College Aid Pro

CAP Report Card: Merit Scholarship Transparency

Fall 2022

College Aid Pro™

Your most affordable path to college

Disclaimer

College Aid Pro, Inc. conducted the research and analysis for this white paper during the two-month period from approximately August 15th,2022 through October 15th, 2022. We recognize that colleges may have updated their public-facing information on merit-based aid and scholarships after this timeframe. If this has happened and any college or university disagrees with the grade given, we encourage you to reach out to discuss the changes you have made. We will gladly promote any improvements.

The grades included herein are also in no way an indication of the quality of education provided by the institutions represented. This Report Card is an evaluation of how transparent these colleges and universities are with the merit aid they provide. Nothing more.

Additionally, this grading criteria does not currently include a factor covering the magnitude of merit aid provided. While a school may not be transparent with the amounts they award or the criteria they use, it may still be quite generous in general with merit aid when it decides to award it.

Lastly, we acknowledge and understand that colleges can and do award all aid types however they see fit. There are subjective elements included in awarding merit aid outside of objective factors such as GPA and standardized test scores. We encourage all colleges and universities to be transparent with the criteria they choose to use, but schools may prioritize certain students for reasons other than purely academic credentials.

Acknowledgements

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The Importance of Transparency

College Aid Pro's (CAP) Mission is to **End the Student Debt Crisis** by empowering families to shop smarter for college. This is an audacious and ambitious goal, yet one we believe is achievable.

CAP is a strong and growing community of college planning experts, school counselors, administrators, concerned parents, and college graduates who have the experience and passion to embark on this crusade. We acknowledge, however, that to ultimately achieve our goal we will need participation and support from the major institutions that have perpetuated the problem in the first place: the federal government and the industry of higher education.

While the federal government can and should make needed changes to public policy to better support college-bound students (hint: it is **NOT** debt forgiveness), this white paper is directed at the colleges and universities themselves who have avoided true accountability for their role in the Student Debt Crisis.

Our core belief at CAP is that students and families can make smart, fiscally sound college selection decisions if they are appropriately educated and armed with the relevant information they need. Regretfully, college consumers are far from being provided with simple and straightforward cost-benefit propositions. Instead, they are forced to fight through an unnecessary maze of confusing paperwork, urgent deadlines, and opaque fee structures, which too often leads to irresponsible borrowing and regrettable outcomes.

To better balance the scales for families of college-bound students, we created College Aid Pro to fill this critical knowledge gap. Our platform is built on the fundamental pillars of 1) comprehensive process education, 2) customized data-driven insights, and 3) tailored and timely guidance. While our platform and team provide a meaningful competitive advantage to our users, consumers of higher education will always be at a material disadvantage as long as colleges and universities play games with tuition amounts and hide financial aid methodologies in a black box. It is with this goal of increasing transparency and clarity that we are publishing this first edition of our **Merit Scholarship Transparency Report Card**.

The Merit Scholarship Transparency Report Card gives credit to the schools that do not "hide the ball" and are straightforward with their potential applicants, allowing them to make well-informed decisions. At the same time, we are shining a light on the many schools that are less forthcoming with the aid they award and the criteria they use to decide who they think is deserving.

More than anything else, we want this white paper (and the others like it) to provide much-needed clarity for families and to push the dialogue with all colleges and universities forward so that the value and ROI of a college degree will simply speak for itself, rather than be buried behind a jungle of misdirection and misinformation.

We look forward to the discussion.

Kevin Degnan
CEO, College Aid Pro

Financial Aid: 101

Introduction

Have you ever wondered if you can afford college and how much you are able to pay? You are not alone. According to a survey conducted by Discover Student Loans, 66% of parents with kids 16-18 years old who are planning to go to college are worried about paying for their child's education[1]. Simply put, most American families do not know what they can afford for their children's college education. What should be a straightforward question is complicated by enormous amounts of information about how to pay for college and a lack of clarity and accuracy from colleges on how they distribute financial aid.

As a company whose Mission is to End the Student Debt Crisis, College Aid Pro helps families shop smarter for higher education by teaching them how college financial aid works, providing them customized planning tools, and enlightening them on all resources and opportunities available so they clearly understand their options and feel confident about what they can afford.

This is the first white paper in a series dedicated to demystifying college financial aid. It focuses on types of financial aid available, how transparent colleges are about institutional scholarships, and tools to estimate how much you will need to pay for college. We also explain College Aid Pro's data collection process and introduce the grading system we created to rate merit scholarship transparency.

Types of Financial Aid

College financial aid falls into two categories: merit and need. While this paper focuses on merit aid, commonly known as scholarships, we will briefly touch on both categories so you may understand the difference.

Merit aid, or scholarships, come from private businesses, non-profit organizations, colleges, and universities in the form of "free" or "gift" money that *does not have to be repaid*. Colleges offer merit aid to students based on academic performance, extracurricular activities, and other achievements by the student. High school GPA, class rank, standardized test scores, extracurricular activities, recommendation letters, and essays are some of the factors used in determining merit scholarship eligibility and award amounts.

Need-based aid, on the other hand, is granted solely on the basis of the student's or family's financial profile. A candidate's financial need eligibility is determined by a family's **Expected Family Contribution** (EFC): a federally calculated number using information such as a family's income, assets, and size.

Learn more about EFCs here – **Understanding the Expected Family Contribution in FAFSA**

[1] BusinessWire (link)

Need-based aid comes in different forms from different sources:

- **Grants**: a form of free, need-based aid provided by the government (state or federal) or the institution themselves that does not need to be repaid
- **Work Study**: the Federal Work-Study program, another form of need-based aid, offers qualified students part-time employment while enrolled in school
- **Loans**: need-based aid you borrow and *repay with interest*

For admitted students, colleges create personalized financial aid packages that outline the "best" financial aid option for you, which they deliver in an "award letter." An accepted student's award letter may include different levels of both merit and need-based aid options. Although we recommend minimizing debt, most families finance college with both types of aid.

The focus of this white paper is on how transparent colleges and universities are with the merit-based aid they offer accepted students. Do all accepted students with the same credentials receive the same awards? Does the college clearly define what its criteria is for qualifying students? Or is the "criteria" loosely applied when the college sees fit and is part of a larger pricing strategy that is not strictly tied to a student's academic qualifications? These are the questions we seek to answer in this report.

Need-based aid is a significant and critical piece to the college affordability puzzle and is deserving of its own transparency report. This is in the works so stay tuned.

Merit Scholarship Transparency

Merit transparency describes how readily colleges share merit aid (scholarship) availability and how the school awards it. Merit transparency allows interested students to see scholarship types, dollar amounts, and qualification eligibility *before* applying for admission.

As you can imagine, knowing how much "gift aid" to expect from a college helps families clearly understand out-of-pocket costs or required loan amounts more easily. These are essential details for determining affordability and avoiding needless debt. Knowing this information up front, or "full transparency," is critical when affordability is the single biggest factor for attending college for most families.

Transparency is also important for families who do not qualify for need-based financial aid (because the school and the government think they earn too much money), but still rely on merit aid to afford college. Needless to say, merit scholarship transparency is critical for the average family trying to finance higher education.

As we explain below, however, there are **NO** merit transparency standards schools must follow. In fact, each college determines how much information they want to publish and where and when they do so, with varying degrees of accountability.

General Process & Timeline

The financial aid calendar officially kicks off each year with the opening of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on October 1st. The FAFSA is the form that the federal government requires if a college-bound student wants to be considered for need-based aid. The FAFSA requests financial and family information to determine a family's EFC, that is used as part of college's financial aid review process. Additionally, some schools require supplemental applications, such as the CSS Profile, which go deeper into the applicant's financial situation.

