



Focus on Lafayette College

Since its founding in 1826, Lafayette College has been committed to providing a first-class education in both liberal arts and engineering (originally known as agricultural and mechanical studies). Its 2,700 students enjoy the academic benefits of a small school exclusively for undergraduates along with the spirit and excitement engendered by its Division-1 athletics in the Patriot League. They describe the school as friendly and supportive, the kind of place where high-fives abound when the seniors cross the stage at graduation.

Located in Easton, Pennsylvania, on the Delaware River separating Pennsylvania from New Jersey, Lafayette is an hour from Wall Street in New York City as well as from Center City, Philadelphia. The traditional looking campus is on the flat portion of a hill in a pleasant residential neighborhood. A five-minute walk away is the Trans-Bridge bus stop that runs 40 busses each day between Easton and the New York Port Authority, stopping along the way at Newark Airport.

Lafayette owes its academic reputation primarily to the quality and accessibility of its faculty, 50% of whom live within walking distance of campus. Classes are small, with 87% having fewer than 30 students and the largest only approximately 700. Students are serious academically, work hard and typically spend a lot of time in the library, but they're also active in many extracurricular activities. Athletics play a prominent role in campus life, with about 600 student athletes each year on varsity, club and intramural teams, and it's common for students to try out new sports once they arrive.

Fraternities and sororities play a relatively small role in the social life, partly because rushing is not permitted until sophomore year, after which approximately 39 % of the students join. In terms of political climate, the student body leans left but is not particularly activist, and there's a healthy dose of conservatism as well. The campus event that generates the most excitement is the annual football game against neighboring Lehigh University, the intense but friendly rivalry between these two schools a beloved long-standing tradition.

Economics and Mechanical Engineering are the most popular majors. The engineering students who choose Lafayette do so because they want a liberal arts education too, and many of them double major in something totally unrelated like a foreign language, music, or theater. There is no separate admission process for prospective engineers who, like everyone else, have until after their 4th semester to declare their major. Besides Mechanical, the other four Engineering majors offered are Chemical, Civil, Electrical and Environmental. An Engineering Studies 101 course introduces prospective engineering students to all five types early on. The Computer Science program is not part of the Engineering department but is located in the same building.

Lafayette's Gateway Career Center is deeply committed to helping students identify and pursue post-graduate opportunities. Forty percent are typically admitted into top graduate and professional programs immediately following graduation. Rankings that focus on outcomes, such as those published by Bloomberg, Financial Times, and PayScale.com, have identified Lafayette among the top ten American liberal arts colleges.

Over the past decade, the school has become more diverse and expanded its geographic reach although students from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York still comprise half of the population. Connecticut and Massachusetts account for another 10%, and the remaining 40% come from all over. Only 5% of admitted students have legacies. One-third are now first generation college students, and one-third are students of color.

The admitted student profile is posted on the college website each year, and last year three-quarters of the applicants were strong enough to be admitted. To qualify, students must have mostly A's and B's in a rigorous curriculum, and the admissions office recalculates the GPA's to focus on rigor.

The suspension of the standardized test requirement last year due to the Covid pandemic will remain in place for two more years. However, when tests were required in the past, the median SATs were approximately 1300 to 1400 and the median ACT was 29 to 33. An interview (conducted most commonly online) is highly recommended although not required. Demonstrated interest is tracked but will not favor the admission of a less qualified candidate over a more qualified one.

Half of the class is typically admitted Early Decision 1 or 2, but keep in mind that half of those students are recruited Division-1 athletes.

Lafayette is committed to meeting 100% of demonstrated financial need and also offers merit scholarships ranging from \$3,000 to full tuition to approximately 30 students each year.