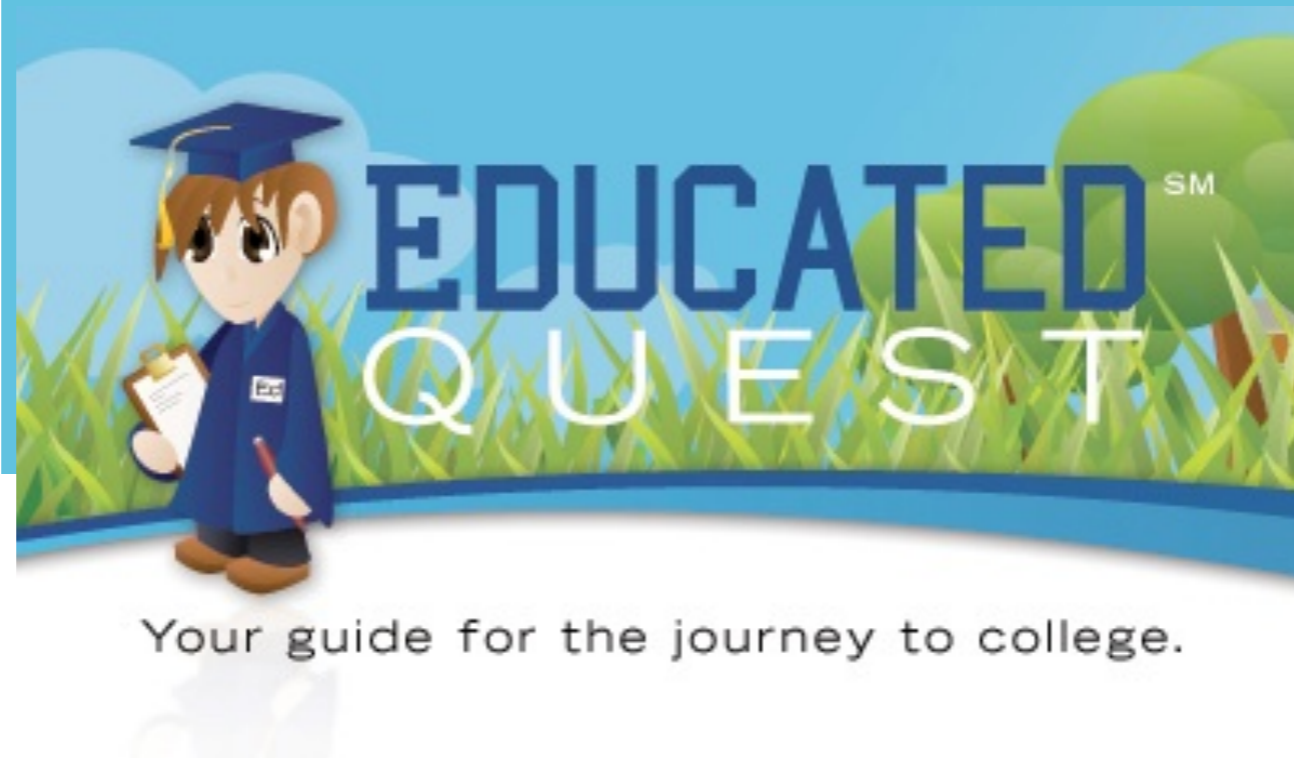


# Updated Profile: Virginia Tech



# Background

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**Introduction to Virginia  
Tech**

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# Background

The Commonwealth of Virginia is very fortunate to have four top-performing public universities, all schools that retain at least 90 percent of their freshmen class and graduate at least three-quarters of them within six years. Only California, with five, has more. The four top public schools in the commonwealth include the University of Virginia, the College of William and Mary, James Madison University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, far more popularly known as Virginia Tech.

With nearly 29,000 students, nearly 24,000 being undergraduates, Virginia Tech has the largest enrollment of any state-supported university in Virginia. Virginia Tech and Texas A&M are also the only two national research universities in the country that continue to provide a civilian education and a military education on the same campus, while also maintaining the designation of being the land grant university, the major agricultural school for their state. Both schools have a Corps of Cadets—membership was once required of all students—though a greater percentage of the corps at Virginia Tech’s (80 percent) accepts a military commission than the corps at Texas A&M (50 percent).