To be considered for merit-based scholarships, many schools do not require anything other than the general application for admission. Automatic consideration may also be given to applicants based on submitted GPA (weighted or unweighted) and test scores (unless the school is test optional). If any supplementary material, such as essays or interviews, are required, the school will specifically request this as part of the application.

Depending on whether the student is applying early decision (ED), early action (EA), or regular admissions, the application results could come in as early as December of senior year or as late as mid-April of the following year. If the results are positive and the student is accepted, typically within a week or two, the candidate will receive what is commonly called the "**Award Letter**."

Award Letters are what colleges send accepted candidates where they finally provide the financial aid package they are willing to offer the student. There are several hundred variations of Award Letter formats used by different colleges and universities, but they all contain the same general details on merit-based scholarships, need-based grants, loan amounts (subsidized and unsubsidized), and sometimes things like work study or other fee reductions.

After receiving the acceptance and award letters, a candidate who applies regular admission will have another week or two before a decision is needed on or around May 1st.

If you are keeping score at home, the months (and sometimes years) of college searching, planning, and applying come down to a window of just a week or two where the family of a college-bound student finally knows the ultimate cost to attend the college, and they need to decide if they can and are willing to pay it. This is an action- and anxiety-packed time period for applicants and their families, to say the least.

One change the federal government made just over a decade ago to alleviate some of the pressure in this stressful, backloaded decision process was the implementation of what is called the Net Price Calculator.

Net Price Calculators (NPC)

To be eligible for federal student aid (also known as Title IV), every college is required to provide a public-facing Net Price Calculator (NPC) on their website. The NPC is designed to help prospective students determine what their actual, out-of-pocket cost will be if they are accepted to a particular institution. While the government requires schools to make them available for use on their website,

few requirements exist about the criteria used to calculate the net price, and the government has no audit process to ensure these NPCs are accurate. While some colleges are more diligent in updating their prices and asking clear, in-depth questions to give families the most accurate estimate, many NPCs are out of date or do not align with how a school actually reviews financial aid packages internally.

Learn more about NPCs here – **Net Price Calculators: Part of the Problem, Not the Solution**

It is because of these limited guidelines and loose requirements that consumers understandably find themselves confused and overwhelmed about which institutions and sources of information to trust when shopping for colleges.

This is where we come in.

To help you find schools that are more transparent than others and save hours of time parsing through the noise, College Aid Pro developed this grading system we hope you find helpful.

Transparency Methodology

Our Transparency Grading System

College Aid Pro's scoring system uses three simple factors to determine a school's "GPA" on the Scholarship Report Card:

1. Clarity Of Requirements
2. Clarity On Award Amounts
3. Consistency In Application

We apply a traditional GPA score of zero through four in each of the above categories and the cumulative total dictates the final grade. We use a combination of quantitative and qualitative sources to score each particular category, including:

- Public data sources including the college's website and government reports
- Direct communication with colleges about their merit award amounts and criteria
- Thorough verification process of each college's published and intuited criteria based on our database of actual award letters
- Proprietary projection engine to incorporate real-time changes to available awards and shifting selection criteria

We strive to provide the most up-to-date and accurate numbers and transparency scores as possible, so we continuously evaluate our algorithms against actual awards to keep our results current and improve our processes. We have a fully dedicated team who verifies, updates, and analyzes our underlying data sets.

Grading Criteria	A	B	C	D	F
Clarity Of Requirements	4	2 - 4	1 - 3	0 - 2	0 - 1
Clarity On Award Amounts	4	2 - 4	1 - 3	0 - 2	0 - 1
Consistency In Application	4	2 - 4	1 - 3	0 - 2	0 - 1
Total Score	**4.0**	**3 - 3.9**	**2 - 2.9**	**1 to 1.9**	**0 to 0.9**

A = 4.0

- Clearly specified merit scholarship amounts, not wide dollar ranges
- Well-defined criteria required to earn each award on their school website
- Merit aid included in school's Net Price Calculator (NPC)

B = 3.0 to 3.9

- Some merit qualification guidance provided
- Do not clearly disclose merit scholarship amounts and criteria on school's website
- Typically include merit-based awards in the NPC results

C = 2.0 to 2.9

- Provide basic information on merit opportunities with a wide range of possible amounts
- Criteria for some automatic or semi-automatic scholarships may be specified
- Merit awards may be included in the school's NPC, but often is not

D = 1.0 to 1.9

- Limited merit information on either award amounts or the criteria used, but not both
- Schools that only offer competitive scholarships
- Merit is not typically included in the school's NPC

F = 0.0 to 0.9

- Make some mention of automatic, semi-automatic, or competitive scholarships on their website
- Unable to find any meaningful information on award amounts or selection criteria
- Merit is also not included in the school's NPC

N/A : Merit scholarships are rare or non-existent at the school

- Highly competitive schools, such as the Ivy Leagues
- Military Academies that are free to attend for all accepted students
- Merit-based aid is only considered alongside the need-based criteria

In simple terms, our grading system rewards the colleges and universities that make it easy on potential applicants to determine if they will be eligible for merit-based awards and how much

those awards will be. The schools that withhold this information until the award letter goes out, removing the family's ability to plan accordingly, receive correspondingly poor marks.

Note: it is worth reiterating that this Scholarship Report Card deals with *only* merit-based aid. A college's ranking based on this criteria will have no impact on how they are graded on the Need Report Card.

Grade Examples:

Ogden, UT
Public University
COA:$31,254
Grade: A

Weber State earns the top mark of an A because they clearly outline requirements and award amounts with clear graphics on their website. Merit awards are included in their NPC results.

TEST SCORE		GPA																				
SAT (CR + M)	ACT	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.0
1570-1600	36	142	140	139	137	135	133	132	130	128	126	124	123	121	119	117	116	114	112	110	108	106
1530-1560	35	140	138	137	135	133	131	130	128	126	124	122	121	119	117	115	114	112	110	108	106	105
1490-1520	34	138	136	135	133	131	129	128	126	124	122	120	119	117	115	113	112	110	108	106	104	103
1450-1480	33	136	134	133	131	129	127	126	124	122	120	118	117	115	113	111	110	108	106	104	102	101
1420-1440	32	134	132	131	129	127	125	124	122	120	118	116	115	113	111	109	108	106	104	102	100	99
1390-1410	31	133	131	130	128	126	124	123	121	119	117	115	114	112	110	108	107	105	103	101	99	98
1360-1380	30	131	129	128	126	124	122	121	119	117	115	113	112	110	108	106	105	103	101	99	97	96
1330-1350	29	129	127	126	124	122	120	119	117	115	113	111	110	108	106	104	103	101	99	97	95	94
1300-1320	28	127	125	124	122	120	118	117	115	113	111	109	108	106	104	102	101	99	97	95	93	92
1260-1290	27	126	124	123	121	119	117	116	114	112	110	108	107	105	103	101	100	98	96	94	92	91
1230-1250	26	124	122	121	119	117	115	114	112	110	108	106	105	103	101	99	98	96	94	92	90	89
1200-1220	25	122	120	119	117	115	113	112	110	108	106	104	103	101	99	97	96	94	92	90	88	87
1160-1190	24	120	118	117	115	113	111	110	108	106	104	102	101	99	97	95	94	92	90	88	86	85
1130-1150	23	118	116	115	113	111	109	108	106	104	102	100	99	97	95	93	92	90	88	86	84	83
1100-1120	22	117	115	114	112	110	108	107	105	102	101	99	98	96	94	92	91	89	87	85	83	82
1060-1090	21	115	113	112	110	108	106	105	103	101	99	97	96	94	92	90	89	87	85	83	81	80
1030-1050	20	113	111	110	108	106	104	103	101	99	97	95	94	92	90	88	87	85	83	81	79	78
990-1020	19	111	109	108	106	104	102	101	99	97	95	93	92	90	88	86	85	83	81	79	77	76
960-980	18	109	107	106	104	102	100	99	97	95	93	91	90	88	86	84	83	81	79	77	75	74
920-950	17	108	106	105	103	101	99	98	96	94	92	90	89	87	85	83	82	80	78	76	74	73
880-910	16	106	104	103	101	99	97	96	94	92	90	88	87	85	83	81	80	78	76	74	72	71
830-870	15	104	102	101	99	97	95	94	92	90	88	86	85	83	81	79	78	76	74	72	70	69
780-820	14	102	100	99	97	95	93	92	90	88	86	84	83	81	79	77	76	74	72	70	68	67

