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The Universe has been evolving ever since it first came into being. People look to astronomy for answers about the mysteries of the universe. Astronomy has three major functions; it helps people understand the universe better, it offers a method of organizing planets other than Earth and it also helps divert any sort of destruction that might occur due to a cosmic impact. Astronomy allows people to look at the night sky and understand the different things they can see with the naked eye or even with a telescope. The Universe is gigantic in size and consists of plenty of celestial bodies. In fact, it drives the scientist and astronomers to keep discovering new facts and continue researching on the dark beyond. When astronomers start their research on any part of the Universe, they soon realize how huge it is. Most of the studies carried out in astronomy is theoretical. In fact, astronomers can be categorized into different groups, namely theoretical astronomers and observational astronomers. Observational astronomers more or less concentrate on the study of planets, stars, galaxies, and so on, whereas theoretical astronomers analyze and model how the systems have evolved over time. However, it is interesting to note that unlike other sciences, theoretical astronomers are not able to directly observe the birth and death of different celestial systems. They have to rely on snapshots of different celestial bodies in the different stages of evolution and decide how they were formed and eventually died. In fact, the line between theoretical astronomer and an observational astronomer is quite blurred in reality. Let's take a look at some of the tools that help in the development of the field of astronomy over the years.

Navigation Before the invention of the compass, the sailors were able to travel across the seas with the help of the stars. Every sailor worth their salt knew how to navigate the seas with the help of the night stars. The importance astronomy has in their lives is immeasurable. Time Measurement Long before clocks were invented, people used the sundial to help keep track of the hours of the day. This particular invention made use of the sun's rays and the shadow cast by it to determine the time of the day. In fact, in the earlier days, scientists were able to notice the difference in the length of the days during different seasons with the help of the sundial. Astronomics Astronomy has played a very important role in the development of several technologies in aeronautics and communication. In fact GPS, infrared radiation radio waves are all different kinds of technology where astronomy has played a role. Astronomy also makes use of many tools from the other branches of science to make sense of what is happening in the universe. In fact, simulation is another tactic used by leading astronomers in the country to help determine the future of the universe. It can be used to predict disasters like whether a meteor is going to hit the earth and so on. Prior information like this can be used to take drastic measures and make sure earth remains safe at all times. 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Natural Sciences (Astronomy...IELTS6.5PTE65€8.2K/YrPrograms7.1/0(1 User)Ranked4.01 by ARWU in 2022 February 24, 2025 If you have a brilliant scientific mind that has always been fixated on topics along the lines black holes, dark matter, and extra terrestrial life then there may just be a college program for you. Sometimes offered as a solo Astronomy & Astrophysics major (i.e. Michigan), other times as an Astronomy-Physics double-major (i.e. UVA), and other times as a concentration area within the Astronomy department (i.e. BU), this rigorous major will take undergraduates through advanced study of mathematics, physics, astronomy, and chemistry. Many graduates of Astronomy & Astrophysics programs go on to complete graduate studies and those with PhDs hold research positions at universities or government agencies like NASA. Others pursue jobs in computing where their skills prove quite useful, including at tech giants like Google, Meta, or Microsoft. Our list of Best Colleges for Astrophysics & Best Colleges for Astronomy will help you navigate through the infinite universe of the higher education search process and discover the perfect academic galaxy to call home. Methodology In order to rank the best undergraduate programs in astronomy and astrophysics, we analyzed institution- and program-level data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics as reported by IPEDS, salary and other outcomes collected by PayScale and College Scorecard, and peer assessment data collected through a number of different college rankings systems and surveys, including our own. Click here for a further breakdown of our methodology. Best Colleges for Astronomy & Astrophysics Here's a quick preview of the first ten Astronomy & Astrophysics institutions that made our list. Detailed profiles and stats for these and other programs can be found when you scroll below. 