A woman in a graduation cap and gown stands on a wide stone staircase inside a grand building with arches. She is looking to the left. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, creating a sense of achievement and history.

**E**  
JOURNAL USA

SOCIETY & VALUES

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY  
EDUCATION  
IN THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 2005

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE / BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAMS

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## SOCIETY & VALUES

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# WELCOME



Under Secretary of State Karen Hughes

**W**elcome to this issue of *eJournal USA*. Thank you for your interest in exploring higher education in the United States—it's a great place to study and learn! My own son started college last fall, so I know what an exciting time this is for students and their families. Whatever your academic interest, whether you want a large, small or medium-size school, you'll find virtually unlimited options in the United States. We hope this journal will help you begin to explore.

Academic opportunity is only one reason to consider studying in the United States. Students here enjoy the freedoms of intellectual inquiry, political debate and open religious and artistic expression. Attending school here also fosters friendship and understanding among students of different countries and cultures.

Nearly all of the colleges and universities in the United States benefit from the contributions of international students. More than 565,000 students from 190 countries

studied on U.S. campuses during the 2004-5 academic year. Many American universities also encourage their students to broaden their horizons and experience the richness of other cultures through travel and study abroad programs.

We hope this issue of *eJournal* will help you make a decision to become one of the next generation of international students to study in the United States – we look forward to welcoming you!

Sincerely,

Karen Hughes  
Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

# INTRODUCTION

Margaret Spellings  
Secretary of Education



Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings

I want to thank you for your interest in America's system of higher education. We are proud of our universities and colleges. They are educating the next generation of world leaders.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of students from all over the world come to the United States to study. International students bring a special perspective, enriching college life for all students.

Higher education in America works differently from systems in other countries. The United States has a highly decentralized system that gives students a wide range of educational options, from large universities to community colleges to vocational and technical schools. While the U.S. Department of Education provides support and funding for higher education, we do not act as a central authority. Colleges and universities are mostly self-governing and have significant independence and freedom.

Earlier this year, my oldest daughter started her first year of college. I was sad to see her leave home, but it was

one of the proudest moments of my life. I want all parents to have the chance to feel that same sense of pride. At the U.S. Department of Education, one of our top priorities is expanding opportunity. We are committed to helping more students realize the dream of higher education through financial aid.

I recently created a new commission to help us develop a national strategy for expanding opportunity in higher education. In today's global economy, the best jobs go to the most skilled workers. Around 80 percent of the fastest-growing jobs require some postsecondary education. As a result, a college education is more important than ever.

This journal will provide you with an overview of the many opportunities for higher education in the United States. I hope you will find it helpful, and if you have more questions, I encourage you to visit <http://www.educationusa.state.gov>.

# ABOUT THIS ISSUE

From the many types of institutions to the virtually unlimited array of programs and majors, the universities and colleges in the United States reflect the diversity, tolerance, and pursuit of excellence that characterize the best of the country as a whole. Through this journal, prospective international students and their parents and advisors will learn about the American system of higher education and academic and student life at U.S. colleges and universities.

Whether following a rigorous program in chemistry, gaining workplace experience through internships, enriching the educational experience through distance learning and the expanded course and resource offerings of the World Wide Web, or pursuing artistic excellence, students in the United States can find programs and institutions that will allow them to realize their full potential.

The U.S. system of higher education is unlike most others in that there is no national system. The U.S. Constitution reserves for the states all government functions not specifically described as federal. The states are, therefore, principally responsible for the establishment, governance, and regulation of universities and other institutions of higher learning.

The states license institutions, but they neither accredit nor guarantee the quality of these schools. Instead, the system of accreditation is operated by private, nonprofit organizations. One of our sidebars is dedicated to this topic.

The journal includes descriptions of various types of U.S. institutions of higher learning, followed by articles that feature more detailed information about individual university programs, as well as articles about the concept of a “major,” college life, and the American styles of instruction. Numerous photos and a video are included to enhance the written descriptions. We also

present information about resources for students seeking guidance in navigating the selection, application, and financial aspects of the U.S. system. EducationUSA’s educational Advising Centers and their Web site [<http://educationusa.state.gov/>] are among the most useful of these resources. Potential international enrollees are advised to begin the application process at least one year prior to the application deadline in order to obtain and submit all the necessary academic records and to arrange to take required tests.

In putting together this issue of *eJournal USA: Society & Values*, we were reminded of how important the college experience is to the student. Without exception, everyone we spoke to suggested we cover his or her college, or the one a family member attends or did attend. This sense of connection, even after many years in some cases, is an important reminder of the role the college experience plays during a time of personal development, intellectual challenge, and the search for community.

We greatly appreciate the enthusiastic support this project received from the dozens of colleges, universities, and educational organizations that supplied information, photographs, and articles in order to help us present as full a picture as possible of higher education in the United States. Our use of their information or photographs should not, however, be construed as an endorsement of any school or organization.

The journal was prepared to coincide with International Education Week, a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education to promote programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences in the United States. International Education Week 2005 is November 14-19.

The Editors



## SOCIETY & VALUES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE / NOVEMBER 2005 / VOLUME 10 / NUMBER 2

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This article, a reprint of a piece written for the *Community College Times*, naturally focuses on community colleges, but the message of "Welcome" is extended to all foreign students at all U.S. institutions of higher learning.

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# PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Robert H. Bruininks



Elliott Minor, AP/WWP

University of Arizona engineering students work on their award-winning robotic airplane.

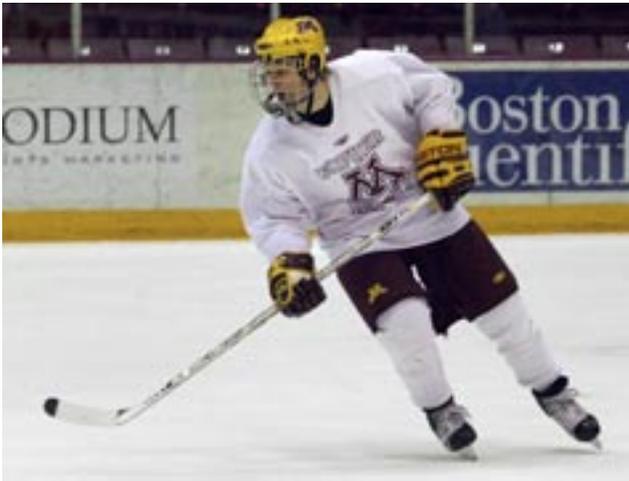
*Public, or state, universities typically enroll tens of thousands of students and offer degrees in hundreds of subject areas. Robert H. Bruininks outlines the makeup and financing structure of large state universities and the opportunities for international students and scholars. He has been president of the University of Minnesota since 2002 and is a member of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.*

Large public universities in the United States, also referred to as state universities, are closely identified with and supported by the states in which they are located. They are exciting, dynamic, and highly regarded centers for higher education, with unique traditions and connections to their communities. They are also major magnets for talent from all over the country and the world.

Typically, universities of this type enroll tens of thousands of students. They produce the majority of graduate and professional degrees in the country, as well as a significant number of undergraduate degrees. Also common to large public universities are a wide range

of academic programs. To use my own institution as an example, the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus has 50,000 students, offers hundreds of degrees, and is a leader in fields as varied as neurology and transplant surgery, economics and political science, material sciences and nanotechnology, and agriculture and natural resources.

Public universities play a critical role in regional economic, cultural, and civic development, and many, such as the University of Minnesota, are deeply involved in advancing knowledge and technology through research. These universities are among the major research universities in the United States and frequently have major involvement in international programs around the world. A series of federal actions in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century provided resources to states to help establish and build universities. Public universities that arose from this federal largesse have a mandate to provide outreach and community engagement to the state in which they are located (e.g., technology transfer, support to agriculture, interaction with primary and secondary



Janet Hostetter/AP/WWP

Ice hockey is one of many sports at the University of Minnesota.

schools, and interaction with state and local policy makers).

The level of research intensity varies greatly among state universities. Competitive research grants and contracts awarded to the most prestigious public universities typically amount to hundreds of millions of dollars each year. There is also great variation in the level of support from the states. State universities with large research budgets typically receive 10 to 30 percent of their budgets from the state in which they are located. The remaining portion of their budget comes from tuition and fees, grants/contracts, and gifts.

As a result of the financing structure of large state universities, many graduate students receive financial aid through research assistantships associated with research grants and contracts received by the university. Although many public universities are seeking increased funding to support international exchanges and study, access to financial aid for international students is very limited outside of the aforementioned research/grant funding. Since undergraduates do not generally hold research assistantships, scholarship support for international students seeking undergraduate degrees is quite limited at these public universities.

Large state universities are located in a variety of communities, from modest towns to large metropolitan areas. Many universities also have multiple campuses at locations throughout their state, and many states also have more than one public university system.

Public universities are governed by boards of trustees or regents, with varying reporting responsibility to the

state government. Unlike in many other countries, these U.S. universities don't report to a federal-level education minister, and higher education policy is largely delegated to the states, with the important exceptions of federal student financial aid and research funding through federal agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and many other federal agencies.

Some traditions of public universities in the United States are quite different from those in other countries. Even at these state-supported institutions, students have traditionally paid for part of their education through tuition and fees, and these costs to students are increasing. Today the average student takes out loans in order to help pay for his or her education. Private fundraising plays an increasingly important role in funding projects, scholarships, and positions at public universities. Finally, intercollegiate athletics attract intense interest from students, alumni, and members of the general public, and athletic events generate additional revenue.

Among all U.S. universities, large state universities often include the largest percentage of international students and scholars. At the University of Minnesota, our community includes more than 4,500 international students and scholars from about 130 countries. The University of Minnesota provides support services such as counseling and advising on personal and academic issues, orientation to U.S. and university culture, immigration and visa advising, and English as a second language courses, as well as programs and workshops on a variety of topics including intercultural understanding and communication. Many state universities have similar programs in place to help students navigate what can sometimes be a confusing system of administration and academic regulation, although the scope of these services varies from institution to institution.

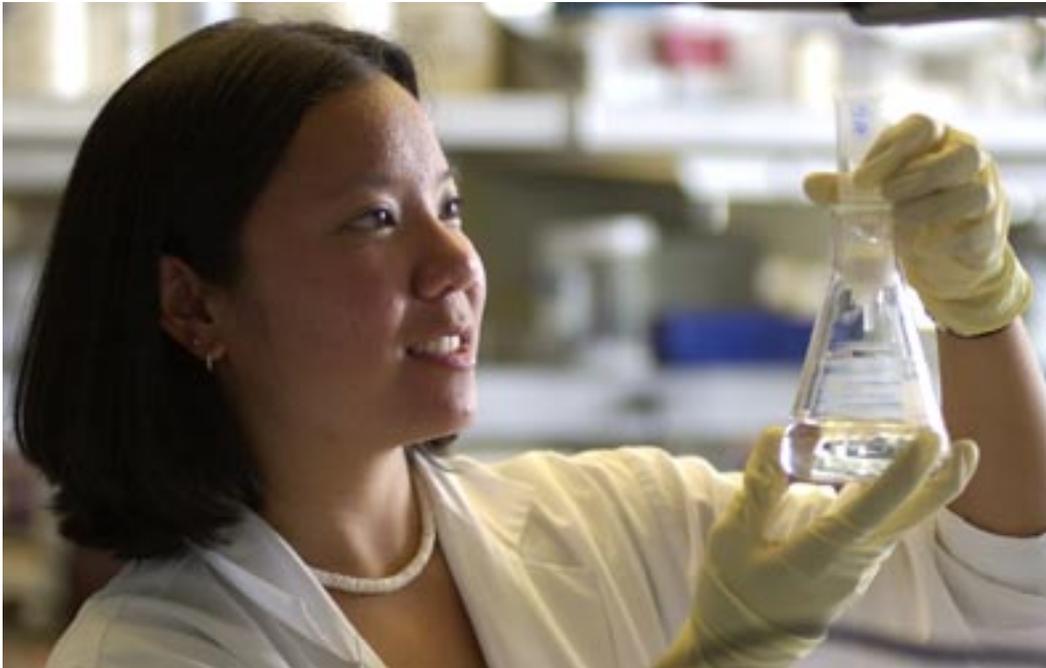
With growing competition from other countries, no major university in the United States can afford to take the interest of foreign students for granted. As a result, public universities are increasingly focused on attracting top students from around the world. If you are a motivated and self-directed student looking for exposure to the cutting edge of knowledge and creative work, I encourage you to investigate the rich opportunities available among large public universities in the United States. ■

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*The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.*

# WHAT IS A LARGE, PRIVATE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY?

James W. Wagner



Linda A. Cicero/Stanford News Service

A student conducts research in a dermatology laboratory at Stanford University Medical School in California..

*James W. Wagner, president of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, says that private research universities enjoy greater financial flexibility than their public counterparts. Thus, private institutions are more able to create distinctive programs.*

One of the strengths of the American system of higher education is its great variety. From small colleges with only several hundred students to large state-supported universities with tens of thousands of students, and from two-year community colleges with vocational programs to privately funded research universities, American higher education meets a wide variety of needs. For students, the right choice has much to do with possible career paths, financial constraints, and geography. In other words, it has to do with what they feel called to do and to study, how much they can afford, and whether or not they want to leave home. What matters

most in the end is the appropriateness of the school to the aspirations of the student.

In the United States, 92 of the 100 largest universities are public or “state-supported” (i.e., supported by one of the 50 individual states, not the federal government), and 77 percent of the nation’s college students receive their education at public institutions. Still, the major private universities occupy all but three or four of the top 25 slots in most rankings. Thus, the private research university appears to be held in especially high regard in the United States and around the world.

But what do we mean when we speak of a “private research university,” and what makes this type of institution so attractive?

Private research universities offer professional training (for instance, in law, medicine, and engineering), as well as education leading to the Ph.D. degree. Besides teaching, the faculty members spend a great deal of their



Adam Hunger, AP/WWP

At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, international students work on a robotics project, testing for strength and agility.



John Bazemore, AP/WWP

A student at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, combines study with fresh air.

time in research. In fact, in these institutions, the quality of faculty, scholarship, and research is as important in determining compensation and promotion as is the quality of teaching. But public universities also offer professional training, Ph.D. education, and an emphasis on scholarship and research. So what makes private universities different?

For one thing, private universities generally enjoy greater financial flexibility. They do not depend on state legislatures for funding, but draw their resources from

alumni, philanthropic foundations, and scientific and other professional organizations, all of which support the universities by funding programs, scholarships, buildings, and professorships. These sources of funding, although increasing at public universities as well, now provide private universities with the ability to be more nimble and more able to step off in bold new directions of inquiry, creating specialized centers of study and distinctive programs. For students, this flexibility often translates into opportunity to stay in fields where they might otherwise expect to find little encouragement.

Similarly, private universities' independence from public coffers has made them more able to establish "points of presence" in other countries. The citizens of Georgia, for instance, are unlikely to approve the use of their tax dollars to establish a study center in London. But they probably would welcome the establishment of such a center by privately controlled Emory University. In general, private universities can more easily open international portals for research, service, and teaching. Emory University, for example, has programs in global health throughout Africa, in the Caucasus region, and in Asia. It has business programs throughout Europe and Asia. Such activities provide opportunities for American students and professors to engage, whether in the United States or abroad, with the best minds and talent from other countries.

Finally, most research universities are somewhat smaller than their public counterparts, offering a favorable mixture of rich resources and human scale. While the potential for learning and research is great at any of our nation's fine universities, public or private, the smaller scale of private campuses makes possible the easy interaction of scholars across disciplines, since the schools and departments generally are at most a short walk across campus. In a world where the most important discoveries are being made through collaboration across boundaries, the capacity of the private university to foster and intensify collaborations both within the confines of the campus and beyond, to the far reaches of the globe, may be the private university's greatest attraction. ■

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# U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A Gateway to Higher Education for Many

George R. Boggs



A student at Owens Community College in Ohio works on a drawing of house plans for an art class.

