



Private & Liberal Arts Colleges

What They Are, Opportunities They Offer, and Things to Consider

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Fremont High School Fall Counseling Night, October 22nd, 2024

Private vs. Public Universities

Where funding comes from

Size of the colleges

Support and attention from faculty

Graduation rates (and timelines!)

6 year graduation rates (2023):

Public: 67.4%

Private (nonprofit): 77.5%

8 year graduation rates (2023):

Public: 71.6%

Private (nonprofit): 80.1%

Price (and financial aid)

Private colleges have higher “sticker prices” for good reason

The True Cost of a Private College Education

According to a 2023 College Board study, the average annual cost of attending a small, private university comes to **\$56,190**.

However, due to the abundance of financial aid, grants, and scholarships available at those same private universities, the true cost of attending private school is **much lower**.

That same College Board study also showed that, on average, students attending private colleges received **\$25,630 in financial aid**, lowering the cost of attendance by nearly **40%**.

SMC's average financial aid package is nearly \$40,000/year
(avg. cost after aid is about \$30,000/year for tuition + food and housing)

Liberal Arts Education - What is it?

“The goal of a classical liberal arts education is to create well-rounded, informed, independent thinkers who are capable of continuing their learning in a wide variety of fields.” - LiberalArtsEDU contributor Scott Wilson



Common Traits

Small Size

Undergraduate Emphasis

Core Curriculum

Discussion-Based Learning

Support from Faculty/Advisors

Study the sciences—such as biology, chemistry, and physics—and social sciences—including economics, politics, and psychology.

Develop strong critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills across multiple academic disciplines.

Focus on student participation within all academic settings. High level of student-teacher interaction, mentorship, and collaboration.

Liberal Arts Core Curriculum at SMC

An intentional, developmental, and integrated program of study in four broad intellectual areas: Habits of Mind, Pathways to Knowledge, Theological Understanding, and Engaging the World.

Collegiate Seminar

The heart of the Saint Mary's core curriculum and provides students with a solid foundation in the liberal arts.

The program comprises three discussion-based courses that examine the Great Books of literature, philosophy, history and political theory, art, and science.

Courses discuss great thinkers from Socrates and Aristotle to Shakespeare and Martin Luther King Jr.

January Term

Every January, students take one course - either on campus, in the community, or abroad.

Explore a single topic outside your major at great depth.

SMC instructors create their own classes from their passions, expertise, and curiosity.

Where SMC Graduates Work



Saint Mary's College Rankings

TOP
5%

In the US for Earning
Potential
payscale.com, 2023

#26

Among Best Value Schools
US News & World Report: Best
Colleges, 2023

#2

Among Peers in the West:
Student-to-Faculty Ratio
US News & World report: Best
Colleges, 2023

#4

Best Regional
Universities in the West
US News & World report: Best
Colleges, 2023



Is a Liberal Arts College Right for You?

Questions to Consider

1. Do you want the flexibility to explore your different academic interests/career paths?
 - a. Follow up: Do you have multiple interests in different disciplines?
2. Do you do better in small classroom settings?
 - a. How do you feel about discussion-based learning?
3. Are you looking for a close knit community in college?
4. Do you want to focus on developing soft skills?
5. Are you interested in leadership opportunities on campus?
6. Do you want your professors to serve as mentors?

Questions?

Contact me!

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