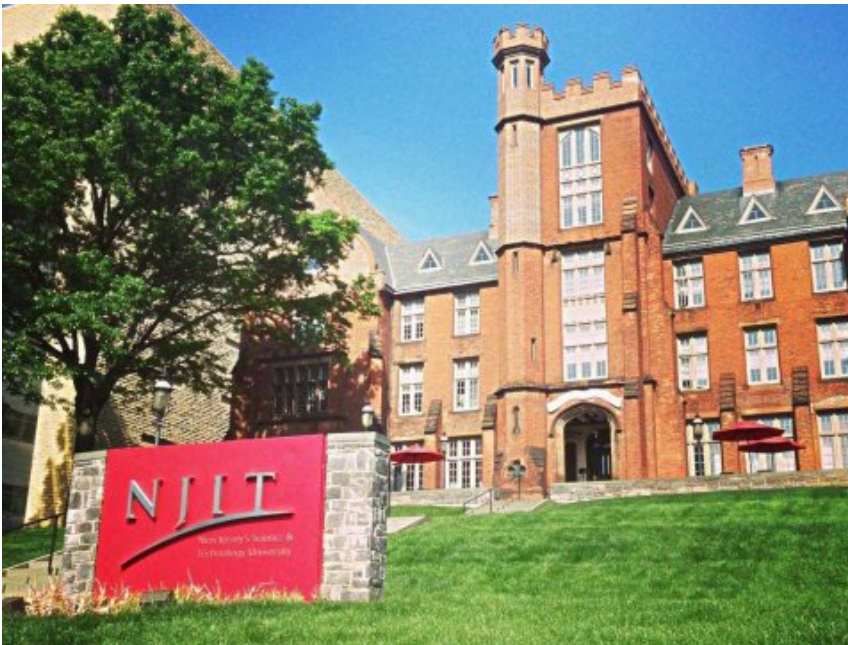


BUSINESS INSIDER

The 50 Most Underrated Colleges In America

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[Facebook//NewJerseyInstituteofTechnology](#)

New Jersey Institute of Technology.

Plenty of schools aren't worth the hype, while others don't get the recognition they deserve.

To uncover the most *underrated* colleges in America, we compared [US News' rankings of the best universities and national liberal arts colleges](#) in the country with [PayScale's 2013-2014 College Salary Report](#), which ranks colleges and universities based on their graduates' mid-career salaries.

We specifically looked for schools that had relatively low rankings on the US News list but high mid-career salaries.

The school that topped this list is the New Jersey Institute of Technology, where most grads are employed immediately after graduation and earn an average salary of \$98,000 after 10 years of employment.

Read our full methodology [here](#).

50. Virginia Tech

US News rank: 71

PayScale rank: 87

Virginia Tech is home to one of the top engineering graduate programs in the country. Located in Blacksburg, Virginia, the school is widely recognized for its research efforts, with seven research institutes and two university research centers. Both undergraduate and graduate students are able to participate in research, and VT grads go on to earn an average mid-career salary of \$94,200.



Virginia Tech/Facebook

49. DePaul University

US News rank: 121

PayScale rank: 206

Students are entrenched in both college and city life at [DePaul](#), which has five campuses all over Chicago. Graduates earn an average mid-career salary of \$84,500, and the most popular fields of study for current students are business and digital media. Also, the school reports that nearly [85% of 2013 grads were employed](#) or in graduate school within six months of graduation.



Wikimedia Commons

48. Drexel University

US News rank: 95

PayScale rank: 142

In the heart of Philadelphia, [Drexel University](#) students gain real-world experience through the school's [co-op program](#), in which students spend six months working a professional job in place of their normal class schedule. Students also take advantage of Drexel's urban location — it's only a 10-minute walk to Center City, Philly's hub of activity. By mid-career, graduates earn an average salary of \$88,600.



Wikimedia Commons

47. Oregon State University

US News rank: 138

PayScale rank: 240

Located in Corvallis, Oregon, [OSU](#) is the [state's largest public research university](#), specializing in marine science, forestry, and sustainability. By the middle of their careers, graduates will earn an average salary of \$82,800, and for those who wish to continue their education, OSU offers several graduate and non-degree programs.



