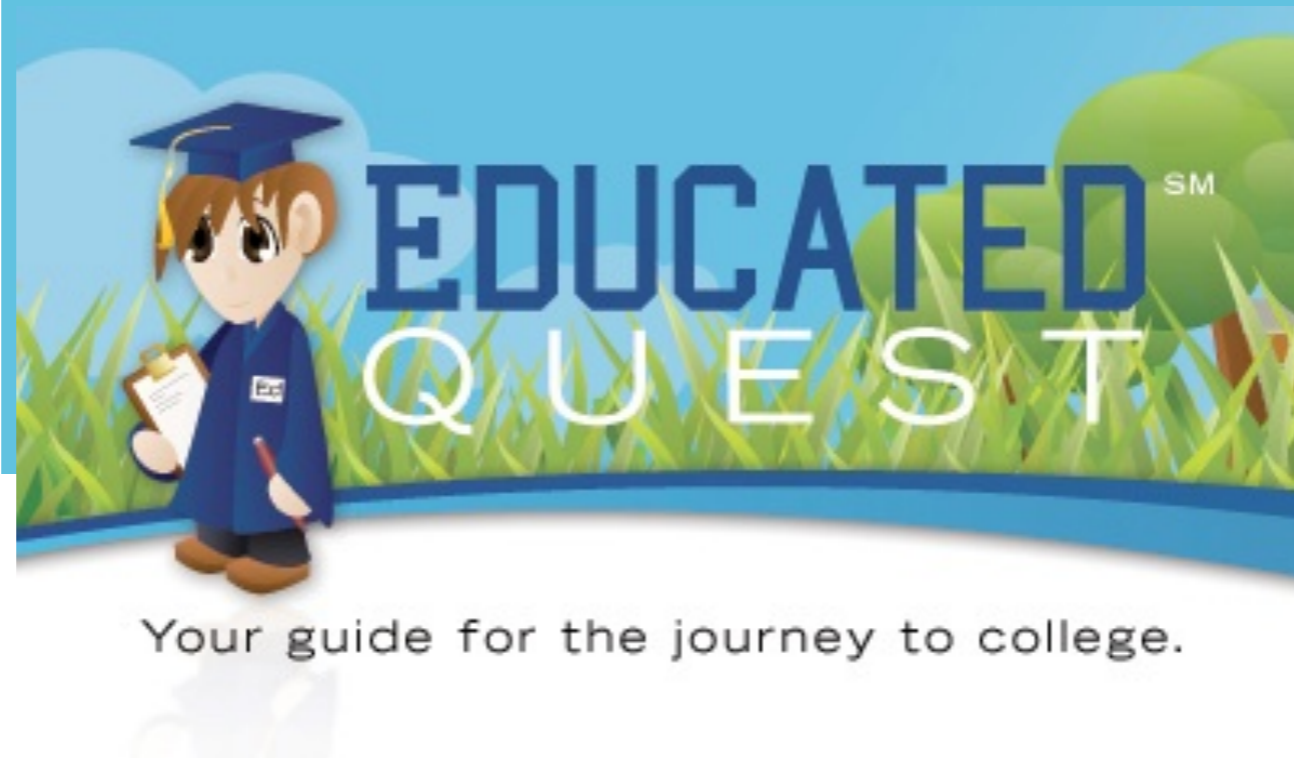


First Impressions: University of Scranton



Background

**Introduction to the
University of Scranton**

Background

Founded in 1888, the University of Scranton is one of 28 Jesuit universities in the U.S. With approximately 4,000 undergraduates, Scranton is a mid-sized university that offers academic programs more commonly found at much larger schools, including a comprehensive accredited business school, education, engineering, health professions and journalism. Located in Northeastern Pennsylvania, Scranton is approximately two and a half hours from New York City by car and about an hour and a half from Philadelphia.

While considered a regional university--Scranton offers only one doctoral program, which is in physical therapy--it has a student-faculty ratio of 11 to 1, more typical of a smaller liberal arts college. The average class size is 20 students although five percent of all classes enroll more than 50. This is not unusual for a mid-sized school that offers several popular liberal arts and pre-professional majors that require the same introductory courses in areas such as Accounting, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Mathematics, Physics and Psychology. Biology and Psychology are the most popular liberal arts majors. The largest clusters of students are in the business school followed by the health professions and education.

