



The Princeton Review's Best Colleges for 2026 Rankings Are Out

Lists of Top 25 Colleges in 50 Categories Based on 170,000 Students' Ratings & Reports About Their Schools

NEW YORK, August 12, 2025 / — [The Princeton Review](#)®—one of the nation's leading education services companies—has reported its [2026 Best Colleges](#) rankings.

The company's 50 categories of college rankings [posted](#) on PrincetonReview.com today. They are also published in *The Best 391 Colleges: 2026 Edition* (Penguin Random House, \$26.99) which went on sale today. Widely known for its multiple categories of student [survey](#)-based ranking lists, The Princeton Review's popular college guide is in its 34th annual edition.

The 50 ranking lists each name the top 25 colleges (of those in the book) in a specific category. Among them are lists on subjects of high interest to parents including Great Financial Aid and Best Career Services. Others report on subjects students often inquire about on campus tours—Best Campus Food, Best College Dorms, College City Gets High Marks, and Profs Get High Marks.

All the ranking lists are based on The Princeton Review's surveys of students attending the schools in the book who rate their own colleges on dozens of topics and report on their campus experiences at them. The rankings reported today are based on data from the company's surveys of 170,000 students at the 391 schools in the book (about 435 per school on average). The surveys were conducted in 2024–25 and/or the previous two academic years.

A new ranking list—Most Politically Moderate Students—was added to the project this year in consideration of the rising political polarization in the country. It, as well as two related lists that have long been in the book—Most Politically Liberal Students and Most Politically Conservative Students—is based on a survey question that asks students their assessment of their personal political views.

A summary below reveals the #1 colleges on the lists mentioned above (as well as the top colleges in other high interest categories). A summary that follows provides further detail about the annual Best Colleges project and the 2026 edition and rankings.

Some of The Princeton Review's 50 categories of Best Colleges ranking lists and the #1 colleges on the lists for 2026 are:

- Professors Get High Marks — #1 Sarah Lawrence College (NY)
- Best Classroom Experience— #1 Washington and Lee University (VA)
- Best-Run Colleges — #1 High Point University (NC)
- Great Financial Aid — #1 Washington and Lee University (VA)
- Best Career Services — #1 Bentley University (MA)
- Best Student Support and Counseling Services — #1 Seton Hall University (NJ)
- Best Health Services — #1 University of Virginia
- Best Campus Food — #1 University of Massachusetts—Amherst
- Best College Dorms — #1 Washington University in St. Louis (MO)
- Most Beautiful Campus — #1 The University of the South (TN)
- Most Politically Conservative Students — #1 Thomas Aquinas College (CA)

- Most Politically Liberal Students — #1 Reed College (OR)
- Most Politically Moderate Students — #1 University of Richmond (VA)
- Most Religious Students — #1 Grove City College (PA)
- LGBTQ-Friendly — #1 College of the Atlantic (ME)
- College City Gets High Marks — #1 American University (DC)
- Lots of Race/Class Interaction — #1 Harvey Mudd College (CA)
- Friendliest Students — #1 Claremont McKenna College (CA)
- Happiest Students — #1 Texas Christian University
- Their Students Love These Colleges — #1 Washington State University

A special feature in the new edition of the book, [Statistical Stand-Out Schools for 2026](#), identifies colleges in the book with compelling distinctions based on data from The Princeton Review's institutional survey for the project. Among them are college(s) in the book with the:

- Highest Average Need-Based Scholarships — \$74,113 / Williams College (MA)
- Lowest Public School In-state Tuition & Fees — \$6,368 / University of South Florida
- Lowest Private School Tuition & Fees — \$21,538 / William Jewell College (MO)
- Lowest Average Undergraduate Debt — \$7,242 / City University of New York: City College
- Most Diverse Student Body — City University of New York: Brooklyn College

"The colleges we profile in our 'Best Colleges' book are a truly select group. They constitute only about 15% of America's nearly 2,400 four-year institutions" said [Rob Franek](#), Editor-in-Chief of The Princeton Review and the book's lead author. "While they vary by locale, type, size, and campus culture, each one offers its students an academically outstanding undergraduate education. In our opinion, they are the nation's best undergraduate colleges and ideal choices for students seeking their 'best-fit' college."

