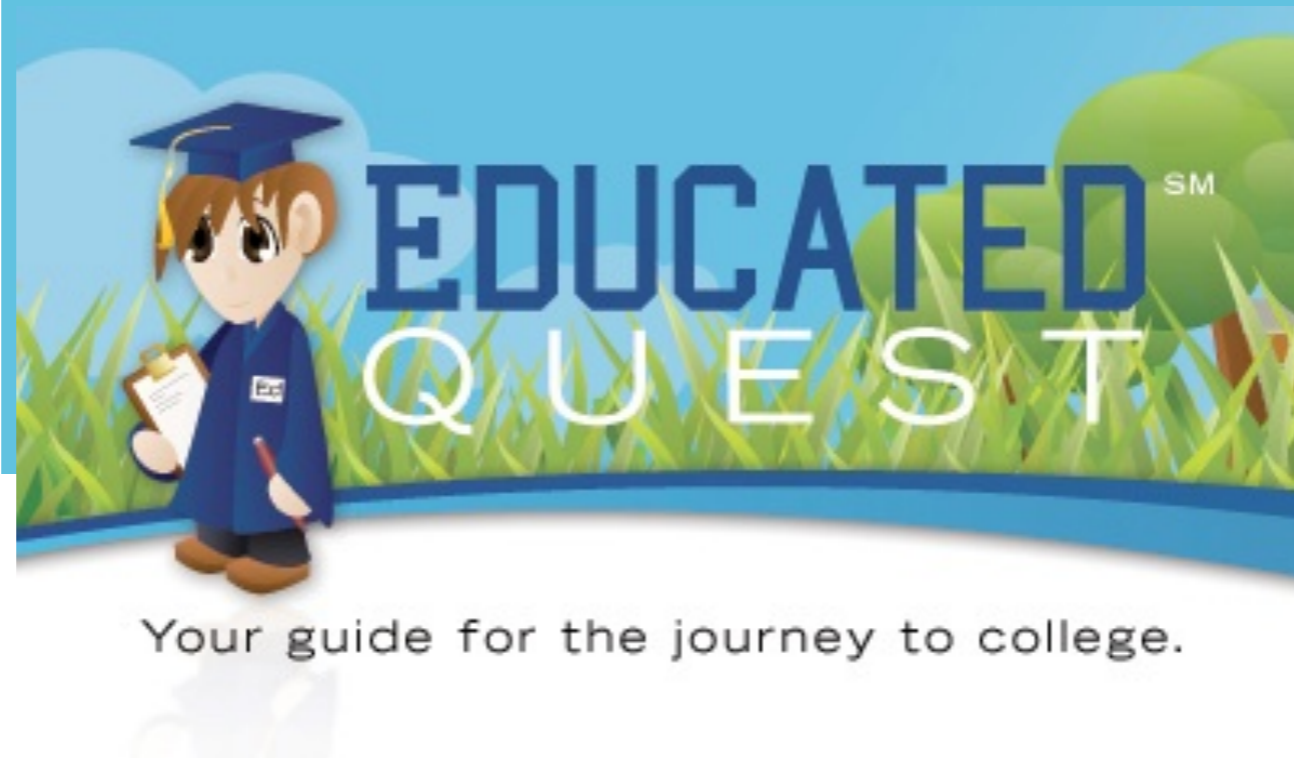


First Impressions: La Salle University (PA)



Background

Introduction to La Salle

Background

Founded in 1863 in Philadelphia, La Salle University is one of the colleges in the Brotherhood of the Christian Schools along with Lewis University (IL), Manhattan College (NY), Saint Mary's College of California and Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. The University, like many Brotherhood high schools, is named for St. John Baptist de La Salle, patron saint of teachers.

With around 4,400 undergraduates La Salle is also the smallest regional university within the City of Philadelphia that offers a comprehensive set of academic majors. La Salle is divided into three undergraduate schools: the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business and the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. The University also offers an Honors Program that is available to students in each school as well as Post-Baccalaureate programs to help students gain admission into medical school or graduate programs in speech pathology.

It is not difficult to gain admission to La Salle. Eighty percent of the applications for the Class of 2017 were accepted as were 85 percent of those students who applied Early Action. Just over 40 percent of the freshman class of 939 students were admitted through Early Action. Average SATs were approximately 1,000 (out of 1,600) on the Critical Reading and Math sections of the test while the Average Composite on the ACT was a 21 (out of 36).

Just over 80 percent of the freshmen who entered in 2012 returned for their sophomore year. And just over half (55 percent) of the students who entered in 2007 graduated within four years, according to *College Navigator*, the college search site developed by the U.S. Department of Education. La Salle's four-year graduation rate was higher than those reported by Philadelphia University, Temple University and West Chester University, all more selective schools, though lower than Saint Joseph's University, according to College Results Online. One consideration: over 40 percent of La Salle freshmen qualified for a Federal Pell Grant, versus just over 10 percent at Saint Joseph's. La Salle also has a higher percentage of Pell-eligible freshmen than Drexel, Philadelphia, Temple and West Chester.

