

## COLLEGE RANKINGS 2014



This list from The Daily Beast takes into account nine factors, with future earnings, affordability, and academics weighted most heavily. The other criteria are graduation rates, diversity, athletics, nightlife, student activities, and campus quality (things like food, weather, and crime rate). This year, we used data from The National Center for Education Statistics, as well as private organizations like PayScale, for salary data, and Niche, for student opinions. Below is the web link to the list of the top 250 and a sampling of how each fared within the given criteria. Click here:

**Web Link:** <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/11/06/the-daily-beast-s-down-and-dirty-guide-to-the-best-colleges-2014.html>

### **1. Stanford University**

This established world leader in computer science, mathematics and other left-brain subjects also offers a top-notch liberal arts education accessible to those of modest means through its “no-loans” aid program that waives tuition for students from families making less than six figures. Immediately adjacent to the city of Palo Alto and in the center of Silicon Valley, it’s not surprising that Stanford, CA has one of the most tech savvy and highly educated populations in the U.S.

## **2. Harvard University**

The oldest and most prestigious institution of higher education in America needs little introduction, but some may not be aware of the school's recent efforts to reduce the economic barriers for prospective low-income students, offering a free ride to students of families making less than \$60K a year. Not surprisingly, Cambridge, MA is one of the most highly educated cities in the country and offers students easy access to Boston's historical and cultural riches.

## **3. Yale University**

The school that produced more presidential candidates in the last three decades than any other doesn't just cater to the upper crust, joining a select few universities practicing need-blind admissions and committed to meeting every student's demonstrated financial need. New Haven, CT is pretty pricey, but boasts loads of beautiful and historic architecture, including Hillhouse Avenue, "the most beautiful street in America" according to Charles Dickens.

## **4. Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

With primary strengths in engineering, technology, and computer science, student's receive one of the most rigorous and challenging education experiences available while benefiting from a generous financial aid program that covers 100% of tuition and fees with scholarships and grants for those from families making less than \$75K. Named after that famous university across the Atlantic, Cambridge, MA is a highly educated but expensive city with close proximity to Boston.

## **5. Columbia University**

This elite Ivy League university in the middle of the big city is an academic powerhouse, responsible for administering the Pulitzer Prize and boasting more Nobel Prize laureates than any other institution of higher education. If you can afford it, there's nothing like New York, NY, widely considered the financial and cultural capital of the world.

## **6. Princeton University**

This traditional academic powerhouse is also a forward-thinking pioneer in financial aid reform, becoming the first major American university to replace all need-based student loan packages with scholarships and grants. Princeton, NJ is a wealthy, highly educated but somewhat expensive town frequently rated one of the top places to live in America.

## **7. Cornell University**

An Ivy League school with a historical commitment to professional studies and equal access requires no financial contribution from families making less than \$60K and meets the full financial need of all students, with no loans for families making less than \$75K and very reasonable loan caps for families who make more. A small city with a college town feel, the moderately expensive Ithaca, NY has a highly educated population and a vibrant cultural scene.

## **8. University of Pennsylvania**

The prestigious Ivy League university birthed out of the mind of Benjamin Franklin carries forward his vision of increasing access to a practical liberal arts education through its recently expanded “no-loan” financial aid policy. The City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, PA, is about average in terms of cost, but offers students a host of historical sites and cultural opportunities.

## **9. Brown University**

This small Ivy League research university places a strong emphasis on undergraduate education and offers a “no-loan” financial aid policy for students from families making less than \$100K and zero family contribution for students from families making less than \$60K. An inexpensive place to live, Providence, RI is the state capital and said to have more coffee shops and restaurants per capita than any other American city.

## **10. University of California at Los Angeles**

With an outstanding global reputation for both academics and athletics, not to mention its glamorous location, the most selective public university in the country also gets more freshman applicants than any other. The second largest city in the nation, Los Angeles, CA is a global leader in entertainment, fashion, culture, and business, but the cost of living is high.