1) University of Chicago 2) California Institute of Technology 3) Harvard University 4) Princeton University 5) Columbia University in the City of New York 6) University of California-Los Angeles 7) University of California-Berkeley 8) University of California-Santa Cruz 9) Swarthmore College 10) Whitman College All of the schools profiled below have stellar reputations in the fields of astronomy & astrophysics and commit substantial resources to undergraduate education. For each of the best artificial intelligence colleges, College Transitions will provide you with—when available—each school's Enrollment Cost of Attendance Acceptance Rate Median SAT Median ACT Retention Rate Graduation Rate We will also include a longer write-up of each college's Academic Highlights - Includes facts like student-to-faculty ratio, average class size, number of majors offered, and most popular majors. Professional Outcomes - Includes info on the rate of positive outcomes, companies employing alumni, and graduate school acceptances. Rankings for Related Programs After reviewing our list of best Astronomy and Astrophysics programs (below), you may also be interested in our rankings for other science programs: #1 Best College for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: A 5:1 student-to-faculty ratio means that classrooms remain very intimate, and face time with the renowned faculty is a reality. More than three-quarters of UChicago undergraduate sections have an enrollment of nineteen or fewer students. Undergraduate research opportunities are ubiquitous as 80% of students end up working in a research capacity alongside a faculty member. A solid 60% of undergrads study abroad at one of the 77 programs offered in 31 cities around the world. Professional Outcomes: On commencement day, 99% of the Class of 2023 were employed or continuing their education. The most popular employers for UChicago grads include Google, Amazon, Goldman Sachs, Meta, JPMorgan Chase, Deloitte, Morgan Stanley, and Microsoft. University of Chicago grads are highly sought after by elite graduate universities. The top destinations for recent graduates are Yale, Columbia, MIT, Stanford, and Harvard A fairly substantial 50% of graduates remain in the Midwest after finishing their degrees, 29% migrate to the Northeast, and 10% make the journey west. Enrollment: 7,643 Cost of Attendance: \$90,360 Median SAT: 1550 Median ACT: 35 Acceptance Rate: 5% Retention Rate: 99% Graduation Rate: 95% #2 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: Across all six divisions at Caltech, there are 28 distinct majors. Possessing an absurdly favorable 3:1 student-to-faculty ratio, plenty of individualized attention is up for grabs. Class sizes are not quite as tiny as the student-to-faculty ratio might suggest, but 66% of courses enroll fewer than twenty students, and 28% enroll fewer than ten. Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURF) enjoy wide participation with 90% of undergrads partaking, and 20% of that group go on to publish their research. Professional Outcomes: Caltech is a rare school that sees six-figure average starting salaries for its graduates; in 2023, the median base salary ranged was 110k-119k. Forty-four percent of recent grads went directly into the workforce and found homes at tech giants such as Google, NVIDIA, Microsoft, Apple, and Meta. A healthy 43% of those receiving their diplomas in 2023 continued directly on the higher education path, immediately entering graduate school. Seventy-four percent of these students were admitted to their top-choice school. Enrollment: 1,023 Cost of Attendance: \$86,886 Median SAT: Test Blind Median ACT: Test Blind Acceptance Rate: 3% Retention Rate: 98% Graduation Rate: 93% #3 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: There are 50 undergraduate fields of study referred to as concentrations; many are interdisciplinary. Even with a graduate population close to 14,000 to cater to, undergraduate class sizes still tend to be breathtakingly intimate, with 43% of sections having single-digit enrollments and 73% being capped at nineteen. Graduates report an almost 90% satisfaction rate with the experience within their academic concentration. Summer research experiences are taken advantage of by over one-third of the student body. Approximately 55-60% of students study abroad at a number of locations in South America, Africa, Europe, or Asia. Professional Outcomes: Harvard's most recent graduating class saw 15% of students head directly into graduate/professional school, with nearly everyone else entering the world of work. Over 1,000 Harvard alumni presently work for Google and over 