

# FISKE

## GUIDE TO COLLEGES

# 费思克选校指南

**2008**  
[第24版]

**Edward B. Fiske**

爱德华·费思克/著

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The colleges in this guide are listed alphabetically and cross-referenced for your convenience. Below is a list of the selected colleges grouped by state. Following this listing, you will find a second listing in which the colleges are categorized by the yearly cost of attending each school.

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	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
\$\$\$\$	More than \$8,000	More than \$34,000
\$\$\$	\$6,000–\$8,000	\$32,000–\$34,000
\$\$	\$5,000–\$6,000	\$27,000–\$32,000
\$	Less than \$5,000	Less than \$27,000

Price categories are based on current tuition and fees and do not include room, board, transportation, and other expenses.

## PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

### Inexpensive—\$

Aberdeen, University of  
 Arizona State University  
 Arizona, University of  
 British Columbia, University of  
 Evergreen State College  
 Florida State University  
 Florida, University of  
 Georgia Institute of Technology  
 Georgia, University of  
 Hawaii, University of—Manoa  
 Louisiana State University  
 McGill University  
 New College of Florida  
 New Mexico Institute of Mining and  
 Technology  
 New Mexico, University of  
 North Carolina State  
 North Carolina, University  
 of—Asheville  
 North Carolina, University  
 of—Greensboro  
 Queen's University  
 St. Andrews, University of  
 Toronto, University of  
 Utah, University of  
 West Virginia University

### Moderate—\$\$

Alabama, University of  
 Arkansas, University of  
 Auburn University  
 Colorado, University of—Boulder  
 Iowa State University  
 Iowa, University of  
 Montana Tech of the University of  
 Montana  
 Nebraska, University of—Lincoln  
 North Carolina, University of—Chapel

### Hill

Oklahoma, University of  
 Oregon State University  
 Oregon, University of  
 SUNY—University at Albany  
 SUNY—Binghamton University  
 SUNY—Geneseo  
 SUNY—Purchase College  
 SUNY—Stony Brook  
 Tennessee, University of  
 Washington, University of

### Expensive—\$\$\$

College of Charleston  
 Delaware, University of  
 George Mason University  
 Indiana University  
 James Madison University  
 Kansas, University of  
 Kentucky, University of  
 Maine, University of—Orono  
 Mary Washington, University of  
 Maryland, University of—College Park  
 Missouri, University of—Columbia  
 Purdue University  
 Rhode Island, University of  
 South Carolina, University of  
 SUNY—Buffalo  
 Texas A&M University  
 Texas Tech University  
 Texas, University of—Austin  
 Truman State University  
 California, University of—Berkeley  
 California, University of—Davis  
 California, University of—Irvine  
 California, University of—Los Angeles  
 California, University of—Riverside  
 California, University of—San Diego  
 California, University of—Santa

### Barbara

California, University of—Santa Cruz  
 Virginia Polytechnic Institute  
 Virginia, University of  
 Wisconsin, University of—Madison

### Very Expensive—\$\$\$\$

Cincinnati, University of  
 Clemson University  
 College of New Jersey  
 Colorado School of Mines  
 Connecticut, University of  
 Illinois, University of—Urbana-  
 Champaign  
 Maryland, University of—Baltimore  
 County  
 Massachusetts, University of—Amherst  
 Miami University (OH)  
 Michigan State University  
 Michigan, University of  
 Minnesota, University of—Morris  
 Minnesota, University of—Twin Cities  
 New Hampshire, University of  
 New Jersey Institute of Technology  
 Ohio State University  
 Ohio University  
 Pennsylvania State University  
 Pittsburgh, University of  
 Rutgers University  
 St. Mary's College of Maryland  
 Vermont, University of  
 William and Mary, College of

## PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

### Inexpensive—\$

Adelphi University  
 Agnes Scott College  
 Albertson College  
 Albion College  
 Alfred University  
 Alma College  
 Alverno College  
 Austin College  
 Baylor University  
 Birmingham-Southern College  
 Brigham Young University  
 Calvin College  
 Cooper Union  
 Cornell College  
 Dallas, University of  
 Dayton, University of  
 Deep Springs  
 DePaul University  
 Drexel University  
 Elon University  
 Emerson College  
 Gordon College  
 Guilford College  
 Gustavus Adolphus  
 Hampden-Sydney College  
 Hendrix College  
 Hiram College  
 Hofstra University  
 Hollins University  
 Hood College  
 Hope College  
 Houghton College  
 Howard University  
 Illinois Institute of Technology  
 Ithaca College  
 Loyola University—New Orleans  
 Manhattanville College  
 Marquette University  
 Millsaps College  
 Morehouse College  
 Oglethorpe University  
 Olin College of Engineering  
 Presbyterian College  
 Prescott College  
 Principia College  
 Randolph College  
 Rice University  
 Ripon College  
 Rochester Institute of Technology  
 Saint Louis University

