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Syracuse University

With nearly 15,000 undergraduates and over 200 majors in 13 undergraduate schools, Syracuse University could be considered either the “more achievable Cornell” or the “USC of the East,” depending on your sports interests. Syracuse and the University of Southern California, the USC for this profile, are the only large (over 10,000 full-time undergraduates), independent (non-religious) private universities that are members of the NCAA’s ‘Power 5’ in Division 1 college football.

Outside of USC, which is in a large city, and Cornell, which is in a more rural area of Central New York, the schools that are most similar to Syracuse in size and in the selection of academic offerings are probably SUNY-University at Buffalo, the University of Virginia and Miami University of Ohio. Applicants consider a wide variety of schools, depending on their academic interests. Syracuse is considered not only against the flagship state university in an applicant’s home state but also more selective private universities and specialized schools in the visual and performing arts.

Syracuse welcomes a class of approximately 3,600 freshmen. There were more than 35,000 applications for the class that will enter this fall. The yield rate, the percentage of accepted applicants who decided to enroll, was 22 percent, according to the most recent data available (2016-17). Considering the size of the applicant pool and the expected number of students in the incoming class, the university would have been expected to accept 40 percent of all applicants to entice 25 percent of them to come. However, acceptance rates and yield rates will vary from school to school within Syracuse, as will high school grades and test scores. The acceptance rates for the more selective schools: Architecture, Newhouse (Communications) and the Whitman School of Management, for example, are lower than they are for the university as a whole, and the yield rates are higher. However, Syracuse does allow applicants to choose up to three schools. Those who apply for a dual bachelors degree program are also considered for admission to each of the two partner schools.

Retention rates at Syracuse have been over 90 percent for some time. Sixty-nine percent of the students who entered in 2010 graduated within four years, but students in Architecture, dual Bachelors and Bachelors/Masters programs needed more time. Overall, the university will graduate over 80 percent of a class, on par with more selective public and private universities.

Costs

[Syracuse is quite expensive.](#) Direct charges—tuition and fees, room and board—are expected to be approximately \$67,400 for the 2018-19 academic year. The total cost of attendance, less health insurance, is expected to be \$70,600. Tuition and fees for the incoming class will increase by \$3,300 (7 percent) over the previous year, though current students see their tuition and fees increase by slightly less than four percent, more typical of similar colleges and universities across the US. Syracuse increased its first-year student fees for the coming year as part of an initiative called [Invest Syracuse](#) to raise \$100 million to provide more student services and need-based aid.



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The university reported to its student newspaper, *The Daily Orange*, on April 12, 2018, that 65 percent of Syracuse students currently receive scholarships and need-based grants, but did not state if it counted varsity athletes among that population. The most current data available for 2016-17—submitted to *US News*—shows that the university met, on average, 96 percent of need, and that it also met the full need for 51 percent of the student body. The average need-based scholarship was also more than half the tuition and fees, and helped to cover room and board. However, the university also determined that while just over two-thirds of the undergraduates requested need-based aid, less than half of the student body qualified for it. The average merit-based award in 2016-17 was less than one-third of the tuition and fees that the university charged that year, though more generous academic awards up to full tuition and fees are available.

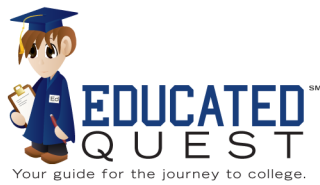
Sixty-three percent of Syracuse graduates in 2016 had to borrow to cover the costs of their education, though some had spent more time on campus to complete an Architecture degree, a dual degree program or an accelerated path to an advanced degree. This led to an average indebtedness of approximately \$37,800, high for any college or university. College students may borrow up to \$27,000 for four years under the Federal Direct Student Loan program over four years, and up to \$31,000 over five.

Syracuse is quite generous at allowing incoming freshmen to apply AP or IB credits towards their education. They can apply credits to graduate early, add a second major, or earn their Bachelors *and* an advanced degree in a year's less time. Most of an incoming class will not be offered *all* of the options by the flagship state university in their home state, let alone more selective private schools. But they all help to reduce educational costs at Syracuse.

Curriculum

Syracuse is an interesting mix for undergraduate education. Its programs in communications, visual and performing arts and public policy rank among the nation's best. The Whitman School of Management has carved out a strong niche in Entrepreneurship in partnership with other colleges within in the university, especially with the College of Engineering and Computer Science. The options in computer and information science are quite diverse, also through partnerships with other colleges in this school. However, it is very difficult to change schools to transfer into Newhouse or Whitman from another school within the university. You might need to back-track into the introductory courses, presuming that you had the grades to be considered for transfer.