Since 1872, when the school was founded, seven Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets alumni have earned the Medal of Honor and over 100 graduates have been promoted to General and Flag Officer rank. Membership in the Corps has grown from 724 students in 2002, the year before the U.S. military entered Iraq, to more than 1,000 today. For the eight of the past nine years, the University Undergraduate Student Leader of the Year has been a cadet, and the

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#1 graduate from Marine Corps Officer Candidate School was a member of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets.

At least three traditions at Virginia Tech that date back to military education apply to civilian students as well: an Honor Code; the designation of freshman class officers as class officers for all four years, and for life; and the Ring Dance, where the design of the senior class ring, directed by students, is unveiled during the spring of the junior year. Also, like Texas A&M, Virginia Tech began its history as a center of agricultural and mechanical engineering education as well as a military academy. In fact, Virginia Tech's original name was Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, aka Virginia A&M. It has been Virginia's Land Grant University since its founding in 1872.

Although Virginia Tech is a comprehensive state university, a school with "Tech" in its name is more likely to be thought of as a science and engineering school as well as an agricultural school. There is some truth to this at Virginia Tech. [More than a third of all Virginia Tech degrees granted in 2012 were in science, technology, engineering or mathematics \(STEM\), according to College Results Online.](#) By comparison, flagship schools such as [Clemson University, University of Maryland-College Park, Rutgers-New Brunswick, Penn State and the University of Virginia granted about a quarter of their degrees in STEM fields.](#) While Virginia Tech is cross-shopped against all four of these schools, it is considered more closely versus North Carolina State and Georgia Tech, both of which are even more invested in STEM programs. [Interestingly, Virginia Tech](#)

[granted a higher percentage of business degrees than all of these schools.](#)

Given the school's emphasis on pre-professional subjects, the freshman retention and graduation rates are impressive. Ninety two percent of the freshman who arrived in 2013 stayed on for their sophomore, a better performance than several "higher-ranked" schools, including Clemson and Tulane. Nearly 60 percent graduate within four years, more than 80 percent within five or six.

It's hard to write about Virginia Tech without acknowledging the events of April 16, 2007, which were thoroughly reported in the national media. The shooting of 32 members of a university community is a tragedy that can never be forgotten, especially among those who were there and are still there now. But this is also a very proud community, also known as the Hokie Nation, who honors its loved and lost with incredible discretion and dignity. Even those who are not part of the Hokie Nation can learn from its example.

Notable Virginia Tech alumni include Homer Hickham, NASA engineer and author of *The Rocket Boys*; actor Sara Erikson; Jim Buckmaster CEO of Craigslist; CNBC news anchor Brian Sullivan; and, Chris Kraft, NASA architect of Mission Control and the first flight director, among many others. Seven Medal of Honor winners are Virginia Tech alumni.

# Competition

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**What does it take to get in?  
Who decides to go?  
What other schools do  
applicants consider?**

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# Competition

Over 19,000 students applied for approximately 5,400 spots in the 2013 entering freshmen class. Approximately 70 percent were offered admission. Virginia Tech's yield rate is 40 percent, very high for a state university. About 1,900 more applicants were offered a place on the waiting list, however, due to the high yield rate, none were later admitted. However, over a fifth of the class was admitted through Early Decision, which contributes to the high yield rate. Only 45 students who applied Early Decision were denied admission; this means that the vast majority students who applied through this route knew the credentials that would be required for admission. The SAT range for admitted students was between 1120 and 1320, comparable to flagship schools such as Penn State or Rutgers-New Brunswick. However, while more than half of the entering class scored above 600 on the Math SAT, less than half scored above 600 on the Critical Reading section of the exam.

All applicants must indicate a major when they apply or choose University Studies if they are undecided. Applicants to the engineering school as well as prospective students in architecture and industrial design may be offered "second choice" enrollment status as University Studies majors. They can use their freshman year to complete some, but not all, of the prerequisite courses to be offered admission into these programs in their sophomore year. This option still allows prospective engineering students to graduate within four years, however, it may stretch the time required to complete a five-year architecture degree. This presumes that some architecture students who were accepted to their major as freshmen will change their mind after going through their first-year program.

The engineering school expects applicants to have a score of 650 or higher on the Math section of the SAT or a 28 on the ACT, while the com-

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bined SATs, Critical Reading and Math, for applicants to the Architecture and Industrial Design programs should be 1250 or higher. These programs require no design portfolio to be considered for admission.

