

## Notes on Philadelphia Area Colleges

by  
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In June 2007 I attended a college counselors' conference and toured colleges in the Philadelphia area: Haverford, Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore, Villanova, St. Joseph's, Temple and Penn. The last two are located in the heart of the city, but the first four colleges are located in small, suburban towns of the same name along the Main Line. These towns have lovely, green residential neighborhoods and are easily accessible by the train to Philadelphia and the airport. Villanova and St. Joseph's are Catholic, Augustinian and Jesuit, respectively. I included a brief description of Drexel, a Co-op university, which we were unable to visit.

Like Boston, Philadelphia is a "college town" with 250,000 college students attending the many schools in the area. Philadelphia itself is a lively city with many activities and historic sites and museums to visit.

Note: I will give highlights from my tours and faculty/student presentations. Please visit the college websites for additional information.

### Haverford College

[www.haverford.edu](http://www.haverford.edu)



Haverford was founded by Quakers. Although no longer affiliated with the Quakers, the Quaker values have survived. Haverford is part of the *Tri-College Consortium*, along with Swarthmore and Bryn Mawr. 90% of Haverford students take at least one class at Bryn Mawr, 10% at Swarthmore, its rival school. Some programs, such as Anthropology, Economics, some Arts are bi-college majors (Haverford and Bryn Mawr).

At Haverford, one of the premier liberal arts colleges in the US, students learn and become skilled in critical thinking, writing and speaking. Seniors do original research to complete a capstone project in their field of interest.

Quick Facts: 1200 students; 47% men, 53% women  
81% from out-of-state, 11% from West Coast  
30-38% students of color, 21% faculty of color  
3,359 applications received; 26% admitted  
98% of freshmen return for sophomore year  
92% of students graduate in 4 years  
98% of medical school applicants accepted; 95% accepted to law school and business school  
4 years guaranteed housing, 98-99% live on campus

Admission: Looking for a “good fit” – students who want to be involved in a 4-year liberal arts experience. Early Decision, no Early Action. Interview recommended, either on campus or in student’s region; SAT or ACT + 2 Subject Tests required – middle 50% of scores on Critical Reasoning and Math: 660-770.

Financial Aid:

Completely need-blind. 37% of students on financial aid, with 100% of need met. No merit scholarships. There are 30 grants for students who do something extraordinary in the area of Diversity.

Academics:

Most popular majors: Biology, Economics, English, History, Political Science

Wide variety of majors

3-2 Engineering program with Cal Tech

First-year writing seminars in many literary themes and topics

Student to faculty ratio is 8:1

Average class size is 17

Each student is assigned an academic advisor and a dean

Faculty is extremely involved and close to students.

Academics are enhanced by three Integrated Centers for interdepartmental research and collaboration:

- Marian E. Koshland Integrated Natural Sciences Center
- John B. Hurford Humanities Center
- Center for Peace and Global Citizenship

Students may do their own research or teach classes.

Dance and Theater programs are housed at Bryn Mawr.

The Fine Arts Center has facilities for painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, photography, woodworking and casting. The Studio Arts Program is combined with Bryn Mawr’s renowned Art History department.

The Music Building includes a recital hall and classrooms.

4 Libraries, including Music and Science

Academic Honor Code:

Haverford has the oldest honor code system in the country. The Academic Honor Code governs how students do their work. Exams are self-proctored and there is a strong sense of trust between students and professors. Students are given their exams in an envelope with instructions from the professor, a time limit, return date, resources which may be used, etc. Students like it because they can allocate their time according to their schedules. There are 3 designated time periods for Finals – students go to a classroom for 3 hours to take the exam.

Student guide: “The Honor Code has a very strong impact on the students. Four years at Haverford will affect you more than just academically.”

