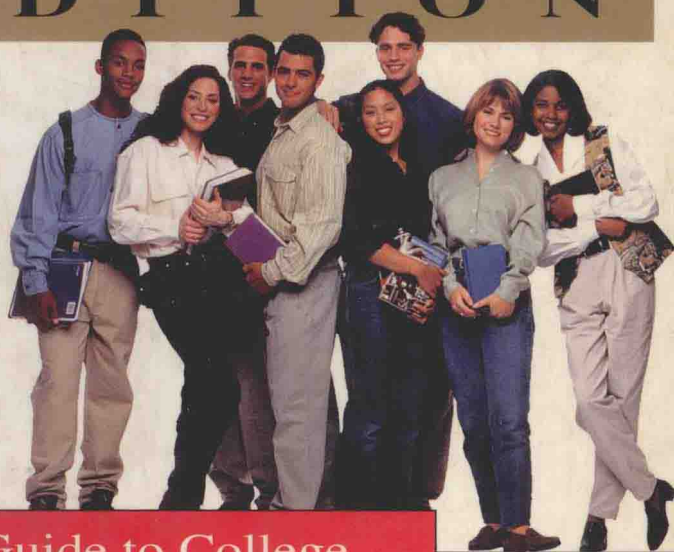


THE
PRINCETON REVIEW

STUDENT ACCESS GUIDE TO
**THE BEST 309
COLLEGES**

1996 EDITION

*56,000 students
tell you what
it's really like!*



The Buyer's Guide to College

56,000 students rate their campuses on faculty,
workload, class size, social life, and sports

Inside information on entrance difficulty

Complete listing of financial aid options from financial aid offices

Tom Meltzer, Zachary Knowler, Edward Custard, and John Katzman

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GUIDE TO
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**BY TOM MELTZER,
ZACHARY KNOWER,
EDWARD T. CUSTARD, AND
JOHN KATZMAN**

**Random House, Inc.
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First Edition

THE PRINCETON REVIEW

**STUDENT ACCESS
GUIDE TO
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1996 EDITION

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FOREWORD

Every year, over two million high school graduates go to college. To make sure they end up at the *right* school, they spend several hundred million dollars on the admissions process. This money pays for countless admissions officers and counselors, a bunch of standardized tests (and preparation for them), and many books like—but not as good as—this one.

It's so expensive because everyone in the admissions world likes it this way. As a group, colleges resist almost every attempt to systematize or simplify the process. Admissions officers want to believe that nothing they do could be done better by a computer. So they make the process a lot more mysterious than it needs to be.

Even the most straightforward colleges hide the information you would want to know about the way they'll evaluate your application: What grades and SATs are they looking for? Do their reported SAT averages include minority students, athletes, and legacies (kids whose parents went to their school)? Exactly how much do extracurricular activities count? What percentage of the aid they give out is loans and what percentage is in grants?

We couldn't get answers to these questions from many colleges. In fact, we couldn't get answers to *any* questions from some schools.

Colleges seem to have the time and money to create beautiful brochures (which generally show that all college classes are held under a tree on a beautiful day); they should just tell you what sort of students they're looking for, and what factors they'll use to consider your application.

Until then, this book is your best bet. It's not a phone book containing every fact about every college in the country. And it's not a memoir written by a few graduates in which they describe their favorite dining halls or professors. We've given you the facts you'll need to apply to the few hundred best schools in the country. And enough information about them—which we gathered from hundreds of counselors and admissions officers, and tens of thousands of students to let you make a smart decision about going there.

One note: we don't talk a lot about majors. This is because most high school students really don't know what they want to major in—and the ones who do almost always change their minds by the beginning of junior year. Choosing a school by the reputation of a single department is often a terrible idea.

As complicated and difficult as the admissions process is, we think you'll love college itself—especially at the schools listed in this book.

Good luck in your search.

—John Katzman
June 1995

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We all owe our sanity to Irina Tabachinik, the programmer from heaven, whose technical expertise made this book possible and whose cheerful disposition in the midst of incredibly confusing computer queries and database computations not only saved us, but enabled all of us to continue working together without killing each other. Without Jefferson "Jake" Nichols none of the information you see on these pages would have made it out of our database and into this book. Though Jake was there at conception and during the first trimester, it was Jessica Brockington who saw it through to delivery, insuring our success.

Many thanks to Lee Elliott who has overseen the student survey project for the last three years and served as principle editor on the last three editions of this book in the face of technical and emotional disasters (although he has vowed never to do it again and this time we believe him).