Like other top-performing state universities, Virginia Tech looks at the rigor of the high school transcript over anything else and matches that to the student's major interests. A student who is interested, for example, in majoring in English, is not expected to have taken, let alone mastered, calculus, but s/he is expected to have excelled in an advanced or honors English class. Students who are interested in the sciences and engineering are expected to have done well in the toughest science and mathematics courses. It is not necessary to take advanced placement examinations, but the admissions office wants to see that a student has academic passions that relate closely to the major they want to seriously pursue, and feel confident that they can pursue them successfully at this school. Other considerations include first-generation students, interest in the Corp of Cadets, legacy status and special talents, including the arts and athletics.

Virginia Tech does not participate in the Common Application, though the application process is very simple. No essay is required. Personal statements are optional, though students will typically submit between four and eight letters of recommendation. Each admissions officer will read approximately 2,000 applications. The bulk of these applications are accepted, wait-listed or denied by the full admissions committee.

Given the admissions statistics, it appears that practically anyone who meets standards for rigor, GPA and test scores will get into all but the most competitive majors. Those who do not meet the numbers for the most competitive programs will need to write the most compelling personal statement they can possibly write. Applicants with a high school

GPA of 3.7 or better and 1350 or better on the SATs should consider applying to the Honors Program. Honors students not only receive access to honors courses; they also have the option of living in honors housing.

Twenty five to 30 percent of a freshman class comes from out-of-state, the top five sending states being Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina and New York. Virginia Tech's applicant pool overlaps not only with the University of Virginia and James Madison University in its home state, and the flagship schools in its main sending states, but it overlaps more strongly with Georgia Tech and North Carolina State, which grant a higher percentage of degrees in STEM subjects.

Even with the science-technology focuses of the majority of the students—architecture majors must know civil engineering, physics and math and landscape architects must understand biology and plant sciences, too—Virginia Tech has recently enjoyed an impressive freshman retention rate of 92 percent. Sixty percent of the freshman class of 2007 earned their degrees within four years, but more impressive, given that architecture is a five-year program, the STEM subjects are so popular, and over 1,000 students go on co-op education assignments, which can extend their degree program, is that 80 percent graduated within five years.

# Costs

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**Tuition and Fees**

**Scholarships**

**Net Prices**

**Debt**



# Costs

Virginia Tech will charge just over \$12,000 in tuition and fees to Virginians in 2014-15, and just over \$28,000 to non-residents. The out-of-state charges are quite competitive with those assessed by the schools that are also considered by applicants such as Georgia Tech, the University of Maryland-College Park, Penn State and Rutgers-New Brunswick. Room and board charges will be just under \$8,000, quite low for any school, large or small, public or private. However, the school also assesses students in the introductory (1000 level) engineering courses an additional \$30 per credit hour.

Students who rank at the very top of the applicant pool are eligible to be considered for Stamps Scholarships. These are very difficult to pass up; they cover tuition and fees as well as room and board for four years. Each Stamps Scholar also receives access to an enrichment fund for experiential learning opportunities, which could include undergraduate research, internships, study abroad or away, academic and co-curricular conferences, or a combination of opportunities. Stamps Scholars are also eligible to live in Honors Housing. Any student who applies--there's no minimum standardized test score or high school GPA--to the University Honors program is also considered for a Stamps Scholarship.

The presence of the Corps of Cadets on campus also means that Virginia Tech has one of the larger enrollments in ROTC scholarship programs for the Air Force, Army and Navy in the U.S. It is fair to state that Virginia Tech will be more supportive of the military culture than other schools that also offer these programs.

Virginia Tech students who graduated in 2012 who took out loans borrowed, on average, around \$25,800, according to the Project on Student Debt. This is a reasonable level of debt considering that a student can borrow a maximum of \$27,000 through the Federal Stafford Student Loan program. Parent borrowers who took out Federal Parent PLUS Loans borrowed, on average, \$12,100 in 2011, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education's Parents PLUS Loan database. But more impressive is the fact that Virginians, thanks to the low living costs on campus, can graduate with fairly little debt.

Virginia Tech had an endowment of \$660 million in 2013, lower than Georgia Tech, Maryland, Penn State, Rutgers and North Carolina State but higher than Clemson and the University of Maryland-College Park.

