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Stockton University (NJ)

Stockton University is New Jersey's regional public college for the Atlantic City metro area, and located approximately one hour from Philadelphia. With over 8,600 undergraduates, Stockton is mid-sized for a state university. But the school offers over 160 majors, minors and certificates, a greater variety than you will find in larger schools. Stockton has two campuses, the main campus in Galloway, in the heart of New Jersey's Pine Barrens, and a recently opened campus on the beachfront of Atlantic City. This is one of New Jersey's fastest growing public colleges, [gaining nearly 1,000 undergraduates over the past five years](#), virtually all attending full time, practically all coming from within New Jersey.

Stockton is not exceptionally selective. Eighty-two percent of the students who applied to be part of the fall 2017 freshman class were offered admission, Over a third decided to come, high for any school, public or private. The university waitlisted another 325 applicants, and offered admission to 124 (39 percent). The overall acceptance rate even included the highly selective Nursing program, which welcomes only 36 new students each fall. The average SAT for the fall 2017 freshman class was 1110. The average ACT Composite score was a 22. This year admissions are test optional for most majors, excluding those that have more demanding math and/or science requirements.

As undergraduate enrollments have increased, [so have retention and graduation rates](#). Since 2008, freshmen retention has improved from 82 to 87 percent for the class that arrived last fall. The four-year graduation rates for the classes that entered from 2008 to 2013 also improved from 51 to 61 percent, better than any public college in the Garden State, with the exception of The College of New Jersey just over 90 minutes north. This is an excellent performance for a regional public college of any size, especially one that does not have exceptionally selective admissions.

Students who consider Stockton are most likely to look at other New Jersey public colleges in Central and Southern New Jersey, including Rowan University, the College of New Jersey and Rutgers University-Camden. Monmouth University and Rider University are the most considered private schools. Applicants also consider public and private colleges in Pennsylvania that are in and around Philadelphia.

Costs

Stockton is one of the best buys in higher education in New Jersey. Resident students are assessed just under \$14,000 for tuition and fees; non-residents are charged just over \$21,000. They may take as many as 20 credits—five four-credit courses—for these charges. Room and board charges to live on campus in the residence halls average \$12,300.

While the sticker price appears high at first for a resident, compared to similar state schools in other states, the university offers [several renewable scholarships](#). Depending on class rank and test scores, accepted students may qualify for awards as large as \$18,000/year, renewable by maintaining a 3.0. A student who might be in the middle of the pool at Rutgers-New Brunswick, New Jersey's flagship state university campus may qualify to pay between \$7,000 and \$11,000



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less to attend Stockton. Non-resident students may qualify for a \$7,100 discount, and need to earn only a 2.25 GPA to keep the award each year.

Stockton students who graduated in spring 2017 owed, on average, approximately \$33,600 according to the Project on Student Debt. College students may borrow \$27,000 from the Federal Direct Loan program over four years, and \$31,000 over five. The indebtedness, however, includes students who remained on campus for an extra year to pursue an advanced degree.

Curriculum

Stockton offers many pre-professional degree programs, but it operates much like a smaller liberal arts school when it comes to degree requirements. All degree programs are 128 credits, usually four courses per semester, with eight credits required in each of four areas: visual and performing arts, literature, philosophy and religion; skill-based class in areas such as writing, public speaking, and foreign languages; life sciences, physical sciences, and mathematics, and social issues and problems. All students must also take a four-credit Junior/Senior course that brings views and methods of several disciplines together. Stockton makes it fairly easy to add a minor or double major, and allows all students to take a fifth course each semester for no additional charge.

Stockton has some signature and unique programs. This is one of the best universities in the US for Environmental Studies and Sciences, including Marine Science and Sustainability. Hospitality Management is a growing program with the opening of the campus in Atlantic City. Business, Criminal Justice, Education and the health professions are quite popular as well. The university also offers bachelors/advanced degree options in Applied Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry and Engineering, Business, Criminal Justice, Environmental Science, Pharmaceutical Engineering, Pharmacy and Osteopathic Medicine.

You're not likely to find many large classes at Stockton. Only two percent of the classes offered during the 2016-17 academic year had more than 50 students; nearly 30 percent had fewer than 20. But while the faculty teaches mainly undergraduates, the university mentions a high student/faculty ratio of 17 to one, similar to much larger schools. This shows that upper division courses with 30 to 40 students, or a more limited selection of course sections, are quite likely to happen in the more popular or more structured majors.

