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University of Scranton (PA)

Located in Scranton, Pennsylvania, aka 'The Electric City,' the University of Scranton is a small Jesuit university with just over 3,600 full-time undergraduates. It also has approximately 1,700 graduate students over programs in business, education, health professions, software engineering and theology. While Scranton is considered a "regional university," it attracts over 60 percent of its undergraduates from outside Pennsylvania, mainly from the neighboring states.

Scranton appears to attract a student who might have otherwise considered a larger state school. The average GPA for the class that arrived last fall was a 3.5. The average SAT was 1190 and the average ACT Composite score was a 25. These numbers fall slightly below the averages for a freshmen class at Penn State's main campus, Rutgers-New Brunswick and Binghamton University, within the State University of New York.

Scranton is not an exceptionally selective school, although admission to the Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy programs is quite competitive. Seventy-five percent of the applicants to last year's freshman class were offered admission. Just over 1,000 more were offered a place on the wait list, more than 350 accepted the offer, and 88 were later admitted. Admissions are test optional, except for the Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy programs, where the ACT or SAT is required.

Scranton does a very good job at retaining and graduating the students it attracts. Freshman retention has been at 88 percent for the more recent classes. The most recently four-year graduation rate for students who entered in 2011 was 72 percent, better than any flagship state university in the region, excluding Binghamton. The six-year graduation rate approaches 80 percent when students in accelerated programs, including Physical Therapy are considered.

Within the Mid-Atlantic states, it is hard to find a school that is similar in size and scope of the academic programs. The academic offerings at Scranton are more similar to those of a larger school such as Duquesne, Loyola-Maryland, Villanova or The College of New Jersey.

Costs

Scranton's direct charges, tuition and fees, room and board, surpassed \$59,500 for the current academic year. Tuition increased by less than three percent from the previous academic year.

Merit-based scholarships may reduce tuition and fees by an average of just over \$16,000 for the student who fits the *middle of the university's academic profile*. This would reduce tuition and fees from approximately \$44,500 to \$28,500, less than the non-



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resident charges assessed by the flagship state schools in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. They would also be about the same as the non-resident charges for The College of New Jersey. The university also has larger awards. The average award for the recipient of a Dean's Scholarship for the current class was \$20,600. Presidential Scholarships, for students who have an average GPA of 3.9 as well as a minimum SAT score of 1450 or a minimum ACT score of 32 cover full tuition.

The average indebtedness of Scranton graduates in 2017 for those who borrowed towards the costs of their education was over \$40,000. However, this also includes students who stayed on to earn graduate degrees which carry higher charges in the last year or two years of the program. The maximum that an undergraduate may borrow over four years from the Federal Direct Loan program is \$27,000.

Curriculum

Scranton offers [68 bachelor's degree programs, 46 minors and 39 concentrations](#), a very large section for a small, but comprehensive school. Interestingly, [only 16 percent of the current freshman class entered undecided on a major](#). Aside from the selection of majors and minors, the best reasons to attend Scranton include the Honors programs, assured admissions programs (health professions, law) and [dual degree options](#). The academic programs are also supported by an impressive selection of [leadership development opportunities](#) available through the Center for Student Engagement on campus.

Scranton's [General Education Curriculum](#) makes it fairly easy for students in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Kania School of Management to consider possible majors and minors during the freshman and sophomore year. But all students must also take 15 credits of theology and religion, including an Introduction to the Bible and an Introduction to Christian Theology, a one-credit Freshman Seminar and three credits of Physical Education and satisfactorily demonstrate skill in writing, public speaking and computer literacy. Aside from the health fields that require direct admission of freshmen—Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy—majors are not capped. There are also four [Honors Programs](#), two in the business school, one a Special Jesuit Liberal Arts Honors Program; most schools of this size, even larger have only one.

With the exception of Marketing, any business program may be chosen as minors to complement a liberal arts, communications, computer science or engineering program, something that is not possible at Rutgers-New Brunswick, Penn State University and other flagship state schools. The choices among the [business programs](#) are quite impressive for a school of this size. A blended Engineering Management major has business and engineering courses. Graduates of this program who qualify academically and wish to stick around for an extra year can earn an MBA.



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Unlike most schools of this size, or larger the university's programs in Electrical Engineering and Computer Engineering are within the College of Arts and Sciences as are programs in Computer Science, Computer Information Systems and Information Technology. Computer Science and Computer Information Systems are also available as minors.

Virtually no class at Scranton has over 50 students; more than half have fewer than 20. Scranton students have held their faculty in high regard, giving them an average rating of 3.88 (out of a possible 5.0) on RateMyProfessors.com. No flagship state school in the MidAtlantic region surpasses this rating, although Binghamton University (3.81) comes fairly close. Villanova, among the more similar private schools academically, also comes close (3.84).

