



College Ratings

Wondering which college is best? You could be in luck. There are lots of organizations happy to answer that question for you including: [Wall Street Journal](#), [US News](#), [Washington Monthly](#), [Niche](#), [College Raptor](#), [College Factual](#), [College Choice](#), etc, etc. [Forbes](#) will even give you a rundown on some of the competing ranking methodologies.

Important information for college applications:

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With all these purported “experts,” how does a prospective college student and their family proceed? As the editor of this newsletter, I’d highly suggest you place considerably less weight on “expert opinions” (despite the fact I’ve included links to all of them) and more weight on your own assessments for several reasons:

- ◆ To generate interest, these organizations treat rating colleges like a horse race. Supposed change is exciting. The reality? Change in any large organization is a relatively slow process. Colleges and universities are more like cargo ships perpetually chugging across the same ocean than they are thoroughbreds on a mile-long track. At the macro level, the year-to-year changes they track are, in most cases, ultimately insignificant. What matters to students are things like changes in professors, program offerings, financial aid commitments, research opportunities, and investments in facilities, which no rating identifies.
- ◆ Despite their purported efforts to be student “centered” the rankings are at their core institutional centered. Why? Money. So much depends on how a college is perceived by the entities funding it whether public, private, governmental or individual. Failing to have a “good” showing can have terrible financial consequences. Does failing to go to the highest ranked school possible have the same impact on the individual? For starters the highest tier of colleges in the US enrolls fewer than 6% of all college students. Being offered a ticket into that world is comparable to winning a lottery. Most jobs will not be occupied by these lucky few. Beyond this rarified sphere, there is no research to suggest that individual student success is in any way predicated on whether they attended *WSJ*’s 65th ranked UW-Madison vs 91st ranked U of MN-Twin Cities. Individuals aren’t averages. Ratings are not predictors of individual outcomes.
- ◆ Rankings are very much a circular phenomenon. Having college presidents evaluate “the reputation for excellence” at other institutions is like asking a SPCPA student to “grade” Hudson High school in Wisconsin. The real but unintended impact of a flawed evaluation system is that students accepted by their personal “dream” schools, which I define as affordable good fit choices, second guess themselves and waste valuable time wondering if they are receiving a “lesser” education. No student should be made to feel badly about their choice by an entity that’s completely unaware of the match this student found between their schools of choice and the factors they identified is being integral to their personal future success. Students are best served by being fully vested in their choice and taking advantage of every opportunity that school offers.

The bottom line? Students need to take responsibility for weighing their personal pros and cons as they relate to any school they are considering. Does size matter? Why? The same goes for location, distance, educational delivery method (lecture, discussion, online, etc), make-up of the student body, credentials of the professors, and so on and so on. Rankings still calling you? Consider reading New York Times writer Frank Bruni’s new book *Where you Go is Not Who You’ll Be* (click [here](#) for a review) or Loren Pope’s classic, *Colleges That Change Lives* (click [here](#) for a review). **You are the expert on you! Honor your truths.** Looking for a ranking system that helps with this matching process, try [College Simply](#).

Free College Applications...



Not sure you're ready to commit to a 4-year degree? Want to work while you're exploring possible majors? Looking for shorter-term training that will allow you to move into a well-paying job? Worried about the cost of a college education? Want to keep growing in the arts or another creative field?

One or more of the Twin Cities area [community colleges](#) may have just what you're looking for!

Film (MCTC has Directing, Producing, Cinematography, Screenwriting and Sound Arts). **Animation** (Hennepin Tech, Century College, St Paul College). **Interior Design** (Century, Dakota County Tech). **Graphic Design** (Century, North Hennepin). **Photography** (Dakota County Tech, Century, MCTC). **Theatre** (MCTC, Normandale, Inver Hills, Anoka-Ramsey, Century, North Hennepin). **Creative Writing** (Normandale, North Hennepin). **Music** (Anoka-Ramsey, Century, Inver Hills, MCTC, Normandale, North Hennepin). **Music Business** (St Paul College). **Marketing Communications/Management** (Century). **Education** (Century, MCTC, North Hennepin). **Entrepreneurship** (Hennepin Tech, St Paul College).

Applying to one or more of the local community colleges in October (*some may require you to use a code to get those applications for free or apply during certain days*) can be part of a well thought out application plan. The total cost of attendance for students who start their college journey at a 2 year institution prior to transferring to a complete their 4 year degree is consistently lower – a welcome fact in these unsettled times. **Applying doesn't equate with attending, but not applying definitely reduces options down the road.**

FREE APPLICATIONS DURING COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE MONTH

Some institutions use promo codes, noted by [] below.

Free for the whole month of OCTOBER:

PRIVATE COLLEGES

Minneapolis College of Art and Design [MCW2022]

MINNESOTA STATE

Alexandria Technical & Community College
Bemidji State University
Century College
Hennepin Technical College [CKM2021]
Hibbing Community College
Itasca Community College
Mesabi Range College
Minneapolis College
Minnesota State College Southeast
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Minnesota State University Moorhead
Normandale Community College

North Hennepin Community College
Northwest Technical College
Rainy River Community College [CKM2021]
St. Cloud Technical and Community College
Southwest Minnesota State University
Vermilion Community College
Winona State University

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Crookston Campus
Morris Campus [Morris22]

Free for the week of OCT 25 to 31:

MINNESOTA STATE

Dakota County Technical College
Inver Hills Community College

Need help keeping track of your applications? Click [here](#) for the MDE College Knowledge month spreadsheet tool. Looking for more general information? Click [here](#) for helpful MDE CK videos.