

College Types

Today, college probably seems like it is a long way off.

But in just a couple of years, you will begin to think about particular colleges that you might want to attend. In the end, picking one college out of hundreds of possibilities will require lots of thought and quite a bit of research. Here are some terms you'll need to know.

College Types:

While no two are exactly alike, most fit into one or more of the following categories:

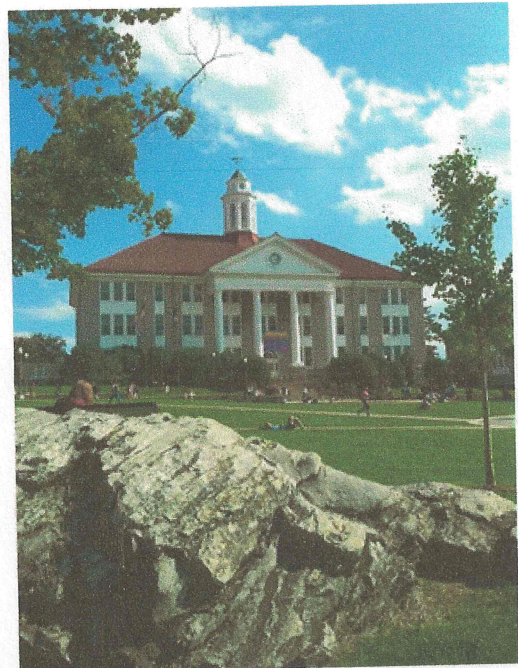
Liberal Arts Colleges focus on the education of undergraduate students. Classes are generally taught by professors who see teaching as their primary responsibility. Students who attend liberal arts colleges are exposed to a broad sampling of classes. In addition, they select at least one area of in-depth study that is their college "major." Many employers look for graduates of liberal arts programs, because they are "well-rounded."

Universities are generally larger and include a liberal arts college, as well as colleges focused on preparation for a specific career, like nursing or education. Universities offer a greater range of academic choices than do liberal arts colleges, but often come with classes that are quite large.

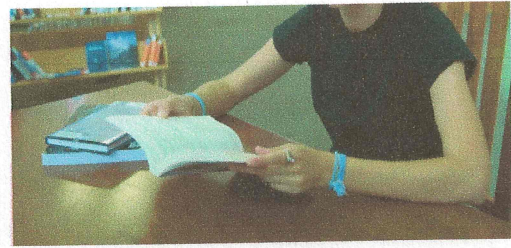
Technical Institutes and Professional Schools enroll students who have made clear decisions about what they want to study and emphasize preparation for specific careers, for example in music or fine arts, engineering or technical sciences. You will want to be quite sure of your future direction before selecting one of these options.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities find their origins in the time when African-American students were systematically denied access to most other colleges and universities. Students at HBCUs have a unique opportunity to experience an educational community in which they are a part of the majority. They find committed faculty mentors who encourage their expectations of success.

Tribal Colleges are similar to HBCUs, in focusing on the needs and education of American-Indian students.



Similarly, **Women's Colleges**, with their larger numbers of female faculty and administrators, offer college women confidence-building role models, greater opportunities to serve in a full range of student leadership positions, and a heightened awareness of career possibilities for women. Women's colleges graduate a high number of science majors, as well as students who continue on to graduate school and/or professional studies.



Community or junior colleges generally offer the first two years of a liberal arts education, in addition to specialized occupational preparation. An associate degree is awarded at the end of a two-year program of studies, following which many students continue their education at a four-year institution.

Proprietary institutions are considered for-profit companies that operate under the demands of investors and stockholders. They attract adult learners and part-time students in search of narrowly-focused professional training opportunities. These programs usually offer a non-traditional format; many for-profits also have classes solely available online.

Other terms you'll want to know:

Public colleges and universities are financed by citizens who pay taxes in your state. Their primary mission is often to serve students who live where you do. Generally, costs to students are less than those of private colleges.

Private colleges and universities are not supported by states or taxes. Some receive support from a religious group.

Financial aid comes in many forms and helps students with need pay for college costs. Financial aid includes:

- Grants: money given to students based upon family income and also
- Scholarships: awards based upon school performance, test scores, or special talents (like sports or music).

Undergraduate degrees include: a two-year associate degree (earned at a community college or two-year private college) and a bachelor's degree (completed at a four-year institution).

Find out more about **College Categories**.

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1050 North Highland Street, Suite 400, Arlington, VA 22201 | Phone: 800-822-6285 | Fax: 703-243-9375 | Email: info@nacacnet.org