



## **Focus on Wellesley**

Founded 150 years ago as a women's college when there were few others, Wellesley remains committed to the mission of preparing women for success at the highest level across 53 different disciplines. A liberal arts college exclusively for undergraduates, it provides its 2,300 students with more opportunities than one might expect. The distinguished faculty (male as well as female) have generally chosen to work here rather than someplace larger because of their desire to mentor these very talented young women both academically and personally.

Even though Wellesley is not designated a tier one research university, it has an abundance of high-caliber research going on that students participate in. Faculty announce research projects for which students may apply in all departments, not just the sciences, and are also receptive to students' own research proposals. Internship opportunities abound as well, and a staff of 25 specialized counselors in Career Education Services help students find these internships and arrange for the college to fund them, even for students who are not receiving financial aid.

Wellesley students tell stories of teachers going out of their way to help them succeed, encouraging them to do things like participate in academic conferences and personally driving them there. And it's not just the faculty in the department where they're majoring who take such a personal interest in their success; it's everyone, students say.

The 7-to-1 student-to-faculty ratio and average class size of 17 to 22 students means that there is no such thing as a lecture at Wellesley; all classes are participatory, and the students here love that. Passionate learners who relish discussion, they enjoy listening to the diverse perspectives of their classmates and are excited to share their own. The grading is tougher than at some other schools, as Wellesley deliberately "deflated" their grades ten years ago to combat grade inflation.

However, students report that the grading feels fair and that their classmates are not competitive with each other even though they are all personally ambitious.

The curriculum is designed to ensure that students gain exposure to a broad range of disciplines as well as deep knowledge of at least one particular one. They may double major, major and minor, or do just a single major. Distribution requirements are based on a division of the disciplines into three categories: Natural and Physical Sciences, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Many courses are offered in each of these categories, and some courses combine disciplines and focus on practical applications. The hope is that this mandatory exposure will help students discover new passions.

Freshmen are assigned both a faculty advisor and a student academic success coach to help with their initial course selection and registration, as no one declares a major until the end of sophomore year. During orientation, every student also has a half-hour meeting with a first-year mentor from Career Services. Once students declare their major, they begin meeting with the Career Services staff member who specializes in that field.

Fifty percent of Wellesley students study abroad. They can do so in a number of ways and for varying lengths of time. Advisors help them plan their schedules to ensure that they will still be able to graduate on time, and no one ever has to pay extra to study abroad. Wellesley has its own campuses in Aix-en-Provence, where members of the French faculty teach, and Bremen, where pre-med courses are offered. Students can also join another college's program abroad or enroll directly in a foreign university.

The bucolic Wellesley campus is 30 minutes outside of Boston, and the college offers cross-registration with nearby Babson (a business school), Olin (an engineering school), and MIT. In fact, Wellesley students can take any class at MIT and sometimes have even done research projects there. A shuttle bus takes them to and from these other campuses. (Cross-registration is available with Brandeis too, but that is less common because transportation is not provided.)

Wellesley students are a diverse group, whose recreational choices range from going into Boston all the time, to watching movies in the dorms with friends, to socializing with a wider group of students at the various other schools in the area. They say they have plenty of opportunities to socialize with men at the other schools, but there is something especially confidence-building and empowering about being at an all-women's college, and it is a fact that a disproportionate number of women in leadership positions in Fortune 500 companies and elsewhere are graduates of women's colleges.

Hillary Clinton and Madeleine Albright are among the many highly successful graduates of Wellesley. In general, the alumnae remain devoted to the college and eager to do all they can for its current students. Consequently, the school is extremely well-endowed financially and can afford to be need-blind in admissions and guarantee to meet 100% of demonstrated need.

The application process is holistic, based on two questions: can the applicant do the work here, and will she take advantage of the opportunities here? Subject tests are no longer required; nor is

the writing section of the SAT although students taking the ACT must take that test with writing. The admissions office will super-score the tests.

There are four application options: November 1<sup>st</sup> for Early Decision 1, December 15<sup>th</sup> for Early Evaluation (meaning the applicant will be notified by mid-February if her admission is “likely,” “unlikely,” or “possible”), January 15<sup>th</sup> for Regular Decision, and February 1<sup>st</sup> for Early Decision 2.

For the class of 2023, the average SAT was 1438 and the average ACT was 32. The overall admit rate was 20%

