

“What should I consider when comparing admission and financial offers from varying institutions?”

Karima Williams, Director of Financial Aid, School of Social Policy & Practice

“When comparing offers between schools, students should consider a couple of things.

“Firstly, which school is the right fit for me and will earning a degree from this school, bring value to my career and life?

“Secondly, have I been offered any financial aid to help offset the cost of attending these institutions? If you have received an award, how important is the award in your decision making process?

“And lastly, you want to think about the cost of living at each institution. Tuition and fees aren’t the only costs that you’re going to have to incur; you have to pay for things like rent, food and transportation.

“This is usually a good time to talk to schools about what the average debt at graduation is for their students and how each graduating class fares in the job market. At SP2, our two year MSW students on average graduate with about \$60,000 of Federal student loans; it is closer to \$35,000-\$40,000 for our one-year program graduates.

“Every year we survey our recent SP2 alums to inquire about their lives after completing our program and historically, our graduates do rather well in securing employment after graduation. Our last survey had 65% participation from our alums, and roughly 90% of them had found employment, within 4 months after graduating. This sort of information is something that should be readily available at every university that you are applying to.

“You should feel free to talk to the schools that you are interested in about the various financial aid offers that you have received. It is okay to inform a school that you would like to attend, that a peer institution has offered you a competing financial aid award and request a financial aid reevaluation. Most schools would welcome the opportunity to make sure that they make the best offer they possibly can, so that you can make an informed decision about where you want to attend school.”