The update to this book would not have been possible without Christine Chung's meticulous management of the immense student survey project with the aid of Bruno Buttler, Faye Dunkley, Niki Gondola, Joe Keith, Bruce McAmos, Joe Pelletier, Mark Stein, and Thane Thomsen, who together processed the seemingly endless torrent of surveys.

Credit for redesigning the book belongs to Julian Ham and Meher Khambata who took something good and made it even better. Thanks also to Meher's staff, John Bergdahl, Joseph Cavallaro, Adam Hurwitz, Peter Jung, Sara Kane, Illeny Maaza, Russell Murray, Glen Pannell, Dinica Quesada, Lisa Ruyter, Chris Scott, Carol Slominski, Ray Suhler, and Chris Thomas whose desktop publishing work was also invaluable.

Some of the quantitative data in this book was compiled and supplied by Wintergreen/Orchard House, Inc. of New Orleans, Louisiana—a major college research and database publishing organization. We would like to thank Don Beatty at Wintergreen/Orchard House for his technical assistance and patience. Wintergreen/Orchard House's database is the most complete and up-to-date information source on American colleges available today. This continuously updated college database has been furnished by the colleges' admissions, institutional research, financial aid, and athletic staffs, and supplemented with information supplied by representative students. For further information about Wintergreen/Orchard House's extensive college, financial aid, and votech school databases, call 1-800-321-9479.

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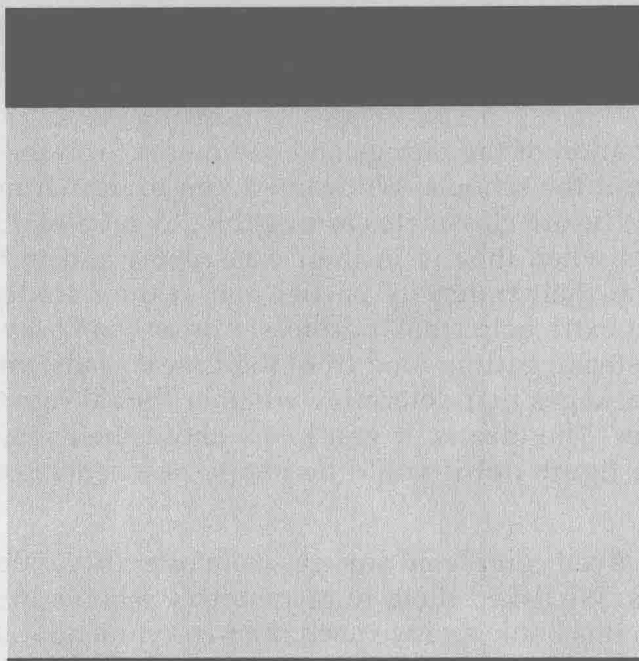
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PART 1

INTRODUCTION



How to Use This Book

There was a void in the college guide market and we have filled it with this book. No other book provides in-depth descriptions of schools *and* in-depth statistics about admissions, financial aid, and student body demographics. And, more important, no other college guide is based on the input of so many students.

More than 56,000 students at the 309 colleges included in this book participated in the survey. Except at some extremely small schools (undergraduate enrollment below 1,000), we heard from at least 100 students on every one of the campuses described between these covers.

On our survey, we asked students to answer seventy multiple-choice questions on subjects ranging from the school's administration to their

social lives, and from the quality of food to the quality of teaching. We asked them to tell us what other schools they had applied to. Finally, we asked students for their comments.

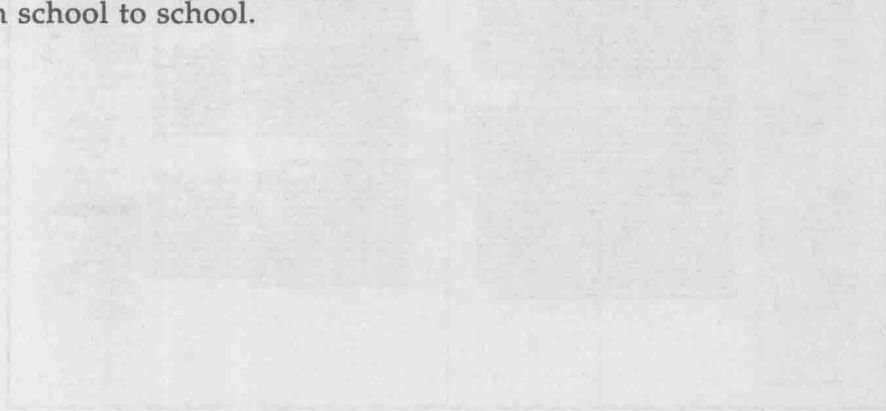
The combination of the ratings and comments form the substance of our articles about the schools. We wanted you to hear from as many of your (potential) future classmates as possible, to get a real sense of how happy they are: when they're in their classrooms and in their campus organizations; at their fraternity parties and at their student rallies; on their way to get extra help from a professor or on their way into town to blow off some steam; getting food from their meal plans; and getting the financial aid packages that determine whether they'll return for the following semester. The idea is, if you know about their responses in advance, you can figure out if you'd be happy at a school before you go there.

