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### **Rutgers University-New Brunswick**

Originally founded as Queens College, Rutgers celebrates its 250th anniversary during this academic year. The campus neighborhood known to Rutgers students as College Avenue is the eighth-oldest college in the United States. The campus is also recognized as the second-oldest public college in the country, after the College of William and Mary in Virginia. Rutgers is the only university in the United States that was chartered as a colonial college (1766), a Federal Land Grant University (1862) and a state university (1945)

Until 1969 Rutgers was primarily two colleges: Rutgers which was all-male, Douglass all-female. In addition to the liberal arts degrees offered by both colleges, the university also offered undergraduate education in agriculture and environmental science, engineering and pharmacy. From 1969 through 2006 the university was comprised of three liberal arts colleges (Rutgers, Douglass and Livingston), Cook College (agriculture and environmental sciences) and a School of Business as well as the Mason Gross School of the Arts, the College of Engineering and the College of Pharmacy. In 2007 the liberal arts colleges were consolidated into a single School of Arts and Sciences while Cook was renamed the School of Biological and Environmental Sciences. The university also opened a College of Nursing—nursing has been offered primarily on its Newark campus since 1942—that graduated its first senior class in 2015.

Today Rutgers has more than 30,000 undergraduates; over 20,000 are enrolled in the School of Arts and Sciences. The university also welcomed 530 freshmen into a new Honors College residence in the Fall of 2015. Altogether approximately 1,200 incoming freshmen, nearly a fifth of the class, were invited to participate in honors programs, either in the new Honors College or in designated learning communities on the campus neighborhoods.

In addition to its unique history, Rutgers has become a member of the Big Ten not only for athletics but also academics. The Big Ten institutions, along with the University of Chicago, form the Council for Institutional Cooperation. The Council shares academic and library resources among all of the member schools. Overall, the Big Ten schools have more than 5 million alumni. Rutgers alone has more than 470,000.

In addition academics and a large alumni base, Rutgers has other advantages over other flagship state universities. It is served by mass transit to New York City directly from campus. New Jersey beaches and the City of Philadelphia are also close by car. Rutgers is also one of the best state universities when it comes to housing its own students. With the completion of the Honors College this year as well as the impending completion of a new apartment complex on the College Avenue campus, Rutgers will be one of the few large public universities that is capable of housing more than half of its undergraduates. The University also maintains more living-learning communities within its residence halls than most other state schools. Rutgers is also one of the few schools where students can choose between campus neighborhoods with urban, suburban or rural ambiance. Within the Big Ten Rutgers has the second-largest campus in terms of acreage after Penn State.



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Rutgers is not an exceptionally selective university overall, though admission into the engineering, nursing and pharmacy programs is exceptionally competitive. Sixty percent of the students who applied for a seat in the freshman class in 2014 were offered admission. Of those offered admission a third decided to come, very good for a public university with such a large student body. The average SATs have been around 1190 (out of 1600) for the Critical Reading and Math sections of the test. This year they surpassed 1200 due in part to the draw of the new Honors College.

Rutgers is one of the better large state schools when it comes to freshman retention and graduation rates. The retention rate for the classes that entered in 2013 and 2014 was an excellent 92 percent. The four-year graduation rate for the class that entered in 2010 was 59 percent. This does not consider pharmacy students who continue towards a doctoral degree or students in accelerated bachelors/masters programs.

In terms of graduation rate performance as well as academic options, Rutgers compares most closely with the University of Wisconsin among the Big Ten schools. This is significant in that Wisconsin typically “ranks” higher in college “rankings” released annually by media such as *U.S. News*. However, Rutgers achieves its performance with students who entered with lower average test scores as well as a more diverse student body.

According to the 2014-15 Common Data Sets for both schools, the middle 50 percent of the Wisconsin incoming freshmen who submitted SAT scores scored between 1200 and 1430 (out of 1600) on the Critical Reading and Math sections of the test. By comparison, the middle 50 percent for Rutgers was between 1090 and 1340. Wisconsin is also the more national school. A third of Wisconsin students comes from other states, most commonly Minnesota, while only six percent of the Rutgers undergraduate student body comes from U.S. states other than New Jersey. The retention and graduation rate performance is as much a positive indicator of the quality of New Jersey’s brighter college-bound students as it is the quality of education at its flagship state university.