500 for Microsoft, McKinsey & Company, and Goldman Sachs. More than 250 are employed at Amazon, Meta, and Bain & Company. Post-graduation, Harvard students tend to cluster in three main states—New York, California, and Massachusetts. Those three states collectively reel in 60% of newly minted alumni. Remuneration is excellent with over two-thirds of graduates reporting starting salaries over \$70k and 30% taking home \$110k+ in base pay. By mid-career, grads have the second-highest median salaries in the Ivy League. Enrollment: 9,095 Cost of Attendance: \$96,705 Median SAT: 1550 Median ACT: 35 Acceptance Rate: 3% Retention Rate: 99% Graduation Rate: 97% #4 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: An absurdly low 5:1 student-to-faculty ratio does, as you might expect, translate to tiny class sizes for undergraduates. Just under three-quarters of class sections have an enrollment of 19 or fewer students. Princeton is known for its commitment to undergraduate teaching, and students consistently rate professors as accessible and helpful. The Office of Undergraduate Research assists Tigers in locating faculty members with whom they can jointly conduct research in the summer or during a regular term. More than four hundred study abroad programs, internships, and experiences are available in over 140 countries; 61% of students ultimately engage in at least one international experience. Professional Highlights: Over 93% of a typical Tiger class has found their next destination within six months of graduating. Companies presently employing hundreds of Tiger alumni include Google, Goldman Sachs, Microsoft, McKinsey & Company, Morgan Stanley, IBM, and Meta. The average salary reported by 2023 graduates was \$89k across all majors. Between 15-20% of graduating Tigers head directly to graduate/professional school. Tigers typically choose equally prestigious graduate schools to attend. Members of one recent class flocked in the largest numbers to Stanford, Penn, Princeton, Harvard, Cambridge, Columbia, and Oxford in that order. Enrollment: 5,671 Cost of Attendance: \$84,040 Median SAT: 1540 Median ACT: 34 Acceptance Rate: 4% Retention Rate: 97% Graduation Rate: 97% #5 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: The academic experience at Columbia is driven by the famed Core Curriculum that lays out an extensive to-do list that includes highly specified courses rather than categorical requirements. Class sizes at Columbia are reasonably small and the student-to-faculty ratio is favorable; however, in 2022, it was revealed that the university had been submitting faulty data in this area. It is presently believed that 59% of undergraduate courses enroll 19 or fewer students. More than 570 students per year participate in the Columbia Overseas Program. A little over one-quarter of the students leave Manhattan for a foreign country during their four years of study. Undergraduate research is taken seriously by the university, which offers multiple avenues through which students can work side-by-side with faculty on their projects or pursue funding for their own original research ideas. Professional Outcomes: The companies hiring the largest number of Lions in 2023 were among the most desirable employers in the world including Amazon, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, Google, Cit, McKinsey, and Microsoft. Those moving on to graduate/professional school were welcomed in large numbers into other universities of Columbia's ilk. In addition to remaining at Columbia (the most popular choice), the top ten institutions attended were Stanford, Harvard, NYU, Ue, Carnegie Mellon, UChicago, Oxford, Princeton, and MIT. Enrollment: 9,111 Cost of Attendance: \$89,587 Median SAT: 1540 Median ACT: 35 Acceptance Rate: 4% Retention Rate: 97% Graduation Rate: 95% #6 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: Close to half of classrooms contain fewer than twenty Bruins, but those taking introductory courses will find themselves in a fair number of lecture halls with a hundred or more students. Professors are given impressively high marks for a research university of UCLA's size. 93% of College of Letters and Science seniors rate their professors as being intellectually challenging. By the time they graduate, 45% of undergraduates have participated in a research experience. Every year, roughly one-quarter of the undergraduate population elects to study abroad, a sharp increase from only a few years ago. UCLA has 115 partner universities in 40+ countries around the globe. Professional Outcomes: Thousands of alumni can be found working at Google, Amazon, and Apple. Companies that employ over 100 Bruins each include Meta, Microsoft, Netflix, TikTok, NVIDIA, and LinkedIn. Ultimately, one-third of UCLA grads go on to enroll in graduate/professional school, with many choosing to stay at their alma