Among regional universities, Scranton is a top performer. While not exceptionally selective outside of the health professions programs--the university admitted more than 70 percent of the students who applied in 2012--Scranton has an impressive

track record when it comes to freshman retention and graduation. Eighty eight percent of the freshmen who entered in 2012 continued on to their sophomore, impressive considering the size of a freshman class (between 960 and 980 students), the interest in the more demanding majors and larger introductory courses than one is likely to find at a traditional liberal arts school. More than three quarters of freshmen who set sights on a four-year degree--there are joint undergraduate-graduate degrees here--graduate on time.

According to the 2014 *U.S. News Best Colleges* guide, Scranton's actual six-year graduation rate (83 percent) was an impressive 15 points higher than the magazine's Predicted Graduation Rate (68 percent). More impressive, the college achieves this performance mainly with classes of good and very good students whose grades and SAT scores fall around, and even below, the middle of the applicant pool at schools such as the University of Delaware, Penn State and Rutgers University-New Brunswick.

The university's most visible academic investment has been in the sciences. Scranton's sleek Loyola Science Center, an \$85 million project, would be an enviable venture at much larger schools. The university is also completing construction on a \$40 million Rehabilitation Education Center. The university has also constructed a beautiful student center (DeNaples) and several very nice residence halls (Condrion, Madison, Montrone and Pi-

larz) and apartments on campus. There are also constant reminders that, while Scranton welcomes students of all faiths, it is at heart a Jesuit institution in a very Catholic community. College-bound students seeking city life or college-town life in an eclectic place will not find that here, nor will they find a social life similar to a "jock school." The university has neither fraternities nor sororities nor does it field a football team. But those who can find their friends can also get a fine education.

Competition



**What does it take to get in?
Who decides to go?
What other schools do
applicants consider?**

Competition

Scranton attracts the good and very good student, primarily from the Northeast, with a 3.5 GPA or better though it attracts excellent students, too. The middle 50 percent of a freshman class scores between 1050 and 1220 (out of 1600) on the Critical Reading and Math sections of the SAT or between 23 and 27 on the ACT. Aside from applicants to the Nursing, Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy programs, the university does not require standardized tests for admissions. Students who apply for the other degree programs and do not submit test scores may submit two graded papers from high school classes, and possibly be asked to interview.

Scranton requires less paperwork than most privately-supported colleges. Only one recommendation is required (from a high school counselor) and the school charges no fee for online applications. Students submit only the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be considered for financial aid. Students who are interested in Occupational Therapy or Physical Therapy must apply Early Action (by November 15th) to be considered for admission; this is optional for applicants to all other degree programs. The university has no Early Decision option. However, applications are considered on a rolling basis, so this is not necessary. All students who are awarded merit-based aid receive notice of their award with their acceptance, though they may also qualify for need-based aid.

The student who is most likely to consider Scranton might be someone who would consider another Catholic (though not always Jesuit) college of similar size. Such schools in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states include Providence College (RI), Fairfield University (CT), Loyola University (MD), Mt. St. Mary's University (MD), Siena College (NY) and St. Joseph's University (PA). Schools such as Arcadia University (PA), Ithaca College (NY) and Quinnipiac University (CT) are also considered by students who are interested in either Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy. Villanova University, while having around 3,000 more students has a similar mix of academic programs.

Costs

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Tuition and Fees
Scholarships
Net Prices
Debt

Costs

During the 2013-14 school year Scranton charged a sticker price of approximately \$40,000 in tuition and fees and \$14,000 for room and board. The housing charges are on the high side for a college that is not in a large city or college town. However, the university asks all freshmen and sophomores who cannot commute to live on campus and asks them all to carry an unlimited meal plan.

Scranton awarded merit-based scholarships to 577 of the 970 freshmen who entered in 2013; more than 600 received need-based scholarship awards. The Loyola Scholarship is awarded to students who have scored 1100 (out of 1600) on the Critical Reading and Math sections of the SAT, and averaged \$12,000 per freshman. Dean's Scholarships, awarded to students who score between 1200 and 1300 and rank in the top fifth to tenth of their class average \$17,900. Ten students received Presidential Scholarships which cover full tuition and fees. The Arrupe Scholarship, a diversity merit award, is also available. Students need to earn a 3.25 to retain a Dean's Scholarship or Presidential Scholarship, a 3.0 to retain the Loyola Scholarship and a 2.5 to retain the Arrupe Scholarship. Xavier Scholarships, need-based awards, may also cover up to \$22,000 to the total cost of attendance (tuition and fees, room and board, books, transportation and other incidentals). Students need to maintain a 2.0, as well as need, to continue to receive these scholarships. The university also offers a family tuition discount of 10

percent per student, regardless of academic performance or need.