Michael Lehmkuhle, AP/WWP

*Two-year colleges offer students an opportunity to begin their higher education in a small, community-based environment, often at lower cost than a four-year institution. George R. Boggs, president and chief executive officer of the American Association of Community Colleges, outlines the qualities that make community colleges an attractive alternative.*

Community colleges are the gateway to higher education in the United States for a growing number of students. These colleges provide students with an opportunity to earn credits for the first two years of a four-year bachelor's degree at high-quality, accredited institutions. With their lower tuition costs, community colleges give students a way to save money while learning in a supportive environment. They also

allow students to access training for associate-degree or nondegree careers, and they offer continuing education and personal development classes for the broad spectrum of adult learners.

Community colleges are the largest and fastest-growing sector of higher education in the United States. There are now nearly 1,200 regionally accredited community colleges located throughout the country, serving more than 11 million students (approximately 46 percent of all U.S. undergraduates).

U.S. community colleges offer international students numerous benefits, including opportunities to improve English language skills and to build an understanding of American culture in a U.S. community.

Among the benefits of community colleges are:



Courtesy Central Piedmont Community College

These Central Piedmont Community College students are enthusiastic about their community college experience in North Carolina.

**Lower Cost.** Tuition costs are significantly lower than four-year colleges and universities (about \$5,000 per year as compared to \$12,000 to \$20,000 or more for a four-year institution).

**Easy Transfer to a University.** A “2+2” system in the United States refers to an efficient system of “articulation” between a two-year college and a four-year college or university. Most community colleges have articulation agreements with four-year colleges and universities, ensuring that credits earned at the community college will count toward the four-year degree program.

**Accredited Institutions.** American community colleges, four-year colleges, and major universities are all accredited by the same agencies. That is why universities accept course credits obtained at community colleges.

**Wide Variety of Programs.** Community colleges have hundreds of majors from which to choose, including popular areas such as business management, computer science, engineering, and health sciences-related programs.

**English as a Second Language.** Most community colleges offer a wide range of English course offerings

at multiple levels and an array of support services to ensure that students with different language proficiencies succeed.

**A Supportive Learning Environment.** Community colleges offer small class sizes, averaging fewer than 30 students, allowing personal attention and ongoing support from professors. The focus is on individual student success within an environment designed to support students’ learning patterns and needs. Support services for students include tutoring, advising, writing labs, international student clubs, and international student service centers.

**Diversity.** U.S. community college students come from diverse cultural heritages and ethnicities. The colleges offer a wide spectrum of clubs and activities that celebrate and support the diversity that describes society in the United States.

**Access to U.S. Culture.** Because they are reflective of and responsive to their communities, community colleges tend to have strong local ties. This relationship provides international students with extensive opportunities to interact with Americans and to experience American culture.

#### **Variety of Locations and Campus Sizes.**

Community colleges, like other educational institutions in the United States, differ widely. Some are large, multicampus institutions located in big cities, while others are much smaller schools located in rural settings and serving small student populations. There is a community college conveniently located within commuting distance of 90 percent of the U.S. population.

**Distinguished Alumni.** Alumni of U.S. community colleges include California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and former Maryland Governor Parris Glendening, NASA space shuttle commander Eileen Collins, *Star Wars* movie series producer/director George Lucas, film actors Tom Hanks and Clint Eastwood, fashion designer Calvin Klein, human genome scientist Craig Venter, and U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona.

For more information about studying at a U.S. community college, go to <http://www.CC-USA.org> or read *A Guide to Studying at U.S. Community Colleges*, available at local EducationUSA advising centers. ■

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# STRENGTH OUT OF DIVERSITY: The Independent Sector of U.S. Higher Education

Richard Ekman



Nancy Palmieri, AP/WWP

A student from Zimbabwe celebrates her graduation from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts.

*Private, four-year colleges provide diverse educational experiences, primarily to undergraduate students. Richard Ekman, president of the Council of Independent Colleges, describes what makes private, or independent, colleges different from their counterparts in the public sector.*

The most remarkable feature of U.S. higher education is its diversity. The national government does not control the curriculum at U.S. colleges and universities or the methods of teaching, and state governments also exercise a fairly light touch. But it is in the “independent” or “private” sector of higher education where diversity of educational philosophies, programs, and traditions is greatest. Some 600 smaller colleges and universities make up this sector and include many of the United States’ most venerable institutions.

Consider these diverse features: Ursinus College in Pennsylvania offers an interdisciplinary freshman-year program that exposes students to a wide variety of texts in the humanities and social sciences; Warren Wilson College in North Carolina requires all students to share in the manual labor of running the institution and treats this as

an important part of the college’s educational philosophy; Northland College in Wisconsin goes to extreme lengths to operate in ways that are sensitive to the environment; Alderson-Broaddus College in West Virginia draws most of its students from very small towns in the West Virginia hills and leads many of them to careers in science and medicine; Earlham College, which was founded by Quakers, is located in Indiana and continues to use consensus among all members of the campus community as its main form of decision-making; Cedar Crest College in Pennsylvania, a college for women, counters the stereotype that women do not excel at science by producing large numbers of science graduates.

These 600 or so independent colleges and universities have, despite their differences, a number of characteristics in common:

- They are fairly small, with enrollments rarely exceeding 3,000 students.
- They are mainly or entirely undergraduate-oriented, with very few graduate programs.
- All faculty members are committed to teaching. Although most also conduct research, they view it as



Patricia McDonnell, AP/WWP

Students at Wellesley College in Massachusetts join their professor in a 24-hour Shakespeare reading event.



Kevin G. Reeves, AP/WWP

Music students of Oberlin College in Ohio work with performers from Argentina to prepare for an opera performance. Noted for its music program, the college is also famous for being among the first to accept and graduate women and African-American students.

secondary to their teaching duties, and they spend long hours with students in and out of the classroom.

- The methods of teaching are highly interactive and engaged.
- Because these institutions understand that much of the educational process takes place outside the classroom, opportunities for interaction among students and between students and faculty abound, and these are understood to be important parts of the cocurricular dimension of education.
- These institutions are explicit about their underlying values. Sometimes these are the values of the religious denomination that founded the college (or some echo of those values if that denomination now is less deeply involved). Sometimes these values reflect a distinctive educational philosophy, such as the “great books” colleges—of which St. John’s College, with campuses in Maryland and New Mexico, is the best known—or

the “work colleges” such as Warren Wilson College or Berea College in Kentucky, where, in addition to their studies, students have assigned duties that help support the school.

- These institutions view study of the liberal arts as essential for responsible citizenship after graduation, no matter what professional training is also acquired.

The format of higher education represented by these schools works exceptionally well. Statistics on degree-completion, for example, show that small, private colleges have higher degree-completion rates than bigger state-run universities. Moreover, this difference holds true not only among the most talented students, but also among those that enter with poorer secondary school grades or SAT [<http://www.collegeboard.com>] scores. Higher degree-completion rates also apply to socioeconomic groups that are sometimes associated with low college participation rates, such as students who are the first generation in their family to go to college, students who must work full-time in addition to attending class, or students from various minority groups.

The explanation for the comparative effectiveness of the smaller private institutions can be found in the “engaged learning” that takes place at these institutions. George Kuh, the founder of the National Survey of Student Engagement (in which hundreds of colleges and universities participate), notes that success in college is closely correlated with getting to know a professor; getting involved in an extracurricular activity; working at a community-based internship; and being enrolled in classes in which active pedagogies dominate, such as classes that require oral reports and frequent written papers. These characteristics are more likely to be found at smaller institutions than at large ones.

Smaller, independent institutions can be found throughout the United States, in major cities, smaller towns and cities, and rural areas. These colleges welcome students from many different backgrounds and those who bring different talents and perspectives to campus discussions. Students who have grown up in other countries are highly valued (although instruction is almost always in English).

Additional information about any of these institutions is readily available on their Web sites. The Council of Independent Colleges has, from its Web site [<http://www.cic.org/>], links to most of these institutions. ■

*The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.*

# MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS



Ted S. Warren, AP/WWP

Louisiana's Grambling State University marching band has a national reputation for exhilarating performances.

*This article, compiled from the indicated Web sites and other sources, provides information about colleges that serve students from three minority populations: African Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians.*

**M**inority Serving Institutions are colleges and universities from the other categories (state colleges, private schools, religiously affiliated colleges, liberal arts colleges, and community colleges) that have a special focus on serving the needs of a minority audience. These universities have a historical tradition or mandate to serve a specific demographic of student, but often serve non-minority students as well. They have formed organizations of common interest and concern. Three groups whose members fit into this category are Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU); and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), the association of tribal colleges and universities. There are many other groups that also work to help colleges and universities serve minority audiences.

## **HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

According to the text of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities:

HBCUs are a source of accomplishment and great pride for the African American community as well as the entire nation. The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, defines an HBCU as: "...any historically Black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation."

In his September 2005 presidential proclamation naming September 11-17, 2005, as National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week, President George

W. Bush praised the nation's HBCUs for their high standards of excellence, for preparing rising generations for success, and for helping to fulfill the nation's commitment to equal education. He said, "By upholding high standards of excellence and providing equal educational opportunities to all Americans, these valued institutions help ensure that all our citizens can realize their full potential and look forward to a prosperous and hopeful future." He went on to say, "We continue to strive toward a society in which every person can realize the great promise of America." The majority of the 105 HBCUs are located in the Southeastern states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands. They include 40 public four-year, 11 public two-year, 49 private four-year, and five private two-year institutions. Additional information is available in a special feature article on HBCU Week at <http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2005/Sep/26-256508.html>.

### THE HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



Courtesy College of Santa Fe

Students work with a fitness instructor at the College of Santa Fe, an Hispanic Serving Institution in New Mexico.

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) was established in 1986 with a founding membership of 18 institutions. Today, HACU represents more than 400 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the United States, Puerto Rico, Latin America, and Spain. Although HACU member institutions in the United States represent less than 10 percent of all higher education institutions nationwide, together they are home to more than three-fourths of all Hispanic college students. HACU is the only national educational association that represents Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). At the 205 HSIs, Hispanic students make up 25 percent or more of the student body. At the other member colleges fewer than 25 percent of the students are Hispanic. See: [http://www.hacu.net/hacu/Default\\_EN.asp](http://www.hacu.net/hacu/Default_EN.asp).

### WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON TRIBAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

President Bush recognized the important role tribal colleges and universities play in American Indian communities and on July 3, 2002, signed Executive Order 13270 on Tribal Colleges and Universities. The executive order established the President's Board of Advisors on Tribal Colleges and Universities and the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities. The president said:

Tribal Colleges and Universities help preserve irreplaceable language and cultural traditions. At the same time, of course, they offer a high-quality college education to thousands of students, and provide much needed job training and other means of economic development in Indian country. ... All Americans deserve an excellent education, including those who attend Tribal Colleges and Universities.

There are 34 federally recognized tribal colleges and universities in the United States. Located mainly in the Midwest and Southwest, tribal colleges and universities serve approximately 30,000 full- and part-time students. They offer two-year associate degrees in more than 200 disciplines with some providing bachelor's and master's degrees. They also offer 200 vocational certificate programs. Although these tribal schools accept only Native American students, they provide insight into a special aspect of U.S. higher education. Additional information at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/07/20020703-16.html>. ■



Courtesy Office of the President, Haskell Indian Nation University

Students from Haskell Indian Nation University in Kansas decorate a vehicle for a parade.

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# 50 YEARS AFTER BROWN: Why Historically Black Colleges and Universities Remain Relevant

Beverly Daniel Tatum



A student makes a point during class discussion.

Courtesy Spelman College

*Beverly Daniel Tatum writes about the role of historically Black colleges in affirming the identity of African-American students, while at the same time giving them the opportunity to meet students with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. She is the president of Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, and the author of "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" and Other Conversations about Race (Basic Books, 2003).*

I was born in 1954, just four months after the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision outlawed the "separate but equal" doctrine of school segregation. I entered the world in Tallahassee, Florida, where my father taught in the art department at Florida A&M University. He wanted to attend Florida State University to earn a doctorate, but in 1954 the state of Florida still denied access to black graduate students. Instead they paid

his train fare to Pennsylvania, and in 1957 he completed his degree at Penn State University. A year later he became the first Black professor at Bridgewater State College in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, the community where I grew up. Today Bridgewater State College has its first president of color, and in February 2004, I, a Black woman, delivered the opening speech at a higher education conference hosted at Florida State. Neither event was imaginable in 1954.

As an educator with many years of experience teaching about racism in predominantly white institutions and now as the ninth president of Spelman College, the oldest historically Black college for women, I have a new lens through which to understand the meaning of *Brown v. Board of Education*. Like many HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), Spelman faced new competition for its students from those predominantly white col-



These Spelman students are relaxing with friends in a dormitory room. Courtesy Spelman College

leges and universities that had previously excluded them. But increased competition spurred important improvements at Spelman. During the post-*Brown* era, professors were actively encouraged to increase their research and publication efforts, and new resources for scholarships were created. Successful fundraising efforts to increase the endowment provided financial stability and fueled construction of new residence halls and academic buildings—creating an environment that now attracts approximately 4,000 talented young women annually to compete for 525 spaces in our first-year class.

Why are historically Black colleges like Spelman not only still relevant but the preferred choice for many talented Black students? College choice is a reflection of identity—a statement about how you see yourself, who you are now, and who you hope to become. Students are drawn to environments where they see themselves reflected in powerful ways, places where they see themselves as central to the educational enterprise.

Several years ago, as part of my research of racial identity development among Black college students raised in predominantly white communities, I interviewed students who had chosen to go to a historically Black university. One young woman commented on her Black college experience, saying, “You know, it really makes me happy when I walk across the campus to know ‘This place was built for me.’” There are not many places in America where a Black woman can say that. The importance of affirmation of identity in college choice cannot be underestimated.

Though most college campuses are considerably more diverse today than they were in 1954, institutions are still struggling to understand the ABCs of creating truly

inclusive environments that will maximize the intellectual and leadership potential of all of their students. Those ABCs are affirming identity, building community, and cultivating leadership, three critical dimensions of effective learning environments through all levels of education.

Translating the ABCs into action requires us to routinely ask each other important questions: Who is reflected in our environment? Who is missing from the picture? What opportunities exist for building community, for encouraging dialogue across difference? How are students involved so that they are honing leadership skills in a diverse context?

As a race relations expert, I am often asked why I would choose to lead an institution as “homogeneous” as Spelman College. Of course, the question is based on a flawed assumption. Though 97 percent of our students are racially categorized as “Black,” the student body is quite diverse. Spelman students come from all regions of the United States and many foreign countries, from white suburban and rural communities as well as urban Black ones. All parts of the African Diaspora are represented, and the variety of experience and perspectives among the women who attend the college creates many opportunities for dialogue. There is a developmental moment in the lives of young people of color when “within group” dialogue can be as important, or perhaps even sometimes more important, than “between group” dialogue. And, even in the context of an HBCU, it is possible to create opportunities for both.

Many of us have a vision of colleges where all students have the opportunity and the encouragement to achieve at a high standard. It is a vision of multiethnic communities characterized by equitable and just group relations. It is a vision of education that should not only foster intellectual development by providing students the tools of critical thinking, speaking, writing, and quantitative reasoning, but should also provide all students the skills and experiences necessary for effective participation in a diverse society. Such an ideal educational environment has never existed on a broad scale in American society—or to my knowledge, anywhere else. But the vision is a blueprint. ■

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# RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED COLLEGES

Very Reverend David M. O'Connell, C.M.



