

Why Stanford? - Stanford University - College Review

Essentials:

Stanford University offers a student a very attractive blend of top-flight academics, a beautiful campus in a prime location, opportunities for a rewarding social life and the resources necessary to nurture the ambitious person. The palm tree lined traditional Spanish mission style campus with mostly sunny days and consistently beautiful weather brings the focus of campus life outdoors. On the surface, the overall campus possesses a laidback, California attitude. The real fact of the matter is that the demanding academics and highly self-motivated students push themselves to the limit but mostly in an unobtrusive, low profile manner.

Stanford University provides a student a combination of pre-professional and well-rounded liberal arts education. Social life is a matter of an individual finding their proper niche among the great variety of students, activities and academic interests that exist at Stanford. Stanford University does not fit into the mold of a work hard, party hard school.

The immediate surrounding area of Palo Alto is very attractive; however it is certainly not a college town. Therefore the majority of student life takes place on campus. The campus has more than adequate resources to be self-contained. However, this leads to a degree of insularity that has both positive and negative attributes.

Strength of the School:

Stanford offers so many truly outstanding opportunities for its students. It starts with great academics featuring leading scholars and a world-class faculty devoted to and enthusiastic about teaching the undergraduate. Many of Stanford's academic departments across the university are ranked top in their respective fields.

Stanford attracts a diverse set of ambitious, talented and enterprising students ready to make their mark on the world. The school provides students extracurricular outlets for almost any type of activity and interest.

Many students are attracted to the school for its beautiful location, campus and weather as well as its California lifestyle. Stanford is located in world-renowned Silicon Valley in the San

Francisco Bay Area. Most importantly many students are drawn to the school because Stanford graduates make a dramatic difference in the world.

Academics:

- Academics are exceptionally challenging, so the laid-back attitude displayed by many students does not represent the true effort needed to fulfill the stringent requirements of the university. Stanford students often display a calm and collected manner that belies a very driven intensity under the surface. Students at the school have to devote a great deal of time to their studies.
- Students are highly ambitious and oriented towards building a very successful career or enterprise after graduation. Students are very competitive with their own high standards rather than overtly competitive with classmates.
- The truly outstanding faculty which includes many leading scholars of various fields is quite devoted to providing a first class educational experience in the classroom. Many students comment on the overall enthusiasm of professors who are truly excited about their academic specialty and who want to share this enthusiasm with students. Professors are accessible and encourage students to visit them during office hours.
- Stanford's stellar reputation has been made in the sciences, especially computer science and engineering; however, the academic quality of humanities now rates just as highly.
- Stanford has quite extensive General Education Requirements that must be met in order to earn a degree. These requirements include one year of a foreign-language plus several classes in writing. Additional courses must be taken across a wide range of disciplines. Stanford students have mixed reactions regarding these requirements. Stanford's response is that they believe the completion of the required courses leads to a well-rounded education. Several introductory

freshman classes of the General Education Requirement take place in large lecture halls. Teaching assistants are often the main point of contact in these lecture hall classes.

- Much smaller and manageable sized classes are the norm for more advanced courses.

- Stanford utilizes a unique quarter system calendar that includes courses of shorter duration compared to similar offerings at other comparable colleges. Subject matter and tests are concentrated into shorter time frames adding to the academic rigor at Stanford. The system also offers Stanford students opportunities to take and sample more course offerings than other comparable universities.

- Stanford has a consistently high quality of professors across academic departments. There are so many great choices at Stanford, the challenge for a student is to decide which courses to take.

- Stanford's undergraduate commitment to research programs is the largest in the country. Stanford has leading graduate programs in business, engineering, education, medicine and law. These provide opportunities for farther participation in research and seminars taught by faculty from these schools.

Student/ Social Life:

- Stanford offers a lower-key social scene. It is not a party school, however, students can definitely have a good time. Stanford offers students social activities and opportunities for every interest and has a number of larger campus parties sponsored by various student organizations occurring on the weekends. It is up to the student to be proactive to discover their niche and take advantage of the many facets of the Stanford social scene.

- The majority of student life takes place on campus with over 95% of the students living there.

