

College Descriptions

The following is a description of a college that has been created for the purposes of this exercise. It is written to combine the characteristics of a number of colleges. As you read the description, react to a sentence, a phrase, or even a word. What is your gut reaction? If it is a positive reaction, highlight the sentence/phrase/word with one color. If it is a negative reaction, highlight the sentence/phrase/word with a different color. If you don't care about it, don't highlight it. Don't react to the whole description of the college, just to the characteristics.

This is all about **your** reactions and opinions.

Liberal Arts College

Liberal Arts College was founded in 1840, in a small, rural town 65 miles from the nearest city.

Despite its physical remoteness, Liberal Arts College is a powerhouse on the national scene.

Ever progressive, it was one of the first colleges in the U.S. to admit African-Americans and women. Its graduates include many notable people who have done much to change the face of American society in the 20th century.

The school's 85-acre campus is an attractive blend of collegiate Gothic and modern academic buildings. The Bradford Science Center recently underwent a \$15-million renovation, and an addition to the Fine Arts Center including gallery, studio, and performing and rehearsal space will be completed next year.

True to its liberal arts focus, Liberal Arts College maintains an open academic style without a structured set of requirements. Students determine their own course of study with the aid of a faculty member. The only requirement outside the major field is the first-year seminar, limited to 12 students each, designed to enhance critical thinking, research, writing and discussion skills, and to allow first-year students to work individually with professors. Study abroad is offered in more than 100 locations around the world, and co-op programs offer additional options.

Strong departments are those in the natural sciences and foreign languages. The chemistry department draws its majors into independent research projects, and biology, English, and philosophy are popular, too. Anthropology also draws raves. The Africana studies concentration emphasizes history, literature, and traditions in Africa and the African Diaspora.

Liberal Arts College's standards are high, and half of graduates move on to graduate and professional schools. Students who don't mind studying, even on weekends, will be happiest here as academics are "intense" and "rigorous." The pressure is eased by the fact that "students are interested in learning and doing well in school, but are not competing against each other," according one student. Teaching is the top priority for Liberal Arts College faculty members, since the college awards no graduate degrees, and "the Profs are generally really good," says a sophomore. A side benefit of Liberal Arts College's lack of graduate students is no TAs; all courses are taught by professors whose main job is to teach. Academic advising also receives universal praise. In this college of just over 1,800 undergrads, it's rare to find a class with more than 50 students, and most have 25 or fewer.

The Douglas Library is plush, close to the dorms, and well stocked with periodicals and over 390,000 volumes, an impressive collection for a small college. Liberal Arts College is a national leader in the use of computers in arts and science education and over 280 computer terminals are available for student use in several locations around the campus, including the library and residence halls.

Students range "from practical and sporty to artsy and philosophical," but most are liberal:

"Everyone is intelligent and individual," says a Latin American Studies major. "It's nice to come here after being taught to conform for four years of high school." The campus is very socially and politically aware, and groups like PAFA (the Politically Active Feminist Alliance), and Fearless (formed to combat gender-based violence) set the tone. Community service is also a big draw.

The financial aid office works overtime to guarantee to meet the full demonstrated financial need of every admit, and that extends to funding study abroad. There are more than 300 merit scholarships for first-year students. Budget cuts are not a problem at Liberal Arts College, and a junior says the grant portion of her financial aid package has been steady each year.

The college guarantees four years of campus housing, and students say the dorms are well maintained. All dorms have kitchens on each floor, cable, and a computer room. All but two dorms are coed. Two dining halls, one on each side of the campus, serve food that is rumored to be among the best college cuisine in America.

Student opinion of the town of Liberal Arts College (pop. 9,200) ranges from “dumpy” to “uncharming.” Community service helps bridge the town-gown gap. Outdoor recreation is popular, and a nearby state park lends itself to biking, running, and cross-country skiing. There are a few bars and pizza joints downtown, but for those craving an urban cultural mecca, the nearest one is about two hours away.

With no fraternities or sororities, intramurals and all-campus parties revolve mainly around the dorms. Each dorm periodically sponsors a party. As for alcohol, a philosophy major reports, “Campus policy is very lenient. Basically, we do whatever we want with the understanding that we’ll be responsible for our actions.” Many Liberal Arts College students do not drink, and the college offers a “wellness” dorm for those desiring a substance-free lifestyle.

Liberal Arts College offers a wide variety of social groups and activities, such as the Black Cultural Center, improvisational workshops, and LACORP (Liberal Arts College Outdoor Recreational Program), which sponsors outdoor trips. The student union is a popular hangout, as is the Social Center, which offers movies, parties, and concerts.

Liberal Arts College competes in Division III sports, and the men’s cross-country, swimming, and soccer teams have garnered conference championships recently. On the women’s side, the basketball and soccer teams have won conference titles.