Oxford, OH
Public University
COA: $56,817
Grade: C

Miami University earns a C. They offer semi-automatic merit scholarships and share some information about requirements. Because they give wide ranges for the actual awards, however, it is unclear what to expect. Miami's NPC also does **not** include merit awards.

First-Year Students: Merit Scholarships for Fall 2023

WEIGHTED HIGH SCHOOL GPA [1]	OHIO RESIDENT (ANNUAL AMOUNT) [2]	NON-RESIDENT (ANNUAL AMOUNT) [2]
4.30+	$4,000 to $13,000	$15,000 to $34,000
3.95-4.29	$3,000 to $8,000	$10,000 to $23,000
3.75-3.94	$2,000 to $7,000	$6,000 to $18,000
3.50-3.74	Up to $6,000	Up to $12,000

Syracuse, NY
Private
COA: $80,872
Grade: F

Syracuse University earns an F. The university offers semi-automatic merit scholarships based on an admission package but gives no information about requirements or award amounts on their website. They do not include merit in their net price calculator.

Syracuse University Scholarships

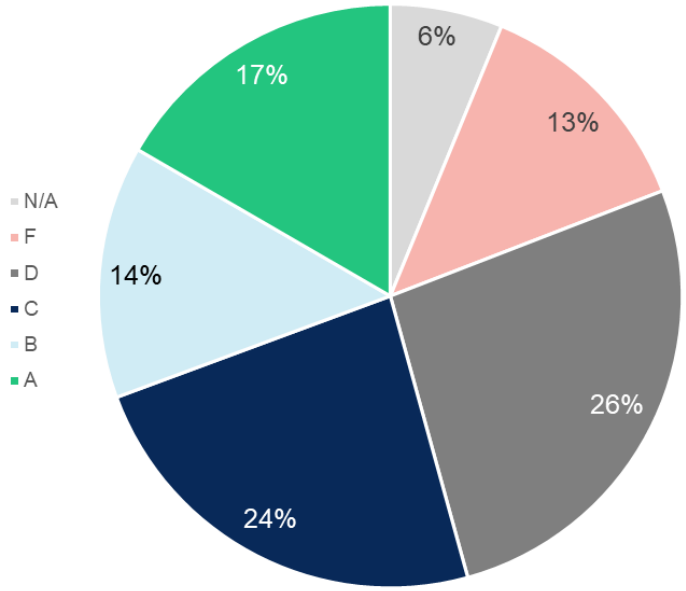
– Academic Merit

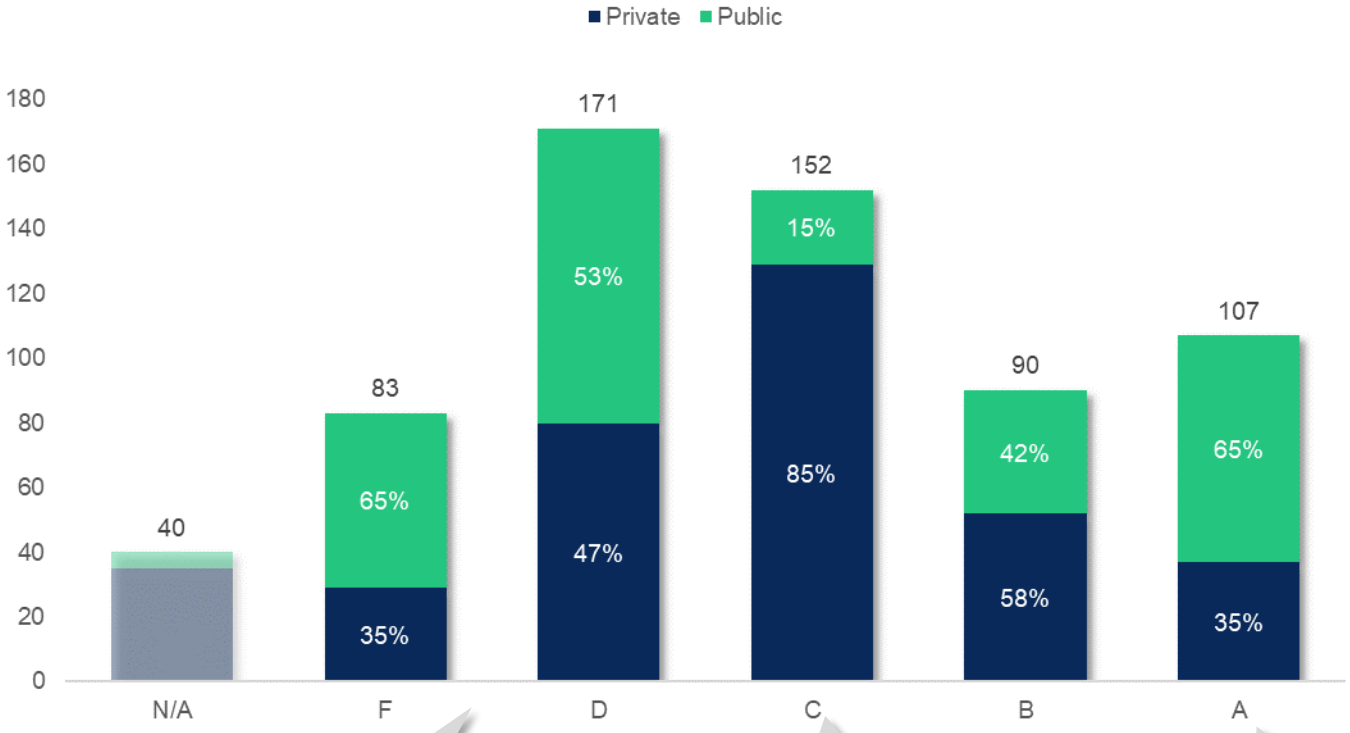
Syracuse University awards academic scholarships to eligible students based on the student's admission application - there is no application for merit scholarships. Selection is by the Admissions Committee and eligibility is based on a student's academic credentials, performance on standardized tests, class rank, portfolio or audition results (if relevant), community and extracurricular involvement, and overall citizenship and character.

Summary Statistics

For this initial report, we graded 643 of the leading colleges and universities across the country. We chose these schools based on factors such as quality of education, popularity amongst applicants, and general reputation.