The generous scholarship policies allow Scranton to compete quite strongly against similar private colleges and universities, and practically match (for the better students it will undercut) the out-of-state tuition charges of schools such as the University of Delaware, the University of Maryland-College Park, Penn State or Rutgers-New Brunswick. While several private schools will award an excellent student (3.6+ GPA/Top 10th/1400 SAT) a scholarship between 50 and 100 percent of tuition, few make awards as deep into a class as Scranton. However, it must be noted that fixed scholarship awards become a smaller percentage of tuition as a student advances in their education. As tuition and fees increase--Scranton's charges rose by six percent from 2012-13 to 2013-14.--a student may be expected to borrow more or work more as s/he advances in their education.

On the panel on the right is a comparison of the smallest merit awards between Scranton and other private schools that applicants may consider, where complete information was available. Among these schools only Fairfield admitted a higher percentage of applicants than Scranton. However, the middle 50 percent of Fairfield's SAT scores was 30 points higher than Scranton's. There is no assurance that an applicant with school-average SAT scores who is accepted to Scranton and Fairfield would receive the same merit award from both schools.

School	Smallest Merit Award	Percent of Tuition	Renewable?
University of Scranton	\$8,000	Approximately 20%	Yes/3.0
Arcadia	\$8,000	21%	Yes/Good Academic Standing
Fairfield	\$6,000	14%	Yes/3.0
Ithaca	\$7,000	18% (Tuition and Fees)	Yes/2.75
Loyola U (MD)	\$12,500 (2014-15)	29%	Yes/stated in award letter
Providence	\$9,000	21%	Yes
Quinnipiac	\$9,000	Approximately 20%	Yes/3.0

Given the scholarship opportunities available at these schools, as well as their ability to provide need-based aid through Federal grants and their own funds, it is also necessary to consider debt as a cost of an education. On the next panel is a comparison between Scranton and five other private schools often considered by applicants. Data on student indebtedness is provided by The Project on Student Debt while the Parent PLUS Loan data is for loans taken out in a single year, according to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. It is interesting to note that while Scranton left its student borrowers with a higher debt burden, it did not pass on as great a burden on parent borrowers as other some other schools did. At the same time, it is possible that students had to borrow more as their scholarships covered a smaller percentage of the total costs of their education. Fairfield, Mt. St. Mary's and Siena, however, appear to burden parents and students less than Scranton does.

School	Average Student Indebtedness/Student Borrower 2012	Average Parent PLUS Loan 2011
University of Scranton	\$38,560	\$17,085
Arcadia	\$41,393	\$13,767
Fairfield	\$28,507	\$22,250
Loyola U (MD)	\$32,392	\$21,423
Mt. St. Mary's (MD)	\$32,311	\$18,083
Providence	\$26,832	\$21,083
Quinnipiac	\$42,730	\$21,772
Siena	\$32,000	\$15,743
Villanova	\$35,297	\$22,984

Scranton makes the most of scholarship opportunities despite having an endowment of only \$125 million, smaller than several private liberal arts schools that have about half as many students and no graduate degree programs. Only Mount St. Mary's makes more of more limited funds, while also awarding scholarships further down in a class. For comparison, on the right are the endowments of other schools considered by applicants to Scranton. The figures are rounded to data supplied through the National Association of College and University Business Officers.

School	Endowment (2012)
University of Scranton	\$125 million
Arcadia	\$52 million
Fairfield	\$245 million
Ithaca	\$203 million
Loyola U (MD)	\$156 million
Mt. St. Mary's (MD)	\$41 million
Providence	\$166 million
Quinnipiac	\$272 million
Siena	\$121 million
Villanova	\$357 million

Scranton goes to greater lengths to help the very good (3.5+/1200 to 1300 SAT) student financially than most other schools. The scholarships make it a better buy than many schools excluding the quality public institution in the student's home state, and possible Mt. St. Mary's among the schools that student also consider. However, those students who choose one of the more rigorous programs (Business, STEM, health professions) and fail to maintain a B or B-plus average could wind up with a large debt burden to bear.

Comforts

4

On-Campus Housing
Local Housing Market

Comforts

On its Web site the university mentions that there are more than 35 living options for students. Housing is guaranteed for four years, a good thing considering the shaky condition of housing in the neighborhood immediately surrounding the campus. Overall, approximately 2,300 students live in on-campus housing. This includes approximately 90 percent of the freshmen and sophomores as well as 60 percent of the junior class. Scranton has neither fraternities nor sororities.