Wikimedia Commons

46. Grove City College

US News rank: 139

PayScale rank: 240

North of Pittsburgh in Grove City, Pennsylvania, this liberal arts college runs on a [philosophy of freedom](#) — that is, it doesn't take any federal aid or funding. However, [Grove City College](#) still retains relatively low tuition rates and encourages students to pursue independence in all aspects of their own lives. The most popular fields of study are English and mechanical engineering, and by mid-career, graduates earn an average salary of \$82,800.



Grove City College/Facebook

41(TIE). University of Tulsa

US News rank: 88

PayScale rank: 115

Though it offers more than 60 majors, the [University of Tulsa](#), in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is best recognized for its petroleum engineering program, which is [one of the best](#) in the country. The school also places a premium on research, with opportunities for students of all majors to get involved in a project. On average, Tulsa graduates earn a mid-career salary of \$91,000.



Wikimedia Commons

41(TIE). Stonehill College

US News rank: 105

PayScale rank: 156

This Catholic school in Easton, Massachusetts, was named one of the best liberal arts schools in the country by US News & World Report, as well as a top green school by the Princeton Review. Top students can enrich their experience by enrolling in the school's honors program or by joining Stonehill's chapter of one of [22 national honors organizations](#). By mid-career, [Stonehill](#) graduates earn \$87,600 on average.



Stonehill College/Facebook

41(TIE). Westmont College

US News rank: 96

PayScale rank: 134

Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California, is [one of the top liberal arts schools](#) in the country, offering 26 liberal arts majors and 11 preprofessional programs.

Westmont graduates earn an average mid-career salary of \$89,100. In addition to their coursework, students can also participate in several [extracurricular opportunities](#), including honors societies, student-led ministries, and intercollegiate sports teams.



Westmont College/Facebook

41(TIE). Auburn University

US News rank: 103

PayScale rank: 151

Though known for their intense school spirit, Auburn graduates also do well academically, earning an average mid-career salary of \$87,900. Auburn, located in the Alabama city of the same name, is also a [land, sea, and space grant university](#), and it receives special funding for projects that benefit the greater good, such as developing a storage facility for nuclear waste or hosting the country's first wireless engineering program.



Auburn University/Facebook

41(TIE). University of St. Thomas

US News rank: 113

PayScale rank: 175

Though there are plenty of opportunities available on St. Thomas' main campus in St. Paul, Minnesota, the university also encourages students to [study abroad](#), typically offering about 150 programs in 45 countries. Back on campus, students take advantage of the school's 90 undergraduate degrees or can work toward a [self-designed specialty degree](#). St. Thomas graduates earn an average mid-career salary of \$86,100.



University of St. Thomas/Facebook

40. University of Arkansas

US News rank: 135

PayScale rank: 222

At the [University of Arkansas](#), located in Fayetteville, students can choose from more than 70 undergraduate degrees in fields spanning from civil engineering to music. The university is also heavily research focused, and it implemented a campaign to become one of the [top 50 public research universities](#) in the country. Post-graduation, students earn an average mid-career salary of \$83,600.



University of Arkansas/Facebook

38(TIE). San Diego State University

US News rank: 149

PayScale rank: 243

San Diego State University is the only college in California to see graduation rates rise by **more than 10% in the past decade**. Graduates earn an average mid-career salary of \$82,700. The school has also been widely recognized for its commitment to diversity, earning a Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award from Insight Into Diversity magazine and a top 20 ranking on CampusPride.org for LGBT-friendly campuses.



San Diego State/Facebook

38(TIE). Washington State University

US News rank: 138

PayScale rank: 216

[Washington State University](#), a land-grant university in Pullman, Washington, places a heavy focus on research, with opportunities for students to work in fields anywhere from clean technology to public policy. The university boasts a top-20 writing program, as ranked by [US News and World Report](#), and grads go on to earn an average mid-career salary of \$84,200.



