

May 29, 2008 Pilot, Redding, Conn. 11A

## Five more things to do when on a college trip

by **Stephanie Klein Wassink**

### WINNING APPLICATIONS

Optimizing a school trip can make the application process much easier. Here are a few more tips to get you on the right track.

Attend the information session. Other than an interview, this is the closest most applicants get to the admissions committee. Take advantage of it. Ask thoughtful questions during, or better yet after, the information session. Get the speaker's card and follow up with an e-mail or note. The note will not get you in, but it will likely be included in your application and provides another data point on which your application will be evaluated.

Talk to students who are not affiliated with the admissions office. Student tour guides are sometimes less than forthcoming with respect to a school's shortcomings. Other students, ones who do not work for the admissions office, may offer different insights.

Investigate the campus's crime statistics and those of the surrounding neighborhood. Campus safety is important. Students need to feel safe when walking back from late night study sessions or socializing. If the

prospective student neglects to do that research, a parent should. Knowing the campus is safe will make everyone more comfortable.

Find out if they like you. One way to quickly assess the relationship between the administration and the students is to get a sense of how students are treated by college employees. Are students, particularly undergrads, considered a nuisance? If so, take notice.

Ask if it's a suitcase school. One coveted part of the college experience is the weekend. Learning from fellow students is the reason the admissions committee works so hard to find diversity in the applicant pool. If students pack up and go home for the weekend because there is nothing happening on campus, beware. Ask a student what, other than studying, happens on campus over the weekend.

**Stephanie Klein Wassink, of Redding, runs Winning Applications, a college and graduate school admissions counseling firm. For more information go to [www.winningapplications.net](http://www.winningapplications.net).**