



25 Great Colleges You Might Not Have Considered (Yet)

1. Allegheny College (Meadville, PA) - If you'd be more inclined to share a grilled cheese sandwich with your French professor in the dining hall than you would to share beers with the bros in a frat house, explore Allegheny. If you believe that physics majors should also adeptly discuss great novels, Meadville, PA just might beckon you. You'll find 2,000 Allegheny students who live in and are excited about the gray areas. They're jazzed about the process of learning, they freely chat with their professors about their ideas, and they enjoy sharing the beliefs that they've culled. Every Allegheny senior must complete an independent research project and defend it before an academic panel. But Alleghenians don't mind. They had so much fun wading through the sea of learning and they want everyone to know about it.

2. Babson College (Babson Park, MA) - Have you always wanted to run your own business? Well then get ready to do just that – in your first year of college – at Babson. Groups of first year students are given \$3000 to invent, develop, launch, manage, and liquidate a business. Recent ventures include “The Shake Up,” a company manufacturing vibrating pillow alarm clocks, and “Crunch Time,” a distributor of tasty kettle corn. And any proceeds received go directly to charity. Babson encourages students to make even the craziest business idea work. As their motto says, “It’s possible. At Babson.”

3. Bates College (Lewiston, ME) – Don’t let Bates’ small town summer camp feeling confuse you—this is a college that prepares students to take on the world. Even the academic calendar reflects this. Students study on a 4-4-1 plan, meaning that there is a normal fall and winter semester, with the addition of a one month “short term” in May. During that “short term,” Bates students can study the economics of China and Taiwan in those countries, or produce a Hungarian play at a theater in Budapest, or complete conservation studies on the Galapagos Islands. And when they return to Lewiston, Maine, their professors will be waiting to celebrate their findings at the Mount David Summit, a campus-wide festival of student academic achievement.

4. Bucknell University (Lewisburg, PA) – Bucknell is a small community of 4,000 learners with the resources of a 40,000 student institution. And like a larger university, there isn't just one stereotypical Bucknell student. Undergraduates can choose to live in regular dorms or one of six residential colleges, with themes such as environmental, arts, and social justice. These living-learning centers make academic discussion part of everyday life. But just because you've chosen to live in the society and technology residential college doesn't mean that you can't play the saxophone in the jazz band—anyone at Bucknell can get involved in music or performing arts. Who knows? You may find yourself performing at the late-night music showcase in the campus' 7th St. Café.

5. Carleton College (Northfield, MN) – If your idea of college involves making an impact in your community, even if it's in the silliest of ways, then Carleton might be the right place for you.

This is the school that hosts an annual Tofu Princess Contest and pits dorms against each other for an energy conservation challenge during the month of February (three Carleton students even camped outside for an entire frigidly cold week to do their part). This is a school with its own arboretum, used for everything from biology labs to cross country running practice. Civic-minded students can live in the Wellstone House of Activism. Future rock stars can hone their skills playing live in The Cave, the oldest college-owned and operated club in the nation. And all Carleton students release stress during primal scream, a campus-wide yell at 10pm on the night before final exams. It doesn't matter what you do, as long as you do something, at Carleton.

6. Centre College (Danville, KY) - Colleges make lots of promises to prospective students. But Centre College, a liberal arts college with 1,070 students in Danville, Kentucky actually gives you a guarantee. All students who meet the college's academic expectations are guaranteed an internship, study abroad, and graduation in four consecutive years. Centre's students enjoy a rigorous, liberal arts education that is integrated with real-world experience through internships at places like the Center for Disease Control, 6th District Court of Appeals, State Farm Insurance, Toyota and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. But it's not all academics and internships at Centre. In addition to a vibrant Greek system and plenty of on-campus organizations, there are some pretty great traditions for Centre students. As seniors, the female students serenade the college president...in their bath towels.

7. Drexel University (Philadelphia, PA) - Drexel students aren't just learning about business and entrepreneurship from text books—they're actually working as business-people and entrepreneurs. Through the Co-Op program, Drexel students gain up to 18 months of on-the-job experience prior to graduation. Aspiring financial advisors can see the real thing at BlackRock Funds. Those interested in the pharmaceutical industry can work at Merck & Co., Inc. And future doctors can see if they've got what it takes at the Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania. Drexel is a place for students who know exactly what they want to do for a living. If you've already got a 5-year plan, give Drexel a look.

8. Earlham College (Richmond, IN) - This is a school where late-night talks replace frat house antics and "extra-curriculars" are never really extra. Earlham students take the Literature of the Industrial Age course during the day and attend a lecture about the impact of that time period's art movement at night. Later they contemplate what they've learned that day with their professor around the fireplace in the coffee shop. And they address their professors by first names—this is not a place for archaic formalities. Then they'll post their thoughts on the "Opinion Board"—a public discussion bulletin board in the student union where Earlhamites argue about everything from civil rights to campus administration.