Chris Greenberg/Catholic University of America

This student has found a peaceful place to study at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

*Religiously affiliated colleges and universities in the United States all have their own manner of combining the religious and the academic. In this essay, Father David M. O'Connell, president of The Catholic University of America and presenter at the Harvard University Conference on the Future of Religious Colleges, discusses his view of the "value added" to higher education by religious colleges. Following this essay, we also feature several statements from other religiously affiliated schools to illustrate some of the other approaches. Those interested in the specific policies or philosophy of any particular school should contact that school directly for the most complete information. Inclusion of this information in this journal is meant to provide readers with sources of information, not to promote or endorse any particular doctrine or program.*

In the midst of what has become rather aggressive competition for students, colleges and universities in the United States must demonstrate to their potential clientele what makes them unique and worthy of special consideration. Every institution will lay claim to "academic excellence" and the "best program" in this or that

discipline to be sure, but is there something else that can demonstrate a "mark of difference"? Religious institutions, in contrast to secular colleges, believe that mark to be the dimension of faith.

For a college to be directly influenced by a particular religion or faith communicates to the secular academic world that the religious institution possesses (1) a sense of its own distinctiveness and difference within the academy, and (2) a conviction that it makes a purposeful contribution to higher learning through faith.

Education sheds light on human experience through reason. It enlightens the mind. Religious education does so in a way that identifies human experience in terms of the God of both reason and faith. It enlightens the mind and the soul. Through religious education, we encounter truth, intelligible to the reasoning mind but also accessible on a deeper level and meaningful to the believing heart and the soul. I read once that "religion is not primarily a matter of facts but a matter of meanings."

Religious colleges attempt to present both reason and faith, not separately but as two distinct yet related components of one integrated truth. It is interesting to



Darron Cummings, AP/WWP

During practice at the U.S. national women's basketball tournament, a Baylor University student from St. Vincent, West Indies, pauses to talk to her teammates from the Southern Baptist-affiliated Texas school.

note that some of the most accomplished and widely recognized institutions of higher learning in the United States identify their origins in some religious faith confession. For some reason, however, these religious affiliations grew less important to participation in the academic enterprise with the passage of time, and so two different models of and approaches to higher education developed: the purely secular model/approach and the religious model/approach.

When a student and his or her parents choose a religious college or university, they are choosing an institution that has a distinctive identity and mission rooted in a distinctive religious tradition. That tradition should permeate the institution and its operations and activities. It should be evident in the classroom as well as in student life on campus. Faculty

and staff should be committed to that mission and not merely tolerant of it as though it offered little real value to the academic enterprise. If an academic institution is truly religious, it will be clear to everyone on and off campus that there is "value added" to higher education by the religious college and its mission, and that this value added is something that interests people, that draws them to the institution in such a way that what they perceive as being uniquely provided is something that they really want. It will make a difference in their education and in their lives. The ability of religious colleges to market themselves as both religious and academically superior to an audience that wants what they have to offer will ensure their long-term survival and ability to fulfill their mission which, in the end, will serve to advance the true diversity that is the hallmark of American higher education.

This is certainly the philosophy at work in The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., the national university of the Catholic Church in the United States. ■

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**Campbell University**, a Southern Baptist (Protestant) school in North Carolina, explains its goal as helping students develop an integrated Christian personality characterized by a wholeness of body, mind, and spirit that includes a method of critical judgment; an appreciation of the intellectual, cultural, and religious heritage; stewardship of the body; and a sensitive awareness of the world and society in which they live and work with persons. The university sees the human vocation as living by faith under grace, with no conflict between the life of faith and the life of inquiry.

**Brandeis University** in Massachusetts is one of the youngest private research universities, as well as the only nonsectarian Jewish-sponsored college or university in the country. According to the Brandeis University Mission Statement, Brandeis was founded in 1948 as a nonsectarian university under the sponsorship of the American Jewish community to embody its highest ethical and cultural values and to express its gratitude to the United States through the traditional Jewish commitment to education. By being a nonsectarian university that welcomes students, teachers, and staff of every nation, religion, and political orientation, Brandeis renews the American heritage of cultural diversity, equal access to opportunity, and freedom of expression.

**Pacific Lutheran College** in the state of Washington was founded by settlers of the Protestant Lutheran denomination. Pacific Lutheran College cherishes its dedication to educating for lives of service, as well as its distinguished and distinctive academic program that emphasizes curricular integration and active learning.

**The Hartford Seminary** in Connecticut was founded by the Protestant Christian Congregationalist denomination. Today, in addition to Christian education programs, the seminary includes the Duncan Black Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, and its master's-level Islamic chaplaincy program. The mission of the seminary is to serve God by preparing leaders, students, scholars, and religious institutions to understand and live faithfully in today's multi-faith and pluralistic world; by teaching, research, informing the public, and engaging persons in dialogue; and by affirming the particularities of faith and social context while openly exploring differences and commonalities.

# SPECIALTY INSTITUTIONS

Michael Jay Friedman



Matthew S. Gunby, AP/WWP

Members of a satellite design course at the U.S. Naval Academy in Maryland work with their instructor. The program now has two satellites in orbit.

*Colleges dedicated to a particular area of study are available in the United States. The author profiles a few schools that focus on the arts, business, or military training. Michael Jay Friedman is a staff writer in the Bureau of International Information Programs of the U.S. Department of State.*

While most American universities offer a broad range of studies, others feature more focused curricula. Specializing in distinct areas, such as the fine and performing arts, business and technological skills, or military training, these schools of special focus afford students the prospect of concentrating their studies in a particular area. This approach is not ideal for every student, but for some the right specialty school nurtures exceptional talents, hones particular skills, and affords the chance to interact with similarly inclined peers. The institutions profiled here represent only a few of the available opportunities.

Located in New York City, the highly selective Juilliard School offers its students pre-professional training in music, dance, and drama. It draws students from 43 U.S. states and 43 other nations, and it includes among its many notable alumni the classical artists Itzhak

Perlman, Yo-Yo Ma, and Pinchas Zukerman; seminal jazz figures like Thelonious Monk and Wynton Marsalis; and vocalists from the classical soprano Leontyne Price to the deep-voiced jazz vocalist Nina Simone. Since 1971, the school has been located in Manhattan's Lincoln Center, considered by many the nation's premier arts complex and home, in addition to Juilliard, of the Metropolitan Opera, New York Philharmonic, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and eight other resident artistic organizations.

A relatively new school, the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), headquartered in Savannah, Georgia, prepares students for careers in the visual and performing arts, design, the building arts, and the history of art and architecture. This focus allows Savannah to offer majors not commonly found at research or liberal arts institutions. Students earn degrees in advertising design, animation, commercial photography, and dozens of other specialties. Many undergraduates aiming at a career in one of these fields highly value the opportunity to concentrate their studies. In the words of college President Paula S. Wallace, "SCAD students are weaving creative vision with technical mastery to transform artistic vision into professional expertise and rewarding futures."



Peter Schaal/The Juilliard School

New York's Juilliard School College Division Jazz Band is led by Artistic Director Victor Goines.

Students seeking careers in design and the arts are attracted to schools like SCAD and Juilliard. Many others seek skills to help them advance in the business world or in the growing technological sector. Often these students are older and already employed. A number of for-profit "proprietary institutions" serve their needs. Schools like DeVry University, which holds classes online and at more than 70 campuses, offer practical instruction, often through part-time or adjunct faculty who also hold full-time professional employment outside the university. Proprietary schools typically accommodate the busy schedules of parents and working students by holding many classes on nights and weekends and by encouraging part-time study. Computer science and programming, business, and other technology-related fields of study are popular. Some American employers offer full or partial tuition reimbursement for employees pursuing continuing



Courtesy Savannah College of Art and Design

At the Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia, a professor and student enjoy a model and virtual character during an animation class.

studies, with the master's degree in business administration a popular option.

Most U.S. universities are either private institutions or are sponsored by state or, sometimes, local governments.

The federal government, however, runs the nation's military academies, including the U.S. Military Academy, affiliated with the Army; the Air Force and Naval Academies; and the Coast Guard and Merchant Marine Academies.

Admission to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, to offer one example, is highly selective, with students (known as midshipmen) appointed to the school by each member of Congress, the president and vice president of the United States, and the secretary of the Navy. Midshipmen must meet age, physical conditioning, and academic requirements and must be unmarried. U.S. citizenship is also required, although up to 60 students from foreign countries designated by the secretary of



Steve Matteo/AP/WWP

A student at DeVry University's Addison, Illinois, campus works on a telecommunications project.

defense may be admitted in the interest of international and navy-to-navy relations. Women have been eligible for admission since 1976, and about one-fifth of the entering class of 2009 is female.

Each midshipman receives free tuition and board, plus a monthly stipend. The academic program stresses mathematics, engineering, and naval skills, and many midshipmen choose nautical-related majors like oceanography, aerospace engineering, or naval architecture. Others focus their studies on history, economics, or other available disciplines. Graduates receive commissions either as U.S. Navy ensigns or Marine second lieutenants and are obliged to serve a minimum of six years active duty.

This brief account only suggests the variety of postsecondary education available in the United States. Specialty institutions complement research and liberal arts schools by catering to nontraditional students like part-timers, parents, and the already-employed. Also, their often more-focused curricula can help gifted and purpose-driven students develop their talents and pursue their professional objectives. ■

## COLLEGE RANKINGS

Counselors consistently advise prospective students to choose a college with the best combination of programs, size, style, price, and location. Among the many materials available to help prospective students sort the thousands of colleges and universities in the United States, there are several rating instruments.

- Peterson's and Kaplan are two companies that produce many different products about education. Peterson's guide is called *Peterson's Guide to Competitive Colleges*. Kaplan publishes *Kaplan Publishing's Most Interesting Colleges*, and 2005—*The Unofficial Unbiased Guide to the 331 Most Interesting Colleges*.

- Education writers of major newspapers have also developed their list of recommended schools. Loren Pope, long-time education writer for the *New York Times*, has produced *Loren Pope's Colleges That Change Lives, 40 Schools You Should Know About Even if You're Not a Straight-A Student*, and Edward B. Fiske, former *New York Times* education editor, produced the *Fiske Guide to Colleges*. *Washington Post* education writer Jay Matthews has a list of top 10 colleges that deserve a second look in his *Harvard Schmarvard: Getting Beyond the Ivy League to the College That Is Best for You*.

- The Templeton Foundation, in Pennsylvania, produces *The Templeton Guide: Colleges That Encourage Character Development*.

- Frederick E. Rugg, a veteran college counselor, wrote *Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges*, which goes beyond recommending colleges to listing outstanding departments at quality schools.

- The *Yale Daily News's The Insider's Guide to the Colleges 2005* looks at life at more than 300 colleges, using student interviews, rather than administrators' reports, to develop the ratings.

Major magazines also weigh in. Several produce college-rating issues that receive great attention. One of the most influential and widely quoted of these is *U.S. News and World Report's* "America's Best Colleges" and "America's Best Graduate Schools" [<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/home.htm>].

*U.S. News* gives its rankings and key information for colleges in a number of categories: national universities (a nation-wide listing); master's universities (listed by region); best business programs; best liberal arts colleges; top engineering programs; and top comprehensive universities, a national list of colleges that have strong

undergraduate programs with more than 50 percent of the students studying something outside of the liberal arts (ranked in regional lists).

A final resource is a Web site provided by the Education and Social Science Library of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The site gives links to many on line ranking services, other sources of information about colleges and universities, and even some sites discussing the relative value of rankings. [<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/edx/rankings.htm>]

### AMERICA'S "TOP" SCHOOLS

According to *U.S. News and World Report* magazine, of the hundred universities often called the "top" universities in the United States, some are public, or state, universities; the others are private. As a group, the schools are noteworthy for the quality of their academic offerings; the resources available, such as high-caliber laboratories and libraries; and the wide network of alumni and supporters associated with the schools. These universities offer a wide range of undergraduate majors, as well as master's and doctoral degrees; many strongly emphasize research. The *U.S. News & World Report* 2006 top 20 national universities are:

- 1/2 (tie) Harvard University and Princeton University
- 3 Yale University
- 4 University of Pennsylvania
- 5/6 (tie) Duke University and Stanford University
- 7/8 (tie) California Institute of Technology and Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- 9/10 (tie) Columbia University and Dartmouth College
- 11 Washington University in St. Louis
- 12 Northwestern University
- 13/14 (tie) Cornell University and Johns Hopkins University
- 15/16 (tie) Brown University and University of Chicago
- 17 Rice University
- 18/19 (tie) University of Notre Dame and Vanderbilt University
- 20/21 (tie) Emory University and University of California—Berkeley.

[[http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/collegelrankings/rankindex\\_brief.php](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/collegelrankings/rankindex_brief.php)]

## LEADING PROGRAMS IN BUSINESS AND ENGINEERING

Many organizations rank, rate, or review U.S. colleges and universities. Unfortunately for anyone trying to find a consensus among the various lists, they are seldom organized along the same divisions of schools, use the same type of sources (for example, administrators' reports), or espouse the same definition of excellent or best. For example, below are two lists of top schools in two fields. These lists were developed by comparing rankings by different organizations and listing the schools that appeared in the top 20 of all the lists. The lists are arranged alphabetically since the rankings did not agree regarding order.

### UNDERGRADUATE ENGINEERING PROGRAMS

The list was developed from rankings by the news magazine *U.S. News and World Report* "Best Colleges 2005" and *StudentsReview.com*, which is compiled by graduate students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to answer "questions students wish they had known enough to ask."

Cornell University, New York  
Johns Hopkins University, Maryland  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Massachusetts  
Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania  
Purdue University, Indiana  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, New York  
Rice University, Texas  
Stanford University, California  
Texas A&M University at College Station, Texas

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia



### UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS PROGRAMS

The list was developed using rankings from the news magazine *U.S. News and World Report*'s "Best Colleges 2005," *Business Week* "Best Business Schools" 2004 (this list is produced every two years), and *Forbes* magazine's business school ranking from 2003, which looks for the best return on the investment made by attending the school in question.

Carnegie Mellon University, Pennsylvania  
Cornell University, New York  
Emory University, Georgia  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Massachusetts  
New York University, New York  
University of Michigan, Michigan  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania  
University of Texas at Austin, Texas  
University of Virginia, Virginia

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## IVY LEAGUE SCHOOLS



"Ivy League" refers to eight of the most historic and prestigious universities in the United States. The schools have an agreement to play sports in the same league and to have similar expectations for athletes' academic performance. Since the colleges were among the first established in the United States, most have distinguished and historic campuses featuring old, ivy-covered buildings; their league, and the member colleges, became known as the Ivy League.

All eight schools are among the top schools in the United States; they are Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, and Yale University. The names of the schools and the name Ivy League continue to evoke the image of excellence in American higher education.



## A CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

EducationUSA is a global network of more than 450 advising and information centers in 170 countries supported by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. These centers actively promote U.S. higher education around the world by offering accurate, comprehensive, objective, and timely information about educational opportunities in the United States and guidance to qualified individuals on how best to access those opportunities.

EducationUSA advising centers are staffed by professional advisers, many of whom have first-hand experience having studied in the United States themselves, and/or having received State Department-approved training about U.S. higher education and the advising process. They assist roughly 25 million prospective international students each year, either in person, by telephone, through e-mail, or on the Internet.

EducationUSA advisers provide a wealth of information and services for international students at all stages of the college search, free of charge. They know the differences among the many types of U.S. colleges and universities and can provide information on how to identify the institution that best meets one's educational and professional needs. They know how the admissions process works; can advise on issues such as testing, essay writing, and letters of reference; and can often assist in identifying financial aid opportunities as well.

