

Focus on The Claremont Colleges:

Pomona, Scripps, Claremont-McKenna, Harvey Mudd and Pitzer

The five Claremont Colleges of southern California bring 5,500 undergraduates together on a single square mile, where they share resources, cross-register, and socialize with one another while also enjoying the specific features and intimacy of their particular schools. Claremont, which is 35 miles from Los Angeles, sits at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains, and the campuses which are designed to look quite different from one another, all afford students magnificent mountain views as well as plenty of sunshine and warm, dry weather. The location is especially attractive to students who enjoy outdoor activities, with mountain hiking trails 40 minutes in one direction, and beaches 45 minutes in the other.

This selective group of undergraduate schools was conceived as a consortium from their inception, each to have a unique mission and character. (There are actually seven schools in all, but two of them are exclusively for graduate programs.)

Pomona, established in 1887, was the first to open and is the largest and most conventional liberal arts college. The other schools, each of which has its own admissions office and policies, are: Scripps (1926), Claremont McKenna (1946), Harvey Mudd (1955), and Pitzer (1964).



Pomona's 1500 diverse students enjoy a 7-to-1 student-faculty ratio and challenging classes, but they say that the campus culture provides a good balance. The atmosphere is collaborative rather than competitive, and students are intellectual, passionate and hard-working, but the general vibe is laid back. Ninety-eight percent live on campus all four years, and the school has been identified in some surveys as among the happiest in the country.

One-third of Pomona's students major in humanities, one-third in science, and one-third in social science. Economics and neuroscience are currently the most popular majors, followed

closely by math and English. Professors in all disciplines are provided a budget to take students out to lunch, and they often invite them to their homes as well. With such a low student-faculty ratio, it's easy for even freshmen to become involved in research, and many Pomona students enjoy paid research internships on campus during the school year or over the summer. Eighty percent eventually go on to graduate or professional school.

In terms of social life, parties are generally for all five colleges. The athletic teams are Division III, and fans are particularly energized by a spirited rivalry enjoyed by Pomona and Pitzer on one set of teams versus Scripps, Harvey Mudd, and Claremont McKenna on the other. Students also have access to discount tickets to all sorts of Los Angeles events, some big enough to entice them to camp out overnight so as to get to the front of the line.

For Pomona Applicants, the ACT or SAT plus 2 Subject Tests are required. 2012: 13% admitted. Median SAT's: CR 720, M 720, WR 730. Median ACT: 32

Scripps is a women's college whose 950 students enjoy the mentoring and leadership opportunities that make such schools particularly empowering for women, while also being able to socialize fully and take classes with students at the four co-ed schools that surround it.



A hallmark of Scripps is the mandatory core of a writing course and three interdisciplinary humanities courses that are team-taught. A senior thesis is also required of all students. The core courses are actually the only single sex classes at Scripps, as men from the other schools can and do register for all the rest of the classes. However, women hold all the leadership positions at Scripps and enjoy a strong sense of community, a faculty that is 60% female, and a genteel campus filled with adobe buildings surrounded by an abundance of flowers lining the meandering paths. They also have a magnificent outdoor pool facility that is affectionately referred to as "the Spa" because looks as if it belongs in a fashionable spa.

The most popular majors at Scripps are psychology, international relations, economics and studio art. The campus has a large and very attractive Center for the Performing Arts used primarily for lectures and concerts as there is no theater major at the school.

The SAT or ACT with Writing is required. 2012: 32% admitted. Median SAT: CR 640-730, M 620-700, WR 640-730. Median ACT: 30

Claremont McKenna, founded with the motto “Society progresses through commerce,” attracts primarily students wishing to focus on economics, government, and international relations although courses are offered in all fields. History and biology are popular majors too, and ten percent of Claremont McKenna students are pre-med. A 3 + 2 program enables select students to receive a B.A. in economics from CMC before doing 2 years of Engineering at Harvey Mudd or Columbia University. Another special program enables some students to receive a Master’s degree in Finance as well as a B.A. in economics.



