Southwestern University - Interview Tips

Thank you for scheduling an interview with a member of our admission team! We are really excited to have the opportunity to speak with you. In order to help alleviate any pre-interview nerves, we have put together this brief tip sheet to guide the conversation we would like to have with you.

GETTING STARTED

Virtual Interviews

- If your interview is virtual, think about your surroundings. Be sure that anything within view of your camera is appropriate and socially acceptable.
- Remember, this is a conversation between you and the admission counselor, so make sure you are in a comfortable setting that emphasizes privacy and minimizes possible interruptions.
- While a virtual interview may seem a bit more informal, please dress as though you were interviewing in person (see below).

In-Person Interviews

- If your interview is in person, appropriate attire is business casual, but be comfortable.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- **Let your light shine; brag about yourself.**
  Being humble is a noble quality, unfortunately, the college admission process is not the best time to demonstrate it! Don't think of it as tooting your own horn, rather, consider it as taking (well-deserved) pride in your many achievements and accomplishments. Remember, no one has done all the things you have. Get excited about yourself, and we'll probably get excited, too!
- **Be prepared to talk about academic goals and passions.**
  College is an exciting time to learn, and we want to understand what you like, what you don't like, and what you are looking forward to experiencing in the classroom.
- **Collect your thoughts**
  Some of our questions are broad in nature, so it's always fine if you need to take a minute to collect your thoughts before answering. We're happy to wait!
- **Don't just give answers. Tell stories.**
  While we will be asking you some questions during your interview (spoiler alert!), we truly want this to be a conversation, rather than an interrogation. Don't think of our questions as a test, instead, think of them as jumping off points—as invitations for you to tell us stories about yourself and your experiences. Give yourself permission to go beyond "the script" and remember that sometimes the most meaningful conversations are the ones that take us along unforeseen paths!
● **Take it to the next level.**

We are probably going to ask about your interests at some point in the conversation—both academic and personal/co-curricular. While it's nice to know what your interests and involvements are, be prepared to go a level deeper and tell us why those are your interests/involvements. What keeps you engaged in those activities? What do you enjoy about that subject/class? It's okay if you don't know your major (we love undecided students!), but we do want to know which classes you've liked, what books you've enjoyed, what topics have opened your mind, etc.

● **You are more than your extracurricular activities.**

We love hearing about your theatrical debut, or the game-winning hit, but we also want to understand what makes you whole when you are not doing these activities. How do you balance your many commitments? How have your extracurriculars helped you in the rest of your life? What are you interested in exploring in college that is new, different, or unfamiliar?

● **Do your research.**

Know something about Southwestern and why you're here. Be prepared to explain not only how you learned about us (e.g., "I heard from coach"), but also why we're on your list. What draws you to Southwestern? What's keeping us on your list? Why do you want to call Southwestern your home? Also, have your own questions to ask us. We know this community well and want to help you determine if it is the right academic and social fit for you.

● **Fail forward. Everyone makes mistakes.**

The wisest among us, though, are the ones who have learned to grow stronger as a result. If you've had some bumps along your journey (academic or otherwise), don't be afraid to tell us! But, also be prepared to talk to us about what you've learned from those experiences. These moments of "stumbling" can often be the most valuable opportunities for personal growth.

● **Be Yourself.**

There is no perfect answer to any of our questions. Simply, we want to get to know you beyond your application and know the genuine person who may call Southwestern home.