The freshman year there is only one living option: A double room in a quadrangle in the center of campus, combined with an unlimited meal plan.

Rising sophomores enter a lottery where they typically live in suite-style arrangements, two double rooms connected by a single bathroom. They are not required to take the unlimited meal plan; they may also choose between a 10 or 14-meal plan.

Juniors and seniors can choose apartment- or house-style housing ranging in sizes from 3-person to 7-person units. These are some of the nicest apartment living options that a college-bound student will find on any campus.

There are also two theme housing options: Wellness and Cura Personalis (Service, Justice and Faith). The university has neither fraternities nor sororities.

While it is possible for juniors and seniors to find slightly lower-cost living options off campus--they may pay approximately \$550/month to live in university-owned apartments--they are better off living on campus unless they plan to work in the Scranton area or take summer classes.

Community

5

Campus
Environs
School Spirit

Community

Scranton has an exceptionally well-maintained, pedestrian-friendly campus. Over \$285 million has been invested in facilities since 2003 including new residence halls and academic buildings as well as a modern student center and fitness center. While the university welcomes students of all faiths--it even has a Judaic Studies Center--campus art constantly reminds community members and visitors that this is a Jesuit institution. The 58-acre campus is also compact and easy for university and local police to secure.

Data on crime statistics was limited to a single 4-month period, January 1st through April 30, 2012, nearly a semester. During this period there were only eight reported arrests: four for alcohol-related offenses, four for drug-related offenses, quite few for a college of any size, especially one located in a urban areas. There were, however, 135 alcohol-related disciplinary referrals but only 14 that were drug-related. There were also three referrals for Weapon Law Violations. There were no reported incidents of burglary during this time period, although there were 23 reported incidents of vandalism, 15 incidents of larceny-theft, two forcible sex offenses, four incidents of disorderly conduct and six incidents of harassment. These occurred on campus or in the immediate vicinity.

The university provides an extensive calendar of events at the DeNaples Center and most events are free to students. Sports events are free as well. While many schools charge students an

athletic fee, Scranton does not. The \$350 charged per student goes exclusively to student activities, including more than 80 clubs and organizations on campus. With no fraternities or sororities nor scholarship sports, there is no dominant student organization at Scranton. This is neither a “party school” nor a “jock school.” Aside from campus events, students are more likely to gather in smaller groups once they find their circle of friends. Collectively, students also perform more than 170,000 hours of community service. Scranton was among just 115 colleges in the nation, and one of only 17 schools in Pennsylvania, to be named to the 2009 President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction.

Freshmen and sophomores are not only required to live on campus; they are also not allowed to register cars. The [COLTS bus service](#) is the best way to get around the Scranton-Wilkes Barre area without a car during the week. Free to Scranton students, The 53 bus leaves campus every 45 minutes. Weekend bus services are unfortunately more limited and do not stop directly on campus. This is one school where incoming freshmen might want to befriend juniors or seniors with cars quickly should their shopping needs take them off campus.

Scranton plays 16 of 18 varsity sports at the Division III (non-scholarship) level in the Landmark Conference. Scranton has been the dominant school in Women’s Soccer, Men’s Basketball, Women’s Basketball and Women’s Swimming and Diving.

The campus is close to skiing and hiking as well as Nay Aug Park, the largest green space in the city’s park system. The park features a gorge with a tree-house lookout point as well as the Everhart Museum, the largest public museum in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Known as the Electric City, Scranton had the first electrically-operated streetcar system in the country. It ran from its founding in 1886 until it closed in 1954. Scranton was also the center of Pennsylvania’s coal industry as well as a major manufacturing center for silks and textiles through the 1950s. The city and region benefitted from its railroad network, now celebrated through the Steamtown National Historic Site. The city also has the only museum dedicated to magician Harry Houdini as well as the American Hockey League affiliate of the Pittsburgh Penguins and the International League (AAA) affiliate of the New York Yankees. The area has every shopping option typically found in suburban shopping centers.

Curriculum

6

Academics
Honors Programs
Experiential Learning

Curriculum

Scranton offers 61 majors, a large number for a school with around 4,000 undergraduates. The most popular are in Biological Sciences, Business, Exercise Science, Nursing and Occupational Therapy. Other Scranton majors that students are less likely to find at other schools of this size (and many larger ones) include: Molecular Biology, Electronic Commerce, Media and Information Technology, Community Health Education, Medical Technology, Biomathematics, Forensic Chemistry and Counseling and Human Services, among others. While Scranton is closer in student body size to a liberal arts college, it offers a selection of degree options more commonly found at a much larger school. This has pluses and minuses; a larger selection of classes at a small school means few faculty in the less-chosen academic programs.

