

# Top Colleges Doing the Most for the American Dream

The New York Times

MAY 25, 2017 ([link to full story](#))

Welcome to the third annual College Access Index. It's a New York Times ranking of colleges — those with a five-year graduation rate of at least 75 percent — based on their commitment to economic diversity. The ranking is based on a combination of the number of lower-and middle-income students that a college enrolls and the price it charges these students. The top of the ranking is dominated by campuses in the University of California system, while the most diverse private colleges include Amherst, Pomona, Harvard and Vassar. Notably, a college's endowment does not determine its commitment to economic diversity. There are wealthy colleges and much less wealthy ones at both the top and bottom of the ranking. Read the [related column](#).

Rank	College	Freshman class	Pell grad share	Net price Mid income	College Access Index	Endowment per student
1	University of California-Irvine	5,400	39	\$12k	1.90	\$11.1k
2	University of California-Santa Barbara	4,600	31	\$13k	1.61	\$7.1k
3	University of California-Davis	5,100	30	\$13k	1.60	\$11.2k
4	University of California-San Diego	5,200	29	\$11k	1.58	\$22.2k
5	University of California-Los Angeles	5,700	26	\$11k	1.52	\$54.2k
6	University of Florida	6,500	22	\$8k	1.46	\$33.3k
7	Amherst College	500	22	\$9k	1.44	\$1.141m
8	Pomona College	500	20	\$7k	1.43	\$1.288m
9	University of California-Berkeley	4,700	22	\$11k	1.38	\$46.3k
10	Harvard University	1,700	15	\$5k	1.36	\$1.51m
11	Vassar College	700	21	\$11k	1.36	\$397k
12	Williams College	500	18	\$7k	1.35	\$1.049m
13	Princeton University	1,300	16	\$6k	1.34	\$2.662m
14	Wellesley College	600	18	\$9k	1.32	\$763.1k
15	Stanford University	1,700	14	\$4k	1.31	\$1.448m
16	Knox College	400	26	\$18k	1.30	\$92.9k
17	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	4,000	18	\$10k	1.30	\$103.8k
18	Columbia University	1,400	16	\$9k	1.26	\$324.2k
19	Barnard College	600	19	\$12k	1.25	\$115.3k
20	Yale University	1,400	14	\$7k	1.22	\$1.759m
21	Westminster College	300	25	\$19k	1.21	\$80.4k
22	Wesleyan University	800	17	\$12k	1.21	\$240.3k
23	Davidson College	500	13	\$7k	1.20	\$356.8k

Rank	College	Freshman class	Pell grad share	Net price Mid income	College Access Index	Endowment per student
24	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	1,000	14	\$9k	1.20	\$1.206m
25	Texas A & M University-College Station	9,000	17	\$11k	1.19	\$175.4k
26	Brown University	1,600	15	\$10k	1.19	\$337.2k
27	University of Georgia	5,200	16	\$12k	1.18	\$28.3k
28	Occidental College	500	19	\$14k	1.18	\$181.4k
29	Grinnell College	400	18	\$14k	1.17	\$1.057m
30	Rice University	1,000	13	\$8k	1.17	\$768.1k
31	Rutgers University-New Brunswick	6,400	21	\$17k	1.17	\$14.9k
32	Duke University	1,700	12	\$7k	1.17	\$478k
33	Middlebury College	600	15	\$10k	1.16	\$326k
34	Washington and Lee University	500	9	\$5k	1.16	\$679.3k
35	Gustavus Adolphus College	600	21	\$17k	1.16	\$57.7k
36	Vanderbilt University	1,600	12	\$8k	1.16	\$353.1k
37	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	7,300	18	\$15k	1.14	\$26.2k
38	Bowdoin College	500	13	\$10k	1.12	\$778.9k
39	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	6,200	12	\$9k	1.12	\$220k
40	Swarthmore College	400	15	\$12k	1.11	\$1.173m

**Pell grad share** for each college is the average share of the freshman class that received a Pell grant in 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16, multiplied by the graduation rate for recent Pell recipients. Later years count more; not all colleges released 2015-16 data. Graduation rates for Pell students at some colleges are estimated.

**Net price** for middle-income students covers tuition, fees, room and board, after taking into account federal, state and institutional financial aid, and it applies to students who come from households earning between \$48,000 and \$75,000 a year and qualifying for federal aid. Loans and wages from work-study jobs are counted in the net price as part of the students' cost.

**The College Access Index** is a combination of a colleges' Pell graduates and net price, compared with the average school. (The index is based on the net price for both the \$48,000-to-\$75,000 income range shown here and the \$30,000-to-\$48,000 income range.) A college with an average score on the two measures in combination will receive a one. Scores above one indicate the most effort.

**Endowment per student** is for the year 2012-13 and includes graduate students.