Fifty percent of CMC students double major. The average class size is 17 students, and classes are mostly discussion-based. Ten research institutes on campus make it easy for everyone including freshmen to obtain paid internships, many of them in local and state government. The focus here is on “learning for the sake of doing.” Everything students learn in class is applied to the real world, and discussion of current events and issues is everywhere.

Study abroad is required and funded for international relations majors, and popular for other majors too because the school is committed to making such opportunities fit with most academic programs.

One of Claremont McKenna’s most unusual features is the Athenaeum. In addition to serving as the location for daily teas with professors, the Athenaeum is where prominent people on the world scene are brought to campus to address and meet with students. Students are encouraged to participate in a Q and A following the talks and to sign up for lunch, wine and cheese receptions, and formal dinners with guests like Condoleezza Rice and John Huntsman, both of whom came to campus recently.

The school is clearly well endowed as the facilities are impeccable and 95% of students live all four years in the dorms, where they enjoy maid service every other week in their rooms and daily in their bathrooms.

Students enjoy the benefits of a strong alumni network, and Princeton Review has ranked the Career Services 4th in the nation. Here all students can obtain guidance from as early as freshman year.

The SAT or ACT with Writing are required. 2012: 14% admitted. Median SAT: CR700. M720, WR 710. Median ACT: 31

Harvey Mudd is for students who wish to major in science, technology, engineering or math in a small school with a liberal arts core. The school's mission is to produce graduates "who may assume leadership in their fields with a clear understanding of the impact of their work on society." Research is a major focus for the 750 students enrolled here. Many, including all who are majoring in engineering and computer science, participate in "clinics," collaborations with industry in which companies pay the college to have students design and build products for them.



The students, 46% of whom are female, seem particularly exuberant when explaining their "cool" studies and projects at this school, where there is much interdepartmental collaboration, an emphasis on community building, and an honor code. The first semester is all pass-fail, after which grading is tough, with B- being the average grade, but the emphasis is on flexibility and teamwork, academic support is readily available from a variety of sources, and students actually seem to be having a lot of fun, skateboarding around campus and participating in events like the annual "Awesome Things Competition." Everyone takes classes and participates in clubs, organizations, and social activities with students at the other Claremont schools.

Two SAT Subject tests are required, one of which must be Math 2, PLUS either the SAT or ACT. 2012: 18% admitted. Median SAT: CR 680-770, M 740-800, WR 680-760. Median Math 2: 760-800. Median ACT: 33-35.

Pitzer's mission is to produce "engaged, socially responsible citizens of the world" through a curriculum that emphasizes "social justice, intercultural understanding, and environmental sensitivity." The 1100 students here enjoy a relatively flexible curriculum and the opportunity

to design their own majors that combine disciplines, subject to approval. In fact, the most popular major here is “self-designed,” and Pitzer tends to attract independent-minded individuals. The learning environment is quite intimate, with introductory lectures typically having at most 30 students and many higher level classes having 4 to 10 students seated around a table.



Pitzer students are particularly active in the community. A Community Engagement Center helps them find positions during their free time, many classes include a practicum, and many majors require an internship. Seventy-five to eighty percent of students study abroad, some as early as second semester, and many live with native families in order to maximize their cultural immersion.

The Pitzer campus looks quite different from the adjacent ones because of the student murals everywhere and the desert-like vegetation chosen to reduce the need for irrigation. In fact, everything has been designed to minimize the school’s carbon footprint. A chicken coop and vegetable gardens maintained by students provide some of the food served at one of the eateries on the campus, which also features community kitchens where some alumni chefs have returned to give demonstrations. Newsweek Magazine recently rated Pitzer’s food the second best in the nation, and it attracts students from the four other Claremont schools as well. (All five schools’ eateries are said to be quite good, though, because they must all compete with one another for students.)

Pitzer is the only one of the Claremont schools that is test optional, but students who avail themselves of this option are required to submit graded essays. 2012: 16% admitted. Median SAT: CR 671, M666.