Social Honor Code: Quakers have a belief in an inner life, the ability to determine what is right and wrong, and the values and character the community holds dear. Students

make decisions based on the honor code and take responsibility for their actions, including administering the honor code on campus. The college may concentrate on safety issues rather than alcohol prevention, resulting in less pressure here to drink. Most violations are resolved between students or at the Honor Council. Students are not expelled, but are separated from the community for up to 7 semesters, until trust is restored among the entire community. *(See website for complete explanation of the honor code principles, an important part of life at Haverford.)*

### Campus Life:

Dorms are organized by Customs Groups for freshmen – 2 sophs on each floor, upperclassmen advisors for academic support and help with course selection, and an academic advisor

There are weekend parties, films, bands, concerts, dances, speakers and other free events on campus + at Bryn Mawr and Swarthmore

Sports: 21 varsity sports, Centennial Conference, Division III, many championships. There are no 4-7 p.m. classes or labs so students can be involved in sports and other activities. 40% of students play varsity sports, + intramurals and there is an active cricket club

Only 1 dining center on campus to foster community. Students also may eat at Bryn Mawr (known for its good food!) and at Swarthmore.

Tour Guide: “Haverford is more laid back, students well-rounded. Bryn Mawr (all women) has a very diverse student body.”

No Greek life.

Lots of space, very safe campus and area

Guide: “Freshman year is the first time I struggled academically. I developed an appreciation for learning, discovered economics for the first time. I had a hard transition from Italy (he was from Rome). My friends are good people and Haverford has been a great experience on a personal level.”

### Bryn Mawr College

[www.brynmawr.edu](http://www.brynmawr.edu)



Bryn Mawr's 135-acre campus was designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, landscape architect for NY's Central Park, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The campus is 11 miles from Philadelphia. Part of the Tri-College Consortium with Haverford and Swarthmore, it shares facilities, courses, dining halls, libraries and social events with the University of Pennsylvania, as well.

Characteristics which distinguish a typical Bryn Mawr student:

- Intense intellectual commitment
- Purposeful vision
- A desire to make a meaningful contribution to the world

Quick Facts: 1,200+ students (women) from 49 states, 40 countries  
33% students of color and/or international students  
Student to teacher ratio – 8:1; most classes less than 20 students  
50% of faculty is women; 16% professors of color

Admission: SAT + 2 Subject Tests required, or ACT + Writing  
Middle 50% Verbal: 630-740, Math: 590-680  
13% 1<sup>st</sup> generation college students  
11% international students  
Class of 2010: 2,133 applicants, 940 admitted, 359 enrolled; 44% acceptance rate; 24% of enrolling students were Early Decision  
Fall Early Decision and Winter Early Decision  
Interview recommended, not required

Financial Aid: Need-based; 58% of students on financial aid; average package is \$23,087.

Academics: 36 majors, 38 minors + independent and interdepartmental majors. Cities major unique to BM. Faculty encourages original research, interdisciplinary scholarship, and global engagement.

- *Praxis Program:* students link theory with practice by interning or working in service agencies, schools and community organizations.
- More than one-third of students pursue majors in natural sciences and math – five times the rate of women nationally
- One-third study abroad
- 500+ students work with faculty on specialized research, (ex) Summer Science Research Projects, field excavations on Arabian peninsula
- Freshman Seminars – 25 course offerings
- PE requirement – must pass Swimming to graduate

Honor Code:

Like Haverford, Bryn Mawr students live and work under the school's honor code and Self-Government Association, founded in 1892, which plays a major role in setting policy and distributing funds.

Campus Life:

Virtually all students live on campus for 4 years. Dorms also have a Customs System, similar to Haverford's. The college is noted for its good food. Students run 100+ clubs and organizations and engage in community service. Athletics: Division III in many sports + other recreational activities.

Alumnae: Besides Katherine Hepburn, Bryn Mawr has many trailblazing alumnae, including one of the first women to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, first woman neurosurgeon, first woman president of Harvard, and many winners of awards, such as the Pulitzer Prize, Medal of Freedom, Rhodes Scholarships, National Science Foundation fellowships, and MacArthur “Genius” Grants (7).

Tour Guide (from Mill Valley, attended San Domenico High School):

“I looked at all Seven Sisters, but I didn’t specifically seek out a women’s college.”

“I like the Bryn Mawr traditions, like Lantern Night, Step Sing. It’s like one big sorority...but I see guys all the time in classes and activities.”

“Women’s college gives you confidence.”

“With the Honor Code (academic and social) you can leave your laptop in the library and nobody will take it.”

“...very diverse, strong bonds among students.”

## Swarthmore College

[www.swarthmore.edu](http://www.swarthmore.edu)



Garden Design magazine called Swarthmore College “the most beautiful campus in America.” The Scott Arboretum comprises 357 acres of the campus and is filled with more than 3,000 ornamental plants and trees.