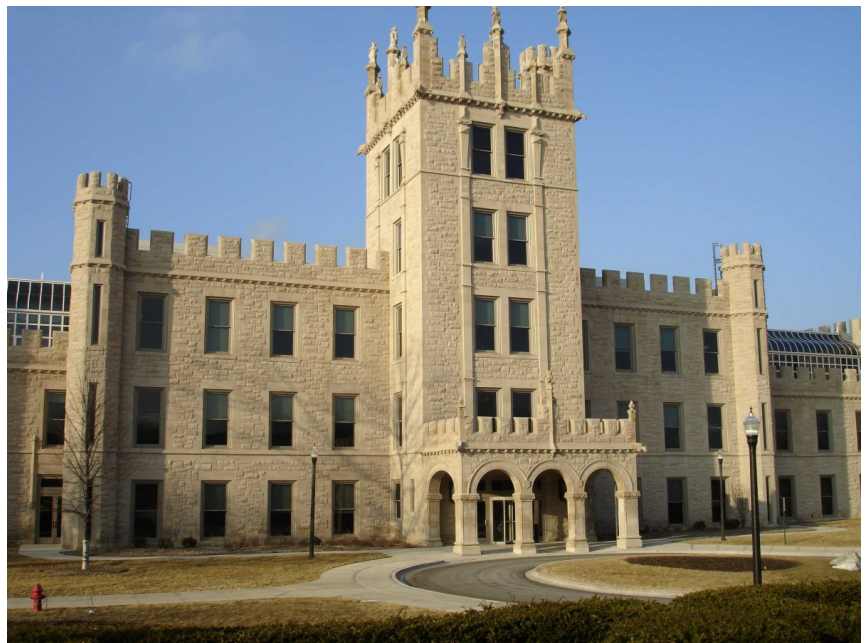
Washington State University/Facebook

37. Northern Illinois University

US News rank: 194

PayScale rank: 349

In addition to its 56 major and 73 minor programs, [Northern Illinois University](#) offers several learning opportunities outside of the classroom. Students are encouraged to participate in [service programs](#) and events like Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day, in which students showcase independent study and capstone projects. The average mid-career salary for NIU grads is \$77,900.



Wikimedia Commons

36. Hampden-Sydney College

US News rank: 105

PayScale rank: 130

This all-male college in Hampden-Sydney, Virginia, values strong writing and liberal arts skills, emphasized through its rhetoric program, which ensures all students are proficient writers by the time they graduate. [Hampden-Sydney's](#) most popular majors are history, economics, and business, and the average mid-career salary for H-SC grads is \$89,400.



Hampden-Sydney College/Facebook

35. Virginia Military Institute

US News rank: 64

PayScale rank: 27

[Virginia Military Institute](#), located in Lexington, Virginia, is the the oldest state-supported military institute in the country. Though not required to enroll in the military after graduation, all students must participate in Reserve Officers' Training Corps, commonly known as [ROTC](#). VMI offers 14 carefully crafted majors, along with numerous enrichment programs, and graduates go on to earn an impressive average mid-career salary of \$109,000.



Virginia Military Institute/Facebook

34. SUNY — Stony Brook University

US News rank: 88

PayScale rank: 85

Certain students at [Stony Brook](#), a [space grant university](#), receive state-funded support for research in space-related fields, including physics and astronomy, biomedical engineering, and marine and atmospheric science. Stony Brook graduates earn an average mid-career salary of \$94,300, and the school has been ranked as one of the top 40 public universities by [US News & World Report](#).



Stony Brook University/Facebook

33. University of Arizona

US News rank: 121

PayScale rank: 164

[University of Arizona](#) students not only work hard in the classroom, but [100% graduate with real-world experience](#) related to their degree, whether through an internship, research, or community service in Tucson, Arizona. Post-graduation, students earn an average mid-career salary of \$86,900. Students are active outside of the classroom as well, participating in over 500 extracurricular clubs and activities offered by the university.



The University of Arizona/Facebook

31(TIE). University of Maryland — Baltimore County

US News rank: 149

PayScale rank: 230

Known as an honors university, [University of Maryland — Baltimore County](#) is frequently named one of the [most innovative schools](#) in the country. The university focuses on research and innovation, and it places an emphasis on allowing undergraduate students the same resources as those pursuing higher degrees. The investment pays off — by mid-career, UMBC grads earn an average salary of \$83,100.