Since EducationUSA advisers receive constant updates about U.S. immigration law and security requirements, they can also provide guidance on the student visa application process and the interview. Many EducationUSA centers provide specialized services, such as essay and resume writing workshops, pre-departure preparation, and translation and document verification.

Find the center nearest you at <http://educationusa.state.gov/>.

International Education Week is an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide. This joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education is part of our effort to promote programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences in the United States.

We encourage the participation of all individuals and institutions interested in international education and exchange activities, including schools, colleges and universities, embassies, international organizations, businesses, associations, and community organizations.

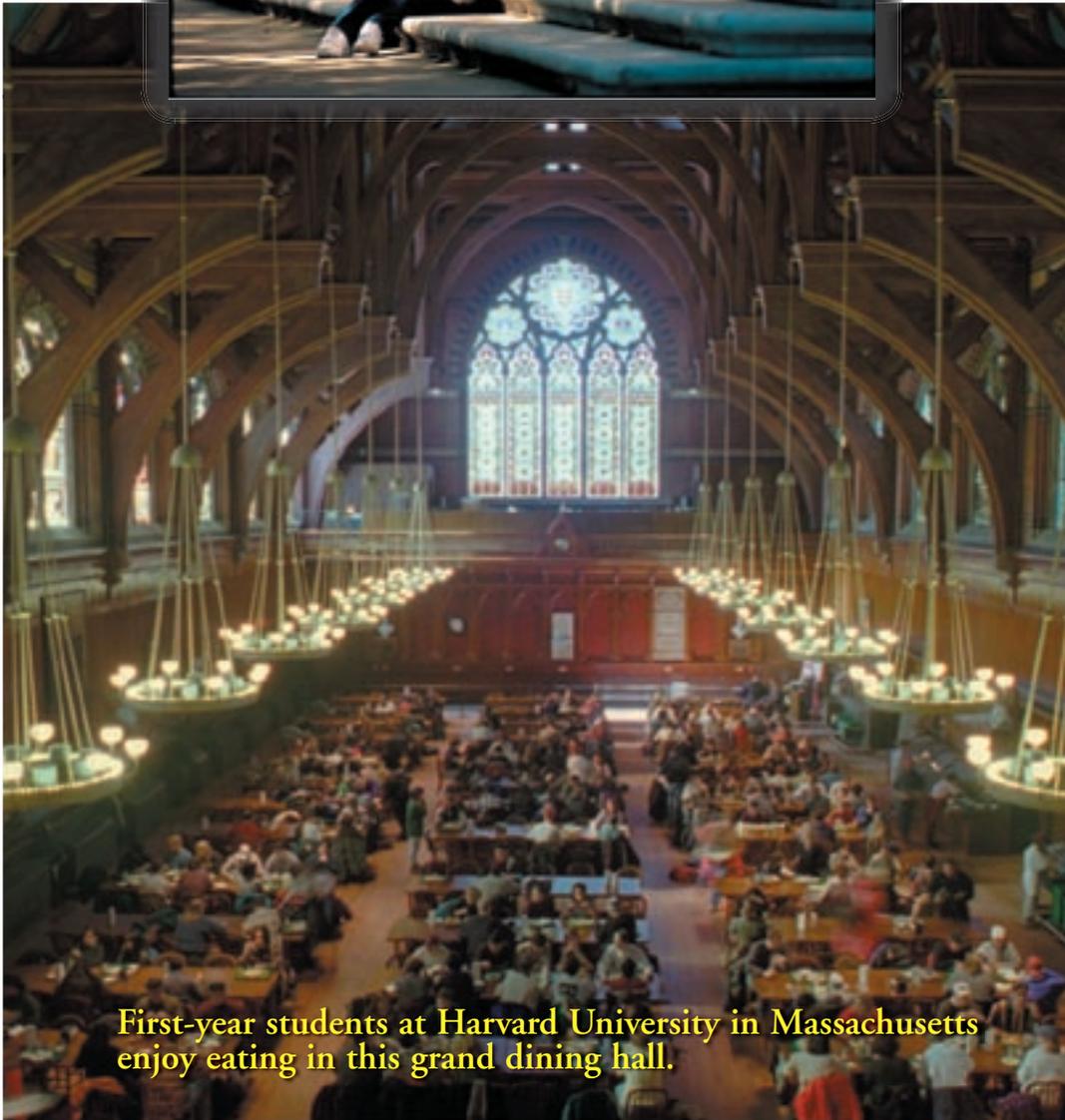
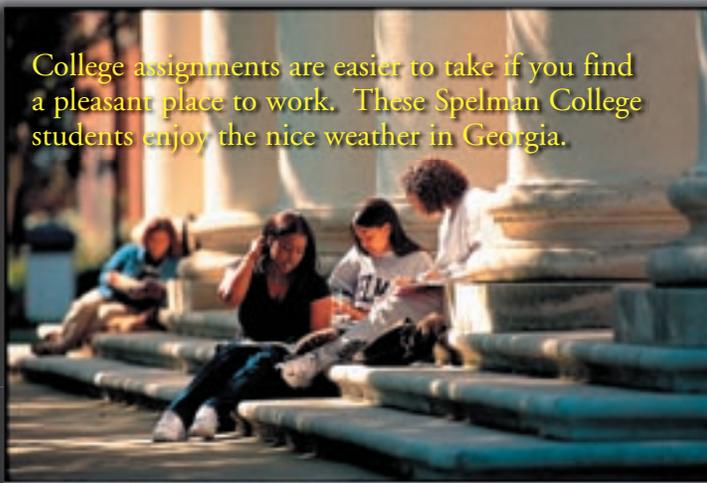
[<http://iew.state.gov/>]



# COLLEGE LIFE

College assignments are easier to take if you find a pleasant place to work. These Spelman College students enjoy the nice weather in Georgia.

Courtesy Spelman College



First-year students at Harvard University in Massachusetts enjoy eating in this grand dining hall.

Jon Chase, AP/WWP



## COLLEGE LIFE



Stephen Morton, AP/WWWP



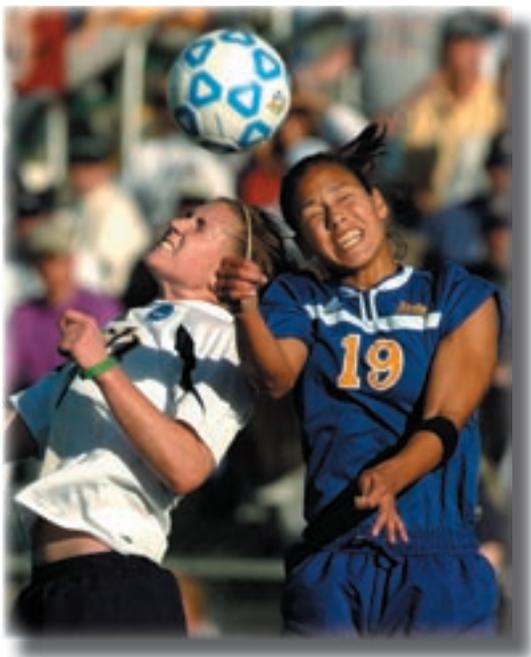
Savannah College of Art and Design students, left, participate in a “Living Art” project during the Georgia school’s annual Sidewalk Art Festival.

Sri Lankan sisters Tharanga and Eranga Goonetilleke, right, are shown on the set of *La Boheme* at Converse College in South Carolina. At the time of the production, less than a month after the tsunami, they had raised \$8,000 to help victims, and they hoped to raise more through the opera production.



Mary Ann Chastain, AP/WWWP

Sara D. Davis, AP/WWWP



Left, women’s football championship brings out the competitive spirit in players from Notre Dame University and the University of California—Los Angeles (UCLA).



# COLLEGE LIFE



Linda A. Cicero/Stanford News Service

The Ballet Folklorico de Stanford, left, and the annual student-run Stanford Powwow, below, are examples of cultural events, begun in the 1970s, that are designed to help members of this California university community learn more about each other. The Ballet promotes Mexican culture. The powwow, which is organized by the Stanford American Indian Organization, draws more than 30,000 participants from across the country.

Linda A. Cicero/Stanford News Service



Courtesy Davidson College

These University of Texas football players just won the Rose Bowl, one of college football's most prestigious contests.



Paul Sakuma, AP/Wide World

This student is practicing Chinese calligraphy at Davidson College in North Carolina.





# COLLEGE LIFE



Ed Andrieski, AP/WWP



Cadets celebrate graduation at the Air Force Academy in Colorado.



Daymon J. Hartley, AP/WWP

Central Michigan University undergraduate political science students, above, address members of the Michigan State Senate, offering a serious proposal to revamp the much-debated Merit Award scholarship program.



Nati Harmik, AP/WWP



Students study in a lounge area at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, Nebraska.



# COLLEGE LIFE



Gene Blythe, AP/WWP

University of Georgia band members add their energy to a basketball tournament.



Matt Houston, AP/WWP

Above, a University of Maryland student works on part of a house her team is designing for the national Solar Decathlon during which new technology was demonstrated for crowds on the National Mall in nearby Washington, D.C.



Fred Faulk, AP/WWP

Mississippi State University students gather for a memorial for victims of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

## A CLOSER LOOK

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Michael Jay Friedman



Frank Plantan  
Livia Rurarz-Huygens, Mohammad al-Ali, and Matthew Frisch (left to right) are students in the University of Pennsylvania's International Relations Program.

*This interdisciplinary program at one of our leading universities offers students with an interest in world affairs the opportunity to tailor their studies to specific goals, while it prepares them for careers in business, government, academia, and other fields at home and abroad. Michael Jay Friedman is a staff writer in the Bureau of International Information Programs of the U.S. Department of State.*

Undergraduates at U.S. universities typically declare their “major” field of study by the end of their second (sophomore) year. As economic, political, and cultural globalization has increased, international relations (“IR”) has become one of the most popular majors at the University of Pennsylvania, located in Philadelphia. IR is an interdisciplinary program that requires students to complete coursework in a number of different fields and to submit a 30- to 40-page thesis under the supervision of an assigned instructor.

Admission to the major is selective. Applicants must have compiled a 2.8 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) and completed prerequisite classes in political science, western civilization, and micro- and macroeconomics. Once admitted, students complete a core curriculum that focuses on international relations theory, international economics, diplomatic history, and international politics. Majors also choose electives from an approved course list culled from offerings throughout the College of Arts and Sciences and the Wharton School of Business. This affords students the opportunity to tailor their studies in any number of ways, from East Asian studies to anthropology to international finance. The wide variety of choices also makes IR a popular “double major,” with students obtaining degrees in both international relations and another field, often history, political science, or economics.

Each international relations major completes an undergraduate thesis on a chosen IR-related subject. Recent

topics have ranged from “The Role of Historical Memories in Bilateral Relations: Japan-China and Japan-South Korea” to “The Challenge of Multinational Corporations to International Business Law.”

Matthew Frisch, a senior from Toronto, Canada, declared an IR major because it allowed him to explore a wide range of subjects, a process he calls “diversifying your knowledge base.” He praises highly an elective course he took in the university’s Annenberg School of Communication. Entitled “Communications and the Presidency,” it awarded each student a research grant to visit the presidential library of his choice. Frisch traveled to the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum in Boston, where he did research for a seminar paper on the interplay between Kennedy’s Cold War and civil rights policies. His paper was later published in the student-run *Penn History Review*.

Third-year student Mohammad al-Ali, a U.S.-Kuwait dual citizen and international relations-economics double major, adds that IR helps him “bridge the gap” between his two cultures and environments. For international relations-French double major Livia Rurarz-Huygens, a

U.S.-Belgium dual citizen whose family received political asylum in America, IR is the best major to train her for a planned career in international refugee law.

IR majors participate in numerous academic, social, and pre-professional activities, many sponsored through the student-run International Relations Undergraduate Student Association (IRUSA). Rurarz-Huygens, the current IRUSA president, notes that the organization sponsors annual trips to New York City and Washington, D.C., where students interact with faculty at leading law and international relations graduate schools.

Penn IR graduates do many things after college. IR Program Co-Director Frank Plantan observes that “there is great demand for people with knowledge of international affairs and the research, writing, and other skills needed to evaluate changes in the world. These people are needed in business, in government, in the academy, and in a host of other fields at home and abroad.” ■

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*The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.*

## AN OVERVIEW OF U.S. ACCREDITATION

“Accreditation is a process of external quality review used by higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities, and higher education programs for quality assurance and quality improvement. Accreditation in the United States is more than 100 years old, emerging from concerns to protect public health and safety and to serve the public interest.

In the United States, accreditation is carried out by private, nonprofit organizations designed for this specific purpose. External quality review of higher education is a non-governmental enterprise. In other countries, accreditation and quality assurance activities are typically carried out by government. ...

Accreditors review colleges and universities in 50 states and a number of other countries. They review many thousands of programs in a range of professions and specialties including, law, medicine, business, nursing, social work and pharmacy, arts and journalism.”

According to the above document, there are three types of accreditors: regional, national, and those serving a specialized profession. Accreditation serves the following purposes: assuring quality, determining qualification for access to federal funds, easing transfer from one school to another, and engendering employer confidence in the degree or license granted by an institution.

[[http://www.chea.org/pdf/overview\\_US\\_accred\\_8-03.pdf](http://www.chea.org/pdf/overview_US_accred_8-03.pdf)]

Judith S. Eaton  
President, Council for Higher Education Accreditation

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FIND A HOME AND A GLOBAL PURPOSE

Richard Holden



Tom Strickland

The service and activism aspects of Earlham College's Quaker approach attracted Afghani student Jawad Joya and Kenya's Yvette Issar to the college in Richmond, Indiana.

*Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, is an independent, liberal arts college committed to providing the highest-quality education in the context of a Quaker (Religious Society of Friends) institution. With an emphasis on learning and respecting the truth, the college encourages students to be active, questioning learners and to combine their intellectual pursuits with a life stressing global education, peaceful resolution of conflict, equality of persons, and high moral standards of personal conduct, both while in college and later in life. Richard Holden is the retired director of public information at Earlham College.*

Tap the shoulder of any international student at Earlham College and you can be certain you are touching a visionary. The small liberal arts school tends to attract students committed to finding just and peaceful solutions for the world's upheavals. And most aren't waiting to finish their degrees before engaging the problematic world. Two who feel this compulsion keenly

are Jawad Sepehri Joya of Afghanistan and Yvette Issar from Kenya. Both students are already finding many ways to apply their academic expertise to social and political troubles around the globe.

Often, international students have personal experiences with injustice in their homelands that drive their dedication. Jawad is a living example of how hope and hard work can overcome seemingly impossible circumstances. Living in the chaos of Kabul and confined to a wheelchair because of polio, this son of illiterate and impoverished Shiite Muslims faced a bleak future in the late 1990s. The ruling Taliban discouraged education generally, especially for girls or the handicapped. An Italian doctor working at a Red Cross facility recognized Jawad's potential and arranged a series of clandestine tutors for him. Languages came easily for Jawad and so did computer skills. By the time he was 13, he was working in the Red Cross facility as a programmer and beginning to envision a fulfilling life for himself.

His friendship with the doctor and with an Italian journalist he was to meet in 2002, following the fall of the Taliban, led to Jawad's liberation from war-torn Afghanistan and admission to a school in Trieste, Italy. As he was finishing his international baccalaureate diploma there, he applied for admission to colleges in the United States and Canada. Earlham was one of the academically rigorous institutions that accepted him and offered him a full scholarship.