We also received completed surveys from over fifty independent college counselors. We asked them to recommend schools in their regions for inclusion in this book, and we used their recommendations to formulate our list of the nation's best schools. We also asked for comments on these schools' academic departments, admissions and financial aid policies, and hospitality toward groups that fall into the "high risk" category regarding marginalization—that is, minorities, and those with physical and learning disabilities. The counselors' comments on these subjects are incorporated into the text of this book.

How did we get it done? The Princeton Review has offices in over fifty American cities. Every year over 60,000 students enroll in our SAT and graduate test preparation courses; those students are either on their way to college or have just graduated. Some of our teachers attend the schools featured in this book; others have recently graduated and still live in the area; we even teach our courses on some of these campuses. Because of this, we already had in place the kind of army necessary to get a project this massive accomplished: all we had to do was mobilize it. Although some campuses didn't exactly welcome us with open arms, none ultimately refused us access to their students. The students themselves were great, even at those schools where we showed up during finals week. Their insightful comments are what's most valuable about this book.

This book also contains several indexes. The first one, a compilation of entertaining quotations from students across the country, is one we just couldn't resist including. The second lists the top and bottom schools in various categories, based on the results of our student surveys. When you look at the bottom schools in a category, please remember that *every* school in this book is an excellent institution—that's why it's in a guide to the best colleges. A third index lists the names and business addresses of the independent college counselors who contributed to the creation of this book.

Finally, there is an Index of Programs for Students with Learning Disabilities which includes brief descriptions of the programs schools offer and the phone number of the offices to contact for information. If you are interested in programs for Learning Disabled students, we suggest you call the numbers provided because these programs vary widely from school to school.



How This Book Is Organized

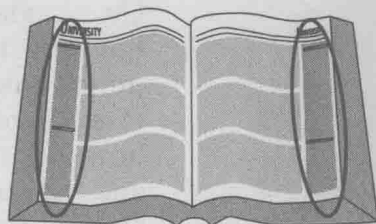
Each of the colleges and universities listed in this book has its own two-page spread. To make it easier to find information about the schools of your choice, we've used the same format for every school. Look at the sample pages below:

[illegible]

Each spread has nine major components. First, at the very top of the spread you will see the school's address, telephone and fax numbers for the admissions office, the telephone number for the financial aid office, and the school's internet web site and/or e-mail address. Second, there are two "sidebars" (the narrow columns on the outside of each page, which consist mainly of statistics) divided into the categories of Campus Life, Academics, Admissions, and Financial Facts. Third, there are four headings in the main body text or "write-up" called Students Speak Out, Admissions, Financial Aid, and From the Admissions Office. Here's what each part contains:

The Sidebars

The sidebars contain various statistics culled either from our own surveys, from questionnaires sent to the schools, or from Wintergreen/Orchard House, Inc., a major college research and database publishing organization.



Here are brief descriptions of each heading:

■ Quality of Life Rating

How happy students are with their lives outside the classroom. This rating is given on a scale of 60 to 100—kind of like your school grades, with 60 being the lowest passing grade. This rating was determined using the results from our surveys. We weighed several factors, including students' overall happiness, the beauty, safety, and location of the campus, comfort of dorms, food quality, and ease in dealing with the administration. Note that even if a school's rating is in the low 60s, it does not mean that the quality of life is horrible—there are no “failing” schools in this book. A low ranking just means that the school placed low compared with others in this book.

■ Type of school

Whether the school is public or private.

■ Affiliation

Any religion with which the school is affiliated.

■ Environment

Whether the campus is located in an urban, suburban, or rural setting.

■ FT undergrad enrollment

The number of undergraduates who attended the school full time.

■ All headings from % male/% female through # countries represented

The demographic breakdown of the full-time undergraduate student body and what percent of the student body live on campus, belong to Greek organizations, spend their weekends on campus, and finally, the number of countries represented by the student body.

■ What's Hot/What's Not

Summarizes the results of our survey. The lists show what students felt unusually strongly about, both positively and negatively, at their schools (see the end of the introduction for a more detailed explanation of items on the list).