UMBC/Facebook

31(TIE). Worcester Polytechnic Institute

US News rank: 68

PayScale rank: 33

Earning an average mid-career salary of \$107,000, [WPI](#) graduates learn to solve real-world problems through the Worcester, Massachusetts, school's project-based learning curriculum. Within this system, students design and complete projects that combine what they're learning in class with larger social and environmental issues. The three most popular majors at the school, which is heavily science based, are mechanical engineering, biology, and robotics engineering.



WorcesterPolytechnicInstitute/Facebook

30. Howard University

US News rank: 145

PayScale rank: 218

[Howard University](#), located in the nation's capital, counts former US Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Toni Morrison among its [distinguished alumni](#). Today, all students at this historically black university [take Afro-American courses](#) along with their other core classes. The most popular majors include biology and journalism, and the average mid-career salary for a Howard grad is \$84,000.



Howard University/Facebook

29. University of San Francisco

US News rank: 106

PayScale rank: 119

Located in the heart of San Francisco, this Jesuit university specializes in [service-learning courses](#), in which students volunteer around the city in addition to completing their coursework. Through this curriculum, [University of San Francisco](#) has earned recognition by the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for seven years straight. Post-graduation, students earn an average mid-career salary of \$90,700.



Wikimedia Commons

28. Central College

US News rank: 139

PayScale rank: 192

Before graduating, over 76% of students at this Pella, Iowa, school complete an [internship or preprofessional program](#), and within a year of graduation, 93% of Central grads are employed, enrolled in graduate school, or doing sustained service. By mid-career, the average salary for a Central grad is \$85,100.



Central College/Facebook

27. Texas Tech University

US News rank: 156

PayScale rank: 224

Grads earn an average mid-career salary of \$83,500 with a degree from one of [Texas Tech](#)'s 10 colleges. The most popular fields of study include business, consumer science, and engineering. In fact, Tech has one of the largest petroleum engineering departments in the country. It opened a [new \\$22 million, 42,000-square-foot facility](#) on its Lubbock, Texas, campus last year, complete with specialized labs to prepare students for hands-on field work.



Texas Tech/Facebook

26. University of Idaho

US News rank: 166

PayScale rank: 243

This rural university in Moscow, Idaho, offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees across eight colleges. The **most popular** school is the Department of Psychology and Communication Studies, which includes more than 550 majors. As a **land-grant university**, the school places a premium on conducting research that benefits the greater community as well as its students. The average mid-career salary for **University of Idaho** grads is \$82,700.



University of Idaho/Facebook

25. Utah State University

US News rank: 194

PayScale rank: 308

Utah State University, in Logan, Utah, is the **oldest residential campus in the state** and the No. 1 public university in the west. Known for its education classes and programs, USU has three undergraduate career fairs a year, including one entirely devoted to **teacher recruitment**. The average mid-career salary for USU grads is \$79,800.



Via Wikimedia Commons

24. Seton Hall University

US News rank: 126

PayScale rank: 131

Seton Hall's employment rate is about 84% — 20% higher than the national average, the school reports. At the mid-career mark, the average salary of Seton Hall grads is \$89,200. Students at the Roman Catholic-affiliated college in South Orange, New Jersey, are involved in internships, community service, and more. Exceptional high-school senior students who apply are also eligible for [reduced tuition costs](#).



Wikimedia Commons

23. Colorado School of Mines

US News rank: 88

PayScale rank: 36

Devoted to engineering and applied science, the [Colorado School of Mines](#) (or “Mines,” as it’s known among students and staff) is based in Golden, Colorado. Its website says it has “the highest admissions standards of any public university in Colorado and [is] among the highest of any public university in the US.” Mines grads average \$106,000 as their mid-career salary.



Flickr/kenlund

22. Stevens Institute of Technology

US News rank: 76

PayScale rank: 3

Stevens Institute of Technology ranked fifth in the country for 20-year net return on investment in the 2014 Payscale College ROI Report. Graduates earn an astounding average of \$124,000 midway into their careers. Located in Hoboken, New Jersey, Stevens focuses on STEM subjects, especially research programs.