mater. Otherwise, the most attended grad schools are primarily other excellent California-based institutions including Stanford, USC, and Berkeley. For graduates early in their careers, the median salary is \$78,600, with mid-career median earnings reaching over \$149k. Many alumni remain in the Los Angeles Metropolitan area after graduating; other popular destinations include the San Francisco Bay area and New York City. Enrollment: 33,040 Cost of Attendance: \$38,031 (In-State); \$68,808 (Out-of-State) Median SAT: Test Blind Median ACT: Test Blind Acceptance Rate: 9% Retention Rate: 97% Graduation Rate: 93% #7 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: More than 150 undergraduate majors and minors are available across six schools. Undergrads will encounter a mix of large lectures (20% of sections contain more than 50 students) and tiny, single-digit enrollments in seminar-style courses (21% of sections contain nine or fewer students). Plenty of undergraduate research opportunities exist, with many facilitated by the Office of Undergraduate Research & Scholarships; 48% of students participate in research during their time at Berkeley. Over 200 study abroad opportunities are available for those who desire them, and approximately 1,800 undergrads take advantage each year. Professional Outcomes: Upon graduation, 53% of Cal's Class of 2023 had already secured employment, and 17% were headed to graduate school. The median starting salary was \$94,000 across all majors. Thousands of alumni can be found in the offices of Google, Apple, Meta, Amazon, and Microsoft, and 500+ Golden Bears are currently employed by NVIDIA and LinkedIn. The school is the number one all-time producer of Peace Corps volunteers. For those continuing their education, most choose to stay at UC Berkeley, with Stanford, the University of Southern California, Columbia, and Harvard rounding out the top five grad school destinations. Enrollment: 33,078 Cost of Attendance: \$45,053 (In-State); \$75,830 (Out-of-State) Median SAT: Test Blind Median ACT: Test Blind Acceptance Rate: 12% Retention Rate: 97% Graduation Rate: 93% #8 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: 74 undergraduate majors are available at UCSC. An identical percentage of classes contain 50+ students (27% as under 20 students (27%). Fortunately, thanks in part to a relatively small number of graduate students (roughly 2,000), there are still opportunities to work side-by-side with faculty. In fact, a commendable 52% of undergraduates conduct some type of faculty-guided research during their four years at Santa Cruz, and the school has pledged to raise that number to 75%. Roughly 15% of students elect to study abroad and the school offers all students to take advantage of the well-established UC program situated all around the globe. Professional Outcomes: Within three months of earning their degrees, 28% of UCSC grads had found employment and 17% started graduate programs. Proximity to Silicon Valley helps open doors to companies like Google, Apple, Meta, Microsoft, and Cisco, which all employ over 200 alumni. More than 100 alumni can also be found in the offices of NVIDIA, Salesforce, Adobe, and LinkedIn. Among graduates, the median salary for those in the first five years of their career was \$75,600. Enrollment: 17,812 Cost of Attendance: \$40,306 (In-State); \$71,083 (Out-of-State) Median SAT: Test Blind Median ACT: Test Blind Acceptance Rate: 63% Retention Rate: 90% Graduation Rate: 74% #9 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: Small, seminar-style courses are the norm at Swat—an outstanding 33% of sections enroll fewer than ten students, and 73% contain a maximum of nineteen students. Overall, the average class size is 17. Thanks to an 8:1 student-to-faculty ratio and zero grad students, professors are extremely available in and outside the classroom. As a result, two-thirds of graduates complete at least one undergraduate research or independent creative project, and the college sets aside \$800,000 in funding for that express purpose. Forty percent of students elect to study abroad for a semester in one of 300 programs in 60 countries. Professional Outcomes: 58% of Class of 2023 grads entered the workforce shortly after graduation. Google is a leading employer of Swarthmore grads followed by Amazon, Microsoft, Meta, and a number of top universities. 