### **Costs**

Rutgers is one of the more expensive state universities in terms of in-state tuition. This year New Jersey residents have been asked to pay just over \$14,000. Students in the School of Business, the College of Engineering, the College of Pharmacy and the School of Biological and Environmental Sciences (SEBS) pay around \$1,000 more. Students who enter undecided and transfer over to the business school or SEBS as juniors will have a larger tuition increase than others. Non-resident tuition and fees are around \$29,500. That’s reasonable compared to some other public Big Ten universities including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan State, Purdue and the University of Michigan and about the same as Penn State. Room and board charges are approximately \$12,000, though on-campus apartments can get expensive.

The university, however, is not one of the more generous when it comes to merit-based aid, with the exception of students who rank at or near the very top of the admit pool. Accepted students have typically needed a 1950 SAT (650 average on each section of the test, including the Writing) as well as achieved excellence in a rigorous academic



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program to qualify for the Scarlet Scholarship, the smallest merit award. The Presidential award, however, is one of the more generous offered by a public university. Recipients receive not only all direct charges (tuition and fees, room and board) but also a stipend.

Rutgers students who graduated in 2014 and took out loans owed, on average, approximately \$25,200 according to the Project on Student Debt. Nearly 40 percent of the senior class graduated with no debt at all; only 8 percent needed to borrow from a source other than the Federal Government.

The university met, on average, just over half of the need for its students who qualified for need-based aid. However, approximately 10 percent of Rutgers students qualify for assistance under New Jersey's Economic Opportunity Fund, which includes not only financial assistance but also academic orientation and advising.

### Curriculum

All Rutgers freshman have the option of taking one-credit pass/fail [Byrne Seminars](#), small-group courses taught by senior faculty. These are similar to popular topics courses taught at other universities, only there is less work as well as less class time devoted to them. Other schools offer these seminars as graded, credit-bearing classes as a required course on a first-semester class schedule. The advantage of Rutgers' approach is that the courses allow students to consider interests while they can use their full course load towards fulfilling major or general education requirements.

Rutgers freshmen in the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Biological and Environmental Sciences and the business school also have the option of taking First-Year Interest Group (FIG) seminars during their first semester that are graded pass-fail though they carry no degree credit. This fall the university offered 75 FIGs in 35 different subject areas. Unlike the Byrne Seminars, FIGs offer introductions to possible majors and career options within the three schools that offer them.

The School of Arts and Sciences has a [core curriculum](#) much like similar universities; the major difference being an Information Technology requirement that is rarely found at a school this size. There is only one specific course required of all students: Expository Writing. Students have a vast selection of courses to fulfill the other distribution requirements; they represent a third of the requirements towards a Bachelor's degree.

Rutgers students must first be enrolled in the School of Arts and Sciences to be able to transfer to the School of Communication and Information, the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy or the School of Management and Labor Relations. They can also transfer to the business school by meeting a GPA requirement. Rutgers also makes it possible for students enrolled in a major in Arts and Sciences to take a minor in one of the other schools. The other undergraduate schools in Biological and Environmental Sciences, Engineering, Nursing, Pharmacy and the Mason Gross School of the Arts require direct admission. Rutgers does allow applicants to choose more than one school, so in effect, the university has "second choice" admissions. This helps Rutgers acceptance rate as much as the student's options.



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Rutgers students gave their faculty a rating of 3.74 (out of a possible 5) on [RateMyProfessors.com](http://RateMyProfessors.com), about the same as NYU students (3.75) rated theirs. Within the Big Ten, Rutgers students had about the same regard for their faculty as students at Penn State .. Within the rest of the Big Ten, students at Michigan, Northwestern and Ohio State held their faculty in higher regard than students at Rutgers. The students at the other Big Ten schools did not.

### Comforts

Rutgers is one of the few large public research universities that is capable of housing more than half of its students in on-campus residence halls and apartments. Students can live within walking distance of a cow pasture on the Cook Campus or hop a train ride to New York City if they're living on the College Avenue Campus. The Douglass campus offers housing strictly for women that accommodates 1,800 students, 1,200 of whom live in a residential college setting. A new apartment complex, under construction on the College Avenue Campus will house another 500 students when it is completed. The Honors College, also on the College Avenue Campus opened its doors to welcome 530 freshmen for the current school year.