Syracuse offers [over 200 majors and more than 100 minors](#), more than you will find at many larger schools as well as options such as dual degree programs that will be attractive to students who enter with a semester or more of AP or IB credits. These programs award two bachelors degrees, usually over four years, possibly including summer or 'May-mester' courses. One school serves as the home school for the dual degree program, but students must meet the core requirements for both, which requires careful planning. The major advantage, aside for access to academic programs and two degrees, is that students may take use the career services of both schools to network and find internships and full-time employment opportunities.



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There are also dual degree options between the Whitman School of Management and the School of Law as well as between the College of Engineering and Computer Science and Whitman for the MBA. These programs are not only accelerated and assured (upon fulfilling GPA and standardized test score requirements); they are also coupled to scholarships for the advanced degree.

Unlike the flagship state universities in New York and the neighboring states, Syracuse allows liberal arts or communications majors to minor in virtually all of the business or information science programs. The university also makes it easier for engineering students to double major or minor in other disciplines as well as study abroad. The university also offers Newhouse communications students the opportunity to “study away” at university centers in Los Angeles and New York. One major difference between Syracuse and flagship state schools for prospective communications students to consider: there is no opportunity to minor in any of the communications programs at the Newhouse School; a general Public Communications minor is the only opportunity available.

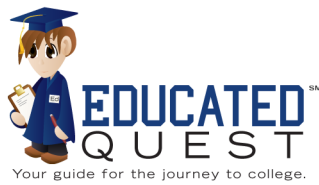
There will be large classes at Syracuse, especially in courses in Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Physics and Psychology that are required in several majors. Nearly 10 percent of all classes taught in 2016-17 had more than 50 students, about the same as Miami University of Ohio but also less than USC (12%), Cornell (17%) and the University of Virginia (15%), and far less than SUNY-Buffalo (22%) among schools with a similar number of undergraduate students as well as a similar selection of academic options.

Syracuse students gave their faculty a rating of 3.68 (out of a possible 5) on RateMyProfessors.com. They held their faculty in lower regard than students at Cornell (3.77), Miami University of Ohio (3.72), SUNY-Buffalo (3.72), USC (3.75) and the University of Virginia (3.82).

Community

If you want a school with an athletic tradition and a campus-based social life, but do not want to attend a large state university, Syracuse is your school. It is the only private university in America that has won national championships in NCAA Division I competition in football, men’s basketball and men’s lacrosse. The university also won a national championship in women’s field hockey in 2015. The men’s lacrosse program has won ten national titles, more than any team in Division I play. However, athletic tickets are not free for students; they are sold on an individual game basis or as part of a five-sport package that costs \$220 a year.

From the middle 1950s through the middle 1960s Syracuse could have legitimately been considered the ‘USC of the East’ in college football. During an era when there were never more than 11 post-season bowl games, Syracuse went to six bowls, and earned its only National Championship in 1959. From 1955 through 1966, Syracuse produced three running backs who have been inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame—Jim Brown, Floyd Little and Larry Csonka—and one who won a Heisman Trophy, Ernie Davis (1961). Davis died from leukemia before he could begin his professional career. The Carrier Dome football field is named for him. While Syracuse has had successes in football since the middle of the 1960s, the team has not had a



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winning season since 2013, the highlight being a win over Clemson last season. Football attendance fluctuates with the team's record. Last season the Orange went 4-8 and averaged less than 34,000 fans per home game, according to the NCAA. In 2013, the last winning season, they averaged more than 38,000.

Syracuse is the only NCAA 'Power 5' university that plays football and basketball in the same venue. [The Carrier Dome, accommodates over 52,000 fans for football and more than 20,000 for basketball.](#) From 1982 through 2017, according to the NCAA, Syracuse has not ranked lower than fourth in the nation for average home attendance for Division I Men's Basketball, and most years it ranked first or second. In addition, while the basketball team has won only one national championship, it has had 47 consecutive winning seasons, including 32 appearances in the NCAA tournament and two other trips to the Final Four.