"The colleges that make our ranking lists do so entirely as a result of their own students' opinions of them," Franek added. "We don't rank colleges based on our opinion of them nor would we crown a school 'best' overall. It is what the students attending the colleges in this book tell us about their experiences at their schools that determines on which lists the schools appear in our book. Our goal since day one on this project has been to provide multiple resources to help college applicants answer what is for most the toughest question in their journey to college, 'Which college is *best for me*?' "

Franek can be seen in a [video](#) that posted today on the company's YouTube channel reporting on the release of *The Best 391 Colleges*. In the video, he cites extraordinary facts about the top colleges on three of the book's most popular ranking list categories.

About The Princeton Review's Best Colleges Book and Rankings

Published since 1992, The Princeton Review's Best Colleges book profiles schools the company's editors and staff deem the nation's best based on data gathered from their survey of administrators at more than 2,000 schools as well as input from college advisors and admissions experts. The profiles feature information on admission and aid application requirements, acceptance rates, accepted students' test scores, and enrollment and student body demographics. They also share The Princeton Review's Inside Word about the school's admission and acceptance trends and report the company's [ratings](#) (scores from 60 to 99) of the schools in eight categories including Admissions Selectivity and Financial Aid. The book's 50 ranking lists (each of which name the top 25 colleges in a specific category) are entirely based on surveys of students attending the schools. Information on the student [survey](#), survey [method](#) (which uses a Likert scale), [methodology](#), and basis for each ranking list is [here](#).

Other features in the book include a list titled Great Schools for 22 of the Most Popular Undergraduate Majors. It is based on data from the company's institutional survey and opinions of The Princeton Review's National College Counselor Advisory Board. (New on this list in the 2026 edition are

suggestions of great schools for Artificial Intelligence majors.) Five Honor Rolls list in alphabetical order the colleges in the book with distinctive attributes. One names the Tuition-Free schools. Three others name the schools in the book that received the company's highest (99) [rating](#) score for Financial Aid, Fire Safety, and Green (i.e. commitment to sustainability and the environment). A Mental Health Services Honor Roll names the colleges with exceptional commitments to providing mental health and well-being services for their students. The book also includes the company's [Best Value Colleges](#), [Best Colleges for Game Design](#) and [Best Colleges for Entrepreneurship Studies](#) ranking lists.

The Best 391 Colleges is one of more than 150 books developed by The Princeton Review and published by Penguin Random House. Other college-related books in the [line](#) include [College Admission 101](#) (May 2022), [Essays That Kicked Apps](#) (September 2023), and [Paying for College](#) (2026 edition on sale September 16, 2025).

About The Princeton Review

[The Princeton Review](#) is a leading tutoring, test prep, and college admissions services company. Every year, it helps millions of college- and graduate school-bound students as well as working professionals achieve their education and career goals through its many education services and products. These include online and in-person courses delivered by a network of more than 4,000 teachers and tutors; online resources; a [line](#) of more than 150 print and digital books published by Penguin Random House; and dozens of categories of school rankings. Founded in 1981, the company is now in its 44th year. The company's [Tutor.com](#) brand, now in its 25th year, is one of the largest online tutoring services in the U.S. It comprises a community of thousands of tutors who have delivered more than 28 million tutoring sessions. The Princeton Review, headquartered in New York, NY, is not affiliated with Princeton University. For more information, visit [PrincetonReview.com](#). Follow the company on [Instagram](#) (@theprincetonreview), [LinkedIn](#) (the-princeton-review), [YouTube](#) (@ThePrincetonReview), and [TikTok](#) (@princeton.review).

THE BEST 391 COLLEGES: 2026 Edition

by Robert Franek

with David Soto, Stephen Koch, Aaron Riccio, and Laura Rose.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: [Rob Franek](#), Editor-in-Chief and author of *The Best 391 Colleges*, and David Soto, Senior Director of Data Operations, The Princeton Review, are available for interviews. [Resources](#) for members of the media include lists of the 391 colleges in the book two ways—alphabetical by college and alphabetical by state/city/college. Each indicates ranking lists (if any) the college made and its rank(s) on the list(s). A downloadable [press kit](#) provides other resources including a PDF showing the 50 ranking list categories and #1 schools on each and a PDF titled By the Numbers with fascinating facts about the schools in the book.