Southwestern University  
 Spelman College  
 St. Benedict, College of, and St. John's  
 University  
 Sweet Briar College  
 Texas Christian University  
 Trinity University  
 Tulsa, University of  
 Wabash College  
 Warren Wilson College  
 Wells College  
 Wheaton College (IL)  
 Wofford College  
 Xavier University of Louisiana

### Moderate—\$\$

Allegheny College  
 American University  
 Antioch College  
 Atlantic, College of the  
 Beloit College  
 California Institute of Technology  
 Case Western Reserve University  
 Catholic University of America, The  
 Chapman University  
 Clark University  
 Clarkson University  
 Davidson College  
 Denison University  
 Denver, University of  
 DePauw University  
 Earlham College  
 Eckerd College  
 Eugene Lang College, The New  
 School for Liberal Arts  
 Fairfield University  
 Florida Institute of Technology  
 Fordham University  
 Furman University  
 Goucher College  
 Grinnell College  
 Hartwick College  
 Illinois Wesleyan University  
 Kalamazoo College  
 Knox College  
 Lafayette College  
 Lake Forest College  
 Lawrence University  
 Lewis & Clark College  
 Loyola Marymount University  
 Macalester College

Marlboro College  
 Miami, University of (FL)  
 Mills College  
 Muhlenberg College  
 Northeastern University  
 Ohio Wesleyan University  
 Pacific, University of the  
 Pomona College  
 Puget Sound, University of  
 Redlands, University of  
 Rhode Island School of Design  
 Rhodes College  
 Rollins College  
 Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology  
 San Francisco, University of  
 Santa Clara University  
 South, University of the (Sewanee)  
 Southern Methodist University  
 St. Olaf College  
 Stetson University  
 Susquehanna University  
 Syracuse University  
 Washington and Jefferson College  
 Washington and Lee University  
 Whitman College  
 Whittier College  
 Willamette University  
 Wittenberg University  
 Wooster, The College of

### Expensive—\$\$\$

Babson College  
 Barnard College  
 Boston College  
 Bryn Mawr College  
 Centre College  
 Claremont McKenna  
 Cornell University  
 Dartmouth College  
 Dickinson College  
 Drew University  
 Duke University  
 Emory University  
 Georgetown University  
 Harvard University  
 Harvey Mudd  
 Haverford College  
 Holy Cross, College of the  
 Lehigh University  
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
 New York University

## PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Northwestern University  
 Notre Dame, University of  
 Occidental College  
 Pepperdine University  
 Princeton University  
 Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
 Rochester, University of  
 Scripps College  
 Smith College  
 Southern California, University of  
 St. Lawrence University  
 Stanford University  
 Stevens Institute of Technology  
 Swarthmore College  
 Ursinus College  
 Vanderbilt University  
 Villanova University  
 Wake Forest University  
 Washington University in St. Louis  
 Wellesley College  
 Williams College  
 Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Yale University

### Very Expensive—\$\$\$\$

Amherst College  
 Bard College  
 Bates College  
 Bennington College  
 Bowdoin College  
 Brandeis University  
 Brown University  
 Bucknell University  
 Carleton College  
 Carnegie Mellon University  
 Chicago, University of  
 Colby College  
 Colgate University  
 Colorado College  
 Columbia College  
 Connecticut College  
 Franklin and Marshall College  
 George Washington University  
 Gettysburg College

Hamilton College  
 Hampshire College  
 Hobart and William Smith  
 Johns Hopkins University  
 Kenyon College  
 Middlebury College  
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 Skidmore College  
 St. John's College  
 Trinity College  
 Tufts University  
 Tulane University  
 Union College  
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# The Best Buys of 2008

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Following is a list of 46 colleges and universities that qualify as Best Buys based on the quality of their academic offerings in relation to the cost of attendance.