Liberal Arts College is not for everybody. Its “students are its biggest assets as well as its largest turn-off. They are active, interesting, and unique. Unfortunately, this can lead to self-righteousness and an exaggerated sense of self-importance” according to one student. Still, for those seeking the combination of small-town friendliness and safety with the bend toward social and political activism more common in big cities, Liberal Arts College is a great place to spend four years. The school’s openness and flexibility make it easy for students to get the most from their college experiences. All students leave with the ability to “think, analyze, interpret and communicate,” and more important, few leave disappointed.

Carroll University

Carroll University is a study in contrasts. Academics are well respected, but so are its Division I athletic teams. The environment is suburban, about 30 minutes from a major city. The Jesuit influence on the university provides a guiding spirit for campus life, but the social opportunities still seem endless.

Carroll University has about 7,000 students and nine schools and colleges. The dominant architecture of the campus is Gothic Revival, with modern additions over the past few years, including new dining-hall facilities and Bradford Hall for the Douglas School of Management.

There’s lots of grass and trees, and a peaceful pond right on the campus.

The university’s mission is to “educate skilled, knowledgeable and responsible leaders within each new generation.” To accomplish this goal, the Core Curriculum requires not only literature, science, history, philosophy, social science, and theology (two semesters are required), but also writing, mathematics, the arts, and the study of other cultures in addition to specific requirements set by each undergraduate school. “Core Curriculum forces you to take classes you might not

want to take but often end up enjoying,” says a senior. Students in arts and sciences must also show proficiency in a modern foreign language or classical language before graduation. Freshmen are required to take a writing workshop, in which each student develops a portfolio of personal and academic writing and reads a wide range of texts. Seniors participate in a series of seminars aiming to give a “big-picture” perspective to their university experience.

The climate here is for the most part challenging, although not every student is highly motivated. “I feel it is fairly competitive between students,” reports a junior. A senior adds, “Most courses are rigorous and intellectually stimulating.” Most professors are described as “top-notch” and “excellent.” The Jesuits on CU’s faculty (about 40 out of 500) exert an influence that some say is out of proportion to their numbers. “The philosophy, theology, and ethics departments are the most important in setting the tone of the campus, because they keep the students encouraged to be open-minded,” says a freshman. Another student says, “Our teachers are dedicated to students and scholarly research, and they are easily accessible through regular office hours” Registration is made painless through a computerized system and students report that getting required classes is “never much of a problem.”

The schools of arts and sciences, management, nursing, and education award bachelor’s degrees. In the college of arts and sciences, the largest undergraduate division, English, biology, political science, and psychology are popular. At the Carroll University Museum of Art students find exhibitions, lectures, and gallery tours. The Music Guild sponsors professional concerts throughout the year, and music students emphasizing performance can take advantage of facilities equipped with Steinway pianos. Theater majors find a home in the 600-seat Paul Douglas Theater Arts Center, which produces ten student-directed productions each year.

The student-run PULSE program provides participants with the opportunity to fulfill their philosophy and theology requirements while engaging in social service fieldwork at any of about 25 local organizations. “Perspectives,” a four-part freshman program, attempts to illustrate how great thinkers from the past have made us who we are. There’s also a Freshman Year Experience program, which offers seminars and services to help students adjust to college life and take advantage of the school. An honors program allows students to work at a more intensive pace and requires a senior thesis.

About 30 percent of CU students come from the local area, and Catholics comprise about 75 percent of the student body. Blacks now constitute 4 percent of the student body, while Asian-Americans make up another 8 percent and Hispanics 5 percent. According to a marketing major, CU’s “biggest problem is the lack of minorities on campus. It is, in many ways extremely conservative.” Still, the Jesuit appeal for tolerance means that students can find support and interaction even when approaching hot-button issues that Catholicism does not condone.

Housing is plush compared to most other colleges, but due to a shortage, not all students are guaranteed housing for all four years. When students are admitted, they are notified whether they will get on-campus housing for three or four years, and most juniors with three-year guarantees live off campus or study abroad that year. Parking is a problem, and if students want to drive to school, there’s a lottery for parking stickers. Freshman dorms are described as “not great and not very modern” but upper-class suites include private baths, dishwashers, and full kitchens. Students pay in advance for a certain number of dining-hall meals, served a la carte.

CU students are serious about their work, but not excessively so. There is time and plenty of places to party. Yet CU’s reputation as a hard-core party school is diminishing, now that no kegs or cases of beer are allowed on campus grounds. Those of legal age can carry in only enough beer for personal consumption. The campus is replete with sporting events, movies, festivals, concerts, and plays. And as far as social life is concerned, “CU is not a dating school,” laments one student. As at other Jesuit institutions, there is no Greek system at CU.

Athletic events become social events too, with tailgate and victory parties common (even when the team loses). Football games are a big draw, and the team is often invited to a Bowl game. The football program has been recognized for achieving the highest graduation rate in the College Football Association,

and the women's soccer and field hockey teams made it to the quarterfinals of the Tournament. The Carroll University Sports Arena can seat the entire undergraduate student body indoors. Basketball and hockey games are also well attended, and CU meets fierce competition from its rivals. Intramural sports are big here, and students rave about CU's recreational complex.

