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### **Rosemont College (PA)**

There are small colleges. Then there are very small colleges. Rosemont College located along the Main Line into Philadelphia, has only 600 undergraduates. Formerly, all-female, Rosemont became a co-ed college in 2009.

Rosemont is not only the smallest of the formerly all-female small private colleges around Philadelphia; it was also the last to become co-ed. Rosemont is also one of only two of these schools—Chestnut Hill is the other—to remain a college instead of transitioning into a university. While Rosemont is a Catholic college, it welcomes students of all faiths. This college is a true melting pot: two-thirds of the students in the most recent entering classes have not been Catholic.

Outside of the Honors program, Rosemont is not exceptionally selective. The average GPA for students who entered this fall was 3.2. Admitted students scored between 950 and 1250 (out of 1600) on the SAT. The range for the ACT Composite was between 18 and 21. Honors students had an average GPA of 3.9. A small population within an entering class of 142 students, their SATs ranged between 1220 and 1400. ACT Composite scores ranged between 24 and 32. The majority of the students come from Philadelphia as well as the surrounding Pennsylvania counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery.

While Rosemont wants to remain small, freshman retention has been slightly higher than 70 percent for several years. The number of transfer students who enter as sophomores or junior essentially equals the number of freshmen who leave. The four-year graduation rate was 38 percent for students who entered in 2010. However, that rate reflects past pricing that was higher over the four years those students were in school than the charges are today.

Cabini University, located in nearby Radnor, has been the most considered college for Rosemont students, though state schools (Penn State-Abington and Penn State-Brandywine) and other small Philadelphia area colleges (Arcadia, Chestnut Hill, Eastern, Holy Family, Immaculata and Neumann) were also in the mix. The Honors students had grades and test scores that would place them in the middle, even the upper third, of the entering class at Penn State's main campus.

#### **Costs**

Rosemont reset its tuition and fees beginning in 2016-17. The college now charges the second-lowest rates of any private college in Pennsylvania, after Grove City College, located in the upper western part of the state. The college charges just under \$19,500 this year for tuition and fees. Room and board charges, also reduced during the reset, average \$12,000.

Merit Scholarship recipients may find that their tuition and fees could become competitive not only with the area's smaller private colleges, but also with the two Penn State campuses near Philadelphia, Abington and Brandywine as well as Temple and West Chester University. Scholarships range from \$3,000 to \$8,000/year for resident students, \$2,500 to \$4,500 for commuters.



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The Project on Student Debt reports that 90 percent of Rosemont's 2016 graduates had to take out loans to cover the costs of their education, although half of the class also received need-based scholarships. The average indebtedness, for a class that did not benefit from the tuition reset, was approximately \$40,800. The reset, combined with continued need-based and merit-based scholarships, should reduce indebtedness of the classes that entered last year and the years after that.

### Curriculum

Rosemont takes a middle ground between the liberal arts and pre-professional education. Approximately half of the college's 24 majors could be considered to be in the liberal arts, and most of these majors also offer pre-professional tracks. Most of the majors are also offered as minors. Interestingly, while Rosemont offers majors and minors in Accounting, Business Management, Finance and International Business, it does not offer a major or minor in Economics.

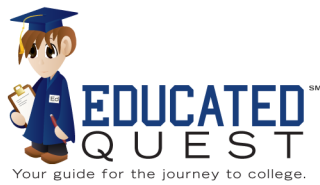
The college's [General Education Requirements](#) are similar to other religiously affiliated small colleges: a year of each liberal arts subject (Humanities, Social Sciences, Mathematics, Natural Sciences) and two courses each in Philosophy and Religion (though they do not need to be in Catholicism). Honors students have access to Honors-level classes, capped at 15 students, and they may draft a "contract" with a faculty member to design their own course! They also receive an Honors advisor to mentor them in addition to their pre-major advisor (from the faculty) and their major advisor.

In addition to more personalized instruction—students are not likely to see more than 30 students in a class through most of their education—the college offers [seven combined degree programs as well as three-year Bachelor's degree programs](#). Rosemont students may also take up to 18 credits at nearby Villanova University. These courses are likely to be electives in a major or free electives. Applicants who score 1220 or higher on the SAT and have a GPA of 3.5 or higher may also be considered for [three-year degree programs](#) in 12 majors or opt to use advanced placement to pursue [a combined degree program](#).

Rosemont students have very high regard for their faculty. They gave them an average rating of 3.88 (out of a possible 5) on [RateMyProfessors.com](#). Rosemont students, on average, showed higher regard for their faculty than students at Arcadia (3.71), Cabrini (3.73), Eastern (3.80), Neumann (3.73), Penn State-Abington (3.69), Penn State Brandywine (3.71), Temple (3.70), West Chester University (3.75), and even Villanova (3.83). However, Chestnut Hill (3.92) and Immaculata (3.90) students held their faculty in higher regard. While a smaller school will produce a smaller sample size in these ratings, Rosemont's high score is a positive tribute to the college and its faculty.