*(See page xviii for an explanation of how Best Buys were identified.)*

## Public

University of Aberdeen (Great Britain)  
University of Arizona  
University of British Columbia (Canada)  
University of Colorado  
Evergreen State  
University of Florida  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
University of Georgia  
University of Iowa  
Iowa State University  
McGill University (Canada)  
New College of Florida  
University of North Carolina at Asheville  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
University of St. Andrews (Great Britain)  
SUNY-Binghamton  
SUNY-Geneseo  
SUNY-Stony Brook  
University of Toronto (Canada)  
University of Washington

## Private

Adelphi University  
Baylor University  
Birmingham-Southern University  
Brigham Young University  
Case Western Reserve  
Cooper Union  
Deep Springs College  
Earlham College  
Elon University  
Grinnell College  
Hendrix College  
Howard University  
Illinois Institute of Technology  
Macalester College  
Morehouse College  
Olin College of Engineering  
Randolph College  
Rice University  
University of the South (Sewanee)  
Southwestern University  
Spelman College  
Trinity University (TX)  
Wabash College  
Warren Wilson College  
Washington and Lee University  
Wheaton College (IL)

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# Introduction

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## FISKE GUIDE TO COLLEGES—AND HOW TO USE IT

The 2008 edition of *Fiske Guide to Colleges* is a revised and updated version of a book that has been a bestseller since it first appeared two decades ago and is universally regarded as the definitive college guide of its type. Features of the new edition include:

- Updated write-ups on more than 300 of the country's best and most interesting colleges and universities
- A list of schools that no longer require the SAT or ACT of all applicants
- A section titled "Sizing Yourself Up," with a questionnaire that will help you figure out what kind of school is best for you
- "A Guide for Preprofessionals," which lists colleges and universities strong in nine preprofessional areas
- A list of schools with strong programs for students with learning disabilities
- Designation of the 46 schools that constitute this year's Best Buys
- Statistical summaries that give you the numbers you need, but spare you those that you do not
- Authoritative rankings of each institution by academics, social life, and quality of life
- The unique "If You Apply..." feature, which summarizes the vital information you need about each college's admission policies—including deadlines and essay topics
- A section on the top Canadian and British universities to help the growing number of students and families in the United States seeking the educational bargains lurking just across the border to the north. These universities offer first-rate academics—easily the equivalent of the flagship public institutions in the U.S.—but at a fraction of the cost.

Picking the right college—one that will coincide with your particular needs, goals, interests, talents, and personality—is one of the most important decisions any young person will ever make. It is also a major investment. Tuition and fees alone now run at least \$5,000 at a typical public university and \$27,000 at a typical private college, and the overall tab at the most selective and expensive schools tops \$50,000. Obviously, a major investment like that should be approached with as much information as possible.

That's where *Fiske Guide to Colleges* fits in. It is a tool to help you make the most intelligent educational investment you can.

## WHAT IS THE FISKE GUIDE TO COLLEGES?

*Fiske Guide to Colleges* mirrors a process familiar to any college-bound student and his or her family. If you are wondering whether to consider a particular college, it is logical to seek out friends or acquaintances who go there and ask them to tell you about their experiences. We have done exactly that—but on a far broader and more systematic basis than any individual or family could do alone.

In using the *Fiske Guide*, some special features should be kept in mind:

- The guide is **selective**. We have not tried to cover all four-year colleges and universities. Rather, we have taken more than 300 of the best and most interesting institutions in the nation—the ones that students most want to know about—and written descriptive essays of 1,000 to 2,500 words about each of them.
- Since choosing a college is a matter of making a calculated and informed judgment, this guide is also **subjective**. It makes judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of each institution, and it contains a unique set of ratings of each college or university on the basis of academic strength, social life, and overall quality of life. No institution is a good fit for every student. The underlying assumption of the *Fiske Guide* is that each of the colleges chosen for inclusion is the right place for some students but not a good bet for others. Like finding the right husband or wife, college admissions is a matching process. You know your own interests and needs; the *Fiske Guide* will tell you something about those needs that each college seems to serve best.
- Finally, the *Fiske Guide* is systematic. Each write-up is carefully constructed to cover specific topics—from the academic climate and the makeup of the student body to the social scene—in a systematic order. This

means that you can easily take a specific topic, such as the level of academic pressure or the role of fraternities and sororities on campus, and trace it through all of the colleges that interest you.