Community

Scranton has a 58 acre urban and open hilltop campus with no guards at gates, but also very tight parking. As you walk up hill towards the residence halls, you can forget that you are at a city school. The newest academic buildings: Brennan Hall, home to the university's business school, the Loyola Science Center, the health professions labs for the Panuska School of Professional Studies and Weinberg Library are as state of the art as similar facilities at larger colleges. The same is true for the DeNaples Center, the campus student center. Amply lit at night, the Scranton campus can be walked end-to-end in less than 15 minutes. While the university welcomes students of all faiths, and even operates a Jewish Studies Center, you are consistently reminded that this is a Catholic college.

Alcohol-related arrests and disciplinary referrals, the most common crimes on any college campus, trended up from 2015 to 2017 according to the university's [Clery Report](#). There were over 330 alcohol-related disciplinary referrals in 2017, high for a school that has less than 2,400 undergraduates living on campus. Interesting, while Clery numbers for all other crimes, excluding drug-related disciplinary referrals, were in the single digits, there were no reported burglaries on campus, unusual for a city school.

It's easy to walk into downtown Scranton from campus. While there are bars and restaurants as well as ethnic festivals that attract students into the city, downtown Scranton is more of a business center that quiets down for the evenings and weekends. Access to a car is helpful to get to the Montage Mountain Ski Resort as well as nearby shopping malls. The Toyota Pavilion at Montage Mountain hosts an impressive calendar of outdoor concerts and music festivals.



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Scranton separates itself from other Jesuit schools in athletics. While most of the Jesuit schools in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states play NCAA Division I scholarship varsity sports, Scranton is a Division III school that offers no athletic scholarships, nor does it play football. Sports do not bind this community in the same way as basketball does at Georgetown or Saint Joseph's or football does at Boston College. However, the top minor league teams for the New York Yankees and the Pittsburgh Penguins play nearby.

There are also no fraternities or sororities at Scranton. Scranton relies more on other student activities to bond the campus community, including service projects. Student review sites such as Niche and Students Review have many positive comments about the student community at this school as do the videos in the admissions office. But those who are looking for a major college basketball or football program to cheer on might want to look elsewhere.

Comforts

Scranton requires all freshmen and sophomores to live on campus and asks juniors to apply for permission to live off campus. The university currently houses two-thirds of its undergraduate student body. [Freshman](#) live in traditional corridor-style residence halls, where students in several rooms share a common bathroom, with options to reside in [learning communities](#). [Sophomores](#) may live in suite-sale halls. [Juniors and seniors](#) have the choice of apartments or houses.

Off-campus housing costs can get below \$400/person/month for those who are willing to share an apartment or house. While these charges are less than those assessed for university housing, it is easier to live on campus and leave the car parked than it is to commute and seek a parking space. The apartments are among the nicest that can be found on a college campus.

Connections

Among the early 32,000 Scranton alumni registered in [LinkedIn.com](#), over 9,400 are based in or around New York City and more than 4,500 live and work in or around Philadelphia. More than 5,700 are in Northeastern Pennsylvania and over 1,400 are based in or around the Baltimore/Washington Corridor. These are large communities of support for a small school. However, the base is quite thin outside of the Mid-Atlantic states.

[In addition to career workshops, job and internship postings, on-campus interviews and Career Expos](#), Scranton's Roche Center for Career Development offers the [Royal Experience Summer Internship](#) program. Students who are selected for this program receive a \$4,000 summer stipend to work in an unpaid internship. Scranton also offers



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the [Sculley Scholars](#) program and the [Congressman and Mrs. Joseph McDade Program](#) for funded internships in politics and public policy.

Conclusions

There are many academic, social, and possibly financial, reasons to consider Scranton. The university appears to provide a more supportive environment for those in the more competitive programs in business, STEM and the health professions than larger public or private colleges. Scranton does what a very good school should do: provide solid academic and career direction to the students it attracts to join its freshman class, and guide them to graduation and life after college.

But Scranton is not as “spirit and sports” oriented as Villanova or Saint Joseph’s, nor does the community have the job market outside of the health professions that students would find in Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh or Washington DC. It’s less likely that students who have a successful experience at Scranton will return to campus as alumni for a homecoming than they would at a more sports oriented school in a larger city. But Scranton has the tools and connections to help its students break into any of those job markets and succeed.

Report Card: University of Scranton

- Four-Year/Six-Year Graduation Rates: A/A
- Freshman Retention: B+
- Costs: B+
- Curriculum: A
- Community: B+
- Comforts: B+
- Connections: B+ (Mid-Atlantic states)/C (elsewhere)