23% of 2023 grads pursued advanced degrees, with 42% pursuing a PhD and 42% entering master's programs. Swatties can also be found at Columbia, Stanford, UPenn, Harvard, and UC Berkeley. The cities attracting the highest percentage of Swat alumni were Philadelphia, NYC, Boston, and Chicago. The average starting salary was \$81,000, an excellent figure for any liberal arts school. Enrollment: 1,644 Cost of Attendance: \$84,103 Median SAT: 1530 Median ACT: 34 Acceptance Rate: 7% Retention Rate: 96% Graduation Rate: 94% #10 Best College for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: With 50+ majors, the academic offerings at Whitman are robust. Whitman boasts a beautifully low 10:1 student-to-faculty ratio and hosts zero graduate students, a recipe for individualized attention. Undergraduate research is so embedded into the foundation of a Whitman education that the college hosts an annual Undergraduate Conference for students to present their work. Nearly 40% of students study abroad in an one of 80+ programs in 40 countries around the globe. Professional Outcomes: After graduation, 64% of Whitman grads immediately begin their careers and 20% enroll directly in graduate programs. Twenty or more alumni currently work for Microsoft, Amazon, Seattle Children's, Boeing, and Kaiser Permanente. Early career median earnings are \$71,100, while Whitman grads earn a median income of \$138,500 midway through their career. Ultimately, 60% of alumni go on to earn advanced degrees at some point post-graduation. Enrollment: 1,544 Cost of Attendance: \$78,332 Median SAT: 1360 Median ACT: 30 Acceptance Rate: 50% Retention Rate: 89% Graduation Rate: 81% #11 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: Impressively, particularly for a school with more graduate students than undergrads, CMU boasts a 6:1 student-to-faculty ratio and small class sizes, with roughly one-third containing single digits and 68% having an enrollment of nineteen or fewer. In a given school year, 800+ undergraduates conduct research through the University Research Office, and many others participated through various outside arrangements. Between 500-600 students study abroad for a semester each year in such countries as Japan, China, and Germany. Professional Outcomes: By the end of the calendar year in which they received their diplomas, 74% of recent grads were employed, and 17% were continuing to graduate school. The companies that have routinely scooped up CMU grads include Google, Meta, Microsoft, Apple, Amazon, TikTok, and NVIDIA. With an average starting salary of \$124,107, CMU grads outpace the average starting salary for a college grad nationally. Enrollment: 7,289 Cost of Attendance: \$83,697 Median SAT: 1540 Median ACT: 35 Acceptance Rate: 11% Retention Rate: 97% Graduation Rate: 93% #12 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: Forty percent of classes actually have fewer than 20 students, while 19% of courses enroll 50 or more students. Opportunities to connect with faculty for research opportunities span all majors and fields of study. The school also offers the Discovery Learning Apprenticeship Program, which enables engineering students to conduct paid faculty-mentored research. Over 2,200 students per year participate in the credit-bearing Education Abroad program that offers hundreds of destinations within 60 countries around the world. Professional Outcomes: Within six months of leaving CU Boulder, 83% of recent grads were working or in graduate school, 47% of graduates earned between \$50k and \$75k, with the greatest number working at Lockheed Martin, Charles Schwab, Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics, and RS&H. More than 100 alumni can also be found at Google, Amazon, Apple, Oracle, and Microsoft. 25% of new grads immediately jumped into an advanced degree program, and 93% were accepted into their first-choice school. Enrollment: 32,105 Cost of Attendance: \$37,684 (In-State); \$63,197 (Out-of-State) Median SAT: 1330 Median ACT: 31 Acceptance Rate: 83% Retention Rate: 89% Graduation Rate: 75% #13 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: Undergraduates can select from 100+ majors across twelve colleges and schools. 47% of class sections enroll fewer than twenty students. Undergraduate research opportunities are within reach as 21% of recent graduates completed one. The Office of Undergraduate Research facilitates numerous opportunities throughout the year, and hosts an annual Undergraduate Research Day and Summer Undergraduate Research Conference at which 550+ students make presentations. Fourteen percent of students also pursue a study abroad experience at one of 300+ destinations in 60 countries. Professional Outcomes: Within six months of graduating, 94% of Class of 2023 grads had positive outcomes. 