9. Grinnell College (Grinnell, IA) - Other than a mandatory first year writing tutorial to enhance critical thinking, writing, and discussion skills, there are no course requirements for Grinnell students. Instead, students work closely with academic advisors to determine their own course of study. Grinnell is a member of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, a coalition of 14 liberal arts colleges that focuses primarily on study-abroad opportunities. Students can choose semester-long programs to study subjects like art in Florence, Italy, language and culture in Russia, or tropical field research in Costa Rica. And the Grinnell Pioneers have the highest scoring basketball team in the nation, using a run-and-gun offense that shoots the ball every 12 seconds for scores of over 100 points per game.

10. Guilford College (Greensboro, NC) - A Guilford education begins with a strong foundation of core courses that emphasize the school's mission to "study human values as well as the

inter-relatedness of the world's knowledge and cultures." First year students complete the First Year Experience seminar to engage themselves in interactive learning as well as acquiring essential skills like time management and academic honesty. Students must also take courses on historical perspectives, foreign languages, and college reading and writing. From the foundation courses, students move through the academic ranks until their senior year, when they complete a capstone course in which they draw on the interdisciplinary classes they've taken to write a concluding paper.

11. Hampshire College (Amherst, MA) – How much academic freedom can you handle? Hampshire College has no majors—instead, students work with faculty advisors to develop their academic path. Hampshire students use their interests as their guide to finding their intellectual passions. These unique learners truly study in an interdisciplinary way and it is hard for Hampshire to outline specific areas of study—courses change year to year based on interest. If Hampshire doesn't specifically offer a course, students can take the class at any school in the Five College Consortium (including Amherst, Mount Holyoke, Smith, and UMass-Amherst). So even though Hampshire College itself is very small, there are four other thriving college campuses within ten miles to keep your interest.

12. Hendrix College (Conway, AR) – Hendrix College looks at the undergraduate experience as an odyssey. In fact, they've recently created the Hendrix Odyssey—an active learning curriculum that inspires students to engage in educational exploration in subjects personalized to their interests. Unearth ancient artifacts on an archaeological dig in Pompeii, Italy or convince your favorite science professor to abandon his sabbatical to research with you. These odysseys, and many more, have come to fruition at Hendrix. If you've got a quirky idea for your academic path, Hendrix might just be right for you.

13. Kalamazoo College (Kalamazoo, MI) – As part of the K-Plan, "K" students are as comfortable with globe hopping as most college kids are with sleeping in on Saturday mornings. English majors might find themselves studying Shakespeare in London, biology majors exploring ecology in Costa Rica, and political science majors studying Israeli history in Jerusalem. Graduates of this 1300-student body have worked aggressively to make the entire world their classroom, with over 80 percent of students studying abroad before graduation. For those not yet keen on disappearing to Senegal or Sierra Leone for months at a time, the K-Plan also includes writing a Senior Individualized Project (SIP) involving in-depth research under faculty mentorship.

14. Kenyon College (Gambier, OH) - Kenyon encourages students to experiment and find their academic passions. Every major at Kenyon culminates in a senior exercise to demonstrate students' depth of knowledge within their majors. Depending on the major, the senior exercise may be a research paper, an examination, a presentation, an art exhibit, or a multimedia project. Traditions define the experience at Kenyon. Incoming freshmen gather on the steps of Rosse Hall to sing Kenyon songs to the rest of the community. On Matriculation Day in October, freshmen sign a book that contains the names of virtually every Kenyon student since the early 1800's. On the last night of Senior Week, members of the graduating class join together with faculty and administrators in the annual Senior-Faculty dinner. And graduating seniors gather once again on the Rosse Hall steps to sing on the day before Commencement.

15. Lake Forest College (Lake Forest, IL) – A college in the Mid-West within walking distance to a beach? You've got it at Lake Forest College! This gorgeous campus is just an hour north of downtown Chicago and adjacent to Lake Michigan. The 1,600 Lake Forest College students know their professors well—in fact, professors are also academic advisors and mentors. After a

great philosophy class, you might find yourself at a cute coffee shop in the town of Lake Forest, discussing what you've just learned with your professor. And all Lake Forest students, regardless of major, garner a comprehensive humanities background through the core courses.

16. Macalester College (St. Paul, MN) – Macalester students represent the world. This is a school where international relations are brought to life by the daily interaction between students on campus. Macalester students come from 80 countries and all 50 states. In fact, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, is a graduate. This intercultural mindset begins during the first year, when students enroll in a 16 person class in which they learn to aptly write, argue, and make connections. Imagine discussing the Mideast conflict with students from Israel and Iran. That kind of international discussion is the goal of Macalester College.