General education requirements at Scranton are similar to liberal arts colleges, with the addition of:

- Three credits in Computer and Information Literacy
- Three credits in Public Speaking
- Three credits in Physical Education
- 15 credits in Religious Studies and Philosophy

Based on this course description on the next panel, the computer class appears to be unnecessary, a holdover from times when computers and the Internet were less accessible to high school students.

Students learn to use digital technology in the problem-solving process to obtain, evaluate and disseminate information. Two hours lecture, two hours lab. Requires concurrent enrollment in lecture and lab

Mandating a 15-credit philosophy and religious studies requirement along with “writing intensive” classes in the major and elective courses suggests that writ-

ing and critical thinking skills are going to be important for success at Scranton, regardless of the chosen major. The existence of a philosophy and religious studies requirement also suggests that a student should come prepared to discuss, and possibly develop a religious identity, even if it is within a faith outside of Catholicism. This is something to consider for a student who is cross-shopping Scranton against a public institution or a more secular private college or university.

Scranton offers three honors programs as well as campus chapters of more than 30 academic honor societies. The university invites approximately 60 incoming freshmen to participate in a [Special Jesuit Liberal Arts Honors Program](#). Open to students in various majors, the program offers an alternative to the General Education courses. Admitted students who choose this program take specific classes in Literature, Philosophy and Religion in place of the schools General Education requirements in Cultural Diversity, Humanities, Religion and Philosophy. The university promotes this honors program as being excellent preparation for law school or medical school because of its emphasis on courses in critical thinking and ethics. [Students in this program may also apply for the Christopher Jason Perfilio Scholarship, valued at \\$3,000 for the current academic year.](#)

[The Business Leadership Honors Program](#) is open to 15 selected sophomores in any major. It includes special sections of key business courses taught from the leadership perspective, leadership seminars, a mentor/internship program, and an independent leadership project. This program is an excellent fit for students who wish to lead a for-profit or non-profit organization.

The [general Honors Program](#) option is to undertake one-on-one study or research with a faculty member for a senior capstone as well as at least one Honors course, three tutorials and two seminars. An honors student may take as many as five one-to-one or small-group tutorials. Freshmen who have attained a 3.3 GPA or better after earning their first 18 credits may apply for ad-

mission to the Honors Program. They must maintain a 3.5 GPA or higher to graduate.

In addition to the uniqueness of the three honors programs, the university allows students to be part of more than one, provided that they can set up their class schedules to enable them to fulfill requirements. But whether a student is chosen for only one program or all three, it appears that s/he will be a very competitive applicant to graduate and professional schools. Such a student is also likely to have received one of Scranton's more generous scholarships; s/he may have more money to save towards their next degree.

Scranton students gave their faculty a 3.86 out of a possible five points on RateMyProfessors.com. The table below shows how the rating compared with those given by students at schools that are cross-shopped with Scranton. It can be seen that only Villanova students held similar regard for their faculty.

School	Rating
University of Scranton	3.86
Arcadia	3.72
Fairfield	3.67
Ithaca	3.71
Loyola U (MD)	3.70
Mt. St. Mary's (MD)	3.78
Providence	3.76
Quinnipiac	3.71
Siena	3.70
Villanova	3.86

Connections

Alumni Relations
Career Services

Connections

Scranton's career development center has four counseling professionals, an information resource specialist and administrative support. It offers 15 programs that can be requested by classes, clubs and organizations as well as the option to work with the host group on a customized one. The career center also hosts an Annual Spring Carnival as well as a calendar of employers recruiting on campus.

In the past two years, according to the university's Web site, students have completed credit-bearing internships at 380 organizations in 12 states. Depending on their degree programs students may also take advantage of non-credit internships, clinical rotations and student teaching opportunities.

