



## COLLEGE ADMISSIONS NEWS

- The Department of Education announced on Tuesday that colleges will not be receiving data from applicants' FAFSAs until the first half of March, which is 6 weeks later than expected. This will obviously impact colleges' abilities to provide timely financial aid award letters, unfortunately. Oregon State has just announced that they will provide award letters by May 1, and they've pushed college decision day to June 1st. A few other colleges have announced that they will follow suit; I hope they all do! It is all just a (shocking) mess.
- Please watch the news for program cuts at colleges and universities. In the past week, the University of New Hampshire, Queens College, UConn, and the University of Chicago have announced budget deficits that will force them to layoff faculty members, enact hiring freezes, or cut programs. As we approach the so-called "demographic cliff," where there will be fewer high school graduates starting in 2025, I am concerned that more and more colleges and universities will be facing enrollment challenges and will be forced to make cuts. Check out the size of the programs you are interested in by going to [collegenavigator.gov](https://collegenavigator.gov). Type in the college name, and then click on Programs/Majors to see how many bachelors degrees have been awarded recently. It's obviously no guarantee, but smaller programs are more likely to be cut than larger ones.

## COLLEGE IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

## REED COLLEGE

- Location: Portland, OR
- # of Undergrads: 1,523
- Acceptance Rate: 30.8%
- Student / Faculty Ratio: 10:1
- Returning Freshmen: 86%
- % Receiving Merit Aid: 0%

### INTERESTING FACTS:

- Reed mixes nonconformist, quirky, cerebral students with a traditional and rigorous curriculum
- One of the most intellectual, scholarly campuses with a highly collaborative environment
- Professors provide detailed written evaluations rather than grades (but never fear, Reed students do great when applying to graduate schools)
- Seniors must complete a research-based thesis before graduation (and they march in the Thesis Parade from the library to the registrar's office)
- Professors' top priority is teaching; no teaching assistants; popular peer tutoring program
- Excellent research opportunities in liberal arts and sciences. Option to work at a nuclear reactor
- Residence halls are grouped into distinct neighborhoods often according to interests
- Prominent queer population
- Always parties, plays, dances, bands on the weekends, but you might be studying beforehand!

## RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES VERSUS LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES:

Many students don't fully understand the difference between research universities and liberal arts colleges. The greatest difference is that professors at **research universities** are typically focused on research instead of on teaching (thus the phrase "publish or perish"). Often, graduate students teach in place of professors, and many classes are large and lecture-style. Students typically live off-campus for at least half of their time at college. Students who want the sports spirit of a large university but who also want to get to know their professors may find that honors colleges make a big university feel smaller. Research opportunities abound at these universities, but be sure to check whether undergrads have access; many times, graduate students have first dibs at research opportunities. And be sure to note the graduation rates at these big universities; 4 year rates are often 50-60%. It can be hard to get the classes you need to graduate in four years.

On the other hand, professors at **liberal arts colleges** typically are fully dedicated to teaching and make a concerted effort to build relationships with their students. Because most liberal arts colleges are focused solely on undergrads, there are no graduate students around to teach classes. Students end up living on campus much of the time (housing for upperclassmen is often apartment style). Don't think that liberal arts colleges don't offer research opportunities. Many offer robust and sometimes personalized opportunities that are solely for undergrads, and many are committed to growing research opportunities as demand continues to rise. 4 year graduation rates are typically 85-90%.

## THINGS FOR JUNIORS TO THINK ABOUT:

Now's the time to be thinking about what classes you'll be taking senior year. Here are a few things to think about:

- Most colleges want to see students taking **5 core courses** every year of high school. Now is not the time to stop taking math or science, even if your school does not require them for graduation.
- **Keep taking foreign language.** Most colleges recommend 3 or 4 years of foreign language, and some require 4 years. And that's 4 years of the same language. If you haven't taken a language this year, see if you can participate in a summer language program and think about taking a language next year.
- Remember that colleges will be looking at how **rigorous** your courseload has been, so try to take the most rigorous classes that you can handle. That's the key: that you can handle.

### AND ABOUT STRESS...

Hearing about seniors receiving acceptances, denials, and lots and lots of deferrals can definitely cause a lot of stress--especially knowing that it'll be your turn to go through this process next year.

Rest assured that most seniors will be just fine. They will land at the place that is right for them. They may even realize that being denied or deferred from some colleges was actually a blessing. Rejection is really an opportunity for redirection!

The key to this whole process is to figure out which colleges make sense for YOU. Not for your friend. Not for your mom or grandma. If you can make a balanced list of 10-12 colleges--some that are super highly likely that you'll get into and some that are less likely--and you'd be happy to attend each and every one, you will drastically reduce the stress.

And remember this **KEY POINT**: there are about 50-100 colleges that are highly rejective or pretty darn rejective, but there are hundreds and hundreds of other fine colleges and universities that are actively looking for students! Put a few of those on your list!

## ABOUT DEFERRALS...

There's been lots of news of deferrals over the past days, weeks, and months. Hello, institutional priorities! Hello, super high numbers of apps! Hello, yield protection! Colleges have priorities to fill, and they simply won't provide acceptances if there is a risk that students will not come. While deferrals are disappointing, there are things you can do:

- Take some time to process and grieve, and then move on. You're going to have other options from colleges that want YOU!
- Look very carefully at the messaging from the college. Follow their directions exactly. They may want you to complete a few more essays (or they may just want you to answer a few questions in bullet form), or they may accept more letters of recommendation. **If they say not to send in another letter of recommendation, do not send one! If they say not to send in a letter, do not send one!** Trust me, colleges do not like it when students do not follow their directions!
- If you want to give them more information that can bolster your case and explain why YOU are a great fit, go ahead and write a Letter of Continued Interest (do it right about now). Be honest and succinct, and show your enthusiasm if that's how you feel. If you're willing to say that you would definitely come if accepted, go ahead and say that.

Many of these deferrals have little rhyme or reason to us outsiders. **Please do not waste your time trying to figure out why Person A got in but Person B did not.** We will never, ever know. Remember, colleges need to meet their institutional priorities each year. Those priorities change each cycle, and we will never know exactly what they are!

**PLEASE FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO OTHER FAMILIES WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM MY APPROACH AND PERSPECTIVE!  
(They can subscribe on my website)**

*I help students and their families navigate the college admissions process while decreasing confusion and stress. I empower students to figure out who they are and where they belong, and I provide structure, insight, and enthusiasm as they apply to colleges that are the best fit academically, socially, and financially. Contact me for a 30 minute complimentary session to learn more!*



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