Grade	Private	Public	Grand Total
A	37	70	107
B	52	38	90
C	129	23	152
D	80	91	171
F	29	54	83
N/A	*35*	*5*	*40*
Total	362	281	643





~40% of evaluated schools have significant room for improvement, receiving Ds or Fs

72% of private colleges, with similar business models and marketing approaches, receive Ds through Bs

Select public colleges and universities are leading the transparency charge with 65% of A grades

The Results Are In

The As

107 schools (17% of those reviewed) are setting the standard for merit award transparency. These colleges and universities provide clear, readily available information on the awards they provide and the criteria used to select recipients. The school's NPC also includes merit awards in its projections.

School	City	State	Type	CoA	Grade
Arizona State University-Tempe	Tempe	AZ	Public	$50,101	A
Auburn University	Auburn	AL	Public	$53,810	A
Augustana University	Sioux Falls	SD	Private	$53,100	A
Austin College	Sherman	TX	Private	$59,410	A
Baldwin Wallace University	Berea	OH	Private	$57,946	A
Ball State University	Muncie	IN	Public	$41,594	A
Biola University	La Mirada	CA	Private	$56,904	A
Calvin University	Grand Rapids	MI	Private	$53,570	A
Carroll College	Helena	MT	Private	$52,612	A
Central College	Pella	IA	Private	$35,099	A
Central Michigan University	Mount Pleasant	MI	Public	$26,736	A
Christian Brothers University	Memphis	TN	Private	$49,567	A
College of Saint Benedict	Saint Joseph	MN	Private	$68,088	A
Concordia College at Moorhead	Moorhead	MN	Private	$42,486	A
Concordia University-Saint Paul	St. Paul	MN	Private	$38,600	A
Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art	New York	NY	Private	$69,462	A
Covenant College	Lookout Mountain	GA	Private	$52,030	A
Dakota State University	Madison	SD	Public	$27,154	A
Dominican University of California	San Rafael	CA	Private	$69,744	A
Eastern Washington University	Cheney	WA	Public	$43,712	A
Ferris State University	Big Rapids	MI	Public	$26,148	A
Gordon College	Wenham	MA	Private	$41,830	A
Grand Valley State University	Allendale	MI	Public	$30,716	A
Hanover College	Hanover	IN	Private	$58,443	A
Hope College	Holland	MI	Private	$51,960	A
Iowa State University	Ames	IA	Public	$40,356	A
John Brown University	Siloam Springs	AR	Private	$43,290	A
Kansas State University	Manhattan	KS	Public	$42,833	A
Lake Forest College	Lake Forest	IL	Private	$68,800	A
Louisiana Tech University	Ruston	LA	Public	$35,934	A
Marshall University	Huntington	WV	Public	$36,205	A
Minnesota State University-Mankato	Mankato	MN	Public	$29,634	A
Mississippi State University	Mississippi State	MS	Public	$43,816	A
Missouri University of Science and Technology	Rolla	MO	Public	$48,238	A
Montana State University	Bozeman	MT	Public	$47,858	A
Murray State University	Murray	KY	Public	$29,293	A
New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology	Socorro	NM	Public	$40,604	A
New Mexico State University-Main Campus	Las Cruces	NM	Public	$43,606	A
North Dakota State University-Main Campus	Fargo	ND	Public	$30,146	A
Northern Illinois University	De Kalb	IL	Public	$27,321	A
Northern Kentucky University	Highland Heights	KY	Public	$34,144	A
Norwich University	Northfield	VT	Private	$63,640	A
Oklahoma State University-Main Campus	Stillwater	OK	Public	$48,642	A
Oregon Institute of Technology	Klamath Falls	OR	Public	$38,519	A
Point Loma Nazarene University	San Diego	CA	Private	$57,104	A
Rockhurst University	Kansas City	MO	Private	$53,000	A
Saint Martin's University	Lacey	WA	Private	$59,610	A
Simpson College	Indianola	IA	Private	$59,416	A
South Dakota State University	Brookings	SD	Public	$27,653	A
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale	Carbondale	IL	Public	$29,903	A
Southern Oregon University	Ashland	OR	Public	$47,868	A
Southwestern University	Georgetown	TX	Private	$64,509	A
SUNY College at Geneseo	Geneseo	NY	Public	$37,852	A
Taylor University	Upland	IN	Private	$53,134	A
Texas State University	San Marcos	TX	Public	$42,138	A
Texas Tech University	Lubbock	TX	Public	$43,210	A
The College of Saint Scholastica	Duluth	MN	Private	$53,284	A
The University of Alabama	Tuscaloosa	AL	Public	$50,254	A

The University of Montana	Missoula	MT	Public	$44,908	A
The University of Tennessee Knoxville	Knoxville	TN	Public	$48,226	A
The University of Texas at San Antonio	San Antonio	TX	Public	$40,370	A
The University of Texas at Tyler	Tyler	TX	Public	$39,970	A
The University of West Florida	Pensacola	FL	Public	$34,302	A
Trevecca Nazarene University	Nashville	TN	Private	$40,770	A
Truman State University	Kirksville	MO	Public	$32,952	A
Union University	Jackson	TN	Private	$56,340	A
University of Alabama at Birmingham	Birmingham	AL	Public	$45,887	A
University of Alaska Fairbanks	Fairbanks	AK	Public	$42,957	A
University of Arizona	Tucson	AZ	Public	$53,553	A
University of Central Arkansas	Conway	AR	Public	$30,019	A
University of Central Missouri	Warrensburg	MO	Public	$30,687	A
University of Central Oklahoma	Edmond	OK	Public	$38,209	A
University of Evansville	Evansville	IN	Private	$56,140	A
University of Idaho	Moscow	ID	Public	$42,082	A
University of Illinois at Springfield	Springfield	IL	Public	$37,552	A
University of Kansas	Lawrence	KS	Public	$42,388	A
University of Kentucky	Lexington	KY	Public	$52,482	A
University of Louisville	Louisville	KY	Public	$42,256	A
University of Mary Washington	Fredericksburg	VA	Public	$46,944	A
University of Massachusetts-Boston	Boston	MA	Public	$55,083	A
University of Memphis	Memphis	TN	Public	$28,395	A
University of Minnesota-Crookston	Crookston	MN	Public	$25,950	A
University of Minnesota-Morris	Morris	MN	Public	$27,762	A
University of Mississippi	University	MS	Public	$44,304	A
University of Missouri-Columbia	Columbia	MO	Public	$48,980	A
University of Missouri-Kansas City	Kansas City	MO	Public	$44,932	A
University of New Hampshire-Main Campus	Durham	NH	Public	$54,260	A
University of New Mexico-Main Campus	Albuquerque	NM	Public	$43,777	A
University of North Dakota	Grand Forks	ND	Public	$29,985	A
University of Northern Colorado	Greeley	CO	Public	$40,749	A
University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus	Norman	OK	Public	$49,552	A
University of Oregon	Eugene	OR	Public	$60,776	A
University of Southern Mississippi	Hattiesburg	MS	Public	$24,780	A
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire	Eau Claire	WI	Public	$29,942	A
University of Wyoming	Laramie	WY	Public	$37,826	A
Utah State University	Logan	UT	Public	$38,296	A
Utah Valley University	Orem	UT	Public	$29,334	A
Valparaiso University	Valparaiso	IN	Private	$60,796	A
Wabash College	Crawfordsville	IN	Private	$63,375	A
Washington & Jefferson College	Washington	PA	Private	$30,685	A
Weber State University	Ogden	UT	Public	$31,254	A
West Texas A & M University	Canyon	TX	Public	$28,191	A
Western Michigan University	Kalamazoo	MI	Public	$32,712	A
Westminster College	Fulton	MO	Private	$52,700	A
Westmont College	Santa Barbara	CA	Private	$68,826	A
William Carey University	Hattiesburg	MS	Private	$21,860	A
Wittenberg University	Springfield	OH	Private	$57,974	A

The Bs

Representing 90 schools (14%), the B schools provide meaningful guidance on their merit awards, but they come up just short of the A schools by either being not fully forthcoming on selection criteria or on the amounts applicants should expect.