# Comforts

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**On-Campus Housing**  
**Local Housing Market**

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# Comforts

Virginia Tech houses approximately 8,800 undergraduate students, just over a third of the student body, in corridor-style or suite style dormitories; suites are typically reserved for upperclassmen and athletes. Suite-style residences have a common area and bathroom for six residents, and they are cleaned by the janitorial staff. Only one dorm where freshmen live is air-conditioned. Each room also has its own sink, a rare amenity in college dorm rooms. Freshmen dominate the residential population in some dorms, while sophomores are scattered. Freshmen are required to live on-campus, though they are not obligated to do so after the first-year, unless they join the Corps of Cadets. All Corps members are live in a designated dorm, just as students are assigned housing within a military service academy.

Outside of the Corps, priority for housing of choice, including living-learning floors, is based on accumulated course credits. There are also eleven themed floors, the best known being Galileo, for honors-level male engineering students, and Hypatia, for honors-level female engineering students. Other halls focus on community service, leadership, honors housing (Campbell and Hillcrest), multi-cultural living, and substance-free living. The university also designated one residence hall, Ambler-Johnston, to be a Residential College. This lifestyle includes academic offerings mixed with residential living.

Virginia Tech students talk positively of the quality of food on the college review sites such as *Campus Discovery*, *College Confidential*, *College Prowler*, *Students Review* and *Unigo*. One dining hall, the West End Market, features fine dining, including lobster. Students purchase meals ala carte; they are charged for the cost of their meal to their Hokie Passport debit account. This way, a student can stop at a dining hall to grab a cup of coffee before class, and get a bagel after class is over.

The university owns no apartments, though the Blacksburg rental market has many options. Two people can share an apartment within walking distance of campus and pay around \$400 per month plus utilities. However, the demand for off-campus housing is larger than in most other communities that surround a large state university. Students are often required to commit to a one-year lease, including a security deposit, for as long as a year in advance of moving in. The best course of action for Virginia Tech students is to live on campus for two years and then move elsewhere.

# Community

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Campus  
Environs  
School Spirit

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# Community

Blacksburg is Virginia Tech and little else. The town has approximately 43,000 residents, including students. However, the campus has 2,000 acres including agricultural land, a research park and the athletic facilities. Residential and academic buildings are well separated and the grounds are immaculate.

But while the university has a relatively large student body, Blacksburg is not likely to be a stop on any major concert tour. Cassell Coliseum, the basketball arena, seats less than 11,000 people, not much more than half the seating capacity of the Comcast Center at the University of Maryland or the Smith Center at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. UVa's John Paul Jones Arena seats just under 15,000, although UVa has about 12,000 fewer undergraduates than Virginia Tech.

Practically every campus building, excluding the basketball and football stadiums, the parking structure nearest to the academic buildings, and the Squires Student Center is made of limestone extracted from a quarry owned by the university. This stone, primarily colored gray on campus, is also called Hokie Stone. The stone is formed into Gothic patterns and shapes, with the mix of buildings being a cross between a larger, more isolated school such as Cornell, Indiana or Purdue—these campuses have limestone buildings, too—and a military academy such as West Point or Annapolis. The presence of the Corps of Cadets, whose enrollment is almost half the total of West Point or Annapolis, walking on campus in uniform, adds to this impression. Nightfall or overcast skies lend to the idea of a castle preparing for battle. The main quad, which is situated around the drill field for the Cadets, adds more to the idea. The light gray colors of buildings, when mixed with modern lighting makes the campus appear safe. Two of the university's most recent additions, the

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Visitors Center and the Inn at Virginia Tech (which also houses the University's Alumni Relations office), follow through on the gothic-like designs.

The campus borders on Blacksburg's Main Street as well as Prices Fork Road, where many retail buildings and apartment complexes are within short walking distance. The Main Street, which is promoted as a historic downtown, has the usual retail mix of bars and restaurants common for a college town, though the lighting could be brighter. But the downtown does not have some of the eclectic shopping options in music, books and clothing one might find in Austin, Berkeley or Madison. However, Christiansburg, less than ten minutes by car, has every chain eatery and shopping option parents or students will find in a well-to-do suburban community.