"I couldn't be more pleased to be here," says Jawad with his broad, ever-ready grin. "Here I am able to work on things I believe in much more than I would at a large university, I think." Now in his second year at Earlham, he is concentrating his studies in the sciences, with additional coursework in the humanities and social sciences. "Given the experiences I have gone through, I've been increasingly interested in studying peace from a naturalistic point of view," he explains. "In biology, there is the issue of competition among the species. Since human beings are one of those species, I'm looking at the question from different angles—looking for ways we can be competitive in a human way." He plans to pursue that interest in graduate school, which he hopes will lead to an eventual appointment with a university, foundation, or think tank.

Ever active in the extracurricular and social life of the campus community, Jawad participates in the Model U.N. (United Nations), the Peace and Global Studies Club, Amnesty International, and the Asian Student Union. To augment his scholarship, he has a paid internship with Earlham's Peace and Global Studies (PAGS) program, researching how the PAGS curriculum can be made more effective.

Last summer he was one of 40 delegates from colleges in the United States to the Japan-America Conference at Stanford University in Stanford, California, then went on to work for the Society of Afghan Professionals in North America, based in Fremont, California. This year, Jawad's work earned him the National Peace and Justice Association's top student prize "for contributions in peacemaking and justice seeking on campus, in the community, and around the world." The honor accompanies a similar award from the Plowshares Student Peace Conference held at Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana.

Now with Afghani, Italian, and American backgrounds under his belt, the 20-year-old Jawad calls himself "a global citizen," adding, "Now all I need is a global visa."

Yvette Issar is a third-year international studies major at Earlham. She was drawn to the college's Quaker heritage and expressed ethos of "non-violence, simplicity,

and social justice." Yvette was born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya, to Indian parents. "I see myself as being from both places, although perhaps I identify more with India," she says. "When I came [to Earlham], I thought I would hate living in a small Midwestern town," she admits, "but I've found it's a wonderful place. The community of learning here is incredible, and there is such a sense of commitment among the people around you."

At Earlham, Yvette has organized a chapter of Americans for Informed Democracy (AID), which arranges face-to-face videoconferences with college students around the world to discuss global problems and seek consensus for solutions. Today there are 70 student-run AID chapters in the United States and abroad. "It all started when I went to an AID retreat and met people who had amazing ideas on how to better represent other countries to ordinary Americans, and at the same time make average Americans more accessible to people in other countries."

So far this year, Yvette has organized four conferences, engaging students in the United States with their counterparts in places like Pakistan, Australia, the Philippines, Honduras, Sri Lanka, and many other countries. Among topics the students explore have been "Global Responses to Natural Disasters" and "Should the United States Pursue Democracy Overseas?"

Like Jawad, Yvette has been deeply involved with the Model U.N. Last year she represented Lebanon at a regional Model U.N. session in Chicago. "It's putting yourself in other people's shoes to represent the interests of another country," she says. "But beyond that it's about learning how to work with other people in coordinating efforts, to make compromises for a global good."

Yvette also finds time to enjoy her passion for music as a member of the Earlham Concert Choir. Last spring, she participated in the College's Vienna Choral Semester. "It was an incredible experience," she attests, "to be able to go into the heart of Europe and sing in those glorious cathedrals. I'll never forget it."

Asked to express the most important lessons she has learned at college in the United States, Yvette rolls her eyes thoughtfully at the ceiling. "It's that community is one of the most important things a person can have. Without connections to others, and love, you are just an island in an unhappy situation. I've learned that people should take care of each other, to look after your neighbors. Perhaps I've always known that, but in the United States I really learned it." ■

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# COMMUNITY SERVICE

Robin L. Yeager



Rogelio Solis, AP/WWP

Students from the University of Southern Mississippi and the University of Illinois scramble to finish work on a home for Habitat for Humanity being built in Jackson, Mississippi.

*Robin Yeager, a staff writer in the Bureau of International Information Programs of the U.S. Department of State, describes how American colleges and universities encourage students to serve their communities.*

The United States has a strong tradition of volunteerism. Young people are encouraged, from a young age, to find ways to help their communities. Across the United States, colleges and universities provide opportunities for students to participate in voluntary service projects. Sometimes students get academic credit for their work, but quite often their reward is simply the satisfaction of helping someone—and of realizing that, even as young people, they can make a difference. This concept is personified by the Campus Compact, which is described on its Web site [<http://www.compact.org>] as “a national coalition of more than 950 college and university presidents—representing some 5 million students—dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement, and service-learning in higher education.”

Since its founding in 1992, the Office of Community

Service Learning (OCSL) at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, has served as the volunteer resource center and service hub for community service and service learning for all members of the university community. More than 20,000 hours annually are served in the community and on the campus. Academic excellence, service to the community, and student success are at the heart of the program, which encourages participants to become part of the service movement locally, nationally, and globally. The University of Southern Mississippi is one of six institutions of higher learning currently partnering with Eastern Michigan University to adapt a model for academic service learning. The university also serves as the host institution for the Mississippi Center for Community and Civic Engagement [<http://www.usm.edu/ocsl/>].

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign explains service learning this way:

A major purpose of a liberal education is to prepare students for citizenship. We do this in part by linking student engagement with classroom



Ted S. Warren, AP/WWP

A Seattle University student teaches American Sign Language to a hearing-impaired resident of a tent city for homeless people that was hosted on the university's Seattle, Washington, campus.

experiences. A liberal education is one that helps students cultivate an attitude—intellectual and social—that is at once playful and responsible. It is playful in its willingness to play with ideas, to imagine different worlds, and to resist habits of thought; responsible in its fundamental worldly connections.

That is why connecting our students to society through public engagement is so important. For example, over a two-semester period, students in an architectural design studio undertook a challenge to design a low-cost yet energy-efficient home for the Habitat for Humanity. The driving force for creating this unique home was a complex set of values and choices rooted in civic responsibility to make homes affordable for low-income families and yet use sufficiently sophisticated technology to ensure energy conservation [<http://www.union.uiuc.edu/ovp/sle/>].

In the New England region, Dartmouth College, the University of Vermont, St. Michael's College, Norwich

University, Champlain College, and Castleton State College have paired with myriad local governmental and nongovernmental agencies to create the DREAM (Directing Through Recreation, Education, Adventure, and Mentoring ) program, providing long-term mentors to children from low-income neighborhoods. The program started at Dartmouth in 1999 and now has locations and services throughout the state, serving children in many communities. The program combines youth development and community development principles, regular weekly meetings with long-term mentors, and recreation, including trips, sports, summer camps, and interactions with sports heroes and local leaders. Partners include housing authorities, the Girl Scouts, and Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream company [<http://www.dreamprogram.org/>].

Seattle University in Seattle, Washington, hosted a national conference on homelessness in November 2005. They were invited to host the fifth annual conference because in February 2005 the university had hosted Tent City 3, a mobile encampment of 100 homeless men and women, for a month. Seattle University was



A Wofford College student helps youngsters with an acting exercise in South Carolina. Courtesy Wofford College

the first university ever to host a homeless community in this way. The national conference was organized locally by Seattle University students and members of the Washington Campus Compact, a statewide coalition of college and university presidents formed to promote civic responsibility in higher education. For additional conference information, see <http://www.studentsagainstthunger.org>.

One nationally recognized program is at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina. According to their Web site's information for prospective students:

"Many of our classes incorporate service learning right into the curriculum, including religion, education, art, philosophy, sociology, and political science. Whether it's teaching reading to disadvantaged youth, planning a marketing event for a local non-profit organization, or helping an entrepreneur with a business plan, you will find yourself working in the community for many of your classes."

Service learning doesn't stop at the classroom door. Each year 800 Furman students volunteer through the student-run Max and Trude Heller Collegiate Educational Service Corps, providing assistance to 45 Greenville agencies ranging from the Salvation Army and the Meyer Center for Special Children to Hispanic Affairs and the Girl Scouts [<http://www.furman.edu/main/community.htm>].

Nearby Wofford College, in Spartanburg, South Carolina, also has a service learning program. Students of the small liberal arts college choose to volunteer for a

project directly or through a local agency or organization. Some students serve as individual volunteers; others participate with fellow members of a campus group, such as a club or fraternal organization. Wofford students serve at soup kitchens (preparing and serving food to the hungry) and homeless shelters. They tutor at local schools and work at a local free medical clinic. They give Christmas presents to needy children and help with campus and community beautification programs [<http://www.wofford.edu/serviceLearning/default.asp>].

All types of colleges offer service learning programs. According to the American Association of Community Colleges, over half of the community colleges in the United States have incorporated some level of service learning into their programs. AACC has published a number of publications on the subject; two of interest are the eight-page *Sustaining Service Learning: The Role of Chief Academic Officers* and the 86-page *A Practical Guide for Integrating Civic Responsibility Into the Curriculum*. Both can be found at [http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ResourceCenter/Projects\\_Partnerships/Current/HorizonsServiceLearningProject/Publications/Publications.htm](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ResourceCenter/Projects_Partnerships/Current/HorizonsServiceLearningProject/Publications/Publications.htm).

The Albuquerque Technical and Vocational Institute (ATVI) in New Mexico provides an outstanding example of service learning at the community-college level. It received a Corporation for National and Community Service Grant, as well as the 1999 National Bellwether and the 2004 Community College National Center for Community Engagement Service Learning and Civic Engagement awards. At more than 50 local agencies, ATVI students can choose to work with youth programs, health services, social and legal services, the forest service, Special Olympics, two congressional offices, or the humane society [<http://planet.tvi.cc.nm.us/experientiallearning/>]. ■

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# SEVEN SNAPSHOTS: A Sampling of Educational Opportunities

*U. S. Embassies and Consulates employ foreign national employees to assist with many aspects of their work, including designing and running educational and cultural programs that enhance mutual understanding. In April 2005, the Department of State brought 18 of these employees to the United States for training, which included visits to several colleges in and around Charlotte, North Carolina, to look at the international student experience on those campuses. This article summarizes the group's report and provides an idea of the variety of educational opportunities available in the United States.*

Charlotte was chosen because it is a major banking, media, business, cultural, and transportation center in the Southeast and is home to a wide variety of respected educational institutions. The 18 participants were divided into teams, each of which visited one campus to meet students, observe classes, discuss the resources and challenges for students who attend that school, and get a feel for the international student experience. All of these schools are very interested in attracting international students and they maintain up-to-date and easy-to-use Web sites to make information accessible for them. An excerpt from the Davidson College Web site typifies the colleges' shared interest in international students:

International awareness and concern for global issues are an important part of the Davidson education. As a student who has lived and studied in an international environment, you have much to share with the members of our college community. We look forward to learning more about you and your experiences through the application process.

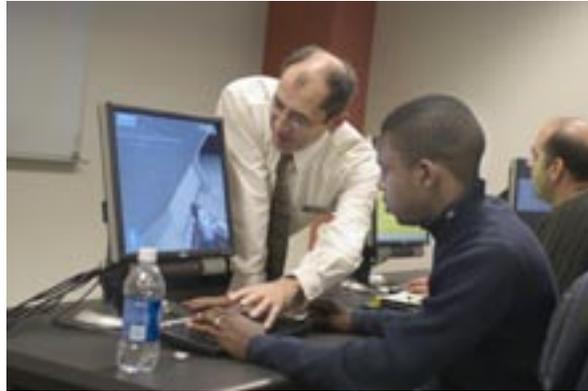
## THE SEVEN SCHOOLS



Courtesy Belmont Abbey College

**Belmont Abbey College** is a small, liberal arts college of 1,000 students, noted for its “family-oriented” environment and its dedication to developing the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. The college is located in Belmont, North Carolina, just minutes west of Charlotte, and is affiliated with Belmont Abbey, a Benedictine monastery [<http://www.belmontabbeycollege.edu/>].

**Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC)** is the largest community college in North Carolina, with more than 70,000 students participating in more than 100 programs on several campuses. President George W. Bush chose Central Piedmont Community College for his April 5, 2005, announcement of workforce development initiatives. The college proudly claims international students from well over 100 countries [<http://www.cpcc.edu>].



Courtesy Central Piedmont Community College

A professor helps a student in a computer class at CPCC.



Courtesy Davidson College

Davidson College students have begun a monthly dinner program featuring the foods, music, and décor of a specific country. Here student volunteers help prepare bread.

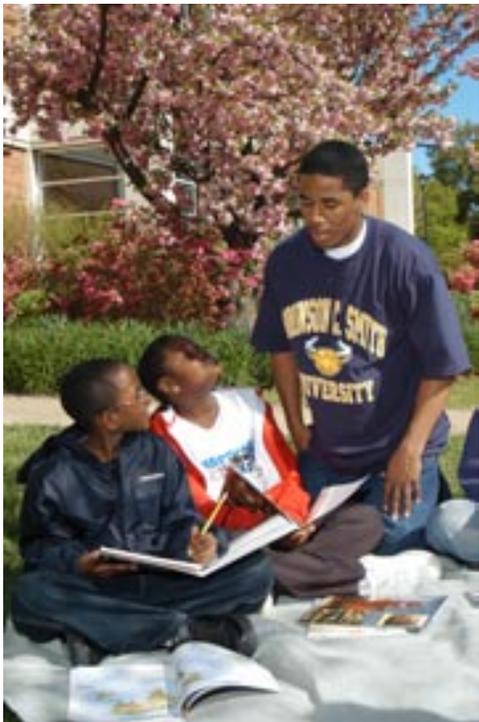
**Johnson & Wales University** calls itself “America’s Career University.” The university has campuses in four states; the Charlotte campus opened in 2004. The university offers both associate (two-year) and bachelor’s (four-year) degrees, with majors in business, hospitality (hotel and restaurant), and culinary arts. The Web site has information in 17 languages [<http://www.jwu.edu/charlotte>].

**Davidson College** is located about 30 minutes north of Charlotte in Davidson, North Carolina; population, 8,000. The college is an independent, liberal arts school with 1,600 students. Since its founding by Presbyterians in 1837, the college has graduated 23 Rhodes Scholars. The Dean Rusk International Studies Program, founded 20 years ago and named for the Davidson alumnus who served as secretary of state, is just one of the outstanding program offerings. Founded as a men’s school, Davidson today has about equal numbers of male and female students [<http://www.davidson.edu>].



Victoria Arocho, AP/WWP

Johnson & Wales students prepare for a decorative bread demonstration at the National Bread Summit.



Courtesy Johnson C. Smith University

The Johnson C. Smith University Service Learning program pairs college students with local children who need tutoring in a program called the Saturday Academy. Through this program many children have progressed from poor math or reading test scores to surpassing the state average for their class.

**Johnson C. Smith University** is a historically Black university. The 1,400 students enjoy a spacious residential campus, only one mile from the center of Charlotte, and a friendly atmosphere in which students are stimulated and nurtured by dedicated and caring faculty and staff. The college requires students to perform community service in order to graduate, and it offers study abroad opportunities in nine foreign countries and internships or other practical educational experiences in conjunction with more than 90 companies [<http://www.jcsu.edu/>].



Courtesy Queens University of Charlotte

Students prepare for the graduation ceremony at Queens University.

**Queens University of Charlotte** began as a women's seminary. Today, male students make up almost 30 percent of the undergraduate program at this private, comprehensive master's-level school, which is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church. Located in a lovely residential section of the city, Queens has a core program in liberal arts with an undergraduate program offering 24 majors. Queens has an enrollment of about 2,200 students and a 13:1 ratio of students to faculty [<http://www.queens.edu/>].

**University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC)** has more than 19,500 students and grants bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. It is housed on a modern campus about 10 miles from downtown Charlotte and has become an important regional business and research center. Students come to UNCC from throughout the United States and about 80 foreign countries [<http://www.uncc.edu/>].

*Self-Made Man*, a campus landmark, provides a good photo backdrop for these UNCC students.



