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Secrets of the universe pdf

Top public universities are often ranked alongside private colleges in lists, but these publicly funded schools can be overlooked for the prestige of private schools. No matter what program you're pursuing or what your dream career is, the best public universities can help you get there! In this article, we'll be covering what a public university is and our own ranking of the best state schools around the United States, combining criteria from a variety of lists. Ready to learn why a public college may be the right choice for you? Read on! What Is a Public University? Public universities have a lot to offer all kinds of students. These schools are ones that receive public funding, typically through a state or national government. That means that tuition is generally lower than at private universities because much of the college's operation is paid for by the government rather than attending students. Many of the best public universities are historic universities set up to provide education to people in their surrounding areas—that's why you'll often see discounted tuition or even scholarship or automatic acceptance opportunities for students who live in-state. Public universities are also generally larger than private schools, with tens of thousands of students rather than a few thousand. We often see private colleges near the top of college rankings like those of US News in part because of their selectiveness—typically, state schools are able to admit far more students, meaning they have less strict standards and higher admission rates. Because the academic strength of a college's students often plays a strong role in its rankings, more selective schools like Harvard or Yale often reach the highest places on these lists. But a public school education can rival that of a private school, depending on what features you prioritize as a student—and many of the best state schools also reach the top of the ranking charts despite not being as selective as private schools. Public schools offer students a variety of great features, including lower tuition. Many students prefer the large, diverse student bodies of the best state colleges to the smaller student bodies of private schools. Public colleges also tend to have many, many academic programs and student activities, as well as strong athletics programs. Beyond the college experience, public schools also tend to have job connections to local companies as well as on-campus employment. If getting a job at a local company is a priority for you, you may consider looking into whether the companies you're interested in have a high number of alumni from nearby public colleges! AndrewHorne / Wikimedia Commons The 20 Top Public Universities Ranking the best public universities is a difficult task. Every website has its own criteria, with some valuing hard statistics and some preferring the testimony of students. US News in particular places a strong emphasis on student retention and graduation rates over things job placement and post-graduation salaries. They also don't weigh student surveys, which have a more subjective view than the quantitative information US News bases their surveys on. Forbes' list of top colleges uses different tactics. This list prioritizes student success, so it features things like a school's graduation rate and postgraduate employment. In this case, Forbes uses salary, high-ranking career positions, and awards as determinants of success. A small percentage of the ranking is derived from student surveys. Niche has another popular list of the best public universities, and it tends to favor the experience of attending a college. To determine experience, the website uses student surveys to rank features like the campus, diversity, and party scene, which give a different view of a college than Forbes and US News. To create our ranking of the best public colleges, I used a mixture of Niche, Forbes, and US News' rankings. Schools that appeared in the top 20 of all three lists got a large boost, and I gave extra consideration to schools with above-average graduation rates and financial aid offers. I also considered Niche's student surveys, as these features are likely things students are weighing in their college decisions. In addition to the by-the-numbers rankings, each of these best public universities contains a snippet of information about the college gathered from student reports to give you a better picture of what attending that school is like. #1: University of California – Los Angeles Acceptance Rate: 12 percent Graduation Rate: 79 percent In-State Tuition: \$13,226 Average Financial Aid: \$21,402 The University of California – Los Angeles is a top-ranked college on almost every ranking list. This is in part because of its selectiveness, but also because it has earned a reputation for aiding students in finding great careers post-graduation. With a student-faculty ratio of 18:1, UCLA's class sizes are smaller than many at public colleges. Aside from its academics, UCLA is known for its achievements in athletics and its beautiful campus, with year-round warm weather and quick access to the ocean. #2: University of Michigan – Ann Arbor Acceptance Rate: 23 percent Graduation Rate: 80 percent In-State Tuition: \$15,948 Average Financial Aid: \$21,665 Like many public universities, the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor is known for its large student body and an incredible number of programs, internships, and organizations on campus. UMich is also recognized as a top-20 research university with some of the best graduate programs in the United States—students who enjoy their undergrad experience may also be interested in taking advantage of the college's grad school. #3: University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill Acceptance Rate: 23 percent Graduation Rate: 84 percent In-State Tuition: \$9,021 Average Financial Aid: \$16,893 The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill is known for having a student body comprised of driven students in search of an academic challenge. The college offers programs in a wide range of fields, as well as strong sports teams. It's also smaller than many other public schools, with a student-faculty ratio of 14:1, giving it an intimate feeling. #4: University of Virginia Acceptance Rate: 24 percent Graduation Rate: 89 percent In-State Tuition: \$18,878 Average Financial Aid: \$24,726 The University of Virginia is known for its strong, active athletics department, as well as its strong sense of student pride. However, the sense of fun don't outweigh academics—University of Virginia students cited their school's intellectual community as a big part of what they love about attending their college. Karen McCluney / Wikimedia Commons #5: College of William and Mary Acceptance Rate: 38 percent Graduation Rate: 85 percent In-State Tuition: \$23,362 Average Financial Aid: \$18,946 The College of William and Mary is smaller than many public colleges, and its surrounding area has more of a small-town feeling than some other campuses. But despite its size, the College of William and Mary has a diverse student body and many on-campus events, as well as the oldest honor code in the US. Like many other colleges on this list, William and Mary is often considered a "public Ivy," meaning that it attracts high-achieving students, great faculty, and provides an educational experience like one you'd find at an Ivy League college. #6: Georgia Institute of Technology Acceptance Rate: 21 percent Graduation Rate: 46 percent In-State Tuition: \$12,682 Average Financial Aid: \$8,821 The Georgia Institute of Technology (or Georgia Tech) is known for being an academically challenging research university. Students have a lot of school pride, and value the college's longstanding traditions. Its large campus and city setting don't conflict with its smaller, tight-knit internal communities—students enjoy the freedom of being part of a large student body and the friendships formed in their programs. The college is highly ranked in rigorous fields like engineering, and graduates enjoy a high average salary. #7: University of California – Santa Barbara Acceptance Rate: 30 percent Graduation Rate: 70 percent In-State Tuition: \$14,391 Average Financial Aid: \$21,037 One of the University of California – Santa Barbara's most prominent features is its proximity to the beach. UC Santa Barbara is known for its beautiful location and its thriving social life, with a reputation as a party school. However, students say that its reputation is a bit overblown, and that its strong academic programs—especially engineering, biology, and marine biology—are just as important to their college experience. #8: University of California – Berkeley Acceptance Rate: 17 percent Graduation Rate: 76 percent In-State Tuition: \$14,226 Average Financial Aid: \$22,420 The University of California – Berkeley has long been associated with a politically active student body, but they're also known for having many Nobel laureates among their faculty and a number of highly ranked programs. Berkeley is a large school with lots of resources, including many diverse academic programs to choose from. #9: University of Texas – Austin Acceptance Rate: 32 percent Graduation Rate: 66 percent In-State Tuition: \$11,106 Average Financial Aid: \$9,343 The University of Texas – Austin is known for having a unique student body with plenty of friendly students. The surrounding Austin area has lots to offer, including festivals like South by Southwest and many different food options. The University of Texas is also famed for their student pride; many students say they feel a deep sense of connection and pride in their school and other students. The University of Texas automatically accepts the top seven percent of Texas high school graduates, and almost 90 percent of their students are Texas residents. Because of this policy, it can be more difficult for out-of-state students to get in to UT – Austin; be sure your grades and scores are top-notch if you're an out-of-state student who wants to attend! #10: University of Florida Acceptance Rate: 37 percent Graduation Rate: 67 percent In-State Tuition: \$6,380 Average Financial Aid: \$8,144 The University of Florida is considered to be one of the most affordable top-50 schools, especially thanks to its capped tuition. Despite having a large student body, the campus is known for its sense of camaraderie and its tight-knit community, emphasized by an intense feeling of school pride. Coxonian / Wikimedia Commons #11: University of Georgia Acceptance Rate: 46 percent Graduation Rate: 66 percent In-State Tuition: \$12,080 Average Financial Aid: \$10,009 The University of Georgia is famed for its strong football team, but the college also has a lot more to offer its students. As a large campus, there are many different attitudes and beliefs throughout its student body, leading to a thriving student culture. Lesser known is the University of Georgia's music scene—Athens has a rich musical history, and every year throws a three-day music festival called Athfest to celebrate it. #12: University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign Acceptance Rate: 59 percent Graduation Rate: 70 percent In-State Tuition: \$16,862 Average Financial Aid: \$17,015 The University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign is another school often hailed as a public Ivy. Its strong engineering, computer science, physics, civil engineering, business, and history programs draw students from all around the world and at different points in their lives—the student body includes a mixture of students fresh out of high school and older people looking to study a new subject. Its beautiful, historic campus has many activities to offer, and the school also boasts the largest public university library in the United States. #13: University of Washington Acceptance Rate: 52 percent Graduation Rate: 66 percent In-State Tuition: \$12,092 Average Financial Aid: \$16,746 The University of Washington is known for its strong medical school, computer science and engineering programs. Located in Seattle, the large campus features lots of study areas and is surrounded by activities, shopping, and great restaurants. UW is known for being an academically challenging school, attracting top students from around the world with a diversity of interests. Despite having a large student body, UW had many small communities to be a part of, giving it a more close-knit feeling. There are also two satellite campuses in Tacoma and Bothell, which offer an equivalent education for lower cost. #14: University of Wisconsin – Madison Acceptance Rate: 52.6 percent Graduation Rate: 83.7 percent In-State Tuition: \$10,488 Average Financial Aid: \$14,043 The University of Wisconsin – Madison is known as a strong research university—it's ranked 8th in the world for its scientific research by the National Science Foundation. The undergrad program is particularly known for its biochemistry and genetics departments, and also its party atmosphere. But University of Wisconsin students are also academically driven, with many different interests and smaller communities within the larger student body. #15: United States Military Academy Acceptance Rate: 10 percent Graduation Rate: 80 percent In-State Tuition: \$0 Average Financial Aid: n/a The United States Military Academy is a very different experience from others on this list. The Academy is intended to train future military officers, and, in addition to its rigorous academic program, it