School	City	State	Type	CoA	Grade
Agnes Scott College	Decatur	GA	Private	$62,306	B
Augustana College	Rock Island	IL	Private	$59,885	B
Birmingham Southern College	Birmingham	AL	Private	$36,150	B
Carleton College	Northfield	MN	Private	$81,690	B
Central Washington University	Ellensburg	WA	Public	$42,092	B
Clark University	Worcester	MA	Private	$65,468	B
College of the Ozarks	Point Lookout	MO	Private	$32,750	B
Colorado State University	Fort Collins	CO	Public	$48,754	B
Dordt College	Sioux Center	IA	Private	$47,190	B
Emerson College	Boston	MA	Private	$74,816	B
Florida Atlantic University	Boca Raton	FL	Public	$39,616	B
Florida Gulf Coast University	Fort Myers	FL	Public	$39,434	B
Fordham University	Bronx	NY	Private	$83,666	B
Gallaudet University	Washington	DC	Private	$38,912	B
Goshen College	Goshen	IN	Private	$51,410	B
Hamline University	St. Paul	MN	Private	$59,975	B
High Point University	High Point	NC	Private	$60,940	B
Hobart William Smith Colleges	Geneva	NY	Private	$77,945	B
Hofstra University	Hempstead	NY	Private	$76,252	B
Houghton College	Houghton	NY	Private	$30,600	B
Illinois Wesleyan University	Bloomington	IL	Private	$68,732	B
Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis	Indianapolis	IN	Public	$47,909	B
Kalamazoo College	Kalamazoo	MI	Private	$70,952	B
Knox College	Galesburg	IL	Private	$66,723	B
Lawrence Technological University	Southfield	MI	Private	$57,289	B
Lebanon Valley College	Annville	PA	Private	$65,640	B
Lewis University	Romeoville	IL	Private	$52,110	B
Luther College	Decorah	IA	Private	$64,825	B
Marymount University	Arlington	VA	Private	$59,407	B
Michigan Technological University	Houghton	MI	Public	$56,612	B
Middle Tennessee State University	Murfreesboro	TN	Public	$47,430	B
Millsaps College	Jackson	MS	Private	$59,820	B
Montana Tech of the University of Montana	Butte	MT	Public	$38,151	B
Mount St Mary's University	Emmitsburg	MD	Private	$63,390	B
New College of Florida	Sarasota	FL	Public	$45,306	B
Northern Arizona University	Flagstaff	AZ	Public	$43,600	B
Northern Michigan University	Marquette	MI	Public	$33,843	B
Oakland University	Rochester	MI	Public	$36,789	B
Oberlin College	Oberlin	OH	Private	$83,322	B
Oregon State University	Corvallis	OR	Public	$52,943	B
Pacific Lutheran University	Tacoma	WA	Private	$65,904	B
Pratt Institute-Main	Brooklyn	NY	Private	$77,607	B
Quinnipiac University	Hamden	CT	Private	$71,350	B
Randolph College - NPC not working	Lynchburg	VA	Private	$43,722	B
Roanoke College	Salem	VA	Private	$53,966	B
Rollins College	Winter Park	FL	Private	$75,310	B
Saint Edward's University	Austin	TX	Private	$67,992	B
Saint Johns University	Collegeville	MN	Private	$68,112	B
Saint Norbert College	De Pere	WI	Private	$57,584	B
Salisbury University	Salisbury	MD	Public	$37,652	B
Samford University	Birmingham	AL	Private	$54,303	B
Seton Hall University	South Orange	NJ	Private	$70,682	B
Siena College	Loudonville	NY	Private	$61,854	B
South Dakota School of Mines and Technology	Rapid City	SD	Public	$25,940	B
St Mary's College of Maryland	St. Mary's City	MD	Public	$47,890	B
St. Francis	Joliet	IL	Private	$51,230	B
St. Joseph's College-New York	Brooklyn	NY	Private	$38,860	B
St. Thomas Aquinas College	Sparkill	NY	Private	$59,880	B
SUNY at Fredonia	Fredonia	NY	Public	$35,182	B
SUNY Cortland	Cortland	NY	Public	$36,515	B
Tennessee Technological University	Cookeville	TN	Public	$30,252	B
The University of Texas of the Permian Basin	Odessa	TX	Public	$44,756	B

Transylvania University	Lexington	KY	Private	$59,770	B
Trinity University	San Antonio	TX	Private	$65,798	B
University of Akron Main Campus	Akron	OH	Public	$29,686	B
University of Alabama in Huntsville	Huntsville	AL	Public	$40,662	B
University of Alaska Anchorage	Anchorage	AK	Public	$46,682	B
University of Dallas	Irving	TX	Private	$66,830	B
University of Massachusetts-Lowell	Lowell	MA	Public	$51,240	B
University of Nebraska at Omaha	Omaha	NE	Public	$39,762	B
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Lincoln	NE	Public	$44,602	B
University of New Orleans	New Orleans	LA	Public	$28,450	B
University of Northern Iowa	Cedar Falls	IA	Public	$33,142	B
University of South Carolina	Columbia	SC	Public	$53,967	B
University of South Dakota	Vermillion	SD	Public	$27,367	B
University of South Florida	Tampa	FL	Public	$36,943	B
University of St Thomas	Houston	TX	Private	$47,710	B
University of the Pacific	Stockton	CA	Private	$70,526	B
University of Tulsa	Tulsa	OK	Private	$67,363	B
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	Milwaukee	WI	Public	$36,644	B
University of Wisconsin-Platteville	Platteville	WI	Public	$26,980	B
Ursinus	Collegeville	PA	Private	$75,962	B
Virginia Commonwealth University	Richmond	VA	Public	$56,027	B
Washington State University	Pullman	WA	Public	$46,202	B
West Virginia University	Morgantown	WV	Public	$40,686	B
Western Kentucky University	Bowling Green	KY	Public	$43,873	B
Westminster College	Salt Lake City	UT	Private	$55,245	B
Westminster College	New Wilmington	PA	Private	$55,006	B
Wichita State University	Wichita	KS	Public	$37,120	B
Wofford College	Spartanburg	SC	Private	$70,193	B

The Cs

152 schools (24%) received middle-tier C grades. These schools offer general guidance on their merit aid opportunities and in some cases the Net Price Calculators are a good resource of potential merit awards. Providing more upfront information on their websites is an easy place to start for these schools to jump up to B or even A grades.