Wade Bruton/UNC Charlotte

## FINDINGS

**Admissions and Applications.** Admission requirements vary. Davidson and Queens describe themselves as highly selective. Belmont Abbey focuses on academic and spiritual development, and Johnson C. Smith is very interested in applicants' character and personality, as well as their grades. Central Piedmont has programs for almost everyone, but not everyone is right for every program. The two largest schools, UNCC and CPCC, both have extensive resources but are large enough to be somewhat intimidating. It really is true that finding the right match makes all the difference in the application process and in the student's academic performance and personal satisfaction after enrolling. Each of the schools has a Web site that gives information about admissions, financial aid, and, in most cases, specifics for international students.

**Housing, Food, Resources, Health, and Security.** Central Piedmont does not have campus housing, but the other schools discussed here do, and they can provide students with application information. Food and meal programs, as well as style of housing vary from campus to campus, but most offer a variety of choices, especially after the first year. All of the schools have libraries and computer access for students, and all post information about campus security. All the schools require students to carry health insurance, but each also has a health service available for students. Counseling may be available for students who need support in adjusting to the college experience. Costs and policies vary from school to school. Each college's academic schedule is different and will vary some from year to year, so prospective students should check the Web sites or other information source for dates of classes, paperwork deadlines, and holidays.

**Academic Support.** Several of the schools help students through English tutoring or writing programs. Most libraries will help students learn how to utilize the resources and how to conduct research. All the schools help organize career fairs or other placement services for jobs after graduation.

**International Students' Services and Organizations.** The colleges have offices with organized events and/or associations and clubs that bring together international students, or internationally minded foreign and U.S. students. Several feature a number of organizations founded by ethnically or geographically related students. Some international student services also help pair foreign students with local students and families, especially for holidays. In some cases, students from more than one school will be associated with a local group, such as Charlotte's Interna-

tional House, a local nonprofit organization that affords them a chance to meet others in the city.

**Religion.** When the State Department visitors asked about religion, they were assured by the students they met, and by the international student advisors, that students of all religions are welcome and respected at each of the campuses, whether public, private, or religiously affiliated.

## CONCLUSION

The team members found that even a short visit helped bring to life many points they had read or heard before coming, but now understood more fully. The most important lesson was that there are many different but great ways to study in the United States.

The contributors (pictured below) were Mohamed Ahmed Abdalla Ahmed, Doha, Qatar; Vivian Abdallah, Jerusalem; Paraskevi Vivien Allimonos, Melbourne, Australia; Nada A. Al-Soze, Baghdad, Iraq; Majka Brzostek, Krakow, Poland; Borie Bendezu-Velez, Lima, Peru; Josita Ekouevi-Amavi, Lome, Togo; Alejandra Escobosa, Hermosillo, Mexico; Usawadee Katpichai, Bangkok, Thailand; Pamela Kuwali, Lilongwe, Malawi; Ratna Mukherjee, Chennai, India; Maria Paola Pierini, Rome, Italy; Dana Polcikova, Bratislava, Slovak Republic; Karin Rosnizek, Munich, Germany; Luisa Maria Viau, Guatemala City, Guatemala; Beatrice GP Vilain, Port-au-Prince, Haiti; Cornelia Vlaicu, Bucharest, Romania; and Zhou Hong, Guangzhou, China. ■



Robert Kaiser/U.S. Department of State

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# CHOOSING A COLLEGE MAJOR

Linda Tobash



Stew Milne, AP/WWP

Classes can be large or small, formal or informal. This Brown University professor instructs his class at the campus in Rhode Island.

*The author defines “major” and “minor” in the academic sense and presents helpful tips for students who are deciding which area of study is right for them. Linda Tobash is the director of University Placement Services at the Institute of International Education.*

*“Like most people, I remember very well the year I chose my major. In fact, I made the decision three times.”*

Dr. David Brownlee, Professor of Art History, University of Pennsylvania

[[http://www.college.upenn.edu/curriculum/major\\_choosing.html](http://www.college.upenn.edu/curriculum/major_choosing.html)]

**W**ith hundreds of majors and thousands of colleges and universities from which to choose, how does one begin to decide what and where

to study? For some, the first decision is where—at a large comprehensive university, or a small liberal arts college, or a specialized institution offering programs in engineering or technology or computer science, for example; in a city or the country; near the beach or in the mountains; near family or far away; at a school providing financial aid; or at a school that offers specific extracurricular activities, such as the opportunity to play on a soccer team, or to work on the campus radio or television station, newspaper, or drama, or film productions. But for many others, the college search begins with what they might want to study and where the best places to study that subject might be.

Unlike other national educational systems, where someone’s college major is determined by what was studied in secondary school or scores received on college entrance exams, undergraduate applicants to U.S. colleges and



Pat Little, AP/WWP

Small adjustments make a giant engine work at the Pennsylvania College of Technology. The student received a scholarship that was initially funded through money left in Benjamin Franklin's will.

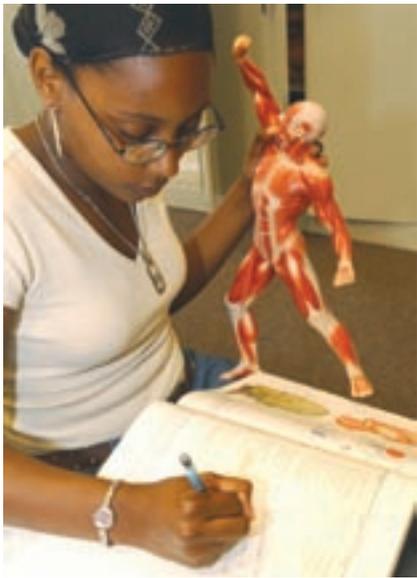
universities often can choose from the full range of schools and academic majors. Of course, at highly selective institutions, competition for admission is very strong and only a small number of outstanding students gain entrance. Even at institutions that are less selective, some majors—nursing or engineering, for example—will have stricter and more competitive admission requirements. But, generally speaking, the array of choices for prospective students is quite broad.

### **WHAT EXACTLY IS A COLLEGE MAJOR?**

Stanford University's Web site states, "A major is the field in which you choose to specialize during your undergraduate study. Your choice determines the academic discipline that will absorb a significant portion of your academic time and energy. Upon successful completion of the major requirements and University requirements, you receive a bachelor's degree. Your major offers an opportunity to develop your intellectual skill,

to show your capability in grasping a subject from the fundamentals through advanced study. What you study is an important personal decision." [<http://www.stanford.edu/~susanz/Majors.html>]

When a student chooses a major, he or she enters into a contract with a college to complete a prescribed course of study that consists of both general education requirements (i.e., university requirements) and academic major requirements. In other words, the college curriculum will consist not only of courses in the major field of study. In fact, as much as 50 to 60 percent of coursework might consist of general education and elective courses, i.e., courses that the student chooses from a broad range of options both within and outside of the major. The percentage of general education courses, as compared to major courses, varies depending on the school and the major, but all institutions require some general education courses. The U.S. undergraduate education is rooted in a liberal arts tradition, with general



Courtesy Savannah College of Art and Design

An art student makes anatomy notes at Georgia's Savannah College of Art and Design.

education seen as very important. The goal of all undergraduate baccalaureate degrees is to develop in each student critical thinking skills and the ability to learn how to learn, as well as proficiency in a specific academic area.

At many institutions, students can choose both a major and a minor area of

study. A minor, or concentration, is usually closely related to the academic major; e.g., a student might major in English and minor in theater, or major in history and minor in political science, or vice versa. A small number of courses in the minor will be required for graduation and will frequently “count” (i.e., be applicable) toward the major degree requirements as well.

At some institutions, students, working closely with an academic advisor, can design their own individualized majors. A growing number of undergraduate students choose dual majors. In other words, they graduate having met the requirements for two majors. The majors can be related—for example, two majors in the social sciences, such as history and sociology. Or they can be completely different—biology and literature, for instance. Often students will choose more than one major in order to better prepare for a career or to make themselves more competitive for graduate school. But sometimes they choose a double major because of personal passion. At some institutions, double majors can be taken simultaneously, and at others dual majors must be taken sequentially. Generally speaking, the length of time to earn a degree will be a bit longer, but students are not starting with each major from the beginning. A good number of the general education and even elective courses in one major will count toward the degree requirements for the second major.

All institutions clearly define the expectations and course requirements that students must fulfill to graduate. Students generally meet each term with an academic advisor who helps them choose courses that will count toward

their degree requirements. Most institutions also provide tools to help students, such as program or degree requirement checklists.

### WHEN DOES ONE CHOOSE A COLLEGE MAJOR?

Some students enter college knowing exactly what they want to study, some think they know, and some have no idea. Most will change majors at least once.

Since nearly two-thirds of undergraduate students in the United States change majors before graduating and might consider up to four or five majors before finally deciding on one, a number of institutions actually prefer that students not declare a major until after they have started their college education. Even at those institutions that require prospective students to identify a major when they apply, students can usually select an “undecided” or “undeclared” major option.

While students do not have an unlimited amount of time to choose a major—most baccalaureate degrees are designed to be completed in four years with 120 semester



Courtesy University of Mary Washington

“Practice, practice” is the life of a music major at Virginia's University of Mary Washington.

credits (see sidebars)—students often have until the end of their sophomore year to decide and still be able to complete their degree on time. Of course, students choosing to enter community colleges (two-year institutions that award associate's degrees) must choose a major much sooner. And it is better for students to decide early if they choose a major for which a large percentage of the required coursework is in the major field (e.g., highly technical fields or some health fields) or if there are a large number of prerequisites (basic courses that must be taken before one is allowed to register for a more advanced course).



Damian Dovarganes, AP/WWWP

A Carnegie-Mellon University student pins a medal on the award-winning unmanned vehicle his team brought from Pennsylvania to a competition in Nevada.

## HOW DOES ONE CHOOSE A MAJOR?

Some have a passion for a subject. Some have an area in which they excelled in high school. Some have a career goal that will dictate the major they must take; for example, nursing, teaching, studio art, or engineering. But many students just don't know. While they may have an idea of what they want to do after college, they might not have a clear idea what area of study will best help them reach that career goal. Nor is there usually only one major that leads to a specific career. In fact, many schools caution that choosing a career and choosing a major are two distinctly different processes.

Most educators agree that in choosing a major, students should consider what they like to do, what their abilities are, and how they like to learn. Some of the best resources for helping choose a major come from colleges and universities themselves. A large number of institutions

post on their Web sites a wealth of information and tools to help prospective and current students select majors. While some Web sites focus entirely on the programs and services offered at that institution, many others post helpful information that can be applied to any college setting (see sidebar).

The most frequently cited advice includes:

- Learn more about yourself. What are your academic strengths and weaknesses? What do you enjoy? What are your interests? What are your values? What are your immediate goals after graduating—getting a job or going to graduate school?
- Take a personality or an interest inventory or assessment. If such inventory or assessment opportunities are not available in your secondary school or town, you can check at a U.S. Educational Advising/Information Center in your home country. Through its EducationUSA program, the U.S. Department of State operates more than 450 of these centers in 170 countries [<http://www.educationusa.state.gov>].
- Visit Web sites of university departments. Look at the majors offered. Analyze the courses offered and the degree requirements. Some college faculty members post their course syllabi, a full description of the courses, online. The more you can learn about the types of courses and work required for a major, the better.
- Once you are in the United States, go to departmental offices on campus and talk with staff, faculty, and students.
- Visit college career centers and look for reports that list jobs recent graduates have found, as well as the subject area in which the graduate majored.
- After you enroll, try out different courses in different departments. Learn about the faculty members who teach the major courses and about what kind of students enroll.
- If you find yourself in the wrong major, don't worry. Most students in U.S. colleges change their majors. Do not stay in a major you don't like or that is not challenging and stimulating.
- Don't confuse a career choice with a major choice. Any major can prepare you for a number of different job possibilities. As the University of Washington states on its Web site, "A college education helps prepare you for the job market but doesn't limit you to a specific career" [[www.washington.edu/students/ugrad/advising/majchoos.html](http://www.washington.edu/students/ugrad/advising/majchoos.html)].

*The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.*

## MAJOR CHOICE VS. CAREER CHOICE

Choosing a major can be a challenging task. The College Board's *Book of Majors* describes more than 900 majors offered at 3,600 colleges and universities. While there are a number of books that can help you search for the major that is right for you, colleges' Web sites are worth a visit because they also provide very useful information at no charge.

All colleges and universities publish in their college catalogues and on their Web sites complete listings of the majors and degrees offered by their institutions. They often provide a great deal of information, tools, and resources that deal with understanding and choosing majors. For example, the University of Minnesota's Web site provides the following information on the relation of college majors to careers in a section entitled "A Workbook for Choosing and Changing Your Major" [<http://ucs1.ucs.umn.edu/www/majorworkbook.html>]

### Different Kinds of Majors

Some majors strongly correlate to career options, while others are less directly related. From a career development perspective, majors can be placed into three categories:

### Non-Vocationally Specific

The non-specific major is not oriented toward employment in a specific career or a particular field. When combined with related experience and internships, such a program results in a career-oriented degree. Some good examples are history, political science, and sociology. For some, these types of majors are preparation for advanced training, either on the job or in graduate school.

### Vocationally Oriented

Vocationally oriented majors are aimed at a specific field of employment but not at a particular job. With this major, you'll be ready for entry employment at a trainee level. Degrees in journalism, management, or mathematics are good examples.

### Vocationally Ready

The vocationally ready major involves specific preparation for a particular job or occupation. These programs are often designed to meet the educational requirements of licensure or certification in a profession. Examples include education, nursing, or engineering.

## Typical List of Major Fields of Study

### Agriculture

Agricultural Sciences  
Animal Sciences  
Plant & Soil Sciences  
Agricultural Business & Management  
Range Management  
Agricultural Mechanization  
Horticulture  
Veterinary Sciences

### Computer Sciences

Computer & Information Sciences  
Computer Programming

Data Processing  
Information Management  
Sciences & Systems  
Computer Mathematics  
Library Science  
Museums & Preservation

### Education

Bilingual/Crosscultural Education  
Special Education  
Counseling  
Adult & Continuing Education  
Elementary Education  
Pre-School Education  
Junior Education

Senior High Education  
Art, Music, & Drama Education  
Home Economics Education  
Physical/Health/Fitness Education  
Science Education  
Vocational/Industrial Education  
Business Education  
Foreign Language Teacher Education  
Liberal Arts Education  
Social Science Education  
Mathematics Education  
Computer Science Education  
Religious Education

**Engineering**

Aerospace Aeronautical Engineering  
Astronautical Engineering  
Agricultural Engineering  
Architectural Engineering  
Bioengineering  
Biomedical Engineering  
Ceramic Engineering  
Chemical Engineering  
Civil Engineering  
Communications Engineering  
Computer Engineering  
Electrical Engineering  
Electronics Engineering  
Geological Engineering  
Geophysical Engineering  
Industrial Engineering & Design  
Materials Engineering  
Mechanical Engineering  
Metallurgical Engineering  
Mining & Mineral Engineering  
Marine Engineering  
Naval Architecture  
Nuclear Engineering  
Petroleum Engineering  
Surveying & Mapping Sciences  
Systems Analysis & Engineering

**Engineering-Related Technology**

Drafting  
Automotive Engineering & Technology  
Electrical Technology  
Electromechanical Technology  
Environmental/Energy Control Technology  
Engineering Mechanics  
Occupational Safety & Health Technology  
Construction & Building Technology  
Aviation & Air Transportation  
Transportation/Logistics

**English & Literature**

English Language  
Classics & Classical Studies  
Comparative Literature  
Creative Writing

Linguistics  
American Literature  
English Literature  
Speech & Rhetorical Studies  
Technical and Business Writing

**Ethnic Studies**

African Studies  
American Studies  
Asian & Pacific Area Studies  
European Studies  
Latin American Studies  
Middle Eastern Studies  
Afro-American (Black) Studies  
Native American Studies  
Hispanic-American Studies  
Islamic Studies  
Judaism & Jewish Studies

**Foreign Languages**

Foreign Languages/Literature  
Chinese  
Japanese  
Asian Languages  
German  
Scandinavian  
French  
Italian  
Spanish  
Portuguese  
Latin  
Greek  
Hebrew  
Middle Eastern Languages  
Russian  
Slavic (other than Russian)

**General & Interdisciplinary Studies**

Humanities  
Conflict Resolution/Peace Studies  
Women's Studies  
Liberal/General Studies  
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies  
Individualized Majors

**Mathematics**

Mathematics  
Actuarial Sciences

Applied Mathematics  
Statistics

**Military Science & Protective Services**

Military Sciences  
Criminal Justice & Law Enforcement  
Fire Protection & Security

**Parks & Recreation Resources**

Parks Administration  
Sports, Recreation, & Leisure Studies  
Equestrian Studies  
Conservation Management & Protection  
Forestry Production & Processing  
Forestry  
Wildlife & Fish Management  
Ecology Sciences  
Environmental Sciences

**Philosophy, Religion, & Theology**

Philosophy  
Religion & Theology  
Philosophy & Religion  
Biblical Languages  
Bible Studies  
Religious Education  
Religious Music  
Ministry & Church Administration

**Public Affairs & Law**

Criminal Justice & Law Enforcement  
Public Affairs/Administration  
Social Work & Social Services  
Pre-Law  
Legal Assisting

**Sciences**

Biology  
Biochemistry  
Biophysics  
Botany  
Cell & Molecular Biology  
Microbiology/Bacteriology  
Zoology

Marine Biology  
Biological Specializations  
Physical Sciences  
Astronomy  
Astrophysics  
Atmospheric Sciences &  
    Meteorology  
Chemistry  
Geological Sciences  
Physics  
Earth & Space Sciences  
Science Technologies

**Social Sciences**  
Anthropology  
Archaeology  
Criminology  
Economics  
Geography  
Government  
History  
International Affairs/Relations  
Political Science  
Psychology  
Sociology  
Urban Studies

**Visual & Performing Arts**  
Crafts & Artisanry  
Dance  
Design  
Photography  
Dramatic Arts  
Film Arts  
Fine Arts  
Music  
Interior Design

(List compiled by A2zcolleges.com.)