## HOW THE COLLEGES WERE SELECTED

How do you single out “the best and most interesting” of the more than 2,200 four-year colleges in the United States? Obviously, many fine institutions are not included. Space limitations simply require that some hard decisions be made.

The selection was done with several broad principles in mind, beginning with academic quality. Depending on how you define the term, there are about 175 “selective” colleges and universities in the nation, and by and large these constitute the best institutions academically. All of these are included in the *Fiske Guide*. In addition, an effort was made to achieve geographic diversity and a balance of public and private schools. Special efforts were made to include a good selection of three types of institutions that seem to be enjoying special popularity at present: engineering and technical schools, those with a religious emphasis, and those located along the Sunbelt, where the cost of education is considerably less than at its Northern counterparts.

Finally, in a few cases we exercised the journalist’s prerogative of writing about schools that are simply interesting. The tiny College of the Atlantic, for example, would hardly qualify on the basis of superior academic program or national significance, but it offers an unusual and fascinating brand of liberal arts within the context of environmental studies. Likewise, Deep Springs College, the only two-year school in the *Fiske Guide*, is a unique institution of intrinsic interest.

## HOW THE FISKE GUIDE WAS COMPILED

Each college or university selected for inclusion in the *Fiske Guide to Colleges* was sent a packet of questionnaires. The first was directed to the administration and covered topics ranging from their perception of the institution’s mission to the demographics of the student body. Administrators were also asked to distribute a set of questionnaires to a cross section of students.

The questions for students, all open-ended and requiring short essays as responses, covered a series of topics ranging from the accessibility of professors and the quality of housing and dining facilities to the type of nightlife and weekend entertainment available in the area. By and large, students responded enthusiastically to the challenge we offered them. The quality of the information in the write-ups is a tribute to their diligence and openness. American college students, we learned, are a candid lot. They are proud of their institutions, but also critical—in the positive sense of the word.

Other sources of information were also employed. Administrators were invited to attach to their questionnaires any catalogs, in-house research, or other documents that would contribute to an understanding of the institution and to comment on their write-up in the last edition. Also, staff members have visited many of the colleges, and in some cases, additional information was solicited through published materials, telephone interviews, and other contacts with students and administrators.

The information from these various questionnaires was then incorporated into write-ups by staff members under the editorial direction of Edward B. Fiske, former education editor of the *New York Times*.

## THE FORMAT

Each essay covers certain broad subjects in roughly the same order. They are as follows:

**Academics**  
**Campus setting**  
**Student body**  
**Financial aid**

**Housing**  
**Food**  
**Social life**  
**Extracurricular activities**

Certain subtopics are covered in all of the essays. The sections on academics, for example, always discuss the departments (or, in the case of large universities, schools) that are particularly strong or weak, while the sections on housing contain information on whether the dorms are co-ed or single-sex and how students get the rooms they want. Other topics, however, such as class size, the need for a car, or the number of volumes in the library, are mentioned only if they constitute a particular strength or weakness at that institution.

We paid particular attention to the effect of the 21-year-old drinking age on campus life. Also, we noted efforts some schools' administrations have been making to change or improve the social and residential life on campuses through such measures as creating learning communities, restricting fraternities, and constructing new recreational facilities.

## BEST BUYS

One of the lesser-known facts of life about higher education in the U.S. is that price and quality do not always go hand-in-hand. The college or university with the jumbo price tag may or may not offer a better education than the institution across town with much lower tuition. The relationship between the cost paid by the consumer and the quality of the education is affected by factors ranging from the size of an institution's endowment to calculations by college officials about what the market will bear.

In the face of today's skyrocketing tuition rates, students and families in all economic circumstances are looking for ways to get the best value for their education dollar. Fortunately, there are some bargains to be found in higher education; it just takes a bit of shopping around with a little guidance along the way. The *Fiske Guide* has an Index by Price that groups public and private institutions into four price categories, from inexpensive to very expensive. We also go one step further and suggest a number of schools that offer outstanding academics with relatively modest prices. This year we have designated 46 such institutions—20 public and 26 private—as Best Buys. Look for the Best Buy graphic next to the college name. (A list of all 2008 Best Buys appears on page xv.)

