

Schools Host Tours For Private College Week

Visited EMU Coffee Shop

By ERIN FLYNN

Daily News-Record

HARRISONBURG — Seventeen- year-old Daniel Allen has no idea where he wants to go to further his education.

His indecisiveness is one reason why the rising senior at Rockbridge County High School in Lexington is participating in Virginia Private College Week, which began Monday and continues through Saturday.

Eastern Mennonite University, Bridgewater College and Mary Baldwin College are among those participating.

“I think Private College Week is a great way to get out,” Allen said Wednesday while on a tour of EMU. “I think if Private College Week wasn’t happening, I wouldn’t be here visiting schools this soon.”

Private College Week, which began in 1997 and is sponsored by the Council of Independent Colleges of Virginia, allows students and their families to tour and learn about programs at 24 schools throughout the state.

Interested high school students and their families can attend information sessions offered at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. every day through Saturday. Some schools, including EMU and Bridgewater, only offer a morning session on Saturday.

Students who visit at least three schools receive three application fee waivers for Virginia private colleges. They also can be put in a drawing for a \$500 Amazon gift card.

Sharing Memories

Allen toured EMU with his parents, Chad and Frieda Allen. Frieda Allen graduated from then-Eastern Mennonite College with a nursing degree in 1992.

“It brings back a lot of memories. It’s changed a lot in 25 years,” she said. “But it’s neat to be back because some of the fundamental things are the same.” Erin Nafziger, 22, who graduated in May, shared her memories and school pride as the group’s tour guide. Among the places they visited were EMU’s Campus Center, Hartzler Library and — Nafziger’s favorite spot — Royals’ Den, the university’s coffee shop. “It’s your typical coffee shop atmosphere,” she said. “It’s probably where I spent the most time on campus because it’s a great place to study.”

‘A Big Circle’

Virginia residents aren’t the only ones participating in Private College Week. The program also has reached students and parents living up and down the mid-Atlantic.

Margaret Tree, who toured Bridgewater College on Wednesday with her mother, Susan, is from West Chester, Pa.

Susan Tree heard about the college through her position as a college counselor at Westtown School, a private Quaker-affiliated K-12 institution in West Chester.

"I've always liked what I've heard and how the representatives from Bridgewater presented the school," she said.

Through her research on colleges, Margaret Tree, 18, has decided to attend a public or private school in Virginia.

"Virginia is far, but it's not too far," said the rising senior at Westtown School. "It's different, so it's something new to learn about."

In addition to visiting Bridgewater College, Margaret and Susan Tree have visited James Madison University and also plan to tour Roanoke College, Lynchburg College and Christopher Newport University.

"We're doing a big circle on our way back to PA," Susan Tree said.

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