Unlike many large universities, students have enough options to enable them to live on campus for all four years. Peer schools such as Ohio State, Penn State and Wisconsin, among others, do not accommodate most students beyond their freshman year. Upper-class students have more access to on-campus apartments on nine-month contracts than they would have at similar schools. They do not need to worry about finding sub-tenants during the summer months. Continuing students also face less pressure from local realtors to sign apartment leases as much as a year in advance, a common practice in college towns where the university does not offer many housing options beyond the freshman year.

Accepted students may choose up to five housing options. Advance preparation to learn the likely locations of their classes and ride the campus bus routes is strongly advised. Rutgers also hosts two-day orientation events where students may meet and choose roommates before they apply for housing. Students may choose new roommates after two weeks, though the change request may not be prejudicial.

First-year students, regardless of campus of residence, live in traditional corridor-style buildings, usually co-ed by wing or floor, though single-sex living options for women are offered on the Douglass and Busch Campuses. Corridor-style living allows students to meet more people, though it means there are more students to share a bathroom. Suite-style arrangements, where bathrooms are shared among small groups, are available to sophomores and other continuing students.

Rutgers also offers 35 special interest living options, including living-learning communities, across all five campuses. These include the all-female Douglass Residential College, which has 11 living-learning communities of its own. Rutgers is one school where a visit will need to be a two-step process. The first trip should be a bus tour through all of the campus communities. The second should be a walking tour through



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the communities where a student is most likely to have their classes. The visit will be much like a trip to see several colleges, only these campuses are part of the same university.

All residence halls are wired for cable television and more than half are set up for wireless Internet. Micro-fridges, a combination microwave oven and refrigerator, come standard. All students are allowed to have cars, a rare privilege at a state university, though they must use the campus bus system to retrieve them from designated parking lots.

It's probably best to live on campus for all four years or become part of the Greek community. However it is common for students to share houses near the College Avenue campus, the Douglass campus as well as in nearby Piscataway and Highland Park. The newer, more modern apartment rentals near College Avenue start around \$650 per person per month. These require security deposits as well as 12-month leases. While Rutgers is a busier campus than most during the summer months, offering classes on campus nearly 11 months a year to students from colleges across the country, apartment renters must compete with the fraternities and sororities to sublet their units.

### Community

As a result of having multiple campuses and student centers, Rutgers-New Brunswick has a vast selection of student events as well as programs open to the public. However, the College Avenue Campus fills the role of social center. It is close to Easton Avenue, the most student-oriented street in downtown New Brunswick, and the fraternities which are scattered mainly between College Avenue and Union Street, a block away from the major campus buildings. College Avenue is the smallest of the five campuses, so it is also the most congested. Downtown parking is very scarce when Thursday night and weekend parties hit full steam. New amenities were completed on the Livingston campus, including a movie theater and a 24-hour diner to direct more social activity there.

The Rutgers-New Brunswick community is heavily reliant on buses because the campuses are divided by a river (the Raritan), two state highways (Routes 18 and 27) and an urban downtown business center (George Street in New Brunswick). Only one of these crossings is wide: the John Lynch Bridge that crosses the Raritan between the College Avenue Campus and the Busch and Livingston Campuses. The rest are one or two lane roads that become extremely congested at morning rush hour (between 7:30 and 9:00 AM) and the evening rush hour (between 4:30 and 6:30 PM). That helps to reduce overcrowding at the bus stops at the end of classes.

Rutgers students learn to avoid first-period and last-period courses away from the campus where they live. The divisions between campuses and the dependency on buses force Rutgers students into one of two mindsets: live close to classes and work and return home in between, or think like commuters to a big city: spend the entire day at classes and work and return home only at the end of the day to sleep and socialize. Night classes are also a popular option; travel home from those is less crowded. It is



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very difficult to split a day between two or more campuses. The university also provides students access to a free downloadable app that enables to track the arrival and departure times of campus buses, a huge convenience. The bus system and the separations between the campus communities make Rutgers appear to be a larger university than it really is.