One interesting aspect of Virginia Tech-oriented retail stores is that t-shirts and sweatshirts are more affordable than in most towns that play host to a large national university. It is as if the retail market and the school want everyone to wear the university's colors. Students also take responsibility for two t-shirt designs each season: the Maroon Effect and the Orange Effect, both sold in the campus bookstore.

Walk around this campus and you'll hear such phrases as Hokie Nation, Hokie Pride and Hokie Spirit said over and over. The maroon and orange colors, shared with no other university, were chosen by a vote of the Corps of Cadets, then also the entire student body, in 1896. Football weekends are very big here. The games sell out and freshmen gain free tickets only by lottery. Homecoming, limited to a parade, if anything, at most schools, is taken quite seriously at Virginia Tech. A Homecoming King and Queen are elected by the vote of the student body, the vote is

completed in advance of the Homecoming game. In addition, the downtown pretty much closes for business during the game.

Virginia Tech competes in the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) in 19 varsity sports. Football dominates fall weekends although the school was conference champion in wrestling this past season. In addition, Joe Saunders, who pitched on the Hokies' baseball team, was a first-round draft choice, 12th overall, of the Los Angeles Angels in 2002. As the only active major league player from Virginia Tech, Saunders received special dispensation to wear a Virginia Tech cap during the April 20, 2007, game against the Seattle Mariners to honor the victims of the Virginia Tech massacre. Saunders also wore the initials "VT" on his cleats and drew the Virginia Tech logo on the back of the pitcher's mound before the start of the game. Three former basketball Hokies: Bimbo Coles, Dell Curry and Allen Bristow also had long (10+ years) careers in the pros.

Virginia Tech's Hokies are one of the dominant football programs in the country. Coach Frank Beamer, an alumnus who played on bowl-selected teams in 1966 and 1968, has coached at his alma mater since 1987, longer than any active coach at a BCS bowl-eligible school. He is also the winningest active coach at that level. Prior to the 2012 season, Beamer had won at least ten games in each of the previous eight seasons; no school had equaled that streak. Virginia Tech has played in bowl games for each of the past 21 seasons.

Having a successful football program no doubt contributes to the spirit of the school, but so do the many traditions which the university has cataloged. This is also a very service-oriented student community. The Relay for Life is one of the most successful student-run charity events in the country. Town and gown have joined to run The Big Event, a spring show

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of campus and community for the past ten years.. The university's motto, "Ut Prosim," means "That I May Serve."

Yet while an "Occupy Blacksburg" protest , in solidarity with the "Occupy Wall Street" movement took place in October, 2011, it was a far more peaceful event than similar protests that took place in larger cities and other college towns that are more noted for political activism. However, given the academic preferences of the students, students are more likely to want to work on Wall Street or Corporate America, or opt for military service, than to demonstrate against these institutions.

The most moving examples of community at Virginia Tech are the remembrances of the events of April 16, 2007. In prior years, from 2008 through 2010, the anniversary of the shooting occurred on a weekday and classes were cancelled. In 2011, the anniversary was on a Saturday for the first time. While classes were not cancelled this year, the candle-light ceremony that was started in 2007 continued into later years, only it now takes place at a memorial constructed on the drill field to honor the 32 men and women lost to the community. A 5K Run-Walk, previously held on the Saturday closest to the anniversary date, was held on the anniversary date this year during the daytime before the ceremony.

The permanent memorial—a temporary one constructed by students was left undisturbed— was built on a reviewing stand overlooking the drill field, providing for a natural podium. An eternal flame, lit and guarded by the Corp of Cadets the night before the ceremony, is used to light the candles for the crowd. In addition to the construction of the permanent memorial, the site of the shooting was converted to a Center for Peace Studies. Another space was turned over to a program where high school students could learn about engineering. The classrooms on the

second floor, where the assailant's guns were also fired, were taken out of service and the space was redesigned for non-academic use.

Alcohol-related violations are by far the most serious crime at Virginia Tech. According to the school's [Clery Report](#), there were 370 or more alcohol-related disciplinary referrals from 2010 to 2012; there were also 165 or more arrests each year during this period. Incidents of drug-related crimes are low for a school with over 23,000 undergraduates; there were no more than 67 in a year between 2012 and 2012 and no more than 34 disciplinary referrals. Burglaries on campus also trended down from 42 to 26. However, there were also reported incidents of auto theft and weapons possession on the [Clery Report](#) as well as incidents of aggravated assault and forcible sex offenses that are concerning.

