TOP PUBLIC COLLEGES THAT DON’T PLAY FOOTBALL

Since it is not uncommon for education writers to contrast the good fortunes of college football coaches with the harder times of college faculty, it would be useful to list some good-to-excellent publicly supported schools that do not play football. Football is the most expensive sport for a college to operate because of:

- The size and specialized nature of the coaching staff.
- The number of players and the specialized nature of the positions on the team.
- The need for a stadium and separate practice facilities.
- A greater need for trainers and medical personnel than other sports during practices and game time.

Below is a list of excellent and very good publicly supported schools that do not play football:

**Excellent Schools—90%+ Freshman Retention, 75%+ Six-Year Graduation Rate**
- Binghamton University (NY)
- St. Mary’s College of Maryland
- SUNY-Geneseo
- University of California—Irvine
- University of California—San Diego

**Very Good Schools—85%+ Freshman Retention, 67%+ Six Year Graduation Rate**
- Ramapo College of New Jersey
- University of California—Riverside
- University of California—Santa Cruz
- University of North Carolina-Wilmington
- University of Vermont
- Western Washington University

On the next page the 2011-12 tuition and fees for each school, where possible, were compared with the 2011-12 tuition and fees for a comparable public “football school” in the same state. In four of these ten comparisons the football school charged less.

In the case of St. Mary’s College of Maryland public policies helped to determine the tuition gap. St. Mary’s, while public, operates independently of the state university system and receives a block grant from state government to help cover the college’s operating budget. The block grant is tied to inflation rates, which have been low in recent years. The two other Maryland schools mentioned on the table, Towson and the University of Maryland-College Park are covered under another legislative act which
froze tuition increases while increasing the operating subsidy of the school. So, the difference in tuition has nothing to do with the fact that two schools play football and one does not.

In the case of Ramapo College of New Jersey one comparable, The College of New Jersey (TCNJ), competes against Ramapo in other sports while also fielding a non-scholarship football team. TCNJ has a 7,000 seat stadium on campus and charges fans $7 per ticket per game. This season TCNJ will play 10 games, five at home and five away. It doubtful that, even without scholarships, and even with a total sell-out at every game, revenue from ticket sales comes close to covering the costs of running the team. Advertising revenues are limited. Chances are the only radio or television coverage comes via the college station. TCNJ plays eighteen varsity sports, including football, and also competes against other schools in club sports. The revenue sports, including football and men’s and women’s basketball, do not help to cover the costs of the non-revenue sports, so someone must step in. Either the students end up subsidizing the entire cost of the sports program through their fees or the college covers the cost through the operating budget.

In the case of the comparison between Ramapo and Rutgers main campus in New Brunswick, a portion of Rutgers’ tuition and fees is a campus fee paid only by resident students. In addition, some schools within Rutgers, such as business, engineering and pharmacy levy additional tuition for their academic programs. The tuition figure used here is for students enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences, the largest academic unit in the university, and the one most comparable to Ramapo, which promotes itself as a liberal arts college. This table shows that the “public liberal arts school” and the football school charge essentially the same.

The major lessons from this exercise are:

- If you have your sights set on a public school, but you do not wish to support a football program, then sometimes there are other public options available.
- The school that does not play football will not always be less expensive than the school that does.
- If the school does not earn enough from its revenue sports to cover to the costs of playing its non-revenue sports, then the college and/or its student body is more likely to be asked to subsidize them.
Comparison of Tuition and Fees between select Non-Football and Football Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Football School—In-State Tuition and Fees for 2011-12</th>
<th>Comparable Football School—In State Tuition and Fees for 2011-12</th>
<th>Difference in Tuition and Fees—Non-Football School versus Football School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUNY, Binghamton University--$6,939</td>
<td>SUNY, University at Buffalo--$7,436</td>
<td>$497</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s College of Maryland--$14,445</td>
<td>University of Maryland—College Park--$8,655</td>
<td>-$5,790</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s College of Maryland--$14,445</td>
<td>Towson University--$7,906</td>
<td>-$6,539</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of California—Irvine--$12,902</td>
<td>University of California—Davis--$12,796</td>
<td>-$106</td>
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<td>University of California—San Diego--$12,187</td>
<td>University of California—Berkeley--$14,641</td>
<td>$2,454</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of California—Riverside--$12,539</td>
<td>University of California—Los Angeles--$12,686</td>
<td>$147</td>
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<td>University of North Carolina—Wilmington--$5,676</td>
<td>University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill--$7,008</td>
<td>$1,332</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ramapo College of New Jersey--$12,758</td>
<td>Rutgers University—New Brunswick--$12,755</td>
<td>-$3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ramapo College of New Jersey--$12,758</td>
<td>The College of New Jersey--$14,187</td>
<td>$1,429</td>
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<td>Western Washington University--$7,811</td>
<td>University of Washington—Seattle--$10,574</td>
<td>$2,763</td>
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