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SUNY-Geneseo

SUNY-Geneseo has ranked second to the College of New Jersey in *U.S. News'* Best College Guides among public Northern Regional Universities for several years and has been frequently listed as a Best Value in *Kiplinger's* college issues. It also advertises itself as New York State's Public Honors College, a designation that is college-proclaimed, but not legislated. In 2004, the college welcomed its first students into Phi Beta Kappa, the national collegiate honor society. Today, Geneseo has approximately 5,500 undergraduates with fewer than 100 pursuing graduate degrees. Its total enrollment has remained steady, up by fewer than 100 students since 2012.

Costs

SUNY-Geneseo is one of the best values for the money among public colleges and universities in the United States, and it is supported by [New York's generous state scholarship programs](#). It also awards merit scholarships to between 10 and 15 percent of the freshman class.

This year SUNY-Geneseo charged New York residents just over \$8,200 in tuition and fees. Non-residents were asked to pay just under \$18,100. Room and board charges for a standard double room and the Gold (mid-priced) meal plan are approximately \$12,700. While this is not a geographically diverse school—only 4 percent of the students come from outside New York State—the non-resident charges are quite competitive with the *resident charges* for New Jersey and Pennsylvania public colleges and universities.

According to the Project on Student Debt, SUNY-Geneseo graduates in 2016 who took out loans owed, on average, less than \$25,000. The maximum that they could have borrowed through the Federal Direct Student Loan Program was \$27,000. Forty-five percent of the class graduated with no debt at all.

Competition

SUNY-Geneseo has become a less selective school since 2012, according to the college's Office of Institutional Research. The number of applicants has declined while the number of incoming freshmen has gone up. In 2012, the college accepted less than half (46 percent) of the 9,100 students who applied to join the freshman class of just over 1,000 students. In 2017, it accepted 72 percent of the nearly 8,800 students who applied to join a freshman class of more than 1,300. The yield rate, the percentage of students who decided to enroll, dropped from 24 to 21 percent.

Even with the College Board's transition to the New SAT, the mean SAT for admission to SUNY-Geneseo has gone down. The mean for the class that entered in 2011 was 1330 for the Old SAT, which concedes to a 1390 on the New SAT. The mean for the class that entered in 2017 was a 1230 on the New SAT. While around 60 percent of incoming freshmen in 2011 entered with AP credits, only 45 percent did in the Fall of 2017. The average GPA has dropped only from 94 to 93. And the size of the freshmen classes has



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grown from just over 1,000 in 2011 to more than 1300 for the class that entered this past fall.

Completion

[SUNY-Geneseo's freshmen retention has declined steadily.](#) Ninety percent of the freshmen who arrived in 2011 returned for their sophomore year. However, this dropped to 86 percent for the class that entered in 2016, even though the class was significantly larger.

In prior years SUNY-Geneseo students who stayed have tended to successfully graduate. The college retained 91 percent of the freshmen who entered in 2010. Seventy-one percent earned their undergraduate degree within four years. This is excellent for any college of any size. Sixty-eight percent of the students who entered in 2011 finished on time. That's also excellent, but retention for that class had also slipped slightly, to 90 percent.

SUNY-Geneseo is quite transparent about releasing data [on degree completion by major.](#) For the class that entered in 2011, the three most popular majors were Biology, Psychology and English. Biology was the most popular intended major when the class arrived for its first year; just over 200 freshmen had made this choice. However, only 83 graduated in the major, while 77 graduated in another major. But among the 89 who chose Psychology, sixty-two earned their degree in that major. Among the 65 who had chosen English, 45 earned their degree in that major.

But there were also interesting changes in intentions:

- Among the 32 entering students who chose Physics as their intended major in 2011, only four graduated as a Physics major.
- Among the 17 entering students who chose Chemistry as their intended major in 2011, only six graduated as a Chemistry major.
- Among the 77 entering students who chose Business as their intended major in 2011, only 18 graduated as a Business major.
- However, among the 30 who chose Accounting in 2011, there were 20 who later earned an Accounting degree.
- Among the 20 entering students who chose Mathematics as their intended major in 2011, only six graduated as a Mathematics major.

