

Representing Vassar at a College Fair

Introducing College Fairs

College fairs vary widely in who hosts them and who attends. Some are sponsored by schools and others by local organizations. Generally large groups of high school students (and sometimes middle school students) are invited to attend along with a large number of colleges. They often include a variety of institutions, public and private, small and big, from state universities to culinary schools. At most fairs, colleges are arranged alphabetically (Vassar is often placed between Vanderbilt and Villanova).

Vassar is invited to hundreds of college fairs every year. Some are attended by admission officers as part of their travel for the College, and we ask AAP volunteers to attend others.

You will get an e-mail from our office or your AAP Chair if we need someone in your area to attend a college fair. They are often quite fun as you get to interact with prospective students and representatives of other colleges.

Preparing

1. Read the “Vassar at a Glance” provided in the box and bring it to the fair for reference.
2. Visit the following websites to be up to date with current Vassar information:
 - The Vassar website at www.vassar.edu
 - The Admission website at www.vassar.edu/admissions
 - The AAP Portal (www.apply.vassar.edu/portal/alum) resources page
 - The AAVC “Hub” website at <http://alums.vassar.edu/>
3. Set up your college fair table (examples below) and look over the materials provided:
 - “Is that a fact”: general information brochure (majors are listed on the back on the left hand side)
 - “Can I afford it?": brochure about financial aid
 - Prospect cards to be completed by those who want to be added to our mailing list
 - Visitor's Guide (reference copy): Open your copy to the campus map. This is sent to all juniors in early June to help families plan summer college trips.
 - “What’s next?": our viewbook (reference copy): Open your copy to one of the pretty pictures. High school seniors on our mailing list will receive this in the mail.



Talking with Students and Families at the Fair

1. Greet students and ask what they are interested in studying in college. If a student asks about a particular major (listed on the back of “Is that a fact?” on the left hand side), provide a few facts about that major. If you don’t have a deep knowledge of a particular department, you can direct the student to check out the departmental website online. Your response might include information about small, seminar-style classes (average class size is 16), research opportunities, and internship possibilities.
2. Encourage students to take “Is that a fact?” and complete a prospect card to get on our mailing list. We prefer that students complete the card and leave it with you so we have a record that you met them at the fair.
3. Encourage students to visit the campus. This is the best way to determine if Vassar is a good match. Check www.vassar.edu/admissions for tour and information session times and for travel directions. Seniors can also participate in a class and/or overnight visit.
4. If you run out of cards, ask students to provide their names, complete mailing address, e-mail address, high school, and year of graduation on a piece of paper.
5. If a student asks a question that you cannot answer, check the Vassar at a Glance and the Frequently Asked Questions (on the next page). If you can't find the answer, encourage the student to contact the Vassar Office of Admission.

Guidelines

Your role as a volunteer representative is to provide a local contact and to help students learn more about Vassar. Please emphasize the following:

- Comprehensive and flexible open curriculum, no core curriculum, lots of freedom
- Attentive teaching faculty; small seminar-style classes; student-faculty ratio 8:1
- Research programs like URSI (Undergraduate Research Summer Institute), the Ford Scholars Program, and our internship (field work) opportunities
- Excellent preparation for medical, law, business, and graduate programs
- Diversity of our student body (generally from all 50 states and about 60 foreign countries)
- Supportive residential campus community with a wide range of extracurricular activities
- Ideal location 75 miles north of New York City in the Hudson Valley; many social, cultural, and recreational opportunities
- About 60% of students receive need-based financial aid. Please refer families to the “Can I afford it?” brochure.

Frequently Asked Questions at College Fairs (with suggested answers)

1. **Do you have X major?** This question will come up a lot. Take a look at the back of the “Is that a fact?” brochure to see a list of majors. Here are some sample responses:

- *General (for a major we have)* – Yes, we do have an X department. Like all departments at Vassar, you will have small classes and get to know your professors well. If you would like more information on the X department, you should check out the Vassar website at www.vassar.edu.
- *General (something we don't have, like physical therapy, cooking, etc.)* – Unfortunately, Vassar does not have an X department. (If there is something closely related, you can mention that.)
- *Engineering* – As an undergraduate institution, Vassar does not offer engineering. However, we do have a 3-2 program with Dartmouth through which students can earn both a Vassar degree and a Dartmouth engineering degree in 5 years. More information can be found on the Physics Department website.
- *Pre-med or Nursing* – While Vassar does not have a formal pre-med major, we do have a strong Office of Pre-Health Advising which works with students who are thinking about going to medical school. Also, because of the flexibility of our curriculum, you can be pre-med and be, say, a History major quite easily. We also offer academic internships in the medical field.
- *Business* – Vassar does not offer a business major, but we do have an Economics Department, which is very similar. This is the major chosen by most students who are interested in business or finance. We also offer academic internships in business in our local area and in New York City.
- *Education* – Vassar has an Education Department. You can minor in Education and can graduate with a New York State Teaching Certification by completing a sequence of courses in addition to your major.

2. **How strong is your X department?** – All of our departments are strong. We try to ensure that every department has great professors and strong courses, regardless of its size.

3. **What do I need to get in? What are you looking for in a student?** – This is a harder question to answer. There is no one thing that a student needs. The most important factor in the admission process is the transcript. We want students to be taking challenging courses and doing well in them. You could also mention our SAT/ACT ranges and the other parts of the application. More can be found in the Vassar at a Glance section.

4. **Where's Poughkeepsie (pa-wha?)** – Poughkeepsie is a small city located about an hour-and-a-half north of New York City in the Hudson Valley. It is easily accessible by train from New York City and its airports.

5. **Do you have boys?** – We do! Vassar went co-ed about 50 years ago (in 1969). Currently the student body is about 41% male and 59% female.

6. **Do you have a course catalogue?** – Our entire course catalogue is now online with up-to-date information. You can visit our website to see the list of classes being offered.

Other Things to Keep in Mind

Attendance at college fairs varies considerably. We measure success by the interest demonstrated by students who stop at the Vassar table. Just one terrific student can make a fair worthwhile.

If an emergency arises that prevents you from attending a program, please contact the sponsoring high school or organization and the Vassar Office of Admission before the event. If possible, drop off your materials for display at the fair.

After the College Fair

Please complete the College Fair Evaluation form. Return it and the completed prospect cards to:

Jodi Hammell
Vassar Office of Admission
124 Raymond Avenue, Box 10
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604
Fax: 845-437-7063
Email: vcaap@vassar.edu

The evaluation you provide of the college fair will tell us if this fair is worth doing in future years. We don't want to waste your time and our college fair budget if a fair is not worthwhile and is just a "grab and go" type fair. If you are not having productive conversations at a particular college fair please let us know!

You do not need to return extra brochures but please let us know how many "Facts" brochures were used.

"What should I do if I can no longer attend the college fair for which I volunteered?"

We understand how unpredictable life can be. However, in order to ensure the continued success of the AAP as a positive representation of Vassar College, it is important for our volunteers to make every effort to follow through on their commitments. In the case of college fairs, often Vassar has paid a non-refundable fee (as minimal as \$25 or as much as \$500) to participate in the fair.

If you are unable to attend, there are a few things you should do.

- First, if you know other alumnae/i volunteers in the area, please see if any of them can cover the fair for you. If you are able to find a replacement, please notify your area chair and the AAP leadership team via email.
- If you are unable to find your own replacement, please notify your area chair and the AAP leadership team so that we can try to find a replacement.

If you must miss a college fair, **PLEASE** notify your area chair and the AAP leadership! Do not miss a fair without telling anyone.

Thank you!