

# Why Columbia? - Columbia University - College Review

## **Essentials:**

Columbia University is defined by two key elements. It is committed to providing a well-rounded liberal arts education through its teaching of the Core Curriculum and by its New York City location. New York City plays a critical role both inside and outside the classroom by providing students a virtually unlimited assortment of activities to choose from. A Columbia University student's home is a compact, busy and historic campus located in an increasingly desirable, Upper West Side Manhattan neighborhood. The campus is a gated quiet oasis but with easy and ready access to one of the most dynamic cities in the world.

Students take a rigorous academic course load based on the Core Curriculum. The Core Curriculum consists of a variety of classes that students take in common. The objective of the Core Curriculum is to expose Columbia students to the classic and timeless great works of literature, the arts, music, political and religious thought and the sciences to provide the essential foundation of a well-rounded liberal arts education. The classroom experience also includes visits to many of the great cultural institutions of New York City to enhance learning.

Columbia University students are happy and active, academically eager and down to earth. They are also hard-working, ambitious, intelligent and forward thinking. You would be hard-pressed to find the caricature of the advantaged Ivy League student at Columbia. Columbia students also enjoy a well balanced social life that offers a wide range of activities on campus and in New York City that can satisfy even the most discerning student.

## **Strength of the School:**

A major challenge for a student attending Columbia University is to properly manage their time so that they are able to take advantage of all the choices of activities and experiences open to them. Its New York City location offers a virtually unlimited menu of things to do and with only 24 hours in a day, a Columbia student should be ready to choose wisely. There are also great opportunities to gain professional experience from internships and other employment and career opportunities available in New York.

Columbia is an intellectually minded school with a diverse and international set of students open to learning and expanding their horizons. A diverse student body from all over the United States and various locations around the world plus a campus in Manhattan empowers students to learn from one another and the variety of perspectives present on and off campus.

The city is right outside the campus gates with public transportation ready to allow students to access the great cultural, culinary, entertainment, commercial and shopping opportunities available. The immediate Morningside Heights neighborhood, like much of New York City, has made great strides in improvement. It has become an excellent place to live with all the necessary amenities for daily living within a walkable distance.

Columbia's stature and its New York City location make it a must stop for prominent speakers from all walks of life. A variety of events on a regular basis are available for a student to choose from. So much is available for a student ready to take advantage of new ideas and experiences.

A Columbia education with its excellent academics based on the Core Curriculum will provide a solid intellectual foundation. Its diverse student body and the location can't help but to widen the horizons of any attending student. After graduation, a dynamic Columbia alumni network is there to assist a student in their transition to a career.

#### **Academics:**

- Columbia University is divided into Columbia College and The Fu School of Engineering. Also there are the affiliate schools of Barnard and Teachers College and the School of General Studies as well as The Jewish Theological Seminary and the Union Theological Seminary.
  
- Columbia also includes many world-renowned graduate and professional programs in arts and sciences, business, law, journalism, medicine, dental, social work and others. The undergraduate population is smaller than the graduate and professional enrollment of the school.
  
- Columbia has a great faculty, however, their classroom performance is uneven. TA's and graduate students assist in teaching some classes. Columbia is a research university and hosts a myriad of graduate schools; it does not provide the consistent devotion to the undergraduate

teaching experience like a Princeton, Dartmouth or Yale. This is not to say that the academic experience does not rate high. The Core Curriculum and New York City as an extension of the classroom assist in providing a fine all-around education.

- Columbia's academic environment can be characterized as intellectually minded rather than as a pre-professional educational environment.

- The Core Curriculum provides the basic foundation of the Columbia educational experience. Finishing the Core Curriculum and all other required courses for graduation may take a student through their Senior year to complete. The majority of the Core Curriculum classes will be taken Freshman and Sophomore years. After completing the core curriculum along with the other required courses a Columbia student can't help but receive a well-rounded education. Often Columbia students after graduation look back and better appreciate the experience and benefits of learning the Core Curriculum.

- Academics at the school are rigorous and there is always some sort of work for a student to do.

- Students share the common experience of taking the Core Curriculum. The experience serves as a great vehicle to promote bonding between students.

