

5 WORST MOTIVATIONS FOR ATTENDING A SUMMER PROGRAM

1. Because you think attending the program will help you get into that college.

Don't be fooled by fancy literature and promises that can't be kept! The way you get into college is through grades, classes, essays and test scores ~ not a pre-college program. There is no magic bullet. PC programs are a tool for you to test drive college, nothing more. If you go into yours with this mindset you'll get the most out of your pre-college experience. trust us!

2. Because my parents made me.

Oh boy. Parents, don't do it. Don't sign them up just because you think it will be good for them. Have a family discussion about what your student wants. Sometimes a better option is a summer job, internship, travel or even just relaxing and being a kid. ***Students, sometimes Mom does know best, be open to the idea and at least consider a pre-college program with an open mind. Maybe they aren't for you, but check them out. They might be cooler than you think!

3. Because you have nothing else better to do.

This goes hand-in-hand with number 2 and we're 50/50 on it. If you have nothing better to do but *want* to go to a pre-college program, by all means. Just don't get sucked into the idea that you have to do one. What's your passion? What do you enjoy doing? Following your passions looks better on college apps than going through the motions.

4. Because you think it will look good on your college resume.

First of all, we hate the idea that students actually have resumes these days but sometimes the rules change and you still have to play by them. Unless your pre-college program is hyper-competitive and world renowned, most likely, no one is going to care that you attended. (No offense!)

5. Because your boyfriend/girlfriend is going.

Give college a test drive alone. Coming with someone from home is OK, but not someone who you want to spend every second of every day with. College and pre-college programs are a place and time to explore new things and discover new things about yourself too!

There are tons and tons of awesome programs out there but those are some of the warning signs we look for at Blueprint. Don't get me wrong, even if you're going to a program for one of the "wrong" reasons above you'll probably still have a great time. Indeed, sometimes mom and dad know best and signing up their students is the best thing they ever did.

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<http://www.collegexpress.com/articles-and-advice/summer-programs/blog/five-benefits-pre-college-summer-programs/>

Pre-college summer programs allow high school students to get a taste of college life, preview their dream schools, and give a boost to their college applications. Many elite colleges and universities offer summer programs, such as Boston University's **Summer Challenge Program**, Brown University's **Summer @Brown**, and Stevens Institute of Technology's **Business Program**. It may be tempting to spend the entire summer at the beach or by the pool (and you certainly should do a little of that!), but why not use some of your free time to learn something new and make yourself a more attractive candidate for admission? In case you need convincing, here are just a few of the benefits of spending some of your summer on a college campus.

1. The gift of time

"All anybody wants is more time," I remember hearing on an old episode of *Grey's Anatomy*. I remember thinking how applicable that is to so much in life. For any big event or big life change, we always want more time—enough time to be ready, enough time to feel prepared, enough time to check everything off the (never-ending) to-do list.

But the thing is, whatever amount of time you have is never enough. Will you feel ready the first day you walk into your first class? Not necessarily, but it doesn't mean that you aren't as ready as you can be.

Pre-college summer programs can create an environment for you to make the most of the time that you do have. They give you a chance to prepare for the first semester while you are already there—in ways you could never do at home. It gives you the ability to adjust to life away from home in a new and somewhat foreign environment. You'll have time to ask your questions and time to get to know what college life actually means.

In many pre-college summer programs, the program is shorter than a regular semester. This, too, will give you a unique experience—more time to explore and participate in other activities.

2. The gift of space

Summer programs allow you to get a taste of campus life in an environment that isn't yet crowded with students. Regardless of the size of the school you have chosen, the campus won't be busy yet with everyone back for the start of the regular school year.

So you'll have space—space to ride your bike, space to find the best sandwich shops on campus (with shorter lines!), space in the classroom to get used to college-level courses. This space, complemented by smaller class sizes, means a better chance to have your voice heard, to get to know professors, and for them to get to know you.

3. The gift of attention

Smaller class sizes also mean more attention can be devoted to each individual student. If you attend a large university, when the regular semester begins, you may find yourself one in the sea of a 500-student class, an environment where it can be difficult to receive one-on-one attention.

In a summer program, you will be in a much smaller class and your instructors can provide more support. This will not only help you in your individual courses, but it will help you build skills you can utilize as you prepare for your first college classes. College-level courses can be a new world for some students, and a pre-college summer program gives you the chance to learn and understand what classes will be like and the work you will need to put in to succeed.

Many summer programs, too, have dedicated staff, who will help you with courses, campus resources, career advice, and counseling. Don't be afraid to ask and to learn about all of the services that are available to you.

4. A chance to learn the lay of the land

Whether you are heading to a large school or a small school (or somewhere in between), figuring out the lay of the land is important. The sooner you can do that, the more comfortable you will feel navigating your way to and from classes, back to your dorm room, and to any other events or places you want to go.

Attending a pre-college summer program at the school you hope to attend (or one similar to it) allows you to map out a real college campus before most people are back, so it's much less overwhelming. There is less pressure and you can take your time. You can try different routes. You can find hidden places for reading and where the best underground coffee shop is. You can find where your classes will be in advance—and then, if you get in and choose to attend, you can share your newfound expertise with other students and friends you meet freshman year.

5. A chance to meet new people

Not only will you learn the layout of your campus during your time spent in your summer program, you will also meet new people, many of whom may share similar interests with you—and you can help each other to make the most of your summer experience, study hard, enjoy the opportunities laid out for you, and prepare for the coming fall semester together.