Costs

Tuition and Fees
Scholarships
Debt



Costs

Tuition and fees at La Salle were approximately \$40,000 for 2014-15, less than those charged by Drexel, Philadelphia and Saint Josephs University. These will rise by just under three percent for 2015-16. Room and board charges will range from approximately \$12,200 for a triple room with the least-expensive meal plan to nearly \$16,000 for the most expensive double room coupled with the most-expensive meal plan. [However, there are many options in between.](#) La Salle has an impressive selection of housing options for a small school, though only 55 percent of the undergraduate student body lives on campus. La Salle is a more regional school than the other Philadelphia-area private universities; a commuter population can be expected.

La Salle requires only the Free Application for Federal Student Aid for need-based financial aid. The average institutional grant or merit scholarship exceeded \$22,000, more than half of tuition and fees, according to the University's financial aid office. According to *College Navigator*, just over 90 percent of the freshmen who entered in 2013 received a scholarship.

[However, Big Future, the College Board's search site, reported that La Salle was able, on average to fulfill 75 percent of need after scholarships and loans were awarded to this class. Only 14 percent had their full need met.](#) This left a "gap" for many students that had to be filled with an additional financial contribution from the student or their family, or by taking out additional loans. Given that La Salle has a high percentage of Pell-eligible students (44 percent of freshmen, 36 percent of all undergraduates) as well as a high percentage of students on state scholarships (35 percent of the freshman class), loans appeared to be the more likely route to cover the gap. According to the Project on Student Debt, La Salle graduates in 2013 who took out loans borrowed, on average, just under \$38,000. The borrowing limit for dependent students in the Federal Stafford Loan is \$27,000 for four years, \$31,000 for more than four. Forty-five percent of La Salle borrowers went to a lender other than the Federal Government to finance their education. This is high for any college, even a private one in a major urban center.

La Salle offers full-tuition Christian Brothers Scholarships for those at the very top of the applicant pool who also have a 1300 (out of 1600) or higher score on the SAT or a 29 or higher Composite on the ACT. Founder's Scholarships range from \$12,000 to \$20,000 per year.

Comforts

3

On-Campus Housing
Local Housing Market

Comforts

La Salle has [12 residence halls, two apartment complexes \(for upper-class students\) and a townhouse complex](#). Saint Basil Court, the newest of the halls, is air conditioned and offers corridor-style and suite-style living options. [The selection of housing and meal plan options is very large considering that nearly half of the student body lives off campus.](#)

Philadelphia has a very large rental apartment market, near campus as well as accessible via mass transit. The better deal for an upper-class student is probably to live off campus, if the commuting cost is low enough. Apartment rents over the nine-month academic year for on-campus units are just over \$8,000 for a nine-month school year. For the townhouses the rent is between \$8,700 and \$9,100. However, the University does not force students to sublet apartments or pay security deposits.

Like most Catholic schools, La Salle has no university-recognized fraternities or sororities, and therefore offers no housing for such organizations.

Community

Campus
Environs
School Spirit

4

Community

There is far more to do in Philadelphia than most college students could ever find the time to do. The La Salle campus is easily accessible to bus transportation and a short walk to a Broad Street subway line station, which is also accessible via a campus shuttle van. There is no need to have a car at La Salle unless you are a commuter. The Olney neighborhood surrounding campus is primarily apartments and a high school; there is little of interest to college students. Entertainment will either be on campus or in Center City. Parking is really tight for resident students who live on campus. The La Salle campus has a very compact academic center. While the Connelly Library, the Devlin Center and the Union are fairly new buildings, the rest of the academic center is showing its age. La Salle covers approximately half the acreage of St. Joseph's University, also in the city. It will feel like the smaller campus if you walk both from end to end.

La Salle, like the other Philadelphia city universities (excluding Philadelphia University in well-to-do East Falls), has its rough edges near campus, although the University reported few incidents of crime in its [most recent Clery Report](#). There were *no reported arrests* for Drug Law Violations or Liquor Law Violations, unusual for any college, though there were five reported Sexual Assaults and five reported Robberies in 2013. Drug-related Disciplinary Referrals trended down from 40 in 2011 to 22 in 2013. There were no fewer than 179 alcohol-related Disciplinary Referrals over this three-year period.

La Salle competes in 21 sports at the NCAA Division I (scholarship) level. La Salle won the NCAA National Championship in Men's Basketball in 1954 and reached the final game (versus a University of San Francisco team led by Hall of Fame center Bill Russell) in 1955. La Salle also won the NIT title in 1952. La Salle is the only true Philadelphia school to have won a national championship. Only Duke (7) and UCLA (4) have had more National Men's Basketball Players of the Year than La Salle, which has had three--- Lionel Simmons, Michael Brooks, and Tom Gola, who led the two championship teams. La Salle is one of the "Big Five" in Philadelphia college basketball along with Penn, Saint Joseph's, Temple and Villanova all of which have fielded competitive teams. Atlantic 10 Conference rival Saint Joseph's is also La Salle's biggest city rival.