School	City	State	Type	CoA	Grade
Abilene Christian University	Abilene	TX	Private	$57,522	C
Adelphi University	Garden City	NY	Private	$66,242	C
Albion College	Albion	MI	Private	$69,180	C
Alfred University	Alfred	NY	Private	$54,604	C
Allegheny College	Meadville	PA	Private	$70,906	C
American University	Washington	DC	Private	$76,563	C
Anderson University	Anderson	SC	Private	$46,684	C
Arcadia University	Glenside	PA	Private	$63,225	C
Assumption University	Worcester	MA	Private	$64,348	C
Azusa Pacific University	Azusa	CA	Private	$57,086	C
Babson College	Babson Park	MA	Private	$77,248	C
Baker University	Baldwin City	KS	Private	$48,010	C
Barry University	Miami Shore	FL	Private	$49,044	C
Baylor University	Waco	TX	Private	$70,208	C
Bellarmine University	Louisville	KY	Private	$63,600	C
Belmont University	Nashville	TN	Private	$56,020	C
Beloit College	Beloit	WI	Private	$68,126	C
Bentley University	Waltham	MA	Private	$79,220	C
Berry College	Mount Berry	GA	Private	$56,490	C
Bethel University	St. Paul	MN	Private	$55,260	C
Boston University	Boston	MA	Private	$82,760	C
Bradley University	Peoria	IL	Private	$53,636	C
Bryant University	Smithfield	RI	Private	$69,130	C
Butler University	Indianapolis	IN	Private	$63,670	C
California Lutheran University	Thousand Oaks	CA	Private	$67,805	C
Canisius College	Buffalo	NY	Private	$46,294	C
Catholic University of America	Washington	DC	Private	$75,456	C
Cedarville University	Cedarville	OH	Private	$47,192	C
Centre College	Danville	KY	Private	$63,470	C
Chapman University	Orange	CA	Private	$82,548	C
Christopher Newport University	Newport News	VA	Public	$45,945	C
Citadel Military College of South Carolina	Charleston	SC	Public	$49,914	C
Coe College	Cedar Rapids	IA	Private	$63,784	C
Cornell College	Mount Vernon	IA	Private	$63,866	C
DePaul University	Chicago	IL	Private	$61,599	C
DePauw University	Greencastle	IN	Private	$71,694	C
Drake University	Des Moines	IA	Private	$63,562	C
Drew University	Madison	NJ	Private	$62,274	C
Duquesne University	Pittsburgh	PA	Private	$62,620	C
Eastern Connecticut State University	Willimantic	CT	Public	$28,050	C
Eastern Michigan University	Ypsilanti	MI	Public	$30,166	C
Eckerd College	St. Petersburg	FL	Private	$67,204	C
Elizabethtown College	Elizabethtown	PA	Private	$51,112	C
Elmhurst University	Elmhurst	IL	Private	$56,192	C
Fairfield University	Fairfield	CT	Private	$74,485	C
Fairleigh Dickinson University-Metropolitan	Teaneck	NJ	Private	$50,916	C
Florida Institute of Technology	Melbourne	FL	Private	$55,460	C
Florida Southern College	Lakeland	FL	Private	$57,420	C
Furman University	Greenville	SC	Private	$73,640	C
Gannon University	Erie	PA	Private	$54,424	C
Georgia State University	Atlanta	GA	Public	$51,179	C
Gettysburg College	Gettysburg	PA	Private	$80,400	C
Gustavus Adolphus College	St. Peter	MN	Private	$64,800	C
Hampden-Sydney College	Hampden-Sydney	VA	Private	$67,616	C
Hendrix College	Conway	AR	Private	$52,700	C
Illinois College	Jacksonville	IL	Private	$49,310	C
Illinois Institute of Technology	Chicago	IL	Private	$72,130	C
Illinois State University	Normal	IL	Public	$45,906	C
Indiana University of Pennsylvania-Main Campus	Indiana	PA	Public	$31,564	C
Iona College	New Rochelle	NY	Private	$65,418	C
John Carroll University	University Heights	OH	Private	$65,565	C

Juniata College	Huntingdon	PA	Private	$69,636	C
Kettering University	Flint	MI	Private	$58,610	C
King's College	Wilkes-Barre	PA	Private	$60,048	C
La Salle University	Philadelphia	PA	Private	$52,490	C
Lawrence University	Appleton	WI	Private	$67,824	C
Linfield College-McMinnville Campus	McMinnville	OR	Private	$64,820	C
Lipscomb University	Nashville	TN	Private	$56,688	C
Loyola University Chicago	Chicago	IL	Private	$67,618	C
Loyola University Maryland	Baltimore	MD	Private	$72,600	C
Loyola University New Orleans	New Orleans	LA	Private	$61,260	C
Lycoming College	Williamsport	PA	Private	$63,956	C
Lynn University	Boca Raton	FL	Private	$62,898	C
Manhattan College	Riverdale	NY	Private	$68,088	C
Marist College	Poughkeepsie	NY	Private	$65,035	C
Marquette University	Milwaukee	WI	Private	$64,473	C
McDaniel College	Westminster	MD	Private	$65,680	C
Mercer University	Macon	GA	Private	$57,752	C
Merrimack College	North Andover	MA	Private	$69,991	C
Messiah University	Mechanicsburg	PA	Private	$54,950	C
Miami University-Oxford	Oxford	OH	Public	$56,817	C
Michigan State University	East Lansing	MI	Public	$57,500	C
Milwaukee School of Engineering	Milwaukee	WI	Private	$61,309	C
Molloy College	Rockville Centre	NY	Private	$58,314	C
Monmouth College	Monmouth	IL	Private	$55,543	C
Montclair State University	Montclair	NJ	Public	$43,052	C
Moravian University	Bethlehem	PA	Private	$69,334	C
Muhlenberg College	Allentown	PA	Private	$75,460	C
New Jersey Institute of Technology	Newark	NJ	Public	$54,246	C
New York Institute of Technology	Old Westbury	NY	Private	$63,193	C
Nicholls State University	Thibodaux	LA	Public	$21,195	C
North Central College	Naperville	IL	Private	$57,956	C
Occidental College	Los Angeles	CA	Private	$80,396	C
Ohio Northern University	Ada	OH	Private	$53,677	C
Ohio Wesleyan University	Delaware	OH	Private	$66,767	C
Pace University-New York	New York	NY	Private	$74,022	C
Portland State University	Portland	OR	Public	$48,695	C
Presbyterian College	Clinton	SC	Private	$57,460	C
Providence College	Providence	RI	Private	$77,832	C
Ramapo College of New Jersey	Mahwah	NJ	Public	$46,217	C
Randolph-Macon College	Ashland	VA	Private	$62,538	C
Rhodes College	Memphis	TN	Private	$66,588	C
Rider University	Lawrenceville	NJ	Private	$54,610	C
Ripon College	Ripon	WI	Private	$61,440	C
Saint Anselm College	Manchester	NH	Private	$65,552	C
Saint John Fisher College	Rochester	NY	Private	$53,914	C
Saint Louis University	St. Louis	MO	Private	$70,604	C
Saint Mary's College	Notre Dame	IN	Private	$67,410	C
Saint Mary's College of California	Moraga	CA	Private	$72,976	C
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota	Winona	MN	Private	$54,670	C
Saint Michael's College	Colchester	VT	Private	$67,512	C
Saint Vincent College	Latrobe	PA	Private	$55,313	C
Salve Regina University	Newport	RI	Private	$67,780	C
Seattle University	Seattle	WA	Private	$65,008	C
Sewanee-The University of the South	Sewanee	TN	Private	$68,704	C
Simmons University	Boston	MA	Private	$64,358	C
Southern Methodist University	Dallas	TX	Private	$83,130	C
St Bonaventure University	St. Bonaventure	NY	Private	$55,945	C
St Lawrence University	Canton	NY	Private	$80,515	C
St Olaf College	Northfield	MN	Private	$69,600	C
St. Mary's University	San Antonio	TX	Private	$51,074	C
Stevens Institute of Technology	Hoboken	NJ	Private	$77,954	C
Stony Brook University	Stony Brook	NY	Public	$48,208	C
Suffolk University	Boston	MA	Private	$66,567	C
Texas A & M University-Kingsville	Kingsville	TX	Public	$70,038	C
The Ohio State University	Columbus	OH	Public	$54,432	C
The University of Tampa	Tampa	FL	Private	$50,008	C
Union College	Schenectady	NY	Private	$82,822	C
University of Dayton	Dayton	OH	Private	$65,310	C
University of Delaware	Newark	DE	Public	$55,964	C
University of Denver	Denver	CO	Private	$75,930	C
University of Detroit Mercy	Detroit	MI	Private	$45,398	C
University of Iowa	Iowa City	IA	Public	$48,846	C
University of La Verne	La Verne	CA	Private	$66,383	C