While, for example, Rutgers has 8,000 fewer undergraduate students than Ohio State, the nation's third-largest university, the Rutgers-New Brunswick campus is larger by more than 800 acres (2,700 versus 1,800). It would be very easy for new students to feel lost at Rutgers unless they take advantage of the varied opportunities to join clubs or become part of special interest communities. The university hosts Involvement Fairs to help students find the groups that best fit them.

Because Rutgers has student centers on all five campus communities, all with their own programming, there is no shortage of activities. The university is large enough and so well located that it can draw in any entertainer or speaker from the major markets in the Northeast and Mid Atlantic states. The university's Louis Brown Athletic Center, located on the Livingston campus, is too small and too dedicated to sports to attract concerts. However, New York's Madison Square Garden and Newark's Prudential Center are less than a one-hour train ride from campus. Philadelphia is an hour and half from campus. Princeton is about 45 minutes away by either bus or train. The university's new book store, operated by Barnes and Noble is adjacent to a walkway to New Jersey Transit's New Brunswick train state. Another transportation convenience: an arrival and departure board is located in the book store cafe.

Rutgers is not a "sports" school along the lines of those that have played regularly for national titles in basketball or football, but students and alumni will turn out in large numbers for winning teams. The university hosted the very first college football game, besting Princeton by a score of 6-4 (scores counted for one point) in 1869. More recently, the football team has earned high Academic Performance Ratings from the NCAA and has played in nine bowl games, winning six. In 2014 Rutgers joined the Big Ten for all sports. The 2014 season was a successful 8-5 campaign for the football team, the 2015 season was a forgettable 4-8 affair. The lack of on-field success, combined with player arrests and suspensions led the university to dismiss Head Coach Kyle Flood as well as Athletic Director Julie Hermann.

The most successful team in Big Ten play has been in women's soccer. While the Rutgers women lost the conference title to Penn State, they were seeded second in their regional in the NCAA Tournament and reached the Final Four, only to face Penn State again. Rutgers also has one of the more successful women's basketball programs in the U.S. Led by Hall of Fame coach C. Vivian Stringer, the team has reached the NCAA Championship game twice and won a NIT title. Rutgers is well represented in professional sports. The most notable former Scarlet Knights are USA Soccer star Carli Lloyd, WNBA and Olympic star Cappy Poindexter, Major League Baseball All Star Todd Frazier and NFL Pro Bowler and Super Bowl champion Devin McCourty.



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Rutgers addressed campus crimes in part by opening its public safety building in downtown New Brunswick, close to the Douglass campus. The building's visibility, combined with a 24/7 Security Escort Program and a 100-student equestrian and bicycle Community Officer Program, have helped to improve the perception of safety. The department also runs late-night shuttle bus programs. The Public Safety Department posts three crime reports on its website: two mandated by the federal Clery Act of 1998; the other, an internal affairs report, is posted by the department. But although Rutgers is transparent in its [crime reporting, the numbers of reported incidents of crime are serious. It is best to read the Clery Report and ask questions before choosing places to live on or off campus.](#)

As the university and community have worked to better coordinate public safety, the City of New Brunswick has continued on a revitalization plan that brought more university facilities, as well as more businesses, downtown. Eating and drinking places along nearby George Street, the business center of downtown New Brunswick, cater more toward the daytime office workers—downtown New Brunswick is the headquarters for Johnson and Johnson as well as a county seat—until it meets up with Livingston Avenue where there is a Rutgers student apartment complex (Rockoff) close by as well as three off-Broadway theaters, two affiliated with the university. The theaters have successfully attracted evening crowds into the downtown as well as providing performance, employment and internship opportunities for Rutgers students.

While the theatre district has brought in more night life, there are still pockets of discount-oriented shopping on George Street mixed between high-end restaurants and luxury apartments, as well as retail vacancies. There are student-oriented restaurants on George Street, but there is little to no student-oriented retail shopping. Shopping opportunities are also limited along Easton Avenue, though student-oriented eating and drinking places are as abundant as they are in any other college town. Stuff Yer Face, a long-standing pizza and stromboli restaurant on Easton Avenue, is noted as the place where Iron Chef Mario Batali (Rutgers Class of 1982) got his start in a kitchen. Princeton-based Thomas Sweet, a candy and ice cream shop, opened its second location on Easton Avenue in 1983. It has been a fixture ever since.