According to the career development center's survey of the Class of 2013:

- 919 students completed baccalaureate degree requirements
- 75.6% (N=695) of the Class of 2013 provided placement information
- 91.9% of the respondents were either employed or pursuing additional education full-time
- 51.2% of the respondents were employed full-time

- 40.7% of the respondents were pursuing additional education full-time
- The rate for the graduates still seeking employment in the Class of 2013 was 4.6%
- The average salary reported for 2013 graduates was \$43,170.
- Of the 356 graduates employed full-time, 85% were employed in occupations related to their academic major and 84% were working in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

The office's excellent response rate to the survey is significant as are the percentages of recent graduates working full time or continuing their education. Also positive is that the average salary of the working graduates, across all majors, is higher than the average indebtedness of students who took out loans. The office also makes [post-graduate employment and salary information from prior years for several majors](#) available to students on its Web site.

Scranton has more than 40,000 living alumni They are invited to join the school's Alumni Society for no charge, though they are asked to consider contributing to the University Royal Fund Campaign. According to data submitted to U.S. News for their 2014 Best Colleges guide, an average of 14 percent of Scranton

alumni have contributed to the university during the 2010-11 and 2011-12 academic years, low for a private university with as much academic breadth as this one. By comparison, more than a fifth of Villanova and Mt. St. Mary's alumni contributed to their alma maters during this time period. Scranton's alumni giving rate is also lower than Providence, Fairfield, Loyola (MD) but higher than Arcadia, Ithaca and St. Joseph's (PA).

The Alumni Society has 17 regional clubs. Three are in the Pocono Valley (Lehigh Valley, Luzerne County and Northeastern Pennsylvania) while three others cover Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and South Central Pennsylvania. Other groups are concentrated in New York (New York City, Greater Binghamton), New Jersey, New England, Washington D.C. (and the nearby Chesapeake Bay Region), Florida, California and the Midwest as a whole. The large number of clubs concentrated in Pennsylvania, interesting considering that over 60 percent of the current student body comes from other states. This year each regional club shares in celebrating the university's 125th anniversary. The Alumni Society also has professional groups for lawyers, business professionals, medical fields, nursing and graduates of the master's program in Health Administration. The Society has more than 2,600 members in its LinkedIn group and operates its own online community as well.

Conclusions

Summing up



Conclusions

The University of Scranton tries to combine the academic breadth of a large university with the same access to faculty as students would find at a small liberal arts college while adhering to Jesuit values. Judging by the high retention and graduation rates, the effort appears to be working.

This school does an excellent job of graduating “good” and “very good” students, especially in business and the health professions. The honors programs accommodate the “excellent” students as well or better than programs at more “selective” institutions.

While downtown Scranton is not the most attractive of urban places, the university does its part to help students feel welcome and safe. The programming on campus helps to bond a freshman class. The campus is clean and well lit, buildings are well-maintained. The newer residence halls and apartments as well as the Loyola Science Center would be envied by students who attend “more selective” schools.

While the Scranton-Wilkes Barre metropolitan area is an inexpensive place to live in the Northeast and it has many entertainment, shopping and recreational opportunities, it is not a hot bed of economic activity. The campus is a good place to get an education, but the region is not the best place for college graduates to find full-time employment after graduation. The regional economy is rebuilding around tourism and recreation; neither

industry is known for high wages. However, the university does a commendable job at helping students find internships and full-time employment outside of the metro area.

The, “excellent” or “very good” student who might be happiest here would be someone with pre-professional aspirations, a Catholic identity, comes from a metropolitan area such as Philadelphia, Pittsburgh or New York where the university has a strong alumni presence, but wants to get away from the bigger city for four years. These students will graduate from a more supportive community than they might find at public and secular private colleges and universities. They will also come home with a fine education.

Ed Quest’s Report Card						
University of Scranton						

Four-Year/ Six-Year Grad Rates	Freshman Retention	Costs	Comforts	Community	Curriculum	Connections
A/A	A	B+	A	B+	A	B+

Strengths	Weaknesses
Comprehensive selection of academic programs for a mid-sized school	Few amenities near campus aside from May Aug Park
Generous scholarships for the excellent and very good student	No-car rule extends to sophomores.
Major investments in the sciences and health professions.	Abundance of pre-professional programs can lead to larger introductory courses than a student might find at a private liberal arts school
Impressive retention and graduation rates with “good” and “very good” students	Abundance of pre-professional programs can create a more competitive academic environment
You get a more “personal” education in the upper-divisions in pre-professional programs than you receive at larger schools	Downtown Scranton is not the most attractive of urban centers
Honors programs	Students like the food, but freshmen are forced into an Unlimited meal plan.
Campus is clean and well-maintained. Good feeling of safety for an urban location	On-campus housing is very nice, but it can get quite pricey
	Alumni base may not be extensive outside of the Northeast, California and Florida

The End



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