Founded in 1864, Swarthmore is a non-sectarian liberal arts college which reflects the traditions and values of the “city of brotherly love” and the Society of Friends (Quakers) which founded the college. It is renowned for its academics, and offers two degrees: the bachelor of arts and the bachelor of sciences in engineering.

Quick Facts: 1,500 undergraduates, representing 48 states and 42 countries  
Part of consortium of colleges with Penn, Haverford, Bryn Mawr  
15-25 students per class, discussion-based  
Acc. to the Wall Street Journal, Swat is one of the nation’s top 10 schools in placing students in medical, law and business schools  
33% identify as students of color  
8:1 student-faculty ratio

Admission: Middle 50% on all sections of the SAT: 720-740  
ACT: 32-34  
300 applied to both Fall and Winter Early Decision – 40% of class were admitted under ED; 25% of ED admitted students minority  
Admission rate: 19% overall

Financial Aid: \$1.2 billion endowment enables facilities, programs, study abroad, student research grants, social action project grants, externships and internships. Admission is need-blind, meets 100% of demonstrated need, *including for international students. Undocumented students are considered international students and would also receive financial assistance.*

Academics: Swarthmore is one of only 5 colleges which offer a complete Engineering program with a liberal arts approach. First semester of freshman year is Pass/Fail, non-competitive atmosphere, no GPA's or Dean's List. Freshman may take 1<sup>st</sup> year seminars. 30 majors + individualized programs. No Core Curriculum; select majors as sophomores to allow for academic and intellectual exploration before the final two years. One-third participate in rigorous Honors Program.

Characteristics of a Swarthmore education and the influence of Quaker tradition:

- *Diversity of ideas and community* – students and faculty are accepting and open
- *Equity of access* – 3 campuses, all activities and events are free; financial aid also goes to study abroad program; can take classes in every major to explore; (ex) engineers may have lead in a play, take art classes, etc.
- *Participation in all decision-making* – student voices represented in administrative and policy decisions, (ex) Pepsi only served on campus since Coke's business practices are not in sync with campus values.
- *Engagement* – most students have participated and engaged in some social justice or community service activity – 99% do some project over their 4 years. Academically, students are intense, engaged, passionate, curious about many interests
- *Choice* – students choose from 35 majors and a wide breadth and variety of courses: 3 natural science, 3 social science and 3 humanities are required. PE/swimming is also required to graduate. 2/3 of students take the regular course curriculum (breadth), and 1/3 follows the Honors curriculum (depth) or PEE, Program of External Examination. Honors students work in seminars of up to 12 people, prepare position papers; external examiners are brought in to help them prepare for their oral comprehensives. Any student may take the Honors program (equity in access).
- *Liberal arts* - Swarthmore is a small, liberal arts college where only professors teach classes. Students have a strong advising and resource base.

## St. Joseph's University

[www.sju.edu](http://www.sju.edu)



Like all Jesuit institutions, St. Joe's mission is to educate the whole student, and provide intellectual, cultural, and spiritual opportunities, within the context of social justice.

Jesuit ideals:

- Cara personalis – care of the whole person
- Commitment to magis – strive for more or to be better
- Social justice

The university is undergoing a great deal of growth and change, but not in its underlying fundamentals and values.

Quick Facts: 4,250 students

New Maguire campus increased size of campus 58%, incl. labs and playing fields

13.7% student body of color

98% of faculty have terminal degrees

Average class size: 25, 12:1 student/faculty ratio

SAT: 1155 (out of 1600), ACT: 25

85% receive some merit scholarships

Academics: Itaub School of Business – 9 majors, including International Business, Sports & Entertainment Marketing and Food Marketing; Wall Street Trading Room and real time finance/stock group; coop programs (internships) in all majors

Arts & Sciences – Laptop Initiative, Psych majors required to have one 5-year BA/MS degree available

Honors – Team taught seminars

Service Learning projects, incl. immersions in Kenya, Appalachia

Campus Life: Residence halls (suites), historic homes, townhouses, apartments and living/learning centers.

Athletics, varsity and intramural, are a big part of campus life.