Virginia Tech has not appeared high on lists of "party schools," perhaps due to its unique culture and the academic choices of the students. However, this school takes school spirit as seriously as any university known for its success in football. If there is a downside, it is that Blacksburg is quite far from any large metropolitan area, including Richmond and Washington D.C. Students who choose to pursue cooperative education are quite likely to work in cities beyond a day's driving distance of Blacksburg. If they come from a large metropolitan area their best bet cost-wise is to work at their co-op while living at home or live in employer-subsidized housing.

# Curriculum

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**Academics**  
**Honors Programs**  
**Experiential Learning**



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# Curriculum

Virginia Tech students must complete up to 38 credits of General Education requirements, which they consider to be the Curriculum for a Liberal Education. This includes courses in the following areas:

- Writing and Discourse (6 credits)—expository writing or communications courses
- Ideas, Cultural Traditions and Values (6 credits)—humanities
- Society and Human Behavior (6 credits)—social sciences and/or social issues in sciences
- Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning (6 credits)—mathematics, statistics and computer science
- Scientific Reasoning and Discovery (6 to 8 credits)—natural and physical sciences
- Creativity and Artistic Experience (1 to 3 credits)—architecture, fine arts, performing arts
- Critical Issues in a Global Context (3 credits)—International affairs, international business, among others

Together these courses represent less than a third of the credits required to complete a degree. Each school provides guides to help students choose courses that will fulfill the Liberal Education requirements while not duplicating coursework that is required by their school and for their major. Virginia Tech has no foreign language proficiency requirement,

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however demonstrated proficiency through an advanced placement examination can help to meet humanities requirements; and, while the university offers computer science, mathematics, and statistics courses that are targeted to liberal arts students who are less quantitatively oriented, all but two of the science courses are in the lab and large lecture format. Those who have struggled with science courses in high school might want to find courses at a local community college or a smaller school near home, then try to transfer the credits to Virginia Tech. Virginia Tech is a school that favors the well-prepared student who knows what they want and commits to a major quickly. Students who can demonstrate advanced standing are encouraged to do so; they can either graduate early or opt to add a major or minors. In addition, several majors have concentrations. For example, you can major in marketing on an advertising track or a product management track. The more requirements that can be met through advanced standing, the more opportunity there is to explore a concentration. There are also Honors courses as well as research opportunities for undergraduates throughout the academic departments.

Internships are run through several academic departments, though each has its own policies on whether degree credit is granted for the position. In addition, Virginia Tech operates one of the largest cooperative education programs in the country, with over 1,000 participating students, and it is open to students in all majors. A “co-op,” according to the university’s career services Web site, is: “a multi-work term agreement with one employer; traditionally with at least three work terms alternated with school terms, resulting in a 5-year degree program. Co-ops are full-time, paid positions.”

The decision to enroll in co-op quite often depends on the economy and the job market. Co-op is more popular in a weaker economy, presuming employers have made positions available, because it provides students with a year or more of paid work experience before graduation, and therefore an edge in the job search. A co-op is less popular during a strong job market or a strong demand in a student’s major field. The extra year in school may delay entry into a full-time job and requires extra expenses for housing for the fifth year. There are also hundreds of options for study abroad, including academically-related service projects, many uniquely offered through Virginia Tech.

Virginia Tech students gave their faculty an average rating of 3.75 out of 4.0 on RateMyProfessors.com, about the same as students at North Carolina State, Penn State, Rutgers-New Brunswick rated their faculty but higher than students at Clemson, Georgia Tech, the University of Maryland-College Park rated theirs. However, students at the University of Virginia and James Madison University had higher regard for their faculties.

Large class sizes and small sections taught by graduate students are a source of student complaints on college review sites, however, this is part of the reality of pursuing a degree at any large state university. Virginia Tech provides all of the help that any student will need to succeed, but that is not openly advertised on campus. Students must take the initiative to seek things out. Shyness and/or a lack of confidence will not help those who struggle in such a setting. It is best to seek help early from peers, tutors or even the professor than to allow yourself to fall further behind.