University of Miami	Coral Gables	FL	Private	$78,562	C
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities	Minneapolis	MN	Public	$51,232	C
University of New England	Biddeford	ME	Private	$60,330	C
University of Puget Sound	Tacoma	WA	Private	$75,570	C
University of Redlands	Redlands	CA	Private	$74,086	C
University of San Diego	San Diego	CA	Private	$75,767	C
University of Scranton	Scranton	PA	Private	$69,574	C
University of St Thomas	St. Paul	MN	Private	$68,537	C
University of Toledo	Toledo	OH	Public	$40,727	C
University of Vermont	Burlington	VT	Public	$59,444	C
Wentworth Institute of Technology	Boston	MA	Private	$61,030	C
Western Washington University	Bellingham	WA	Public	$46,758	C
Wheaton College	Norton	MA	Private	$78,276	C
Whitman College	Walla Walla	WA	Private	$75,232	C
Whittier College	Whittier	CA	Private	$52,014	C
Whitworth University	Spokane	WA	Private	$66,313	C
Willamette University	Salem	OR	Private	$63,312	C
Xavier University	Cincinnati	OH	Private	$63,550	C

The Ds

The D-graded schools are the largest category in this initial review and include 171 colleges and universities (27%). These schools have decided to hold their merit award strategies close to the chest and aspiring applicants may find a pleasant or unpleasant surprise in their award letters.

School	City	State	Type	CoA	Grade
Bennington College	Bennington	VT	Private	$84,178	D
Brandeis University	Waltham	MA	Private	$81,414	D
Brigham Young University	Provo	UT	Private	$21,128	D
Bryn Mawr College	Bryn Mawr	PA	Private	$79,490	D
Bucknell University	Lewisburg	PA	Private	$81,170	D
California State Polytechnic University-Pomona	Pomona	CA	Public	$39,988	D
California State University Maritime Academy	Vallejo	CA	Public	$34,620	D
California State University-Channel Islands	Camarillo	CA	Public	$39,954	D
California State University-Chico	Chico	CA	Public	$38,608	D
California State University-Dominguez Hills	Carson	CA	Public	$39,466	D
California State University-Fullerton	Fullerton	CA	Public	$39,705	D
California State University-Long Beach	Long Beach	CA	Public	$38,062	D
California State University-Los Angeles	Los Angeles	CA	Public	$37,965	D
California State University-Northridge	Northridge	CA	Public	$35,582	D
California State University-San Marcos	San Marcos	CA	Public	$37,382	D
California State University-Stanislaus	Turlock	CA	Public	$35,524	D
Central Connecticut State University	New Britain	CT	Public	$41,314	D
Champlain College	Burlington	VT	Private	$64,130	D
Claremont McKenna College	Claremont	CA	Private	$82,427	D
Clarkson University	Potsdam	NY	Private	$77,320	D
Clemson University	Clemson	SC	Public	$58,956	D
Cleveland State University	Cleveland	OH	Public	$37,128	D
College of Staten Island CUNY	Staten Island	NY	Public	$45,793	D
College of William and Mary	Williamsburg	VA	Public	$63,479	D
Colorado College	Colorado Springs	CO	Private	$83,228	D
Colorado School of Mines	Golden	CO	Public	$61,609	D
Connecticut College	New London	CT	Private	$82,400	D
Creighton University	Omaha	NE	Private	$61,580	D
CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice	New York	NY	Public	$38,025	D
CUNY Queens College	Queens	NY	Public	$32,708	D
Davidson College	Davidson	NC	Private	$76,465	D
Denison University	Granville	OH	Private	$77,900	D
Dickinson College	Carlisle	PA	Private	$80,541	D
Drexel University	Philadelphia	PA	Private	$79,480	D
Duke University	Durham	NC	Private	$85,583	D
Earlham College	Richmond	IN	Private	$64,505	D
East Carolina University	Greenville	NC	Public	$38,424	D
Elmira College	Elmira	NY	Private	$52,892	D
Elon University	Elon	NC	Private	$61,529	D
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University-Daytona Beach	Daytona Beach	FL	Private	$60,122	D
Emory University	Atlanta	GA	Private	$77,214	D
Farmingdale State College	Farmingdale	NY	Public	$34,953	D
Florida International University	Miami	FL	Public	$36,396	D
Florida State University	Tallahassee	FL	Public	$41,607	D
George Mason University	Fairfax	VA	Public	$55,470	D
Georgia College and State University	Milledgeville	GA	Public	$47,102	D
Georgia Institute of Technology-Main Campus	Atlanta	GA	Public	$54,168	D
Georgia Southern University	Statesboro	GA	Public	$38,408	D
Goucher College	Baltimore	MD	Private	$69,340	D
Grove City College	Grove City	PA	Private	$33,890	D
Hampshire College	Amherst	MA	Private	$72,374	D
Harvey Mudd College	Claremont	CA	Private	$86,146	D
Hillsdale College	Hillsdale	MI	Private	$46,902	D
Humboldt State University	Arcata	CA	Public	$36,730	D
Ithaca College	Ithaca	NY	Private	$66,085	D
James Madison University	Harrisonburg	VA	Public	$46,902	D
Kennesaw State University	Kennesaw	GA	Public	$42,433	D
Kenyon College	Gambier	OH	Private	$81,699	D
Lafayette College	Easton	PA	Private	$79,362	D
Lehigh University	Bethlehem	PA	Private	$78,885	D
Lewis & Clark College	Portland	OR	Private	$76,732	D
LIU Post	Brookville	NY	Private	$60,271	D