## University of Pennsylvania

[www.upenn.edu](http://www.upenn.edu)



One of America's finest universities, Penn was founded by Benjamin Franklin. It is an urban campus, located just across the Schuylkill River from downtown Philadelphia. However, once you leave the city streets and enter the campus, you are in an enclave of architecturally significant buildings, tree-lined walks (Locust Walk) and quads on 269 acres.

Quick Facts: 4,300 faculty; 10,000+ undergrads

Distinguished faculty, many have earned Nobels, Pulitzers, and Fulbright, Macarthur and Guggenheim Fellowships

Part of Quaker consortium of colleges

7:1 student/faculty ratio

39% of freshmen are minority

4 UG schools: Arts & Sciences, Engineering and Applied Science, Nursing, and the renowned Wharton School of Business + 12 Graduate Schools

15 libraries

Division IV (Ivy League) athletics, many championships

First student union in the U.S.

Admission: Apply to only 1 undergraduate school; Penn promotes the One University concept – you may take classes in any of the schools.

\*Highly recommended to apply Early Decision because of very low acceptance rate

Only 20 were accepted from the waitlist, including our guide

(Guide's application essay was simple: described walking from the bedroom to kitchen, describing the family and home as she walked)

Financial Aid: Need-blind admission, no merit scholarships, but Penn meets 100% of financial need

Campus Life: Penn has hundreds of organizations, clubs and recreational activities, ranging from academic, support services, religious, cultural, government and political, sports, performing arts, publications and media, service, honor societies, to fraternities and sororities.

There are 11 College Houses, from 200 – 870 students of all ages and majors + resident and graduate advisors, labs, seminar rooms and dining areas. Freshmen live in the halls surrounding the Freshman Quad.

Penn is a world-class university. Please see the materials in the College & Career Center for more information.

## Villanova University

[www.villanova.edu](http://www.villanova.edu)



Villanova was founded in 1842 by friars of the Order of St. Augustine. Located on the Main Line, Philadelphia is only 12 miles away.

### Quick Facts:

6,000 undergrads from 49 states and 29 foreign countries

Average class size: 22

13:1 student/faculty ratio

4 undergraduate colleges: College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, School of Business, College of Engineering and College of Nursing

Minorities are under-represented, but diversity is increasing due to the efforts of the Multi-Cultural Affairs office. All faiths, cultures and races are easily accepted on campus.

### Academics:

Courses are rigorous, but the atmosphere is not overly competitive. All classes are taught by full professors. Finance, Communication, Nursing and Engineering are the most popular programs. Most students graduate in 4 years.

### Admission:

Applications received: 13,000; freshman class size: 1,600

SAT middle 50%: 1310-1420 (based on 1600 total); ACT: 30-32

GPA: 3.74-4.09

### Financial Aid:

\$12 million was awarded last year in grants, average grant \$18,000. Average financial aid package: \$24,000. Merit scholarships are offered.

Campus Life: Residential halls are well-maintained and attractive, and are guaranteed for 3 years. Learning communities are available. 8% of men and 25% of women belong to Greek societies. Not a commuter campus – there are many social activities. Sports are a big part of Villanova life, as is community service in the Augustinian tradition.

## Temple University

[www.temple.edu](http://www.temple.edu)



Quick Facts: Bill Cosby's alma mater  
Urban location near downtown Philly  
19,000 undergrads, 10,000 live on or around campus  
40% minority  
Grad schools of Law, Dentistry, Pharmacy  
1100 median SAT

Temple is more of a local or regional university and attracts students mainly from Philadelphia and the state of Pennsylvania.

## Drexel University

[www.drexel.edu](http://www.drexel.edu)

Due to scheduling problems, we were unable to tour Drexel, which is located just next to Penn. Drexel is a Co-op University, meaning it incorporates paid and unpaid internships into its curriculum. Some students do two internships, go to two summer sessions, and still graduate in 4 years. Others opt to do more internships and graduate in 4 years.

The advantages of Co-op are that you can earn money (average \$14,000) to offset your tuition, gain valuable professional experience, explore different careers, develop professional contacts around the country and most likely be assured of a job after graduation.

Drexel also offers accelerated degree programs, a combined Bachelor's and an advanced degree in the following fields:

- Physical Therapy
- Dance Therapy
- Law
- Business
- Design and Merchandising

- Music Industry
- Medicine
- Physician Assistant
- Engineering and Biomedical Engineering
- High Education
- Psychology
- Nursing