# Connections

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**Alumni Relations**  
**Career Services**

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# Connections

Virginia Tech has approximately 230,000 living alumni; approximately half live in Virginia. Large concentrations of alumni live along the East Coast from New York to Florida with significant pockets in Dallas, Houston, Denver and all of California. The Los Angeles metro area also has sub-chapters. Popular work places for younger alumni, those less than 10 years out of school, include Northern Virginia and Washington D.C—this is the home of the largest concentration of current students as well—Charlotte and Atlanta.

The individual chapters prepare monthly newsletters, organize watch parties for sports events, conduct fundraisers and host student send-off picnics, among other projects and programs. Neither the alumni association nor its chapters collect membership dues. The alumni association also moved quickly into online networking. They administer the Hokie Nation Network, a password-protected database where alumni may interact online and employers may post jobs to experienced alumni for no charge. Alumni are also permitted to keep their @vt.edu for life in a G-Mail housed system.

Virginia Tech's Smith Career Center is unique in that it is funded entirely by student fees. The center has 32 interview rooms and coordinates events for recruiters and opens doors for them to academic departments and student organizations. Firms will work through the academic departments to host career symposia; often faculty members will conduct practice interviews with students and review resumes. More than 3,000 employers are registered with the Center. [The list of events is too long to reprint in a profile.](#)

# Conclusions

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Summing up



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# Conclusions

Virginia Tech has the spirit of a southern football school combined with the academics of a land grant university and the historical traditions of a military academy. Texas A&M may be the only similar institution in the country, and that school has less room to welcome students from out of state.

Virginia Tech is also an excellent value for the money, especially for Virginia residents. It's competitively priced for out-of-state students because the costs of living in Blacksburg are lower than they are in other major college towns. However, the tuition and fees are comparable to out-of-state charges for schools such as Rutgers-New Brunswick, the University of Maryland-College Park and Penn State's main campus. Yet Virginia Tech has a smaller undergraduate student body and a tighter-knit community than all three of these schools. Sports rival North Carolina State is similar in terms of mission and student body size, and it is less expensive, but Virginia Tech is more successful at retaining and graduating its students.

Virginia Tech also joins with Georgia Tech as being one of the best publicly-supported engineering schools in the South, important because that region that is experiencing the most industrial development. Southern cities, for example, have emerged winners in competitions to attract automotive manufacturing, once heavily concentrated in the Midwestern Great Lakes states. Defense and pharmaceuticals, two other growth industries, have expanded in this region, sometimes at the expense of jobs in

other places. This school also has a strong alumni presence in the MidAtlantic states such as Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The academic preferences of the students weigh heavily towards pre-professional education, especially in agriculture, architecture, business and the STEM subjects. Virginia Tech educates 60 percent of the engineering students in Virginia. It's possible to get a very good liberal arts education here, in fact, students may have more personal interactions in these subjects than at other large state schools, but Virginia Tech is more invested in the other programs.

The person who will be happiest at Virginia Tech is civil, outgoing and ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work. Adults, including alumni, administrators and faculty, are more involved in setting direction here than at other large state schools. A major part of student engagement at Virginia Tech is getting along, as opposed to complaining and picking battles. That behavior has to carry forward, for the school's alumni network is vast and the Hokie Spirit is contagious.

Ed Quest's Report Card						
Virginia Tech						
Four-Year/ Six-Year Grad Rates	Freshman Retention	Costs	Comforts	Community	Curriculum	Connections
A/A	A	B+	B+	B+	A	A
Strengths			Weaknesses			
Very tight-knit community for a school with a large student body; very strong "civic architecture"			Blacksburg is nowhere near a major metro area			
Excellent career services. Virginia Tech is also well-networked in the Southeast and MidAtlantic states			Liberal arts, excluding English, take a more distant second place to the pre-professional programs than at most state schools			
Traditions are highly valued here and there's tremendous respect for history			The politically liberal might want to look elsewhere			
It's less expensive to live here than in most other college towns			On-campus housing is in short supply for a school of this size, though off-campus housing within walking distance is not overly expensive			
If you like football with your academics this is one of your better options in a state university			Not much in the way of merit-based aid unless you're at the very top of the pool or in ROTC			
The campus setting is beautiful. Campus looks like Cornell and West Point thrown together.			If you do co-op, the best bet cost wise is to live at home, if home is near a large city			
Retention/graduation rates quite good considering the technical orientation of the school						
If you like the military culture but don't want to go to a military academy, this is your school. Unless you want to go to Texas A&M.						

# The End



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