All of our Best Buys fall into the inexpensive or moderate price category, and most have four- or five-star academic ratings. But there are bargains to be found among all levels and types of institutions. For example, some of the best values in American higher education are public colleges and universities that have remained relatively small and offer the smaller classes and personalized approach to academics that are typically found only in expensive private liberal arts colleges. Several of these are included as Best Buys.

## STATISTICS

At the beginning of each write-up are basic statistics about the college or university—the ones that are relevant to applicants. These include the address, type of location (urban, small town, rural, etc.), enrollment, male/female ratio, SAT or ACT score ranges of the middle 50 percent of the students, percentage of students receiving need-based financial aid, relative cost, whether or not the institution has a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the number of students who apply and the percentage of those who are accepted, the percentage of accepted students who enroll, the number of freshmen who graduate within six years, and the number of freshmen who return for their sophomore year. For convenience, we include the telephone number of the admissions office and the school's website and email and mailing addresses.

Unlike some guides, we have intentionally not published figures on the student/faculty ratio because colleges use different—and often self-serving—methods to calculate the ratio, thus making this particular statistic virtually meaningless.

Within the statistics, you will sometimes encounter the letters "N/A." In most cases, this means that the statistic was not available. In other cases, however, such as schools that do not require standardized tests, it means "not applicable." The write-up should make it clear which meaning is the relevant one.

We have included information on whether the school has a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa because this academic honorary society is a sign of broad intellectual distinction. Keep in mind, though, that even the very best engineering schools, because of their relatively narrow focus, do not usually qualify under the society's standards.

Tuition and fees are constantly increasing at American colleges, but for the most part, the cost of various institutions in relation to one another does not change. Rather than put in specific cost figures that would immediately become out of date, we have classified colleges into four groups ranging from inexpensive (\$) to very expensive (\$\$\$\$) based on estimated costs of tuition and fees for the 2007–2008 academic year. The results for



each college can be found in the Index by Price pages xii–xiv. Separate scales were used for public and private institutions, and the ratings for the public institutions are based on cost for residents of the state; out-of-staters should expect to pay more. If a public institution has a particularly low or high surcharge for out-of-staters, this is noted in the essay. The categories are defined as follows:

	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
\$\$\$\$	More than \$8,000	More than \$34,000
\$\$\$	\$6,000–\$8,000	\$32,000–\$34,000
\$\$	\$5,000–\$6,000	\$27,000–\$32,000
\$	Less than \$5,000	Less than \$27,000

We also include an index that groups colleges by their relative cost (see Index by Price pages xii–xiv).

## SAT and ACT SCORES

A special word needs to be said about standardized test scores. Some publications follow the practice of giving the median or average score registered by entering freshmen. Such figures, however, are easily misinterpreted as thresholds rather than averages. Many applicants forget that if a school reports average SAT–Verbal scores of 500, this means that, by definition, about half of the students scored below this number and half scored above. An applicant with a 480 would still have lots of company.

To avoid such confusion, we report the range of scores of the middle half of freshmen—or, to put it another way, the scores achieved by those in the 25th and 75th percentiles. For example, that college where the SAT–Verbal average was 500 might have a range of 440 to 560. So if you scored within this range, you would have joined the middle 50 percent of last year's freshmen. If your score was above 560, you would have been in the top quarter and could probably look forward to a relatively easy time; if it was below 440, you would have been struggling along with the bottom quarter of students.

The reporting of ranges rather than a single average is an increasingly common practice, but some colleges do not calculate ranges. These are indicated by “N/A.” Keep in mind, as well, that score ranges (and averages, for that matter) are misleading at the growing number of colleges that no longer require test scores from all applicants (see the section on SAT- and ACT-Optional Schools below). The ranges given for these colleges typically represents the range of scores of students who choose to submit their test scores, although they are not required to do so.

Unfortunately, another problem that arises with SAT and ACT scores is that, in their zeal to make themselves look good in a competitive market, some colleges and universities have been known to be less than honest in the numbers they release. They inflate their scores by not counting certain categories of students at the low end of the scale, such as athletes, certain types of transfer students, or students admitted under affirmative action programs. Some colleges have gone to such extremes as reporting the relatively high math scores of foreign students, but not their relatively low verbal scores. Aside from the sheer dishonesty of such practices, they can also be misleading. A student whose own scores are below the 25th percentile of a particular institution needs to know whether his profile matches that of the lower quarter of the student body as a whole, or whether there is an unreported pool of students with lower scores.