71% found employment; the companies/organizations that hired the greatest number of grads included Northrop Grumman, Deloitte, Capital One, and Montgomery County Public Schools. Amazon, Google, and Microsoft employ more than 900 alumni each. The salary range for 2023 grads was between \$60k and \$96k. 21% of the Class of 2023 headed directly to graduate and professional school. Enrollment: 30,608 Cost of Attendance: \$30,885 (In-State); \$59,686 (Out-of-State) Median SAT: 1468 Median ACT: 33 Acceptance Rate: 45% Retention Rate: 96% Graduation Rate: 88% #14 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: UT Austin offers over 170 majors. An encouraging 36% of course sections enroll nineteen or fewer students. Opportunities for undergraduate research vary by school, and many student must compete for slots in programs such as Summer Research Scholars or use the Eureka database to find individual professors offering research assistantships. A robust study abroad program boasts 400 offerings in 100+ foreign countries; 4,600+ students participate each year, the third-largest number in the country. Professional Outcomes: Over 1000 alumni work in the offices of Dell, Google, Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, and Deloitte; IBM, Meta, Oracle, and AMD employ over 500 each. Graduates early in their careers earn a median salary of \$77,400, with median mid-career pay reaching \$141,100. Roughly one-quarter of University of Texas at Austin undergraduates go on to pursue advanced degrees after completing their bachelor's. Many pursue advanced study at UT Austin itself, which offers more than one hundred graduate programs. Many alumni stay in Texas after graduation, settling in Austin, Houston, and Dallas-Fort Worth. Enrollment: 42,444 Cost of Attendance: \$31,572 (In-State); \$62,672 (Out-of-State) Median SAT: 1370 Median ACT: 31 Acceptance Rate: 29% Retention Rate: 96% Graduation Rate: 88% #15 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: 180+ undergraduate majors are offered across twelve colleges/schools. Twenty-six percent of sections contain 50 or more students compared to 29% of sections that contain fewer than 20. Still, there are opportunities for personal connections with professors as evidenced by the fact that 80% of graduates complete research during their four years at UW. The study abroad rate of participation has climbed steadily since the turn of the millennium; 3,000 students each year spend a semester in a foreign locale. Professional Outcomes: Within months of graduation, 62% of Class of 2023 grads were employed and 24% were continuing their education. The most popular employers of 2023 grads included Amazon, Microsoft, Boeing, Seattle Children's, and Deloitte. Across all living alumni, 6,000+ work for each of Boeing and Amazon. Of those headed to graduate/professional school, most remain at UW itself. Large numbers of 2023 grads also headed to Columbia, UPenn, USC, and Johns Hopkins. Enrollment: 39,515 Cost of Attendance: \$34,552 (In-State); \$63,906 (Out-of-State) Median SAT: 1410 Median ACT: 32 Acceptance Rate: 43% Retention Rate: 95% Graduation Rate: 84% #16 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: With 46 majors and 32 minors, Ws truly has something for everyone. The academic requirements are relatively minimal, giving undergrads a high degree of intellectual freedom. 76% of class sections have fewer than twenty students; students rarely about the accessible faculty. Research opportunities with professors are plentiful. The undergraduate program for Research in the Sciences funds over one hundred students per year to conduct research over the summer. The university has increased its study abroad participation in recent years to the point that almost 50% of students now spend a semester overseas. Professional Outcomes: Within six months of graduating, 66% of recent grads had entered employment. The companies employing the highest numbers of recent Wesleyan grads included JPMorgan Chase, Americorps, Citi, McKinsey, Accenture, AlphaSignis, and Massachusetts General Hospital. Graduate school was the next step for 17% of new alumni. Those pursuing advanced degrees have enrolled in a wide range of schools, including elites like MIT, Stanford, Berkeley and most Ivies. New York, Boston, San Francisco, and Hartford are the most popular post-college destinations. Enrollment: 3,066 Cost of Attendance: \$89,020 Median SAT: 1510 Median ACT: 34 Acceptance Rate: 17% Retention Rate: 95% Graduation Rate: 92% #17 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: The school's 26 academic departments offer 37 majors and a number of concentrations rather than minors. An unparalleled 40% of courses have fewer than ten students enrolled. Many formal opportunities to engage in undergraduate research exist in the summer, during a semester, or as part of one's senior honors thesis; 40% of students participate in faculty-mentored projects. Over 50% of the junior class connects with the International Education and Study Away program to pinpoint the study abroad opportunity that is right for them. Included on that menu is the opportunity to study at Oxford for an entire year. Professional Outcomes: Among the Class of 2023, 93% were employed or continuing their educational journey within six months of graduation. Top professional destinations include Google, Goldman Sachs, Bain & Co., Harvard Medical School, Morgan Stanley, and Microsoft. The median annual income for grads early in their career was \$85,800. 