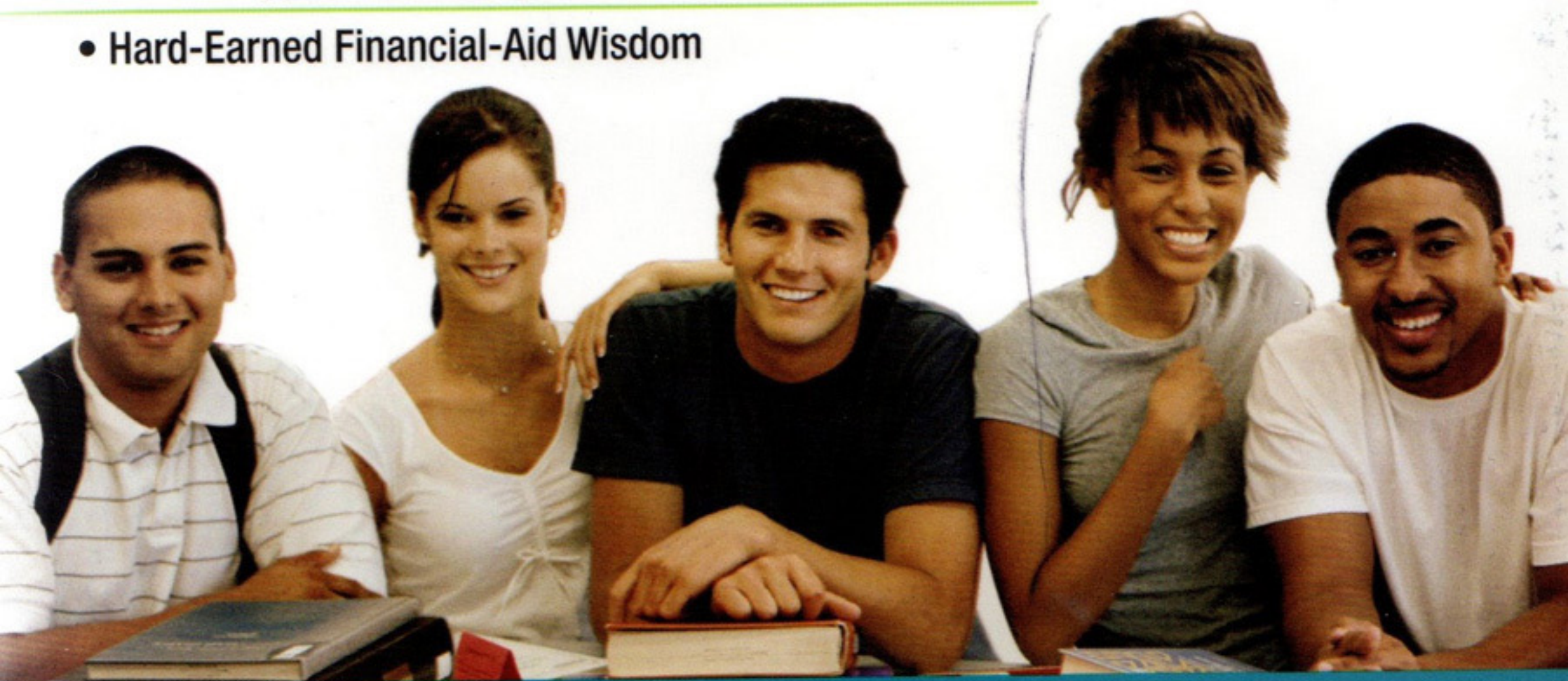
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IECA⁺ COUNSELOR'S CORNER

WHAT TO DO ON A SCHOOL VISIT

VISITING COLLEGES is an incredibly important (not to mention fun!) part of the college search and admissions process. After all, you're checking out schools where you might be spending the next four years of your life! Here are some tips for making the most of your time on campus:

THE TOUR: Use the tour as both an opportunity to see the campus and a chance to ask the guide (usually a student) questions. If you have a choice between student guides as the tour commences, you should try to choose the guide whose academic or extracurricular interests are most similar to your own.

INFO SESSIONS: Plan to attend one of the college's information sessions, which are usually hosted by admissions officers who will go into detail about academics, extracurricular life and the admissions process. Bring a list of questions - this is your chance to have them answered in person by an admissions officer at the college. Take good notes - as you visit several colleges on a trip, you will find that it can become hard to remember who said what!

MEETING WITH ADMISSIONS OFFICERS: When you call to arrange tours and information sessions, ask for the name and contact information of the admissions representative in charge of your high school or region. It is generally a good idea to make contact with that person. If it's a small school, you could ask the receptionist if you could schedule a meeting with that person; if it's a bigger school, it's likely better to e-mail them yourself. If you send them an e-mail, and they aren't able to meet, at least they've seen your name and had some indication of your interest in the school!

ATTENDING CLASS: Try to attend a class by making arrangements in advance through the admissions office. Or, if you have a friend or know a graduate of your high school who is a student at the college, contact them to see if there is a class you could attend with him or her. Most professors welcome visitors - just be on time!

MEETING WITH PROFESSORS: An increasingly common question from students and parents is whether or not they should arrange a meeting with a professor while on campus. Meeting with a professor in a particular subject area in which you are interested can be helpful – but remember that you need to know what you’re talking about! If you do arrange such a meeting, you need to be well-prepared ; you should know a substantial amount about that subject, and the department at that school, be able to discuss the reasons for your interest in that subject, and have several questions for the professor about his classes and/or research.

INTERVIEWS: If the school you’re applying to offers on-campus interviews, and you are a rising senior, you should take advantage of the opportunity to schedule an interview along with your tour and information session. This chance to meet with an admissions officer (or in many cases, a rising senior) can be a great way to demonstrate your interest and also to learn more about the college – just be sure to spend some time preparing for the meeting.

THANK YOU NOTES: Remember to send thank-you e-mails to any admissions officer, teacher, or student interviewer with whom you met while you were on campus!

—SHANNON DUFF
COLLEGE COACH AND DIRECTOR, COLLEGIATE COMPASS LLC