

**TABLE 5.3 Compiling Your Education Database: 17 Questions to Ask about Any College Option****The Nature of the Academic Programs**

1. What is the academic reputation of the college? How is it ranked?
2. Does the college have an outstanding reputation in certain majors? If so, which ones?
3. Describe the quality of the faculty: Are the faculty members good teachers? Are they concerned about undergraduates? Graduate students? Are they available for appointments outside class hours? Are most introductory classes taught by full-time faculty?
4. Can all or part of the course work be completed online or in blended courses (i.e., some online elements combined with traditional teaching)?
5. Do the college and faculty keep up with the latest instructional technology (e.g., course management systems, computer labs, or wireless connections)? Are technology tools widely used on campus to aid teaching and learning?
6. How large are the classes? How competitive are the students?

**The Admission Requirements**

7. What are the admission requirements (e.g., grade-point average, letters of recommendation, or a personal statement)?
8. (For transfer students) Are there special procedures and requirements for transfer students? What kinds of credits are likely to be accepted toward the bachelor's degree?
9. (For graduate school) Is my background appropriate? Are my grades high enough? Will I need additional course work to be accepted?

**The College's Profile and Student Body Characteristics**

10. Describe the physical qualities of the college: location, setting (rural or urban), the campus, and the surrounding area.
11. Describe the classrooms, libraries, labs, sports and arts complexes, and dormitories.
12. Describe the student services and special programs: counseling, tutoring, cooperative education, internships, career services office, study abroad, and the like.
13. Describe the students: How many students are enrolled? What is the ratio of men to women? Are all the students young or are some older? Where are the students from (e.g., one state, many countries, mostly urban, or mostly rural)? What is the ethnic makeup? How many international students attend?
14. Describe the interpersonal atmosphere of the college: friendly, competitive, social, religious, and so on.

**Cost and Financial Aid**

15. What is the COA (cost of attendance) per year: tuition, housing or commuting costs, meals, fees, books and supplies, personal expenses, and so on?
16. What scholarships and other financial aid are available?
17. How many students receive financial aid? What percentage of the student body takes out loans to cover the COA?