14% pursue an advanced degree, with alumni attending graduate programs at Brown, Columbia, and Harvard. Enrollment: 2,112 Cost of Attendance: \$84,860 Median SAT: 1530 Median ACT: 34 Acceptance Rate: 10% Retention Rate: 97% Graduation Rate: 97% #18 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: Undergrads can study within one of eight colleges/schools, which all offer many small classes; 14% boast single-digit enrollment and 48% contain 19 or fewer students. Undergraduate research opportunities can be challenging to uncover at any large school where graduate students get the prime spots, yet, UVA does offer a multitude of formal opportunities as well as the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium and three undergraduate research journals. The classroom at UVA extends well beyond Charlottesville as one-fifth enjoy a semester abroad through one of fifty programs around the world. Professional Outcomes: Upon receiving their degree, 86% of the Class of 2023 immediately joined the workforce—with an average starting salary of \$82k-or headed directly to graduate school. Capital One (58), Amazon (45), Deloitte (41), and Accenture (34) scooped up the greatest number of 2023 grads. UVA itself was the most popular grad school destination followed by Columbia, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Duke. Enrollment: 17,612 Cost of Attendance: \$39,926 (In-State); \$76,954 (Out-of-State) Median SAT: 1490 Median ACT: 33 Acceptance Rate: 17% Retention Rate: 97% Graduation Rate: 95% #19 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: There are 50+ departmental and interdisciplinary majors offered. Eighteen percent of course sections have single-digit enrollments while 65% have 19 or fewer students. In addition, opportunities for participation in research with faculty members abound, and Wesleyan students publish their work at a rate that outpaces their peers at comparable institutions. The Summer Science Research Program is cited by many undergraduates as the most influential part of their educational experience. The Office of International Studies facilitates the overseas study of hundreds of students each year, with 45% of students spending a semester in one of 180 programs worldwide. Professional Outcomes: Six months after graduating, 97% of the Class of 2023 had achieved positive outcomes. Of the 72% of grads who were employed, top employers included Microsoft, BlackRock, Bank of America, Goldman Sachs, and JPMorgan Chase. Of the 23% of 2023 grads who directly entered an advanced degree program, common schools attended included NYU, Boston University, University of Oxford, Yale, and MIT. Enrollment: 2,418 Cost of Attendance: \$86,290 Median SAT: 1510 Median ACT: 34 Acceptance Rate: 14% Retention Rate: 96% Graduation Rate: 91% #20 Best College for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: Fifty-six majors are on tap at Colgate, including all of the expected liberal arts concentrations. With a student-faculty ratio of 9:1 and an average class size of 17, Colgate undergraduates work intimately with their instructors. Undoubtedly, the resulting connections help to explain the school's sterling 94-95% freshman retention rate. It is commonplace for Colgate students to research alongside professors. Each summer, the school funds over 200 undergraduates who assist with research projects, and, year-round, it maintains a useful database of professors who are seeking research across all disciplines. Raiders study abroad in overwhelming numbers with a 60-70% participation rate in one hundred programs that operate in 50 countries. Professional Outcomes: Nine months after graduation, only a small number of Colgate alumni are still looking for work; in 2023, that group represented less than 3% of the graduating class. A substantial 77% had already landed full-time jobs. Employers hiring the most Colgate grads included Barclays, EY, Goldman Sachs, Massachusetts General Hospital, NIH, and True Search. Alums pursuing further education attended Boston College, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, and NYU. Enrollment: 3,131 Cost of Attendance: \$87,070 Median SAT: 1430 Median ACT: 33 Acceptance Rate: 12% Retention Rate: 93% Graduation Rate: 91% #21 for Astronomy & Astrophysics Academic Highlights: Vassar students at comparable institutions. The Summer Science Research Program is cited by many undergraduates as the most influential part of their educational experience. The Office of International Studies facilitates the overseas study of hundreds of students each year, with 45% of students spending a semester in one of 180 programs worldwide. Professional Outcomes: Six months after graduating, 97% of the Class of 2023 had achieved positive outcomes. 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