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Marywood University (PA)

Located in Scranton, Pennsylvania, Marywood University has approximately 1,900 undergraduates as well as around 1,100 graduate and professional students. Founded in 1915 as a Catholic women's college, Marywood became co-ed in 1989. Eight years later, the school was approved for university status by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Marywood is divided into three schools: the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Health and Human Services and the College of Professional Studies that includes the School of Architecture, School of Business and Global Innovation and the School of Education.

Marywood is not an extremely selective school. But it asks applicants to make a first and second choice of major. Marywood accepted 68 percent of the students who applied to join the freshman class in 2016, according to the university's [2016-17 Fact Book](#). The average SAT scores for the class that entered in 2016 were approximately 1040. The university's admissions office looks for a minimum of 980 on the Critical Reading and Math sections of the SAT or a Composite of 19 on the ACT. The bar is higher for admissions into the Nursing program (1040 SAT with a minimum of 530 Math/ACT Composite of 21), Pre-Physicians Assistant program (1080 SAT with a minimum of 530 Math/ACT Composite of 21) and Speech Pathology (1060 SAT with a minimum of 530 Math/ACT Composite of 21). Fine Arts students are required to submit a portfolio of work although admissions are likely to be more lenient than they would be at a specialized art and design school.

The admissions office reported that 88 percent of the freshman who entered in 2016 will return for their sophomore year, excellent for a small private school, especially one that offers several programs where a student must commit early to the academic requirements. The university retained approximately 84 percent of the students who entered in 2015, up from 80 percent only two years before. It must also be noted that the sizes of the freshmen classes in earlier years were larger. According to the university Fact Book, from 2010 through 2012 Marywood welcomed at least 450 freshmen each year. In 2016 there were 323. This university, like others in the Scranton/Wilkes Barre area, has traditionally recruited locally first to fill its freshman classes as well as attract transfer students. But while the size of the adult and transfer student markets have grown, and the schools have added degree programs to accommodate them, the number of high school seniors in Northeastern Pennsylvania has been on the decline.

Marywood reported a six year graduation rate of 67 percent for the class that entered in 2010, down from 70 percent for the class that entered the year before. But the four-year graduation rate dropped from 56 percent for the class that entered in 2008 to 47 percent for the class that arrived in 2012. For comparison, Misericordia University, which offers several similar academic programs, graduates over 60 percent of a freshman class within four years although it retains 83 percent of its class. But Bloomsburg University, the nearest school in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, has not done as well as Marywood at freshman retention (76 percent) or at graduating its classes. Only 38 percent of the students who arrived there in 2010 earned a degree in four years.

Within Northeastern Pennsylvania Marywood is considered most often verses Kings College, the University of Scranton, DeSales University (for Speech Pathology) and Roger Williams University



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(for Architecture). It is also considered against three state schools: Bloomsburg, East Stroudsburg and Kutztown.

Costs

Marywood will charge just under \$34,000 in tuition and fees for 2017-18, actually \$2,000 *less* than Penn State's main campus charges students who come from outside Pennsylvania. Students who major in Aviation pay an additional \$7,000 for flight time. Room and board charges are approximately \$13,800. The university also estimates an additional \$2,500 for books, transportation and personal expenses. [The university's Web site is a model for thoroughly explaining charges to current and prospective students](#) that should be emulated by other colleges.

Marywood also offers [merit-based scholarships](#) that are achievable for just over half of a freshman class and easier than most to retain. Dean's Scholarships (Average high school GPA 3.4/Average SAT 1030) ranging from \$10,000 to \$18,000 require only a 2.5 to retain. Centennial Scholarships (Average high school GPA 3.7/Average SAT 1100) ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000 require only a 2.75 to retain. Trustee Scholarships (Average high school GPA 3.9/Average SAT 1200) ranging from \$14,000 to \$22,000 require only a 3.00 to retain. Only the FAFSA is required to be considered for need-based aid.

With a high percentage of students pursuing combined degrees, Marywood students are more likely than most to have high levels of debt. The financial aid that a student receives towards their undergraduate degree only applies to credits earned towards the undergraduate degree. Marywood attempts to lower costs of a combined degree by allowing students to take up to 18 credits and also allows them to take graduate courses while still in their undergraduate program at the undergraduate charges. But undergraduate merit awards go away after the student becomes full-time graduate student.

Curriculum

Marywood separates itself from other small schools in the Scranton/Wilkes Barre area through signature academic programs as well as interest in combined degree programs. Approximately 30 percent of Marywood's undergraduate students enter with the intention to pursue a Bachelors/Masters program by the time they leave. While some of the university's signature programs include Athletic Training, Communication Arts, Education, Entrepreneurship, Fine Arts, Exercise Science, Nursing, Physician Assistant Studies and Speech Pathology are also offered by other schools in the Scranton area, others such as Aviation, Architecture, Art Therapy, Dietetics and Interior Architecture are unique to Marywood. Overall the university offers more than 50 majors.

The signature programs are among the best reasons to consider Marywood, especially in Architecture and Interior Architecture, Communications, Dietetics and Fine Arts. The facilities are among the best you will find at a small school that offers these programs. The university is also among the leading producers of dietitians in Pennsylvania, offering bachelors, masters and combined programs.



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The university has made major investments to improve its academic facilities. The Insalaco Center for Studio Arts, Learning Commons, O'Neill Center for Healthy Families, Center for Architectural Studies and the Shields Center for Visual Arts have all opened since 2000. The Communication Arts studios, located in the Learning Commons, are nearly new, featuring some impressive radio and television production equipment, superior to what many students are likely to use in their internships and first full-time jobs.