### Community

Walk around Rosemont's campus, then follow-up with walks around nearby Bryn Mawr and Villanova. You won't see much of a difference in setting or architecture. Rosemont could easily fit into the middle of either of the larger, more endowed schools. The Main building, a former 19th



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century residential estate, was the college's first building when it was founded in 1921. Other buildings follow Gothic styles popular at very selective colleges. The Immaculate Conception Chapel on campus is one of only two in the US that features only female leaders of the Catholic Church on its stained glass windows, a link back to its heritage. Rosemont recently renovated the dining hall and will open a new community center in 2019. The small campus is also quite easy to secure.

As Rosemont welcomed more male students, the college added NCAA Division III (non-scholarship) varsity sports. Today, there are 13. Rosemont also has the only synthetic gray turf field in the US. While the outdoor sports facilities are quite modern, the indoor facilities appear dated. That will be resolved in two years when the new community center opens. [Thirty-three of the college's varsity athletes were named to the All-Academic teams in their conference](#) this past season, including nine members of the Women's Softball team.

Rosemont is surrounded by a well-to-do neighborhood only 11 miles from Center City Philadelphia. The college provides free shuttle service to the SEPTA train station and shares a shuttle to King of Prussia Mall and other shopping destinations with Villanova University. Students may purchase 5 SEPTA train tokens for only \$9. Parking is more than adequate on campus for residents and commuters. The college also has 30 clubs and organizations. A minimum of ten students is required to form and maintain one.

### Comforts

Rosemont is capable of housing 300 students on campus, nearly all of the undergraduate students who do not commute from home. While the exteriors of the residence halls are in excellent shape, the interiors need an update. However, the rooms in freshman halls have their own sinks and are sufficiently spacious doubles. Single rooms and suite-style living options are available to upper-class students. The college also maintains an honors house on campus for seniors in the honors program. Returning students are assigned a housing selection number based on their class status (number of credits and GPA). All students who live on campus must carry a meal plan, though the honors house also has its own kitchen where students may prepare meals.

With such a small population, reported incidents of crime in the residence halls have been few, according to the college's [Clery Report](#). The most reported by far are liquor law violations. The college is supported not only by campus security but also police departments in Philadelphia and Lower Merion Township.

Rosemont's room and board charges are low enough that it makes more sense to live on campus than to move off. There are many apartment buildings nearby in communities such as Ardmore, Bryn Mawr, Lower Merion and Wayne. But the costs of renting will be at least \$650/person/month, including utilities, with obligations to lease during the summer.

### Connections

A small school will have a smaller alumni base, although the college plans to leverage its connections with its network as well as parents to spread the word and attract a stronger student



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body. Of the nearly 8,800 Rosemont alumni registered on [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com), approximately 3,900 (44 percent) are based in or around Philadelphia. While most of the alumni are in business careers, the largest cohort, about 10 percent of the alumni, work in education.

However, career development becomes a group responsibility of the faculty as well as the career services and alumni relations offices within a school this small. Given the college's location, it is quite possible for any diligent student to build a solid resume through on and off-campus employment and internships. The college has reported that 92 percent of the students who graduated this past May were either employed or attending graduate or professional schools full time.

One area that will help this college in the health professions is the continued success of its Post Baccalaureate Pre-Medical program. Open to students who have already earned Bachelor's degrees, this two-year program prepares students not only by offering pre-med courses but also by offering one-to-one advising, a committee recommendation letter, clinical and research opportunities and MCAT prep.

### **Conclusion**

Rosemont can best be described as a unique opportunity for B students in high school to become A students in college, if they enter ready to do the work, and its also an opportunity for A students to get a far more personalized college experience that they are unlikely to find anywhere else. There are more than enough opportunities to receive help, for those who are ready to ask. It also helps to have at least a supportive interest in sports. Rosemont expanded the athletic program with an eye towards attracting students who were more likely to help build stronger bonds within the campus community.

It is not fair to make a Report Card for Rosemont given the very small size of the student body as well as its transition from an all-female to a co-ed college. The freshman class that entered in 2016 was 40 percent male, although men represented 30 percent of the full student body. The tuition reset also set the college on a different direction towards providing an affordable and more personal alternative to the larger public and private colleges in the area and to recruit a more geographically diverse student body.

Since Rosemont intends to remain small and committed to the reset pricing, it will need to attract more students with stronger records of achievement in high school and community college by not only doing what it already does well, but also by adding more partnerships with other schools that grant advanced degrees in fields that a very small college could not offer on its own campus. It will also need to leverage its contacts among faculty, alumni and parents to help more students find internships, especially in business, communications and the health-related fields.

Prospective first-year students should attend an Open House, and possibly some classes on campus, before they commit to Rosemont. Success at a very small college is about making friendly, or at least cordial, connections with as many people who work on campus as possible, and also making friends with as many classmates as you can.