## **11. University of California-Berkeley**

The one time hotbed of student activism has mellowed over the years, but still offers students a wide berth for self-expression and one of the most outstanding undergraduate educations in the world at a public school price. Located on the San Francisco Bay, Berkeley, CA is a highly educated and rather expensive city with a reputation as one of the most politically liberal places in the country.

## **12. California Institute of Technology**

This former vocational school turned science and engineering powerhouse practices need-blind admissions and graduates students with one of the lowest average debt amounts and among the highest starting salaries. Best known for hosting the Rose Bowl and Tournament of Roses Parade, Pasadena, CA is a moderately expensive city home to the NASA Jet Propulsion Lab and a sizable population of non-indigenous parrots.

## **13. Vanderbilt University**

This urban university with a campus designated a national arboretum not only offers students beautiful surroundings in which to pursue a great education, but the opportunity to do so entirely debt-free through its full-need, no-loan financial aid policy. In addition to the outstanding music, dining, and cultural opportunities, the “Music City” of Nashville, TN offers students an exceptionally low cost of living.

#### 14. Rice University

A small research university known for its research and programs in the applied sciences, the school also has a strong commitment to undergraduate education, operating on a residential college system with a student-enforced Honor Code that allows for all tests and exams to be taken home and completed unsupervised and at the student's convenience. Students on the large wooded campus near the Houston, TX museum district have easy access to the amenities of the big and relatively low cost city.

#### 15. University of Michigan

One of the original "Public Ivies" offers comparable academic quality and many of the amenities of much more expensive schools while continuing to open up greater access to lower income students through programs like M-Pact, which replaces student loans with grants for students with the greatest need. With a reputation for being socially progressive, Ann Arbor, MI has been recognized as one of the best small cities to live in, offering its highly educated population a lower than average cost of living.

## 25 MOST RIGOROUS COLLEGES



To find out which schools are offering the most rigorous education, The Daily Beast looked at the quality of the student body and of their instructors. First, they scored colleges on the selectiveness of admissions with data from the National Center for Education Statistics as an indicator of student competition, weighted 50 percent. Student surveys provided by Niche on workload manageability made up 30 percent. Then they made up the remaining 20 percent by assessing the amount of time students

were likely to spend with the best instructors. For this, they used Niche surveys on schools with the smartest professors combined with data on class size from the National Center for Education Statistics.

**Web Lin:** [http://www.thedailybeast.com/galleries/2014/11/06/20-most-rigorous-colleges-photos.html?source=TDB&via=FB\\_Page#277f40e9-88c2-45cc-9ac5-8a61c6f0b8cd](http://www.thedailybeast.com/galleries/2014/11/06/20-most-rigorous-colleges-photos.html?source=TDB&via=FB_Page#277f40e9-88c2-45cc-9ac5-8a61c6f0b8cd)

**1. Columbia University** – New York, New York

Smartest Professors Score: 8.4  
Percent of Applicants Admitted: 7%  
Student to Faculty Ratio: 6:1  
Workload Manageability Score (lower=harder): 2.0

**2. Cooper Union** – New York, New York

Smartest Professors Score: 8.8  
Percent of Applicants Admitted: 8%  
Student to Faculty Ratio: 8:1  
Workload Manageability Score (lower=harder): 2.4

**3. University of Chicago** – Chicago, Illinois

Smartest Professors Score: 9.9  
Percent of Applicants Admitted: 9%  
Student to Faculty Ratio: 6:1  
Workload Manageability Score (lower=harder): 3.0

**4. Swarthmore College** – Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Smartest Professors Score: 9.3  
Percent of Applicants Admitted: 14%  
Student to Faculty Ratio: 8:1  
Workload Manageability Score (lower=harder): 1.7

**5. Massachusetts Institute of Technology** – Cambridge, Massachusetts

Smartest Professors Score: 9.8  
Percent of Applicants Admitted: 8%  
Student to Faculty Ratio: 8:1  
Workload Manageability Score (lower=harder): 3.5

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