Curriculum

5

Academics
Honors Programs
Experiential Learning

Curriculum

La Salle has three requirements of first-year students. The Doubles Program is a pair of courses, usually taught by two faculty members that cut across academic disciplines. A First-Year Odyssey course, for one credit, introduces incoming freshmen to resources around campus and Philadelphia. A third course, Understanding at Home or Abroad encompasses community service and social justice. La Salle students must also complete a core set of courses that are along three themes: Power (Writing, Communications and Quantitative Reasoning), Frameworks of Scientific Understanding (Economics, Political Science, Sociology and Natural Sciences) and Patterns of Meaning (Fine Arts, Foreign Language, Humanities). Within Patterns of Meaning all students take two courses each in History, Philosophy and Religion. Courses taken along the three themes comprise nearly half of the credits required to earn a La Salle degree, although courses taken to fulfill them may also be applied to a major or minor. Students in the [Honors Program](#) have courses called an Honors Triple that encompass History, Literature and Philosophy as well as smaller Honors courses in the core subjects and their major and travel study options.

La Salle takes some noteworthy approaches with academic programs. For example, the College of Business offers a four-year Bachelor's/MBA program in Accounting that meets the 150-credit requirement to sit for the CPA exam in Pennsylvania and 47 other states. All business majors, including those in the Bachelor's/MBA program in Accounting, may take advantage of a Business Scholars program that allows them to have 12 months of full-time work experience within their field and still graduate in four years. Arts and Sciences students may also take advantage of a co-op program. The Nursing and Health Sciences programs are rigorous, but also offer more personalized clinical assignments than similar majors at larger schools. The College of Arts and Sciences offers an Integrated Business, Science and Technology degree program, a degree in Digital Arts and Media Design, as well as a multi-disciplinary major in Politics, Philosophy and Economics.

In addition to the signature programs and the Honors Program, La Salle's strength is small classes. Virtually no classes have 50 or more students. Honors sections will be even smaller. La Salle students gave their faculty a rating of 3.73 (out of 5.0) on RateMyProfessors.com about the same rating as Saint Joseph's (3.70) and Temple students (3.70) gave their's.

Connections

Alumni Relations
Career Services



Connections

Among the 23,000 La Salle alumni registered on LinkedIn.com, more than 14,000 live in the Greater Philadelphia area while just under 2,000 live around New York City and about 600 live around Washington D.C.

The alumni base is spread quite thin after that, though most of the students came from communities within a two-hour drive of campus. However, the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area is a huge business community in areas such as finance, health care and tourism. It is very easy for La Salle students and alumni to connect near campus either through networking events or the University's Fall Career Expo or the Spring Job Fair.

La Salle offers a great deal in the way of making connections through paid or volunteer opportunities as well as providing students with access to more challenging academics. A student who would ordinarily rank in the middle to upper third of the applicant pool at a larger school such as Penn State's main campus or Drexel or Saint Joseph's would be able to receive a more personalized education experience, quite possibly through the Honor's Program as well as the signature programs in the undergraduate divisions of the University.

In addition, the four-year business co-op, combined with one of the more generous scholarships, is a better value than the more widely publicized five-year co-op program at Drexel.

Conclusions

Summing up



Conclusions

La Salle University's strengths are the accessibility and pricing of its more popular academic programs: Accounting, Communications, Education and Nursing. Students who are interested in these programs, or Honors, and rank near the top of the admit pool receive an education that becomes a tremendous value for the money. The same is true for the varsity athlete. But La Salle can be an expensive proposition for anyone who cannot receive all, or close to all, of the financial aid they will need.

The La Salle experience is more personal, a premium over other area schools. La Salle has a smaller undergraduate student body than the other Philadelphia-area colleges that students are most likely to cross-shop against it: Drexel, Philadelphia University, Saint Joseph's, Temple and West Chester. It is also smaller than the three other Pennsylvania State System schools near Philadelphia: Cheyney, East Stroudsburg and Kutztown. La Salle is well connected to the Philadelphia business community, though it does not offer the access to Center City found at other universities such as Drexel, Saint Joseph's, Temple and the University of the Sciences. There are also some rough edges around this campus students should avoid.

Few schools in the Northeast offer La Salle's advantages of size and location, and some, like Loyola-Maryland and Saint Joseph's University, start at a higher sticker price. Nor have many had La Salle's success in working with students from economically-disadvantaged backgrounds. Those who want a small school and a city life in their college experience may like La Salle, especially if they are interested in one of the signature programs.

Ed Quest's Report Card						
La Salle University						

Four-Year/ Six-Year Grad Rates	Freshman Retention	Costs	Comforts	Community	Curriculum	Connections
C/B	B	C	B+	B+	A	B+

The End



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