Being a smaller school, Marywood has attracted students who want an earlier and more personalized immersion into their major. However, there is also a liberal arts core as well as a required 12 credits in Religious Studies and Philosophy. But while Marywood is a Catholic university, it does not require students to take a course in the Catholic faith. All students must take six credits in Math and Science (will usually be fulfilled within a major), three in the Social Sciences (can also be fulfilled within a major), six credits in World Literature, three in the Fine Arts and six in History. One course in the major can be used to fulfill a Global Studies requirement.

This is a good school to walk in with AP credits, Scores of 3 or better are accepted. Those who enter with four years of foreign language can also receive exemption from one semester of the language requirement, provided that they choose a course at the 200 level or higher in the same language.

You won't see large classes at Marywood. Fifty-seven percent of all classes offered by the university in 2015-16 had fewer than 20 students. Virtually none had more than 50. Marywood students gave their faculty a rating of 3.78 (out of a possible 5) on RateMyProfessors.com. That's a lower rating than students at the University of Scranton (3.86) gave their faculty. But it was higher than students at King's College (3.71), Wilkes University (3.71), Bloomsburg University (3.66), Kutztown University (3.74) rated theirs. Misericordia University (3.76) and East Stroudsburg University students (both 3.78) held their faculty in similar regard.

Community

Marywood has an exceptionally attractive and well maintained campus that makes the school look more expensive than it really is. The university has done an excellent job at blending its newest buildings with its oldest, the Liberal Arts Center, also known as The Rotunda. Its School of Architecture was built from an innovative adaptive reuse of the university's former gymnasium. The 115-acre campus also has its own arboretum with over 100 varieties of trees. The campus has few streets and is easy to navigate and secure. Aside from alcohol-related disciplinary referrals and a limited number of drug-related referrals, the university reported few incidents of crime on our near campus in its most recent [Clery Report](#).

Marywood has sororities, which do not have their own houses, but it has no fraternities. The university competes in 22 NCAA Division III (non-scholarship) varsity sports and has won 37 conference championships. Because of the university's small student body, a high percentage compete in varsity sports.

The Marywood campus is bordered by a residential neighborhood called Green Ridge, one of the nicest and safest neighborhoods in Scranton. It is possible to walk into the downtown from



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campus. But its better to use the local bus system; its free to students who show their ID to the driver and will get them back to campus faster.

Scranton has several festival events throughout the year that attract college students, including “First Fridays.” The metro area also offers many opportunities for outdoor recreation, especially skiing in the winter. It is also home to the Scranton-Wilkes Barre RailRiders, the New York Yankees top minor league baseball team as well as the Wilkes Barre/Scranton Penguins, the minor league affiliate of the National Hockey League’s Pittsburgh Penguins. The Pavilion at Montage Mountain hosts a full calendar of concerts during the warmer months. But it really helps to have access to a car to go outside of the city. The university allows all students to have cars, including freshmen, and charges no fee for a permit.

Comforts

Marywood requires all first and second-year students who do not commute from home to live on campus. Unlike most colleges, the university offers suite-style housing—no more than four students share a bathroom—to first-year students. First-year halls are also co-ed by wing (part of a floor), unusual for a Catholic school. The university also offers apartment-style housing, primarily for juniors and seniors.

But while the university requires on-campus living for the first two years, over 60 percent of the undergraduate student body lives off campus. This includes commuters, who could represent as much as a quarter of a freshman class, transfer students (between 140-150 each year) and upper-class students who elect to move off. It’s difficult for a university to bond a community like this, although students who share a demanding major will make friends. The university maintains an off-campus housing office and posts [rental listings](#).

Connections

Of the more than 13,000 Marywood alumni registered in [LinkedIn.com](#), just over 4,700 are based around the Scranton/Wilkes Barre Area. Nearly 2,000 are clustered in or near New York City; just over 1,100 are based in our around Philadelphia. There are over 300 alumni based in or near Allentown (PA), Ithaca (NY) as well as the Baltimore-Washington area. After that the base is spread really thin.

Marywood appears to be a school where you can get as much help as you need—as long as you maintain good academic standing in your program and ask politely. Help is as likely to come from the faculty as it is from the career services office. Being a small school, relationships with staff and teachers can be less formal, although students are expected to become more professional as they progress with their academics.

Conclusions

Marywood is an attractive option for a B or better student, especially one who has their eye on a major in one of the university’s signature programs. It has one of the nicer campuses that you will find for a small school within a city setting as well as some of the nicest residence halls for first



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and second-year students. Marywood is also a good value for the money compared with similar schools. It is also trending upward in terms of retaining and graduating its students.

There is a lot to like about Marywood. But it has been a very regional school for a long time. The university still has a larger share of commuters than some prospective students might like in considering a small college. That can change as more information gets out to a wider audience of high school seniors and more current students take advantage of the numerous opportunities in and around the Scranton/Wilkes Barre area. There is always a need for a small school that maintains a reasonable price, especially for a program such as Architecture or Dietetics that requires more than four years to complete. Marywood amply fills this need.

Report Card: Marywood University

- Four-Year/Six Year Graduation Rates: C/B
- Freshman Retention: B+
- Costs: B+
- Curriculum: A
- Community: B
- Comforts: A
- Connections: B+ within Eastern Pennsylvania and the Syracuse metro area/C elsewhere