### Connections

The career-related programs and services at Rutgers are typical what students would find at universities that charge more than twice the tuition. It also helps that the campus is within a 45-minute train ride from New York City, one of the largest job markets in the country, and is about an hour from Philadelphia. New Jersey is also known as the “medicine chest” of the nation; pharmaceuticals and health care are two of the leading industries in the Garden State.

Rutgers' Career Services center maintains offices on the College Avenue and Busch Campuses. Counseling services are available at both offices, while on-campus interviewing is conducted at Busch. The career services operation serves all students in all majors while comparable universities such as Ohio State and Wisconsin allocate career services by school. The Rutgers-New Brunswick approach helps to ensure that



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students in the liberal arts receive as much attention as those enrolled in the pre-professional degree programs. This is necessary at Rutgers because the School of Arts and Sciences includes around 20,000 of the university's estimated 30,000 undergraduates.

Rutgers hosts two-day "mega-fairs" in the fall and spring, each attracting approximately 300 employers, and the university has an aggressive on-campus recruitment program. Rutgers also joins with the other Big Ten schools to co-sponsor a career fair that runs in conjunction with the conference's basketball championship tournament, as well as a virtual career fair.

[A September 2010 survey](#) of college recruiters conducted by the *Wall Street Journal* ranked Rutgers 21<sup>st</sup> among all large universities, public or private, and fifth among Eastern universities behind Penn State, Maryland, Carnegie Mellon and Cornell. The survey also ranked Rutgers third as a source for business and economics majors, higher than New York University or the University of Pennsylvania, both of which are generally perceived to have more prestigious business programs. The results of this survey have value as they are based on comments from people who actually interview the students.

Rutgers has over 470,000 living alumni. All Rutgers graduates are life members of the Rutgers University Alumni Association (RUAA). They may join any of more than 100 charter groups by school, region or special interests. Interest groups range from former band and glee club members who gather regularly for their own concerts and reunions to dance and sports-oriented groups where students and alumni can row crew or play roller hockey. Similar to the alumni groups structured at prestigious schools such as Stanford, the charters provide a way for alumni to keep in touch with their alma mater through the activities they enjoyed as students. Association members have access to an extensive benefits program, including more than 50,000 discounts that may be obtained just by presenting a member card.

Unlike many state universities, Rutgers' alumni network includes graduates of all of the university's undergraduate, graduate and professional schools not only in New Brunswick, but also in Newark and Camden. This has become more helpful for alumni, especially the most recent graduates who have entered the workforce in a very weak economy.

But while Rutgers has taken many positive steps to better engage alumni, its alumni giving rate is low, around seven percent, ranking last among the Big Ten universities, according to *U.S. News* rankings for 2016. The university also has the lowest endowment in the conference, approximately \$920 million in FY 2014, according to the National Association of College and University Business Officers.

Among the approximately 172,000 Rutgers alumni registered in [LinkedIn.com](#) who reported their home or work location, about 60 percent are based around New York City while around 9 percent are based around Philadelphia. There are more than 3,000 Rutgers alumni based in or around Washington DC as well as San Francisco. According



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to head counts on [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com), Rutgers ranks among the top 25 schools in the U.S. that produce professionals in finance, marketing and the media.

### Conclusions

If one were to compare Rutgers to Wisconsin, one of the more established Big Ten universities s/he would be hard pressed to find major differences in the quality and selection of academic options. Rutgers is also able to house the majority of its students. Most schools with more than 30,000 undergraduates, including most of Rutgers' Big Ten peers, cannot come close. The students who have graduated from the Honors College are quite similar to those who attend Ivy League schools and graduate at the same rate. The university has every amenity that a college student could expect from a Big Ten school.

The major differences between Rutgers and a similar "higher-ranked" school such as Wisconsin are ones of geography, given the campus layout that history has given to the university as well as the location within commuting distance of New York City, the less national student body, school spirit and the costs. Not everyone wants to ride campus buses to get around.

Unlike Wisconsin's main campus in Madison, which can be considered the leading research university in its state, Rutgers vies for attention not only with Princeton but also Columbia, Lehigh, NYU and Penn in a very populous region. Too often Rutgers is not the first choice of those students who have targeted one of these schools. Yet its graduates will fare just as well, provided that they do the work.

### Report Card: Rutgers University-New Brunswick

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