17. Oberlin College (Oberlin, OH) – 1,000 things to do on a college campus in rural Ohio? Believe it at Oberlin College! This outstanding liberal arts college is teeming with activity—anything from one of the 400 annual campus concerts to warming up with Tuesday Tea in the Allen Art Museum. Students may pursue academic endeavors in humanities, science, social sciences, music, theater, and dance. In fact, Oberlin is home to its own Conservatory of Music. This Conservatory contributes to the thriving art community on campus and everyone benefits from the work of its students.

18. Oglethorpe University (Atlanta, GA) – If you want a small liberal arts college within proximity to a large city, try Oglethorpe. From your first day as a freshman to your final day as a senior, Oglethorpe makes sure its students are successful. This is due in part to the core curriculum—courses that every Oglethorpe student takes at the same time. For freshmen, there is Fresh Focus, a class designed to help first-year students select the appropriate classes by drawing on experience from upperclassmen and professors. And every senior must take Senior Transitions, a class created to help graduating students make the transition into life beyond college.

19. Rhodes College (Memphis, TN) – Rhodes is another gem of a small school within a thriving metropolitan area. And Rhodes loves being part of the community—through the Rhodes CARES program, students combine their academic interests with community service, working at places like St. Jude's Children's Hospital. The Center for Outreach in the Development of the Arts (CODA) awards 16 Rhodes students with annual scholarships to strengthen their own artistic abilities while taking advantage of Memphis' cultural community. If you want your college life to be intertwined with your community, check out Rhodes.

20. Simmons College (Boston, MA) – Think that going to an all-women's college sounds boring? Well then you haven't heard of Simmons. While this all-women's college prides itself on its community of smart and strong female students, undergraduates also take advantage of the multitude of activities that Boston offers. Simmons students describe their school as a "sisterhood, not a sorority." Here, everyone's interests are respected as integral parts of the colorful Simmons universe. And these sisters come together to explore Boston—probably the greatest college town in the universe with over 300,000 students swarming the city. So if you'd like to become part of an exciting intellectual sisterhood, take a look at Simmons.

21. Skidmore College (Saratoga Springs, NY) – This liberal arts college in upstate New York truly believes in the benefit of studying "the arts"—almost one in five undergraduates is a visual or performing arts major. The campus is home to The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery. Its exhibitions, collections, and programs are an integral aspect of the Skidmore experience. But it's not just about art. Skidmore offers majors in everything from American to Asian Studies. And the town of Saratoga Springs is a thriving college town that students love.

22. Southwestern University (Georgetown, TX) – Want to get to know your professors really well? Check out Southwestern. This small liberal arts university north of Austin, Texas is full of professors who hand out their home phone numbers and notice if you miss a class. This is an academically serious school where the library is often full on Friday nights. Many students also hang out in The Cove to play pool, grab a snack, lounge by the fireplace and just catch up with friends. Southwestern students can even develop a “student-guided” experience, working with faculty members through the Paideia Program to understand current events and contribute to their community while pursuing their academic interests.

23. University of Mary Washington (Fredericksburg, VA) – This might be the right choice for you if you’re looking for that prestigious private school feeling, but don’t want to pay the high price tag. University of Mary Washington offers small class sizes and professors whose number one priority is teaching, not research, all without high tuition costs. And with more than 100 clubs on campus, UMW has the resources of the expensive private schools. Every freshman is paired with an upperclassman to ease with the transition into college and to introduce incoming students to the opportunities on campus.

24. Ursinus College (Collegeville, PA) - Ursinus College is a place for writers. Ask any of the 1200 students on campus what their favorite book is and chances are many will say *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger. Salinger attended Ursinus briefly for the fall semester of 1938, but his influence continues to permeate campus life. In honor of this famous former student, Ursinus awards the Salinger Scholarship—a \$25,000 annual four-year scholarship for creative writers. Everyone gets involved at Ursinus, even the professors. Every week, one faculty member is designated as “coach of the week” for the football team, giving pep talks before games and even contributing strategic plays. During the football team’s most successful year, two female professors served as “coach of the week.”

25. Whitman College (Walla Walla, Washington) – Quaint Walla Walla, Washington doesn’t offer much in terms of activities for Whitman students, which is why there are so many exciting things constantly happening on campus. Students affectionately refer to their academic home as the “Whitman Bubble”—they feel that there’s not much need to venture away from school when there’s so much happening at their doorstep. Students are the number one priority at Whitman, voicing opinions on candidates for the next college president and giving feedback during the admissions process. And they take advantage of everything that the “Whitman Bubble” offers—groups ranging from the Telemark Skiing club to writing for the newspaper to being a security escort. Whitman professors are incredibly accessible to their students and these teachers strive to better their skills at the Center for Teaching and Learning. So if you want a college campus that you’ll never want to leave, take a look at Whitman.