The social life at Syracuse is going to be more campus based than it is at most of the school's sports rivals. Marshall Street, which leads into campus is a social center, though it does not offer as many dining, shopping and entertainment options as you will find in a college town such as Chapel Hill or Charlottesville. The [Carrier Dome is large enough to attract virtually any performer to come to the campus](#), and to Central New York. Billy Joel has performed there as have U2, Pink Floyd and the Rolling Stones, among many others. The university is large enough, and the academic programs prominent enough, to attract virtually any speaker to campus or make networking a successful activity for motivated students.

Visually, the urban Central and North Campuses are attractive and eclectic, though the student center is showing its age compared to similar facilities at schools that applicants consider such as Ohio State or Penn State-University Park. From the ground and [the air](#), the most similar campus to Syracuse would probably be [USC](#) or the [University of Pennsylvania](#), if either campus were placed atop a hill.

But while the campus has its visual assets the surrounding area offers little for college students to do, and little reason for them to venture off campus, unless they want to work, participate in community service or seek off campus housing. The public roads leading into and through campus are not in the best shape. Rough winter conditions, including snow storms, cause some of the problem, but so does neglect. While Syracuse is not an exceptionally large city, it is one of the more difficult places for a college student to have a car due to the lack of parking spaces on campus as well as the road conditions. The campus bus system makes up for this, as does the rich selection of activities, clubs and organizations on campus. [Greek life, including 21 recognized sororities and 31 fraternities attracts 30 percent of the student body.](#) One major advantage of going Greek: you can sometimes have a car and live closer to campus.

The ["party school" reputation](#) that has been hung on Syracuse is not helped by the 1,000+ reported alcohol-related disciplinary referrals in 2015 and 2016 that appear in the university's [2017 Clery Report](#), while the number of drug-related referrals more than doubled over three years. Incidents of burglary, rape and stalking either rose and/or became better reported as well. There were also reported disciplinary referrals for illegal weapons possession each year from 2014 through 2016, something rarely seen in a college's public safety report.



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Comforts

Syracuse requires all first-year students to live in the [residence halls](#) on campus, unless their families reside in the area. With the exception of Flint Hall, all of the first-year residences are tall towers, the most popular living option being an open (no wall) or split (privacy wall) double room on a floor where several rooms share a common bathroom. Suite-style options, where a smaller number of rooms share a common bathroom, are also available. The university did not construct a new, non-apartment residence hall from 1968, when it opened the Brewster, Boland and Brockway residence complex, to 2009 when Ernie Davis Hall opened its doors. Students who are interested in one of the more demanding majors should consider a [Learning Community](#) in order to improve their chances for success in their academic program, and to get to know their classmates.

Syracuse offers [on campus apartment-style housing to over 2,400 students who live on South Campus](#). This is probably the best living option for upper-class students who do not want to pledge a fraternity or sorority, or do not plan to live in the city over the summer. It is possible to pay less than \$400/month plus utilities to share a house or apartment off campus, but it makes little sense to venture too far from campus or at least a bus route, given that parking is so tight. Apartments can also be difficult to sublet over the summer; the Greek organizations that have housing provide serious competition for tenants.

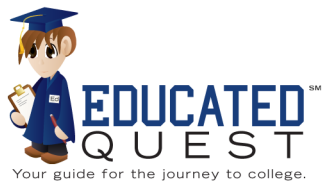
Connections

Each of the university's 13 undergraduate schools has its own career services staff to help students make connections to find internships and full-time positions as well as their own alumni networking programs and career fairs. Postings are circulated privately to students by school, although everyone applies through Orange Link, the university's jobs database. Virtually any Syracuse student in any major can find a paid non-credit internship or an unpaid credit-bearing position, beginning in their sophomore year, as long as they are motivated to work.

Among the nearly 149,000 Syracuse alumni registered on [LinkedIn.com](#), nearly 36,000 are based in or around New York City. Outside of the Syracuse area, where more than 18,000 alumni live and/or work, the university has over 4,000 alumni based in or near these metro areas: Boston, Washington DC, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Philadelphia. Over 2,000 alumni are based in or around Chicago and Atlanta as well.

Conclusions

Syracuse offers many things that prospective students would love to see at the flagship state university in their home state, including academic flexibility, school spirit, less competition for vast resources and a high volume of internships and jobs brought to them through a loyal alumni network. Those who choose to enroll at Syracuse can get everything that they might have gotten had they gone to Cornell, USC or the University of Virginia, among many other places, as long as they can handle the costs, the city and the weather.



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Report Card: Syracuse University

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