



## **Focus on Saint Joseph's University**

With half of its campus in Philadelphia and the other half just over City Line Avenue in suburban Merion, St. Joe's as it's popularly called, is a Jesuit university with approximately 5,500 undergraduates. Its mission, like that of all Jesuit schools, is to foster personal as well as academic growth, and St. Joe's is a particularly warm and friendly place, focused on ensuring each individual student's success.

A popular co-op program enables students to earn course credit for paid internships and still graduate in four years. The sole exception is the program in Food Marketing, which requires five years. Experiential learning is a hallmark of at St. Joe's education even for students not doing co-ops, as is community service. Both are imbedded in the curriculum of many of the courses, and doing part-time internships while taking classes is also common.

Ninety-seven percent of last year's graduating class was employed full time or in graduate school within a year, partly because of the efforts of the Career Development Center, which works closely with students beginning in their freshman year. In fact, one-on-one career counseling is provided on Admitted Students' Day to everyone in attendance, even before they matriculate. Yet the school's stated goal is not to find students jobs so much as to help them figure out their career goals and how to pursue them.

SJU's more than 60 majors include some less common ones like Autism Studies, Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing, and Risk Management and Insurance.

The university also offers "3 + 2" programs jointly with Thomas Jefferson University (3 years at SJU followed by 2 at Jefferson) in Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Nursing, Bioscience Technologies, and Radiologic Sciences.

Students are required to live on campus their first two years, initially in conventional residence halls and then sophomore year in apartments or houses. After that they can stay on campus if they choose, and about half do so. The dorms nearly all have gyms on the first floor, and students enjoy an active social life both on and off campus.

The school has more than 100 student organizations, ranging from a nationally recognized Speech and Debate Team to an extensive athletic program for both men and women. The twenty Division-1 sports teams draw enthusiastic support from students, who get free tickets to all the games. Basketball games, in particular, pack the arena. Trips organized by the university take students to festivals in Center City, skiing, ice-skating, and to Broadway shows in New York City. For students who are over 21, there is even a tour of local breweries.

Approximately one-quarter of St. Joe students join a fraternity or sorority, which they can pledge any semester. These organizations have no houses but host many activities that are open to the entire student body, and they also perform many hours of community service.

Academic support is particularly strong at St. Joe's and is available to anyone who walks into the Success Center looking for help. Students can also be referred there by their professors, who get together regularly to discuss how to support any students they are concerned about either academically or socially.

Approximately 75% of SJU students are Catholic, and Mass is held daily, three times on Sunday. The midnight Mass is a candle-lit service run entirely by students. Attendance at Mass is always optional, and students of all faiths are welcome on campus and in neighboring houses of worship.

Admission to St. Joe's is test-optional except for applicants to the combined degree programs with Thomas Jefferson University, which are more selective. Students who are denied admission to these programs may still be admitted to St. Joe's. Median test scores for all SJU students who opt to submit them are 23 to 27 on the ACT and 510 to 620 on each section of the SAT.

Applications are reviewed holistically, the most significant factors being a transcript that reflects "an appropriate challenge," the application essay, and one letter of recommendation. Admissions officers will read as many additional letters as they receive. Demonstrated interest carries a small amount of weight for Regular Decision applicants only (as opposed to Early Action ones). Alumni interviews are offered in some regions, but are intended to be informative rather than evaluative, meaning they do not impact admissions decisions.

SJU's acceptance rate is 85%. Some admissions are offered contingent upon participation in the Passport Program, an intense summer program designed for students who struggled in high school to brush up on academic skills. The program

has proven highly successful insofar as Passport students graduate at the same rate as their classmates.

Saint Joseph's University offers two admission plans: Early Action 11/15 and Regular Decision 2/1.