- New York City cultural institutions serve as extensions of the classroom for many of the Core Curriculum courses.

- The Core Curriculum courses are taught in a series of seminar sized classes.

### **Student/ Social Life:**

- Columbia has an impressive collection of students from around the United States and the world with varied interests to interact with or talk to and learn from. Finding interesting people to meet is never a challenge at Columbia or in New York City.

- Columbia has an involved student body with a wide variety of interests that keep them very busy. Columbia offers an assortment of activities, events and clubs to keep even the most demanding student satisfied with all the available options. In addition, Columbia has a politically active student body. The overall political orientation of the campus is liberal.

- All freshmen and the majority of students live in dorms on or nearby Columbia's campus. Living in the dorms is conducive to making friends right away. Dorms are one of the most important centers of social life.

- Columbia's campus is compact and any destination on campus is only a short walk away. Travel time is never an issue on campus. People and facilities are always in close proximity to each other.

- Columbia cannot be characterized as a party school; a better description would be that it is a "doing" school.

- New York is an extension of the campus in so many ways. The official name of the school, Columbia University in the City of New York accurately defines the experience. Exploring New York is a big part of the social life of the school. The university provides discounts and free tickets to many attractions around the city. A prerequisite of attending Columbia is that the student must be able to enjoy living full-time in the middle of a very large, dynamic, urban environment that can be exceptionally enjoyable and daunting at the same time.

- Columbia provides adequate athletic facilities for the students, however, following varsity sports is only a minor diversion. Columbia is not known for consistent success on the football field or basketball court. The field and facilities for the playing of outdoor team sports such as varsity football, soccer and baseball are all played at the Baker Field Complex located on the northern tip of Manhattan, a distance away from the campus.

- For casual walking, running, bike riding and pick up sports, a student can access Riverside Park only two blocks away, along the Hudson River. Central Park is also within easy walking distance from campus. Central Park, located right in the center of Manhattan, is one of the world's greatest urban parks.

- Greek life plays a very small role at Columbia and is notably out of the mainstream experience.

- Classes rarely meet on Friday. Fridays are often used as a day to catch up on all matters academically and socially.

- It's often said that Columbia has an administration that is overly bureaucratic and unresponsive to student demands. Resolving problems often turns into a nightmare.

- Academic advising is also criticized as being inadequate.

**Location:**

- The campus is located in Morningside Heights an ever increasingly attractive area of New York City. Twenty or thirty years ago this location caused some trepidation in students because of

crime. Now it is transformed into one of the safest areas of New York City, the safest big city in America.

- Students have to get used to public transportation for the best and fastest way to travel the city.
- All the amenities for college students are right near campus.
- Everything you need is accessible 24/7 in New York City.

**Don't go to Columbia if:**

Don't go if you don't want to study the Core Curriculum. This is the basis of the Columbia education. As a student you need to embrace the highly rigorous Core to successfully get through it. Don't go if you want a pre-professional education, Columbia is dominated by the liberal arts and more academically oriented and general studies. Also, don't go to Columbia if you can't handle New York City or if you want a high level of school spirit centered on sports, fraternities and campus wide events.

**Columbia Interview- College Specific Questions to Ask the Interviewer:**

How did the Core Curriculum contribute to the overall academic experience?

What opportunities did you take advantage of in New York while attending?

How did New York institutions play a role in your education?

How would you rate the classroom teaching experience at Columbia?

How did the diverse and international student body contribute to your experience?

What contributes to school spirit at Columbia?

**Columbia University Quick Facts:**

Columbia University General Website:

<http://www.columbia.edu>

Columbia Financial Aid:

<http://sfs.columbia.edu>

Columbia University Campus Map:

<http://www.columbia.edu/content/maps.html>

Columbia University Nickname: Lions

Columbia Athletics:

<http://www.gocolumbialions.com>

Columbia Undergraduates: 6,113 (8,274 including General Studies)

**Columbia University Famous Alumni:**

Barack Obama

Benjamin Spock

Isaac Asimov

***accepted10percent.com***

Alexander Hamilton

Art Garfunkel

Robert Jastrow

Robert A. M. Stern