also requires students to participate in military activities like marches and physical training. As such, it's more niche than many schools—but for those who are interested in military training and discipline, it's a strong option. Though the acceptance rate is low, tuition is free, paid for by service to the military rather than money. The school has a great academic reputation and can lead to a long-term military career. Eric T Gunther / Wikimedia Commons #16: Virginia Tech Acceptance Rate: 70 percent Graduation Rate: 65 percent In-State Tuition: \$13,749 Average Financial Aid: \$8,009 Virginia Tech is known for being strong academically, particularly in its engineering and business departments. In fact, it's one of the top 50 research universities in the United States! But beyond academics, Virginia Tech has some other notable features, such as its great food. Niche ranks it the number two college with the best food, and many students cited its cuisine as a particular draw. #17: Pennsylvania State University – University Park Acceptance Rate: 49 percent Graduation Rate: 68 percent In-State Tuition: \$18,450 Average Financial Aid: \$7,528 Pennsylvania State University – University Park is known for its engineering programs, as well as agriculture, education, and even musical theater. One of its biggest selling points is the Schreyer Honors College, which accepts around 300 students per year, and Schreyer scholars are awarded more than \$7.9 million dollars in grants and scholarships each year. Students in this program live in a separate dorm and are given access to study abroad programs and funding, early registration for courses, and over 200 honors courses that let them pursue an undergraduate degree and a master's degree at the same time. Penn State also boasts a top-20 football team for those interested in college athletics! #18: University of California – Davis Acceptance Rate: 39 percent Graduation Rate: 63 percent In-State Tuition: \$14,653 Average Financial Aid: \$18,987 The University of California – Davis is another college frequently called a public Ivy League. It has a strong academic focus that's well-balanced with fun, particularly because the campus is located in a smaller town with nearby cities. The campus itself is beautiful, and the nearby arboretum gives students a natural environment to escape from if they wish. There are lots of internship opportunities available for interested in students, giving them a jumpstart into future careers. #19: Purdue University – West Lafayette Acceptance Rate: 60 percent Graduation Rate: 59 percent In-State Tuition: \$9,992 Average Financial Aid: \$11,997 Purdue University – West Lafayette is in a smaller town, but that doesn't limit the amount of things there are to do. The campus is large, but the surrounding area and tight-knit community give it more of a small-town feeling than some of the large colleges on this list. Purdue also offers free bus travel for students so that even students without cars can experience the wider West Lafayette area. On-campus, there are lots of jobs and research opportunities to take advantage of, and the school is known for the strength of its engineering program. #20: University of California – Irvine Acceptance Rate: 27 percent Graduation Rate: 69 percent In-State Tuition: \$20,935 Average Financial Aid: \$23,973 The University of California – Irvine is sometimes overlooked in favor of California's other prestige schools, but, as part of the UC system, UC – Irvine is still a great college. This campus is known for its academic strength, but also its beautiful location and beach access. It has a more relaxed atmosphere than some other schools, but is also known for being more studious than party-oriented. Tips for Applying to the Top Public Universities Though public colleges often have higher acceptance rates than private colleges, that doesn't mean they'll automatically be easy to get into. Like all colleges on your list, you want to put time and effort into choosing the top public universities for you. When applying, keep these tips in mind: Don't Treat Them Only as Fallbacks Many students have their sights set on Ivy Leagues, but that doesn't mean you should treat public colleges as nothing more than fallback plans. Even if a public college isn't your first choice, remember that these colleges still provide a good education and wonderful career opportunities for dedicated students. When applying to public colleges, treat each one as if it's your dream school. Put effort into researching the things that make them unique and really get excited about the potential for attending. Don't feel like a public college is settling, because it doesn't have to be! Do Your Research Public schools share many features—large student bodies, diversity of programs, lower tuition—but each one is different from the rest. As you're putting together a college list, look into what each school has to offer. What do students say about attending? Is the campus small or large? Are there many nearby activities, or is it located in a small town? Pay attention to things like class size, graduation rates, and average starting salary, too. These can be indicators of academic rigor and student success, which can give you some insight into what you can expect for your life after graduation. Does the college line up with your expectations? Do students in your desired program end up in places you would want to end up? This kind of research takes time, but helps you make better decisions about what schools to apply to. Consider a Variety of Factors A college's academic strength is important, but there's more to college choices than that. Think about things like class size, what clubs are available, whether the colleges you're applying to are in small towns or big cities, even what kind of architecture they feature. These things might sound like they won't be important, but when you're spending four or more years there, they are! No matter how inconsequential these desires might seem, they're worth considering. If you want to go to college on the beach, look for colleges on the beach! If you want small class sizes, look for colleges with low student-faculty ratios! There are so many potential schools out there that it is worth doing the research to find which one suits you best, even if those factors sound less important to others. What's Next? Ready to apply to our top-ranked public college? Check out UCLA's admission requirements! If UCLA isn't the right school for you, no worries. We also have admission requirements for the University of Michigan! Still trying to narrow down your dream schools? Read our guide for figuring out what colleges you should apply to! Want to build the best possible college application? We can help. 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