Even when dealing with a range rather than a single score, keep in mind that standardized tests are an imprecise measure of academic ability, and comparisons of scores that differ by less than 50 or 60 points on a scale of 200 to 800 have little meaning. According to the laws of statistics, there is one chance in three that the 550 that arrived in the little envelope from ETS should really be at least 580 or no more than 520. On the other hand, median scores offer some indication of your chances to get into a particular institution and the intellectual level of the company you will be keeping—or, if you prefer, competing against. Remember, too, that the most competitive schools have the largest and most sophisticated admissions staffs and are well aware of the limitations of standardized tests. A strong high school average or achievement in a field such as music will usually counteract the negative effects of modest SAT or ACT scores.

## SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Since the first edition of *Fiske Guide to Colleges* appeared, the problems of financing college have become increasingly critical, mainly because of the rising cost of education and a shift from grants to loans as the basis for financial aid packages.

In response to these developments, many colleges and universities have begun to devise their own plans to help students pay for college. These range from subsidized loan programs to merit scholarships that are awarded without reference to financial need. Most of these programs are aimed at retaining the middle class.

Some colleges advertise that they are “need blind” in their admissions, meaning that they accept or reject applicants without reference to their financial situation and then guarantee to meet the “demonstrated need” of all students whom they accept. Others say they are need blind in their admissions decisions, but do not guarantee to provide the financial aid required of all those who are accepted. Still others agree to meet the demonstrated need of all students, but they package their offers so that students they really want receive a higher percentage of their aid in the form of outright grants than in repayable loans.

“Demonstrated need” is itself a slippery term. In theory, the figure is determined when students and families fill out a needs-analysis form, which leads to an estimate of how much the family can afford to pay. Demonstrated need is then calculated by subtracting that figure from the cost at a particular institution. In practice, however, various colleges make their own adjustments to the standard figure.

Students and parents should not assume that their family’s six-figure annual income automatically disqualifies them from some kind of subsidized financial aid. In cases of doubt, they should fill out a needs-analysis form to determine their eligibility. Whether they qualify or not, they are also eligible for a variety of awards made without regard to financial need.

Inasmuch as need-based awards are universal at the colleges in this guide, the awards generally singled out for special mention in the write-ups in *Fiske Guide to Colleges* are the merit scholarships. We have not mentioned awards of a purely local nature—restricted to residents of a particular county, for example—but all college applicants should search out these awards through their guidance offices and the bulletins of the colleges that are of interest to them. Similarly, we have not duplicated the information on federally guaranteed loan programs that is readily available through both high school and college counseling offices, but we cite novel and often less-expensive variants of the federal loan programs that are offered by individual colleges.

For more information on the ever-changing financial aid scene, we suggest that you consult the companion book to this guide, *Fiske Guide to Getting into the Right College*.

## RATINGS

Much of the fierce controversy that greeted the first edition of *Fiske Guide to Colleges* a quarter century ago revolved around its unique system of rating colleges in three areas: academics, social life, and quality of life. In each case, the ratings are done on a system of one to five, with three considered normal for colleges included in the *Fiske Guide*. If a college receives a rating higher or lower than three in any category, the reasons should be apparent from the narrative description of that college.

Students and parents should keep in mind that these ratings are obviously general in nature and inherently subjective. No complex institution can be described in terms of a single number or other symbol, and different people will have different views of how various institutions should be rated in the three categories. They should not be viewed as either precise or infallible judgments about any given college. On the other hand, the ratings are a helpful tool in using this book. The core of the *Fiske Guide* is the essays on each of the colleges, and the ratings represent a summary—an index, if you will—of these write-ups. Our hope is that each student, having decided on the kind of configuration that suits his or her needs, will then thumb through the book looking for other institutions with a similar set of ratings. The three categories, defined as follows, are academics, social life, and quality of life.

### Academics

This is a judgment about the overall academic climate of the institution, including its reputation in the academic world, the quality of the faculty, the level of teaching and research, the academic ability of students, the quality of libraries and other facilities, and the level of academic seriousness among students and faculty members.

Although the same basic criteria have been applied to all institutions, it should be evident that an outstanding small liberal arts college will by definition differ significantly from an outstanding major public university. No one would expect the former to have massive library facilities, but one would look for a high-quality faculty that combines research with a good deal of attention to the individual needs of students. Likewise, public universities, because of their implicit commitment to serving a broad cross-section of society, might have a broader