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## THE ACADEMIC YEAR

Most baccalaureate degrees are designed to be completed in four academic years of full-time study. Bachelor's degrees lead to work or further study at the graduate level. Associate's degrees, generally awarded by community colleges (or junior colleges), are designed to be completed in two years of full-time study. Associate's degrees lead to work or ongoing undergraduate study at a four-year institution.

Most academic years consist of two 15-week semesters.\*

The academic year usually begins in August or September and finishes in May or June with a short "winter" break, usually in December or January. A summer term in June, July, and/or August might be held, but summer enrollment at the undergraduate level is usually not mandatory.

### "Years"

Freshman: 1st year  
Sophomore: 2nd year  
Junior: 3rd year  
Senior: 4th year

\*Other common calendars include the "trimester" system of three equal terms running from 10 to 12 weeks each and the "quarter" system of four equal terms running 10 weeks each. A student must attend three of the four quarters to be considered full-time.

## BACHELOR'S DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Most bachelor's degrees consist of 120 credits (180 if on a quarter system). Margaret Schatzman of Educational Credential Evaluation Services in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has developed the following credit descriptions.

Undergraduate students enrolled full-time would generally be engaged in a minimum of 15 semester hours of credit per term, i.e., 30 credits per year.

**Freshman (1st year):** 1 to 30 credits

**Sophomore (2nd year):** 31 to 60 credits

**Junior (3rd year):** 61 to 90 credits

**Senior (4th year):** 91 to 120 credits

### THEORY COURSE

One credit is equal to 50 minutes of contact (time spent in class) per week for one semester (15 weeks). Most undergraduate theory courses carry three or four credits each. Therefore, students should expect to be in class three times per week for 50 minutes each for

a three-credit course. Most undergraduate students take five courses for a total of 15 credits. So, students should expect to be in classes about 15 hours per week. Preparation time, which can include reading, homework, library research, and preparing for quizzes and tests, is in addition to the class contact time.

### LABORATORY, PRACTICAL, OR STUDIO (ART, DRAWING, PAINTING, ETC.) COURSE

One credit is equal to two to four 50 minutes of contact (class or lab time) per week for one semester. In other words, students should expect to be in lab, practical, or studio courses two to four times more per credit than for a theory course. Outside preparation and work is either not required or at a minimum. For example, for a two-credit lab course, students should expect to be in the lab at least twice a week for a minimum of two 50-minute credit hours at each meeting.

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## WEB SITES OF INTEREST

These are a few of the many U.S. university sites that provide useful information to prospective undergraduate students (sites recommended by author).

**The University of California at Berkeley** [<http://ls-advise.berkeley.edu/choosingmajor/intro.html>] defines what a major is, describes how to prepare for and declare a major by the end of the second year, explores some myths about majors and career directions, and provides tips on setting personal goals.

**The University of Minnesota** [<http://ucs1.ucs.umn.edu/www/majorworkbook.html>] has an online workbook that includes an inventory of interests, skills, values, and personal characteristic "types" developed by Dr. John Holland, that can help students better understand their own "type" and what majors might work best.

**Oklahoma State University** [[http://home.okstate.edu/homepages/nsftoc/chp15\\_1](http://home.okstate.edu/homepages/nsftoc/chp15_1)] has developed a "College Prep 101" resource that includes extensive advice on what students should do before they begin college and what they need to know after they start their studies. It includes a section on choosing a major.

**Pennsylvania State University** [<http://www.psu.edu/dus/md/mdmisper.htm>] discusses common misperceptions about majors; e.g., how picking a major and a career are not same thing and how choosing one major does not mean giving up all others.

**University of Pennsylvania** [[http://www.college.upenn.edu/curriculum/major\\_factors.html](http://www.college.upenn.edu/curriculum/major_factors.html)] provides a checklist to help students identify their interests, motivations, and goals.

# THE UNDERGRADUATE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

Linda Tobash



Students are expected to participate in classroom discussions. Michael Conroy, AP/WWP

*Different courses and professors have different requirements for students, but in general, U.S. colleges require students to participate in class discussions and activities, and to do assignments throughout the course. Final grades are often based on a combination of interim and final examinations, as well as this other coursework. The author explains some of the various practices. Linda Tobash is the director of University Placement Services at the Institute of International Education.*

The U.S. undergraduate classroom environment is generally one where students are expected to actively participate in the learning experience. While each professor will have his or her own teaching style and expectations for students, most often students are expected to be active learners. Usually during the first class, the professor will provide students with a course syllabus—or direct the students to the course Web site on which the

syllabus will be posted. This syllabus outlines the objectives for the course, the reading and work assignments, the grading policy, the attendance policy, and frequently the instructor's approach or philosophy. Some common expectations that professors will most likely hold include the following:

- **The learner is expected to attend class.** At many institutions, the professor sets the attendance policy. At others there may be an institution-wide attendance policy established; e.g., students are expected not to miss more than three classes. It is not uncommon—and at some institutions it is mandatory—for attendance to be monitored. Often poor attendance will affect the final grade (see sidebar) a student receives. Also, some professors give “pop” (i.e., unannounced) quizzes. If a student is not there, he or she misses the quiz, which can also hurt the student's final grade.



Courtesy Eastern Mennonite University

Students work in a laboratory at Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia.

- **The learner is expected to be prepared for class.** In the course syllabus, the professor generally will identify all assignments. Students are expected to come to class having read the material to be covered and to be ready to discuss it. Sometimes students are expected to form study groups and to work together on projects. Most college guides stress the importance of keeping up with the work and of not getting behind. The volume of work can be high, and usually it is impossible for the student to “catch up” once he or she falls behind. So the key is to “keep up.”
- **The learner is expected to turn in all assignments on time.** Assignments, e.g., papers or projects, turned in late usually will result in a lower grade. Some professors may refuse to accept a late assignment under any circumstance.
- **The learner is expected to participate in class.** In large lecture classes, where there may be well over 200 students, discussion among professors and students might be limited. However, many of an individual’s classes will be much smaller, and the ability to participate in discussions frequently will be part of the grade. Students are expected not only to answer questions but to ask questions as well. The goal in most classes is for students to synthesize the material being learned and formulate their own opinions. In other words, students are expected not just to be able to master the material but also to develop, articulate, and defend their own opinions around a subject, theme, or content area.

But what should the undergraduate student expect in terms of the types of classes he or she might take? There might be any number of different types of courses in which the undergraduate student will be engaged. It is not unusual during the first year to be enrolled in large lecture

## GRADING

The most common grading scale in the United States is the A – F / 0 – 4 scale:

A = 4

B = 3

C = 2

D = 1 (U.S. concept)

F = 0 (failure) [sometimes called E]

### Other common grades:

I = incomplete

W = withdrawal

WU = unofficial withdrawal

**Audit** = take course for no credit, no grade, attend and complete assignments

**Pass/Fail** = take course for either Pass or Fail, no specific passing grade

**Pass/No Credit** = take course for either Pass or No Credit, no negative points

Each professor establishes the criteria that he or she will use to evaluate work and assign a final grade for the course. Professors generally inform students of the grading criteria on the first day of class by including it on the course syllabus. Often professors will explain how they grade tests and how they grade research papers. Very rarely will one’s final grade depend on just one paper or test. Usually there is a range of items that will be evaluated. Some combination of the following criteria might be used:

- % class participation
- % quizzes or interim tests
- % midterm exam
- % final exam
- % final research paper



courses with 100 or more students. These large-lecture style formats generally cover a large amount of material, and students are expected to take comprehensive notes. There might be frequent quizzes or tests. Students might be required to meet with a smaller number of students in study groups—either in a face-to-face (F2F) mode or through a Web-based study program.

Most courses, though, will be smaller in size, with up to 30 or 40 students in a class and where student interaction is critical. As one takes more advanced classes, the class size often becomes smaller, with some courses being held as seminars—sometimes with 10 or fewer students. Again, being prepared for class and able to participate



Courtesy Johnson C. Smith University  
A student's dormitory room is the place for sleep, study, and relaxation at Johnson C. Smith University in North Carolina.

actively is very important in these smaller settings.

Other types of classes might include labs, most frequently held in the hard sciences and mathematics, where the focus is on conducting experiments. Fine artists will find that a number of their classes will be in studio art where they will both cover concepts and work on projects. Similarly, dancers, actors, vocalists, and other musicians will have a large number of their courses focused on practice and performance.

Students can arrange for some courses to be taken as independent study. Usually these students work with a professor to design a course of study involving individual research, papers, and a schedule of meetings with the professor over the term.

On a growing number of campuses, students need to choose between delivery options: resident (face-to-face) or Web-based (distance education) courses. It is not uncommon for students to take some courses in an actual classroom and some via the Web. Even if one never takes a distance education course, there is a growing trend for professors to use the Web to post additional information



Wade Bruton/UNC Charlotte

These business students at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte are attending a lecture in an amphitheater-style hall, one of many types of classrooms at U.S. colleges.

and assignments, as well as direct students to additional resources. It is, therefore, important to get used to the Web-based course functionality implemented at the institution.

Some students will be engaged in internships as part of their degree study. The goal is to supplement their study with real-world experience and also to give students a chance to see if this field is really where they want to be. Usually students are employed in companies or businesses closely related to their major. If offered for degree credit, students often will be required to participate in periodic class meetings that enable them to reflect on their internship experiences. A salary might be offered, but many internships are unpaid or offer minimal financial compensation. In some fields, e.g., engineering, it is highly recommended that students engage in internships over summer breaks. Usually these summer internships do not carry college credit.

Another effective model is to incorporate service learning into courses or to have students engage in service learning experiences as part of the curriculum. Service learning focuses on having students use what they learn in the classroom to solve problems and issues in a specific community. In addition to helping the community, the goal is to instill in students a civic responsibility and to facilitate a sense of democracy and citizenship. ■

*The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.*

# THE COST OF COLLEGE IN THE UNITED STATES



Linda A. Cicero/Stanford News Service

Graduating students let Mom and Dad know that they appreciate the sacrifices that made their education possible.

*Most American students finance their education through a combination of family savings, loans, grants, and employment. International students may not have all these options available, but this article provides suggestions on where they can find information on financial assistance.*

Attending a college or university in the United States is very expensive. A year at a prominent four-year university can cost almost \$50,000, and this does not include the extra costs of housing, transportation, and other living expenses. There are, of course, less expensive options at colleges that also offer an excellent education. Most four-year colleges cost at least \$10,000 per year, and many more are in the \$20,000 to \$30,000 range. For families in the United States, paying for the education of their children has become a major expense. Many families begin saving money from the time their children are born, and some states offer incentive plans for savings programs.

As expensive as the tuition is, it should be noted that

this hardly covers all the cost of providing an education. Buildings, equipment, and salary costs are increasingly expensive, with advanced technology adding tremendous costs for laboratories and other specialized facilities. Universities and colleges constantly seek support from foundations, corporations, and industry, as well as from local, state, or federal government.

Still, for prospective students, the costs can be daunting. Students may have jobs in secondary school or college to help earn money for college tuition or other expenses, such as books, transportation, and housing. Colleges help students find work either on campus or in the nearby community to offset the costs. Community colleges are successful, in part, because they allow working adults to take classes during the evening or on weekends or to otherwise combine full- or part-time school with full- or part-time employment. Since World War II, an important benefit to military service has been the tuition support provided through the GI Bill, a law that provided financial assistance to allow American soldiers (known as

GIs) a gateway to higher education that otherwise would not have been possible for many of these military veterans.

In addition to family funds and savings, there are two main types of funding for college: loans and grants. Loans are borrowed money that must be paid back, with interest, although the interest rates for student loans are lower than for some other types of loans. The early years of many workers' careers are spent trying to pay back student loans. Grants, including scholarships, are gifts of money that do not have to be paid back, but students often must fulfill certain obligations, such as maintaining a certain grade point average or demonstrating family need, in order to qualify. Scholarships are funds that are earned or competed for, and they may be based on the student's academic, athletic, or civic performance, or on some other condition that has been met by the student or family. Identifying and accessing these funds can be confusing, and even discouraging, for families when they encounter the application forms. Colleges, secondary schools, and other organizations have offices to help students learn about funding resources.

How much more daunting, then, must this process be for students from other countries who want to study in the United States. Many other countries provide an education at little or no cost to the student, or they have costs far below those in the United States. What options are available for international students who want to attend a college in the United States, but who did not start saving for college from the time they started elementary school?

The September 2005 *eJournal USA*: "See You in the USA" [<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0905/ijpe/ijpe0905.htm>], about travel to the United States, addresses many student issues, especially focusing on visa questions. Nancy W. Keteku, regional educational advising

coordinator for Africa, working for the Department of State in Accra, Ghana, wrote "U.S. Higher Education, the Financial Side." We recommend that article and, indeed, the entire journal. Following are some highlights from her article:

Interested in attending college in the United States? You may have noticed that the cost of an American education is higher than what you would pay in countries where the government centrally controls the educational system. We hope you have also noticed, however, that an American education gives you a tremendous return on investment, making it an excellent value for the money.