If nothing else, these numbers show that Mathematics and the Sciences are quite demanding at SUNY-Geneseo, and that the Accounting program, while rigorous, is manageable for those who are motivated at the start.



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Curriculum

SUNY-Geneseo offers [40 undergraduate degree programs as well as 21 interdisciplinary minors](#). However, the school does not offer a Computer Science degree, unusual for any school, especially one that advertises itself to be a public honors college. Only two foreign languages, French and Spanish, are offered as majors; these plus German are also offered as minors.

Biology is not only the most popular major at SUNY-Geneseo; it is also a focal point for [four combined degree programs](#) in Dentistry, Optometry, Osteopathy and Physical Therapy. It is also [a partner in majors in Biochemistry and Biophysics as well as a BioMath minor](#). The English major offers tracks in [literature](#) and [creative writing](#) and partners to offer majors [Comparative Literature](#) as well as [Theatre/English](#) along with a [Film Studies](#) minor. The undergraduate Business program, while apparently quite competitive, has [agreements with six other schools, public and private, to enable SUNY-Geneseo students to earn the MBA in just one additional year](#). It is also possible to combine any major at SUNY-Geneseo with [a minor in Economics, Finance, Management or Marketing](#). Those who choose the [Accounting major should stay for an additional year to earn the MS in Accounting](#). New York requires Certified Public Accountants to have earned 150 credits to sit for the professional examination. Accountancy and [Education](#) are the only Masters offerings at this school.

The [general education requirements](#) vary between 30 and 52 credits, depending on high school preparation. Those who enter with four or more years of a foreign language will not need to take one at SUNY-Geneseo. The college on its Web site that a few courses may be applied [to fulfill more than one general education requirement](#).

Perhaps the greatest show of academic pride at SUNY-Geneseo is [GREAT Day](#). GREAT stands for Geneseo Recognizing Excellence, Achievement and Talent. GREAT Day includes poster presentations as well concurrent oral presentations on honors-related projects.

SUNY-Geneseo advertises a student/faculty ratio of 19 to 1, high for a school of this size, more likely a larger flagship state university. Nearly 60 percent of classes offered during 2015-16 had between 20 and 49 students; ten percent had 50 or more. Three percent, or 24 classes, had more than 100. These numbers are more in line with a larger school than a mid-sized one. For comparison, at Ramapo College of New Jersey, a similar-sized public school, 65 percent of all classes offered in the same year had between 20 and 49 students; none had 50 or more.

SUNY-Geneseo students gave their faculty a 3.58 (out of a possible 5) on [RateMyProfessors.com](#). This school is cross-shopped against SUNY's Binghamton (3.80) and Buffalo (3.72) flagship campuses as well as private schools such as Syracuse (3.68) and the University of Rochester (3.70) that have far larger graduate programs. A comparable school is Ramapo College of New Jersey (3.65) which has about the same number of students and makes undergraduates a higher priority.



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Community

The SUNY-Geneseo campus features at least one of every type of building one would associate with a college campus: Gothic, sleek glass, red brick styles being prime examples. A former high school, once used as an on-site teaching laboratory school, has been converted to an administration building while another brick building devotes grounds and wall space to an outdoor movie plaza. The mix of buildings on such a small (220 acre) space makes the campus appear eclectic.

The campus appears to be relatively safe, according to the college's most recent [Clery Report](#), but alcohol-related disciplinary referrals in the residence halls did rise considerably from 73 in 2014 to 189 in 2016. Drug-related disciplinary referrals in the halls also rose, though they were low, from 21 to 49. Alcohol-related arrests were few, but drug-related arrests on campus rose from 49 to 97. It is fair to ask if this is due to better law enforcement and reporting, or larger freshman classes, or some other issue.

The surrounding community visually out-shines the campus. You can look out onto the picturesque Genesee Valley from the student center balcony and a gazebo, among other spaces. Sunsets have long been a part of local folklore. Summer and winter recreational opportunities abound at nearby Letchworth State Park and Conesus Lake. Downtown Geneseo is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It has practically every retail and dining opportunity one comes to associate with a college town.