Stockton students gave their faculty a rating of 3.78 (out of a possible 5) on RateMyProfessors.com, higher than students at Rowan (3.7) or Rider (3.67), and about the same as students at Monmouth (3.77) and Rutgers-Camden (3.77). They also held their faculty in higher regard than students at Rutgers-New Brunswick (3.75), Temple University (3.72) and the University of Delaware (3.72).

Community

Stockton's 1,600 acre main campus is quite large for a school with less than 9,000 undergraduates, but most of the land is environmentally sensitive and will never be developed. [Lake Fred](#), separates the academic and residential sections of campus, and is a focal point for social events. The university opened a new Health Science building and a new Unified Sciences



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building across from its student center this fall. The Atlantic City campus, located by the Atlantic Ocean, also opened in the fall of 2018 and houses over 500 students within walking distance of many of the city's casino hotels. The university operates a free shuttle bus service between the two campuses.

There is a lot more for students to see and do in Atlantic City than there is on or immediately near the main campus, though most would prefer to use a car vs. the shuttle on the weekends to get closer to the entertainment options or the beach. Fortunately, Stockton allows all students who live on the main campus to have cars, including the freshmen, and pay no fee for the parking permit. NJ TRANSIT buses also stop at Stockton to take students into Philadelphia, an hour away, or to nearby shopping malls.

Stockton is not really a "spirit and sports" school, though the university's varsity athletic program has had [several recent successes in conference and tournament play](#). The university has also recently produced an NCAA champion in the Triple Jump, Jared Lewis, who won his first title in 2017, then repeated this past spring. The university competes in the New Jersey Athletic Conference against other regional public colleges in the state, and in NCAA Division III competition against similar schools in neighboring states. However, the university does not field a football team.

Stockton has an open main campus in the sense that you do not need to go through a security gate at the main entrance, and you drive through pine lands to get to the academic and residential centers, which are amply secured by campus police. Liquor law violations in the residence halls are by far the most reported crimes on campus, according to the university's [Clery Report](#), although alcohol-related referrals declined each year from 364 in 2015 to 221 in 2017 with only three arrests over those three years. Drug related arrests dropped as well, from 29 to 17 though the university had more referrals each year, rising from two to 21.

The Atlantic City campus is right at the intersection of the main entrance into the city (Route 40, then Albany Avenue) and the casino hotel row (Atlantic Avenue). Campus buildings are amply secure, but students are advised to be careful walking the streets of Atlantic City and parking is limited.

Comforts

Stockton can house approximately 3,300 students, with 530 living on the Atlantic City campus. Unlike many colleges, Stockton allows freshmen to apply to live in on-campus apartments, though nearly 900 will live in more traditional residence halls. Housing 3 is the newest, and most modern residence hall option. There are also five [themed communities](#) for freshmen to choose.

Sophomores, juniors and seniors are more likely to live in on-campus apartments, though off-campus housing is quite inexpensive for New Jersey. Students can share houses or apartments near campus for less than \$600/month, [which undercuts the university's charges for on-campus housing in either Galloway or Atlantic City](#). Stockton has Greek life, but no on-campus residences are assigned to any particular fraternity or sorority.



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Connections

Stockton has over 14,000 alumni living and working the Philadelphia area, according to [LinkedIn.com](#) along with more than 10,000 in and around New York City. There are also more than 500 in and around Washington DC. After that the base is spread really thin. The base is small for a school of this size mainly because the enrollment in the past was much smaller, and the school only opened in 1971. Stockton welcomed nearly 450 fewer freshmen in 1996 (743) as it did in 2015 (1,187) according to the university's enrollment records, and [has done consistently better at retaining larger freshman classes.](#)

While Stockton is close enough to Philadelphia for occasional travel, the city is too far to make commutes to internships practical during the school year. Atlantic City is the more likely destination for business students who want such experience. The university career services and academic departments are also quite capable of placing students in clinical, government and student teaching assignments in Atlantic and Cape May Counties. In addition, Stockton students who wish to do a semester internship in Washington DC [may receive nearly \\$3,400 in discounts and stipends through a partnership with the Washington Center.](#) Similar discounts are not available to students who attend other colleges.

Conclusions

Stockton is a solid school for students who are interested in environmental, hospitality, teacher training and health-related education. The university is also one of the best educational values in the Mid-Atlantic states, especially for New Jersey residents. The shame is that the news has not gotten beyond New Jersey.

Report Card: Stockton University

Four-Year/Six-Year Graduation Rates: B+/B+

Freshman Retention: B+

Costs: B+

Curriculum: A

Community: B

Comforts: B+

Connections: B+ (New York and Philadelphia only)