CU students spend four years fine-tuning the art of the delicate balance, making old-fashioned morals relevant to life in the new millennium and finding time for fun, while keeping an eye on their academic averages. With a degree from CU, graduates can be propelled quickly to personal and professional success, which they are then completely comfortable handling.

Big State University

One of the leading public institutions of higher education in the region, Big State University offers its students a chance to explore a kaleidoscope of topics at a school that is more than a century old. Big State U. is located in one of the nation's premiere college towns and has an extensive research program, a top-notch honors program, and an endless supply of social opportunities, all at an affordable price.

The sprawling 1,200-acre campus is centered by a pond that comes complete with ducks and swans and its structures range from Colonial to 20th-century architecture. The school is located on the outskirts of Collegetown, which combines the energy of a city with the quaintness of a small town.

Of the 10 undergraduate colleges and schools, offerings in business and engineering are first rate. Engineering students enjoy the considerable resources of the Bradford Engineering Building, and Big State U. also hosts a strong computer science department. The English department features a Pulitzer Prize winner and a MacArthur "Genius" Award winner. The most acclaimed class on campus is Microbiology of Cancer and AIDS, which students consistently list as tough to get into because of its popularity. Other strong programs include art, communications, women's studies, and linguistics and language.

Students at Big State U. must take two courses in writing, six courses from literature, arts/liberal arts, historical studies, and social and behavioral sciences to satisfy the Social World requirements and a variety of other courses ranging from biological and physical sciences to various interdisciplinary options to fulfill the university-wide general education requirements. Freshmen are required to complete the College Writing Program, taught in sections of 20 students or less. The University Honors Program offers qualified students the opportunity to take special designated honors courses and also sponsors interdisciplinary seminars, student gatherings, service projects, a newsletter, and a housing option.

Students seeking to stand out from the crowd (total enrollment is 22,042, undergraduate enrollment is 16,065) should look into the interdisciplinary majors or the Individual Concentration Program, a design-it-yourself major. The study abroad program offers the opportunity to travel to 30 different countries. The Center for Student Business offers one of the most unique programs at Big State U., allowing students to staff and manage nine businesses on campus. Students learn not only how to run the business but also how to work with each other and resolve their conflicts professionally. The school is also the home of the Daily Free Press, which boasts one of the largest college circulations in the country.

Big State U.'s intellectual and political climate is extraordinarily fertile for a state university, perhaps in part, because of its membership in the Collegetown Consortium. This special alliance allows students to attend Big State U. and take courses at two other consortium colleges — Collegetown College and Poly tech U. Students say most of the professors at Big State U. are excellent. "Most of my professors are eager to assist me when I need extra help," says a junior. Some classes have one hundred or more students and are taught in large lecture halls, but most of the largest courses are broken down into smaller sections with teaching assistants that meet weekly. When it's time for registration, you won't find the proverbial long lines at Big State because students can register and drop or add courses by touch-tone phone.

The majority of Big State U. students are white, in-state public school graduates. African-American and Hispanics make up about 9 percent of the student body, while Asian-Americans constitute 6 percent. The university has established cultural centers providing a range of opportunities, activities, and support for students.

Big State U. has the fourth-largest residence hall system in the country. Its 47 dorms are situated in five different residential areas, and house about 11,000 students. Freshmen choose whether they want single-sex or coed living and also submit a list of preferred living areas in descending order. "Housing definitely dictates one's social interactions," says one recent grad. "Individuals have entirely different social and academic experiences depending on where they live."

Big State U. offers an abundant social life. "There's always something to do on campus -sports, comedians, concerts, guest speakers, and movies," says a junior. The university's alcohol policy is that students under 21 aren't allowed to drink on campus. One student describes the drinking scene this way: "Alcohol is accessible and those who want it can find it, but if someone declares themselves a non-drinker most students respect that and do not force the issue." Those 21 and over patronize one of Collegetown's dozen bars or drink at two on-campus spots. About two dozen fraternities and sororities occupy the time of about 26 percent of the men and 25 percent of the women, but they are somewhat out of the mainstream are scorned by the "socially aware."

The university's location in the Big Valley is one of its most enticing features. Surrounded the Big Mountain Range foothills, Collegetown is close to good skiing, hiking, and canoeing areas. It is conveniently located 90 miles from a large city. Varsity sports (NCAA Division I) are popular and Big State U. has been a model for achieving gender equity in its athletic programs. Its football is a national powerhouse, and its women's basketball team makes it to the NCAA Final Four regularly. And the men's swimmers have won eight consecutive regional championships. Women's softball is also strong, reaching the College World Series and finishing fifth in the nation. Women's soccer, field hockey, and gymnastics are also programs of note, as are the men's cross-country and soccer teams. The two gyms on campus offer excellent facilities for the recreational athlete, and intramural teams often have fan clubs of their own.

Big State U. is big enough to offer a vast number of academic and extracurricular opportunities, while its participation in the Collegetown Consortium gives students access two leading private colleges. Add a beautiful campus, located in one of the country's best college towns, and the Big State University definitely possesses all the ingredients for a first-rate college experience.