Here are some ways of managing the cost of your U.S. education:

- EducationUSA centers are backed by the U.S. Department of State and serve as your official source of information. Locate the EducationUSA center nearest you by going to <http://www.educationUSA.state.gov/centers.htm>.
- Two publications you'll want to look for at your EducationUSA Advising Center are *The College Board International Student Handbook* and Peterson's *Applying to Colleges and Universities in the United States*.
- Resources available through the U.S. government: Most U.S. government programs target graduate students. They are administered through the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (PAS) or the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in accordance with bilateral agreements.
- Scholarship agencies: Beware! Fraudulent agencies abound. As a rule of thumb, any so-called scholarship agency that demands a fee in exchange for information should be treated extremely cautiously, no matter how impressive the literature or convincing the guarantees. ■

## TUITION AND FEES VERSUS TOTAL COSTS FOR COLLEGE

Tuition is only the beginning of the financial investment required for a U.S. education. Costs include educational fees – some are paid by everyone each term, others are related to the courses being taken. Students must also pay for housing; books; other materials; meals; health insurance and health care; local day-to-day transportation, including parking; and transportation to and from home; telephone and Internet usage; and any other expenses. Normally, international students pay the higher out-of-state tuition rate at public institutions.

Another thing to consider is the investment of time. During student years, there is a loss of income. Even if the student has a job, often it is for fewer hours per week and at a lower rate than for full-time employment. The worksheet on the next page should help potential students and their parents gain an idea of the full cost of education.

# SAMPLE COLLEGE BUDGET

Expense	COSTS	NUMBER OF TERMS	TOTALS
<i>Application Fee</i>			
<i>Admission Testing</i>			
<i>Tuition</i>			
<i>Late Registration</i>			
<i>Residence</i>			
<i>Meal Plan</i>			
<i>Books  School Supplies</i>			
<i>Parking</i>			
<i>Auto Insurance</i>			
<i>Additional Car Costs</i>			
<i>Local transportation</i>			
<i>Transportation to  from school</i>			
<i>Student ID Card Replacement</i>			
<i>Sports Center Fee</i>			
<i>Transcripts</i>			
<i>Library fees</i>			
<i>Photo Copying</i>			
<i>Microfilming</i>			
<i>Entertainment</i>			
<hr/> <i>Totals</i>			

# POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID

Martina Schulze

*An expert outlines where international students, particularly graduate students, can look for financial aid, and she gives advice on making successful application. Martina Schulze is the cultural affairs specialist at the U.S. Consulate General, Hamburg, Germany, and the educational advising coordinator at the Amerikazentrum, Hamburg.*

**M**ore than 500,000 international students successfully apply for admission to U.S. colleges and universities every year. According to the Institute of International Education, some 67 percent of them rely on family funds to pay for their studies in America. But for many, applying for adequate financial support is a crucial part of their application. On average, international students will have to pay between \$16,000 and \$46,500 for tuition and living expenses for an academic year in the United States.

## **WHERE DO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS RECEIVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT?**

The main source for financial aid outside of personal funds are the host U.S. college or university, with 23 percent offering aid, followed by the home government or university with 2.4 percent. The overall picture changes, though, when one compares the percentages for undergraduate and graduate students: While only about 10 percent of all international undergraduates receive financial support from their host institution, 41 percent of all graduate students are supported by their host university. Many of them work as research and teaching assistants at doctoral and research institutions. Moreover, there are more funds available for Ph.D. programs than for master's programs, as well as more funds in the sciences than in social sciences and humanities. And there is generally more money for international students applying for academic than for professional programs. Incidentally, chances for receiving financial aid from the host institution increase during the second year of studies.

## **WHAT KIND OF FINANCIAL AID IS AVAILABLE FROM U.S. SOURCES?**

International undergraduate students can apply for partial scholarships, primarily from private colleges and

universities; they also are eligible for athletic scholarships and can apply for student loans. Graduate students can apply for teaching, research, and administrative assistantships, as well as for fellowships and scholarships from both private and public universities. Applying for a student loan is also an option for graduate students.

## **HOW DO YOU SUCCESSFULLY APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID?**

Start early with your preparations and research, preferably 15 to 18 months before your studies will begin. Learn about scholarships offered by your home government and university, and apply early.

Do your research: Visit an EducationUSA-supported advising center, and study the specialized reference works on U.S. colleges and universities and prospective departments, which offer information on how much financial aid is available. Also, use the Internet to learn as much as possible about the four to six institutions that you are applying to. If you are a graduate student, google and get to know your professors before you apply. They are the people who will decide which new graduate assistants are accepted, and they should have heard from you before they review your application package.

Don't be shy about asking for financial aid. Send a second letter if your first application for financial aid has been denied, and address it to a specific person in the academic department or admissions office. If you don't succeed the first time, call to learn why your application was not successful, and apply again with a stronger application the next year.

Last but not least, financial aid for international students is limited and the competition is keen. To increase your chances of success, you should demonstrate that your academic qualifications are first-rate; study hard to get excellent TOEFL, SAT, GMAT, or GRE scores; show that you have some private funds, or show your financial need; and send in a neat, complete, and well-researched application. ■

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*The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.*

# THE UNITED STATES WELCOMES FOREIGN STUDENTS TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Jennifer Burcham  
(Originally published in the  
*Community College Times*)

The United States' "welcome mat" is out to foreign students wishing to study in the United States, and U.S. missions abroad have been instructed to give priority to students and exchange visitors, said Janice Jacobs, the State Department's deputy assistant secretary for visa services, speaking at the 57th annual conference of NAFSA: Association of International Educators (formerly the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs) in 2005. She noted that although the attacks on September 11, 2001, did change some of the department's visa application policies, those who think the visa procedures are an insurmountable barrier to travel to or study in the United States are wrong. "Outdated public perceptions regarding changes to visa processing couldn't be more different from reality," she said. "The Department of State is working hard to support what we hope will be a resurgence of international students, exchange visitors, scientists and business people. ..."

During her conference presentation, titled "Welcoming International Students to Community Colleges in the U.S.—The Role of the State Department," Jacobs talked about the role community colleges have taken in international education. "I know community colleges around the nation have taken an increasingly active role in making sure that foreign students have access to the incredible education opportunities available to them in the community college system," she said.

In response to concerns expressed by officials from two-year higher education institutions about a perception that visas are frequently denied to students seeking admissions to two-year colleges, Jacobs said the State Department has reminded consular officers that different institutions meet the needs of different students. She said consular officers have been told to review every single case

on its own merits, keeping the broad array of U.S. educational opportunities in mind.

Jacobs added that the State Department has enhanced its ability to process student visa applications by adding more than 350 new consular positions since September 2001, and the current budget includes a request for an additional 121 consular officer positions.

Almost all visa applications—some 97 percent—are processed within two days, and the screening process for the 2.5 percent of visa applicants subject to special screening requirements for security reasons has been streamlined, she added. "For the 2.5 percent of visa applicants who, for national security reasons, are subject to special screening, we have streamlined the process, so even this small percentage of the overall number of applicants can expect an answer promptly," Jacobs said. "A year ago, the average processing time was about 74 days for a sensitive technology case. Today, the average processing time for these cases is 14 days, and we will continue to refine that process."

Jacobs noted that the U.S. Institute for International Education data show that more than 572,000 foreign students were enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities during the 2003-2004 academic year. Indian and Chinese students are among the leaders attending U.S. colleges, and although the number of foreign students applying to U.S. colleges has declined, the United States still hosts more international students than any other nation.

"One thing we desperately hope to do is dispel any misperceptions that might linger abroad about the United States not welcoming foreign students," she said. "It is simply not true. Students from Muscat to Mumbai need to know that if they want to study in the United States, our door is open." ■

## WHAT IS A FOREIGN STUDENT ADVISOR?



Courtesy Eastern Mennonite University

1. An international student consults with an advisor at Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia.



Morgan Mularram/LeMoyne-Owen College

2. Historian Tajudeen Gbadamosi from Nigeria is spending a year as a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at LeMoyne-Owen College in Tennessee. The Historically Black College is pleased to have this internationally recognized authority on Islamic history, culture, and civilization share his insights with college audiences.



Robert Jordan/AP/WWP

3. Students from South Korea participate in international student orientation at the University of Mississippi. The day-long program both introduces the students to issues of life at the university and registers them for their first term of classes.

Formerly called the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA), the Association of International Educators promotes international education. *The Profession of Foreign Student Advising*, published by Intercultural Press in 2000 under the auspices of NAFSA, includes this explanation of the role of the Foreign Student Advisor:

Foreign student advisers work with students and scholars from all over the world. They provide information, programs, and services designed to make these students' and scholars' U.S. experiences as productive as possible. They serve as the liaison between foreign students and scholars and all those with whom these individuals come into contact, representing the students' best interests and advising them accordingly.

Foreign student advisers work not only with the diverse group of individuals Americans call "foreign

students," but also with American students, faculty, and staff; with citizens of the local community; with officials of U.S. and foreign government agencies; and with a variety of agencies that sponsor foreign students and scholars in the United States. They promote constructive relationships between foreign students and scholars and their local American hosts.

Foreign student advisers work to bring the benefits of international educational exchange to their campuses, communities, and the world. They can help people from many countries learn to understand people from many other countries and, in the process, become more tolerant and open-minded citizens of an interdependent world.

For more information, see <http://www.nafsa.org>.

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- Graduate Study: <http://www.educationusa.state.gov/graduate/biblio.htm>
- Living in the U.S.: <http://www.educationusa.state.gov/life.htm>
- Opportunities for Scholars: <http://www.educationusa.state.gov/scholars/biblio.htm>
- Predeparture Information: <http://www.educationusa.state.gov/predeparture/biblio.htm>
- Specialized Professional Study: <http://www.educationusa.state.gov/professional/biblio.htm>
- Short-Term Study: <http://www.educationusa.state.gov/study/biblio.htm>
- Undergraduate Study: <http://www.educationusa.state.gov/undergrad/biblio.htm>

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# INTERNET RESOURCES

## Selected Web sites on college and university education in the United States

### U.S. Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs  
EducationUSA

<http://www.educationusa.state.gov/>

Subtitled "Your Guide to U.S. Higher Education," EducationUSA provides "a wealth of information and services for international students at all stages of the college search." Composed of a global network of more than 450 advising and information centers [<http://www.educationusa.state.gov/centers.htm>] in 170 countries, these centers "actively promote U.S. higher education around the world by offering accurate, comprehensive, objective, and timely information about educational opportunities in the United States and guidance to qualified individuals on how best to access those opportunities." Portions of the Web site cover accreditation, finding a school, visa information, financial assistance, Fulbright scholarships, and programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State.

International Education Week, 2005

<http://iew.state.gov/>

A joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education to celebrate and promote international education and exchange.

International Information Programs  
Study in the U.S.

[http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life\\_and\\_culture/education/study\\_in\\_the\\_us.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/education/study_in_the_us.html)

Bureau of Consular Affairs: Visas

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa\\_1750.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html)

Studying in the USA: Visas

<http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/studying.html>

### U.S. Department of Education

USNEI: U.S. Network for Education Information

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/edlite-index.html>

A basic resource on the U.S. educational system created to

inform international exchange students.

Federal Student Aid: International Students

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/intl.jsp>

IPEDS College Opportunities Online

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/index.asp>

Office of Postsecondary Education

Database of Accredited Institutions

<http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>

### U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service

How Do I Become an Academic Student in the United States?

<http://uscis.gov/graphics/howdoi/academic.htm>

### Voice of America

America's Global College Forum

[http://www.voanews.com/english/AmericanLife/global\\_college\\_forum.cfm](http://www.voanews.com/english/AmericanLife/global_college_forum.cfm)

This weekly radio series profiles international students attending one of America's colleges or universities.

### White House

Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

<http://www.yic.gov/>

Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

<http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/list/whhbcu/edlite-index.html>

Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities

<http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/list/whtc/edlite-index.html>

### Other Resources

American Association of Community Colleges

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/>

American Council on Education

<http://www.acenet.edu//AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home>

The major coordinating body for all of the nation's higher education institutions, ACE also sponsors a number of international initiatives: <http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=International>.

American Indian Higher Education Consortium

<http://www.aihec.org/>

AMIDEAST, America-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc.

<http://www.amideast.org/>

Association of American Colleges and Universities

<http://www.aacu-edu.org/>

Campus Compact

<http://www.compact.org>

A national coalition of college and university presidents "dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement, and service-learning in higher education."

CHEA: Council for Higher Education Accreditation

<http://www.chea.org/>

Database of accredited institutions and programs: <http://www.chea.org/search/default.asp>

*The Chronicle of Higher Education*

<http://chronicle.com/>

Requires subscription; limited free material available: <http://chronicle.com/free/>

College Board

<http://www.collegeboard.com/splash>

Community Colleges USA

<http://www.cc-usa.org/>

Council of Independent Colleges

<http://www.cic.org/>

Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)

<http://www.ciee.org/>

eduPASS!

<http://www.edupass.org/>

Higher Education Resource Hub

<http://www.higher-ed.org/>

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

<http://www.hacu.net/>

Institute of International Education

<http://www.iie.org/>

NAFEO: National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education

<http://www.nafeo.org/about.htm>

NAFSA: Association of International Educators

<http://www.nafsa.org/>

National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges

<http://www.nasulgc.org/>

University of Texas at Austin

Web U.S. Higher Education

<http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ/>

Links to U.S. universities, community colleges, college catalogs, and regional accreditation agencies.

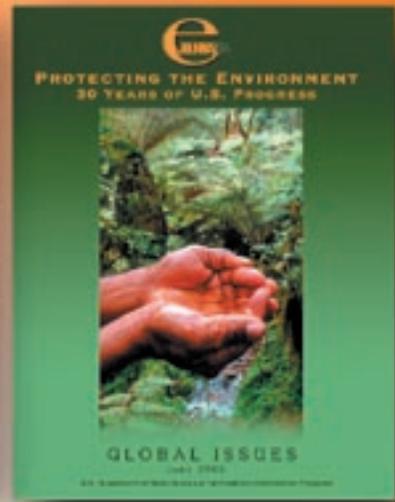
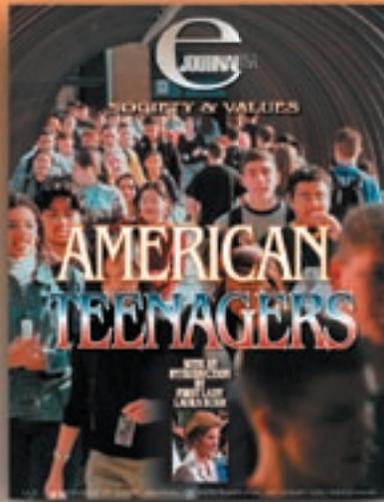
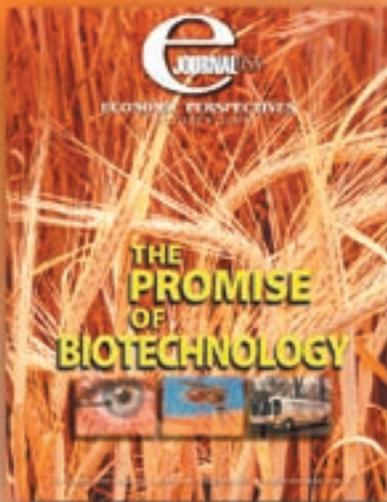
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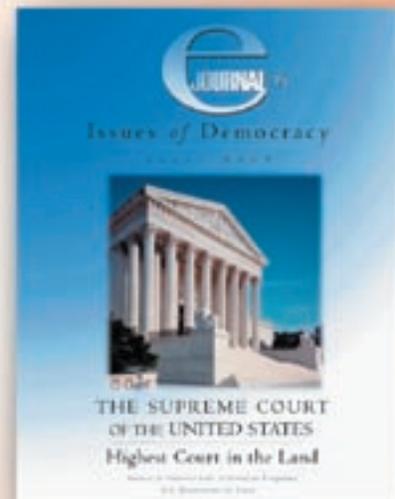


Steve Helber/AP/WWP

Collegiate sports draw huge crowds, as demonstrated at the stadium of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.



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