- The adjoining town of Palo Alto is a beautiful place to live for the affluent but offers very little for the average Stanford student. Students agree Palo Alto is expensive and not a college town. San Francisco, Berkeley and Santa Cruz are interesting places to visit however traveling to them on a regular basis for entertainment is inconvenient and unrealistic because of their relative distance from campus. Traveling off campus for the majority of students is not a regular activity.

- The idea of the "Stanford Bubble" persists among students because travel off campus is challenging and a degree of insularity exists at Stanford. The other reason for this idea is that the Stanford campus is large enough, entertaining enough and pleasant enough to be self sufficient.

- The overall great, sunny weather of the area makes life on campus much more enjoyable. Outdoor life dominates the campus scene. Walking, bike riding and an efficient bus system are the popular forms of transportation.

- The natural beauty of the area and the beauty of the campus is another positive aspect of the Stanford experience. Students can find outlets for all varieties of outdoor activities in close proximity to campus.

- There is a lower level of public displays of political discourse and social activism when compared to other schools of this caliber. In this regard, it is a quieter campus. Students interested in these types of activities can join a club or organization to channel these interests.

- With an assortment of over 650 student groups at the university, there are opportunities for a student to participate in any activity they may be interested in. The school also encourages

community service participation and sponsors many community service outlets for the student to get involved.

- The freshman dorm experience is consistently highly rated by Stanford students. Resident Assistants are praised for their overall support of the student. Living together in close quarters as freshmen is very conducive for students to make long-lasting relationships.

- There are many types of housing available for Stanford students. Access to these housing options is determined by lottery and this system creates students both happy and unhappy with their outcomes.

- Students are generally not satisfied with the dining plan. They rate the meals unsatisfactory and the plan too expensive.

- Greek life comprises less than 15% of Stanford students. However, their parties play an important role in the social scene of the school.

- While many Stanford students do come from privileged backgrounds, the typical Stanford student is somewhere right in the middle in terms of family income. Stanford's generous financial aid policies have allowed the creation of a diverse student body and have allowed highly accomplished students from a wide range of economic circumstances to make the university a realistic choice. Stanford students for the most part are very open to meeting and becoming friends with all sorts of people. Similar to most college campuses, self-segregation of groups does occur but on a smaller scale than other universities. Attendance by a large contingent of international students at Stanford adds to the flavor of diversity.

- Many entrepreneurial students are attracted to Stanford and the school, plus its location in Silicon Valley, goes a long way to nurturing the creation of new enterprises. Stanford offers

assistance, programs and classes to those students interested in starting their own businesses. Resources and technical support necessary to build a new venture are all available on campus and in the area.

- Stanford offers the opportunity to root for highly competitive and well-regarded college sports teams. While not a primary focus of the average Stanford student, the university is a very successful participant in major college sports. Famous professional athletes across a variety of sports have attended Stanford.

Location:

Stanford is in a beautiful and highly desirable area of the country. The immediate Palo Alto area is a great family setting but does not offer the amenities of a typical college town. San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Cruz and Berkeley are great for day trips and are great places for college students to visit.

Stanford is an integral part of Silicon Valley and countless opportunities in this area are open to students. A major strength of the area is that a student is able to make the connections necessary to have a job lined for after graduation.

Don't go to Stanford if:

Don't go if you are not open to being creative and entrepreneurial. The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well at Stanford. You'll have to be open to be an innovator to take full advantage of the Stanford experience. Also don't go if you want a traditional college social life.

Stanford Interview- College Specific Questions to Ask the Interviewer:

- How do the location, weather and campus contribute to the Stanford experience?

- Can you describe the dominant student attitude at Stanford?
- What resources are available at Stanford to assist you in starting your own business?
- How did your fellow students inspire you during your time at Stanford?
- How did Stanford sports contribute, if at all, to your college experience?
- What are the most popular extracurricular activities at Stanford and how did most students spend their time?

Stanford University Quick Facts:

Stanford General Website:

<http://www.stanford.edu/>

Stanford Financial Aid:

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/finaid/>

Stanford Campus Map:

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/visitorinfo/plan/maps.html>

Stanford Nickname: Cardinal

Stanford Athletics:

<http://www.gostanford.com/index.html>

Stanford Undergraduates: 6,999

Stanford Famous Alumni:

Herbert Hoover

Edwin Hubble

Andrew Grove

David Packard

Charles Schwab

Ted Koppel

Jerry Yang

Sandra Day O'Connor