SUNY-Geneseo competes in 20 NCAA Division III (non-scholarship) varsity sports—Men's Hockey is the one that bonds the campus. According to the athletic department, the athletes take their academics quite seriously. In 2014-15, 162 (34%) Geneseo student-athletes earned SUNY Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) Commissioner's List honors for having a 3.3 grade point average or higher for three semesters at the institution (does not have to be consecutive semesters). In 2014-15, 243 (51%) Geneseo student-athletes earned SUNYAC All-Academic Team honors for having a 3.3 semester grade point average during the season in which they competed.

Fraternities and sororities are popular, attracting just over a fifth of the men and a third of the women, approximately 1,600 undergraduates. For perspective, Binghamton has approximately 1,800 engaged undergraduates engaged in Greek letter social organizations, but it has a much larger (over 13,000) undergraduate student body.

SUNY-Geneseo also has over 200 recognized student organizations. During any given semester, about one-quarter of the student body takes non-credit courses through Geneseo Opportunities in Leadership Development, also known as "[The GOLD Program](#)," a series of certificates that students may earn in such areas as leadership, career development, sustainability, diversity, information management and volunteerism. The GOLD Program stands out by putting all of the courses under a single catalog and marketing program, with awards attached. Certificates are awarded after participation in as many as eight one-hour workshops though in some cases papers, projects or community service hours are also required. Students receive their certificates at an April ceremony. In addition, the awards may be listed on an official Cocurricular



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Transcript that may be used to apply for scholarships, graduate and professional school admissions, internships and on-campus jobs.

Comforts

SUNY-Geneseo houses just over half (54%) of the student body on campus as well as nearly all of the freshmen. The college has a two-year residency requirement for students who live on campus. There are 13 [Living-Learning Communities](#) at Geneseo as well as gender inclusive and substance free living options. However, the college has only one apartment complex on campus. If you want to move off campus, and are willing to walk a few blocks, its possible to keep housing costs to under \$500/person/month, including utilities. The online registry had per-semester rates, suggesting that some landlords know that students will go home for the summer.

Connections

While SUNY-Geneseo attracts students from all over New York State, students should expect to look towards Rochester, about a half-hour away, for [internship opportunities](#) during the school year, and possibly the summer. But while Rochester is a headquarters city for firms such as Bausch and Lomb, Eastman Kodak, Wegman's and Xerox, Geneseo students will face strong competition from peers who attend Rochester Institute of Technology and the University of Rochester, and they will need access to a car.

Among the more than 29,000 SUNY-Geneseo alumni registered on [LinkedIn.com](#), the largest groups are almost identical in size. Just over 7,100 are based in and around Rochester, and about 6,800 are based in or around New York City. The Buffalo (around 2,100), Syracuse (just under 1,400) and Albany (just under 1,200) are well represented, but surprisingly so are Washington DC (just under 1,000) and Boston (just over 900). The employers with the largest numbers of alumni were in the Rochester area.

Conclusions

SUNY-Geneseo is a very good public college to pursue an Accounting, Education or liberal arts degree. It is a good alternative to the larger SUNY schools, with achievable admissions into similar academic programs as well as a setting more similar to a traditional college town—at a lower cost. SUNY-Geneseo is also a good value for non-residents who come from states, Massachusetts and Vermont being two examples, that do not have a public college that has achieved similar success with their students.

If you judge a school by its students, SUNY-Geneseo has fared quite well in the past. By the numbers, it appears to be a tough place to earn in a degree in the sciences, although those who succeed can be amply rewarded. However, a slip in retention from 91 to 86 percent has to be noticed, especially when the college was less selective in admissions. Either more students are struggling or the resources, especially faculty, have not grown with the sizes of the freshman classes. The college has not yet reported four-year graduation rates for students who entered in 2012 or 2013, so it is not possible to know which is true.



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Report Card: SUNY-Geneseo

- 4-Year/6-Year Graduation Rates: A/A
- Freshman Retention: B+
- Costs: A
- Curriculum: A
- Community: B+
- Comforts: B+
- Connections: B+/A for Upstate New York