Facebook/Stevens1870

21. Catholic University of America

US News rank: 116

PayScale rank: 99

CUA's location in Washington, D.C., makes it incredibly accessible to numerous internships, community service, and job opportunities.

Founded by the US Catholic bishops, CUA's graduates earn an average mid-career salary of \$93,200 in successful careers in architecture, the arts, business, and engineering, among others.



Via Wikimedia Commons

19 (TIE). Rutgers University — New Brunswick campus

US News rank: 126

PayScale rank: 122

The New Brunswick, New Jersey, campus is Rutgers' flagship location of the State University of New Jersey. Home to [New Jersey's foremost pharmacy school](#), Rutgers is a research university and gives undergrads the hands-on experience many students don't experience until their first jobs. Graduates have an average mid-career salary of \$90,400.



Flickr/Rajiv Patel (Rajiv's View)

19 (TIE). William Jewell College

US News rank: 155

PayScale rank: 192

[Kiplinger](#) named [William Jewell College](#) to its list of the 100 best value liberal arts colleges this year. [More than 98%](#) of the [Liberty, Missouri](#), college's alumni have jobs or are in graduate school within six months of graduating, and graduates earn an average of \$85,100 midway through their careers.



Facebook/William-Jewell-College

16 (TIE). University of Illinois at Chicago

US News rank: 149

PayScale rank: 166

Students at University of Illinois at Chicago become members of the [University of Illinois Alumni Association](#) — the world's largest alumni community, which has an expansive network of career and job opportunities. The average mid-career salary for UIC grads is \$86,800.



Via Wikimedia Commons

16 (TIE). George Mason University

US News rank: 138

PayScale rank: 139

With an average mid-career salary of \$88,800 among grads, George Mason University, in Fairfax, Virginia, [has been rated](#) a top up-and-coming university, a best value public college, and one of the best college buys in America. GMU hosts career events, fairs, networking opportunities, and an online jobs board for current students and alumni.



Via Wikimedia Commons

16 (TIE). Pace University

US News rank: 173

PayScale rank: 224

Pace was rated among the [top five schools in the country for internship placement](#) by US News in 2013. Pace, whose grads earn an average mid-career salary of \$83,500, also has a campus in Westchester County, New York.



Edward via Flickr

15. Michigan Technological University

US News rank: 116

PayScale rank: 83

Michigan Tech grads have the [10th-highest starting salary](#) in the country among public universities, and an average mid-career salary of \$94,700. The Houghton, Michigan, school specializes in STEM fields of study, and it has a 92% job, grad school, and military [placement rate](#) for undergrads within six months of graduation.



Facebook/michigantech

14. St. John's University

US News rank: 145

PayScale rank: 137

In Queens, New York, St. John's has [three New York City campuses](#) and two international campuses, in Rome and Paris. Grads earn an average \$88,900 at the mid-career mark. SJU is known for its competitive Division I sports teams and biology, pharmacy, and psychology programs.



Via Wikimedia Commons

13. Hartwick College

US News rank: 165

PayScale rank: 181

Located in Oneonta, New York, this small, upstate liberal arts college offers a unique [three-year bachelor's degree program](#), getting students on the road to a successful career one year faster than at most other colleges. Hartwick grads earn an average of \$85,800 midway through their careers.



Facebook/HartwickCollege

12. Illinois Institute of Technology

US News rank: 116

PayScale rank: 52

IIT is one of US News' [best value universities](#), and it is No. 5 among Midwestern universities for undergraduate salary potential according to PayScale. Graduates of the Chicago technical school earn a \$100,000 average mid-career salary, compared with the school's \$39,975 [tuition](#).



Facebook/IITScarletHawks

11. University of the Pacific

US News rank: 116

PayScale rank: 49

University of the Pacific grads' average mid-career salary is \$101,000. Renowned for its [programs in health sciences](#), including pharmacy and dentistry, the Stockton, California, school offers career counseling; resume and interview assistance; career fairs; and an [online jobs and mentoring network](#).



