

**Do financial aid programs differ among colleges?**

*Here are some thoughts....*

*Determine if admission decisions are truly need-blind and what is meant by the term “need-blind” at the college under consideration.*

*Determine if financial aid awards are truly need-based and ask what is meant by the term “need-based” at the college under consideration? For example, are there published policies that disclose the manner in which family contributions are calculated?*

*Does the college meet full need for all admitted students? If not, what are the “packaging” rules that determine who receives a partial award?*

*What comprises the standard aid package, that is, how much campus earnings and loan are students expected to assume in the first year? What happens with job and loan amounts in the upper-class years?*

*Do some students receive “preferential packages?” If so, who qualifies and how are the recipients chosen? What kinds of packages are offered?*

*What is the average indebtedness of the typical graduate? What is the average monthly repayment for the typical graduate? What is the institutional default rate for Perkins loan borrowers?*

*Does the financial aid budget, used to determine a family’s “need,” accurately reflect all costs associated with living and learning at the college under consideration? For example, how much is budgeted for books, supplies, personal consumption and student travel during the academic year? Is this a realistic budget?*

*Are campus jobs available (and reserved) for needy students? Are they available at any time during the school year? Does anyone assist students with locating work on campus?*

*Can financial aid students register automobiles on campus? Do they incur any additional responsibilities or obligations as a condition of their scholarship or grant award? Can a financial aid recipient lose an award for poor academic performance?*

*Under what conditions can a financial aid award change from year to year? What happens if my family experiences unexpected hardship or long-term unemployment? Are any awards adjusted during the academic year?*

*How often are semester bills mailed? Are there tuition payment plans that allow me to make monthly payments over a longer period of time?*

*Does the college provide financial planning advisory services for families facing four (or more) years of college costs?*

*Is graduate school support available for select disciplines? How do I qualify?*

*Are these policies and procedures published and available to me?*