Facebook/universityofthepacific

10. University of Alabama at Huntsville

US News rank: 181

PayScale rank: 192

UAH students benefit from the [proximity of federal employers](#) like NASA, Redstone Arsenal, and Cummings Research Park for high-earning jobs in engineering, astronautics, and other science fields. Grads earn a mid-career average salary of \$85,100, attending the No. 1 return-on-investment school according to The College Database.



Facebook/UAHuntsville

9. Clarkson University

US News rank: 121

PayScale rank: 44

[Starting as a technology school](#) in Potsdam, New York, Clarkson still excels in engineering, business, and the sciences, but it is also an accredited university with well-rounded liberal arts programs. Clarkson grads earn an average of \$102,000 midway into their careers.



Courtesy of Clarkson University

8. Louisiana Tech University

US News rank: 201

PayScale rank: 234

Louisiana Tech is ranked **No. 1 in Louisiana** and in the top 25 in the US for the best return on investments (ROI) in college education, according to AdvisorOne. The Ruston, Louisiana, university also competes in the NCAA Division I conference. Its graduates report an average mid-career salary of \$83,000.



Via Wikimedia Commons

7. Widener University

US News rank: 189

PayScale rank: 202

The Widener experience includes an **active involvement in civic engagement**, Greek societies, and experiential learning. Located in Chester, Pennsylvania, students are only 20 minutes away from internships and job opportunities in Philadelphia. The average mid-career salary for Widener grads is \$84,600.



Via Flickr

6. Hofstra University

US News rank: 135

PayScale rank: 69

In Hempstead, New York, just a short train ride west to Manhattan, Hofstra is an arena for research, Division I athletics, and [even presidential debates](#). Grads report an average mid-career salary of \$96,500 in a diverse variety of industries. Hofstra is [in the top 9%](#) of colleges and universities nationwide for return on investment.



Facebook/hofstrauniversity

5. Missouri University of Science & Technology

US News rank: 138

PayScale rank: 72

Missouri S&T students make the most of their education, spending an [average of 16 hours a week](#) in classrooms or labs. The Rolla, Missouri, school also has [one of the largest female populations](#) among US technical schools. The average mid-career salary of Missouri S&T grads is \$96,100.



Facebook/MissouriSandT

4. University of Houston

US News rank: 189

PayScale rank: 190

University of Houston grads make an average \$85,200 mid-career salary. Known particularly for business studies, UH has the No. 1 undergraduate entrepreneurship program in the country, according to The Princeton Review and Entrepreneur magazine, and more than 3,500 alumni are CEOs of companies or founders of their own companies. The school is also renowned for its college of engineering, and its Gulf location makes it prime for jobs in the oil and energy sector.



Via Wikimedia Commons

3. Florida Institute of Technology

US News rank: 173

PayScale rank: 146

Florida Institute of Technology is widely recognized for being a military- and veteran-friendly school. Florida Tech is in support of the Post 9/11 GI Bill and participates in the Yellow Ribbon Program, which makes additional funding for education available to eligible veterans. The Melbourne, Florida, school's grads earn an average of \$88,200 at the mid-career mark.



Via Wikimedia Commons

2. University of Massachusetts at Lowell

US News rank: 156

PayScale rank: 80

UMass at Lowell was No. 1 on [our previous version](#) of this list. Also a top military-friendly school, UMass at Lowell [recently became a Division I sports school](#) and is known for its science and engineering programs and for its online bachelor's degree in psychology. Graduates earn an average mid-career salary of \$95,100.



Via Wikimedia Commons

1. New Jersey Institute of Technology

US News rank: 149

PayScale rank: 61

Graduates of the New Jersey Institute of Technology earn an average of \$98,000 midway through their careers. Located in Newark, New Jersey, NJIT is [a leader in job placement](#); 56% of undergrads have accepted a job offer, or are already employed, at the time of graduation — nearly 26% higher than the national average. Another 13% are enrolled in graduate school full time after they graduate.



Via Wikimedia Commons

Now, time for a little fun.

The 20 Most Fun Colleges In America »



Doug Benc/Getty Images

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