Louisiana State University-Baton Rouge	Baton Rouge	LA	Public	$44,278	D
Loyola Marymount University	Los Angeles	CA	Private	$76,896	D
Macalester College	St. Paul	MN	Private	$79,670	D
Maine Maritime Academy	Castine	ME	Public	$45,378	D
Maryland Institute College of Art	Baltimore	MD	Private	$71,755	D
Massachusetts Maritime Academy	Buzzards Bay	MA	Public	$34,553	D
Menlo College	Atherton	CA	Private	$67,840	D
Metropolitan State University	St. Paul	MN	Public	$33,904	D
Monmouth University	West Long Branch	NJ	Private	$64,473	D
New Jersey City University	Jersey City	NJ	Public	$45,714	D
Newman University	Wichita	KS	Private	$46,394	D
North Carolina State University at Raleigh	Raleigh	NC	Public	$47,493	D
Northeastern University	Boston	MA	Private	$81,132	D
Northwestern University	Evanston	IL	Private	$87,750	D
Nova Southeastern University	Fort Lauderdale	FL	Private	$52,618	D
Ohio University-Main Campus	Athens	OH	Public	$39,536	D
Old Dominion University	Norfolk	VA	Public	$48,476	D
Otis College of Art and Design	Los Angeles	CA	Private	$68,657	D
Pennsylvania State University-University Park	University Park	PA	Public	$58,553	D
Pepperdine University	Malibu	CA	Private	$85,202	D
Pitzer College	Claremont	CA	Private	$83,932	D
Regis University	Denver	CO	Private	$59,760	D
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Troy	NY	Private	$79,054	D
Rowan University	Glassboro	NJ	Public	$46,148	D
Rutgers University-New Brunswick	Piscataway	NJ	Public	$53,715	D
Sacred Heart University	Fairfield	CT	Private	$66,300	D
Saint Joseph's University	Philadelphia	PA	Private	$67,220	D
Saint Peter's University	Jersey City	NJ	Private	$59,420	D
Sam Houston State University	Huntsville	TX	Public	$42,291	D
San Diego State University	San Diego	CA	Public	$44,014	D
San Francisco State University	San Francisco	CA	Public	$41,003	D
San Jose State University	San Jose	CA	Public	$42,730	D
Santa Clara University	Santa Clara	CA	Private	$79,521	D
Sarah Lawrence College	Bronxville	NY	Private	$79,604	D
Scripps College	Claremont	CA	Private	$83,330	D
Seattle Pacific University	Seattle	WA	Private	$55,737	D
Skidmore College	Saratoga Springs	NY	Private	$82,810	D
Soka University of America	Aliso Viejo	CA	Private	$55,084	D
Sonoma State University	Rohnert Park	CA	Public	$39,232	D
Spelman College	Atlanta	GA	Private	$52,051	D
St John's University-New York	Queens	NY	Private	$70,178	D
SUNY at Albany	Albany	NY	Public	$46,006	D
SUNY at Purchase College	Purchase	NY	Public	$38,004	D
SUNY College at Old Westbury	Old Westbury	NY	Public	$34,659	D
SUNY College at Oswego	Oswego	NY	Public	$37,732	D
SUNY College at Plattsburgh	Plattsburgh	NY	Public	$38,771	D
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry	Syracuse	NY	Public	$40,986	D
SUNY Oneonta	Oneonta	NY	Public	$37,055	D
Susquehanna University	Selinsgrove	PA	Private	$64,710	D
Swarthmore College	Swarthmore	PA	Private	$80,579	D
Temple University	Philadelphia	PA	Public	$46,876	D
Texas Christian University	Fort Worth	TX	Private	$74,554	D
The College of New Jersey	Ewing	NJ	Public	$44,472	D
The College of Wooster	Wooster	OH	Private	$73,950	D
The Evergreen State College	Olympia	WA	Public	$46,746	D
The University of Tennessee-Chattanooga	Chattanooga	TN	Public	$43,734	D
The University of Texas at Arlington	Arlington	TX	Public	$45,242	D
The University of Texas at Austin	Austin	TX	Public	$57,198	D
The University of Texas at El Paso	El Paso	TX	Public	$34,570	D
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	Edinburg	TX	Public	$36,849	D
Thomas Jefferson University	Philadelphia	PA	Private	$63,054	D
Touro College	New York	NY	Private	$40,830	D
Trinity College	Hartford	CT	Private	$83,190	D
Tulane University of Louisiana	New Orleans	LA	Private	$81,232	D
University of Arkansas	Fayetteville	AR	Public	$46,054	D
University of Baltimore	Baltimore	MD	Public	$45,856	D
University of Bridgeport	Bridgeport	CT	Private	$36,690	D
University of California-Berkeley	Berkeley	CA	Public	$70,826	D
University of California-Davis	Davis	CA	Public	$70,826	D
University of California-Los Angeles	Los Angeles	CA	Public	$70,826	D
University of California-Merced	Merced	CA	Public	$70,826	D
University of California-Riverside	Riverside	CA	Public	$70,991	D
University of California-San Diego	La Jolla	CA	Public	$70,991	D

University of California-Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara	CA	Public	$70,826	D
University of California-Santa Cruz	Santa Cruz	CA	Public	$70,826	D
University of Chicago	Chicago	IL	Private	$86,536	D
University of Colorado Boulder	Boulder	CO	Public	$61,979	D
University of Colorado Denver/Anschutz Medical	Denver	CO	Public	$46,098	D
University of Georgia	Athens	GA	Public	$45,784	D
University of Hawaii at Manoa	Honolulu	HI	Public	$50,545	D
University of Illinois at Chicago	Chicago	IL	Public	$44,949	D
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Champaign	IL	Public	$52,030	D
University of Maryland, Baltimore County	Baltimore	MD	Public	$48,055	D
University of Maryland-College Park	College Park	MD	Public	$58,985	D
University of Minnesota-Duluth	Duluth	MN	Public	$33,198	D
University of Missouri-St Louis	St. Louis	MO	Public	$46,474	D
University of North Carolina at Charlotte	Charlotte	NC	Public	$37,176	D
University of North Florida	Jacksonville	FL	Public	$38,772	D
University of North Georgia	Dahlonega	GA	Public	$38,660	D
University of North Texas	Denton	TX	Public	$44,862	D
University of Notre Dame	Notre Dame	IN	Private	$80,461	D
University of Pittsburgh-Pittsburgh Campus	Pittsburgh	PA	Public	$53,268	D
University of Portland	Portland	OR	Private	$71,196	D
University of Rhode Island	Kingston	RI	Public	$53,386	D
University of Rochester	Rochester	NY	Private	$82,468	D
University of San Francisco	San Francisco	CA	Private	$77,854	D
University of Southern California	Los Angeles	CA	Private	$85,524	D
University of Utah	Salt Lake City	UT	Public	$49,037	D
University of Wisconsin-Madison	Madison	WI	Public	$56,838	D
Vanderbilt University	Nashville	TN	Private	$85,412	D
Villanova University	Villanova	PA	Private	$81,105	D
Virginia Military Institute	Lexington	VA	Public	$54,564	D
Wagner College	Staten Island	NY	Private	$70,018	D
Wake Forest University	Winston-Salem	NC	Private	$84,104	D
Washington and Lee University	Lexington	VA	Private	$84,320	D
Washington College	Chestertown	MD	Private	$70,727	D
Washington University in St Louis	St. Louis	MO	Private	$83,476	D
Wayne State University	Detroit	MI	Public	$47,662	D
Wheaton College	Wheaton	IL	Private	$57,040	D

The Fs

Bringing up the rear, the 83 F schools (13%) listed below provide minimal guidance on the types of merit aid available and the criteria in which they provide it. Some of these schools may be very generous with merit aid, but applicants will not find this information readily available. Other F-graded schools deliberately withhold their evaluation processes from the public and instead choose to leverage merit in a much more subjective fashion, often as a recruitment tool.

Regardless of reason, the F schools leave much to be desired on merit transparency and put their applicants in an unnecessarily opaque position on the potential cost of attending their college.

School	City	State	Type	CoA	Grade
Appalachian State University	Boone	NC	Public	$39,305	F
Berklee College of Music	Boston	MA	Private	$70,620	F
Bowie State University	Bowie	MD	Public	$36,841	F
Brigham Young University-Idaho	Rexburg	ID	Private	$17,954	F
California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo	San Luis Obispo	CA	Public	$42,501	F
California State University-Bakersfield	Bakersfield	CA	Public	$38,210	F
California State University-East Bay	Hayward	CA	Public	$39,839	F
California State University-Fresno	Fresno	CA	Public	$35,233	F
California State University-Monterey Bay	Seaside	CA	Public	$39,638	F
California State University-Sacramento	Sacramento	CA	Public	$40,606	F
California State University-San Bernardino	San Bernardino	CA	Public	$37,520	F
Carnegie Mellon University	Pittsburgh	PA	Private	$80,300	F
Case Western Reserve University	Cleveland	OH	Private	$81,474	F
College of Charleston	Charleston	SC	Public	$54,225	F
College of the Atlantic	Bar Harbor	ME	Private	$56,669	F
College of the Holy Cross	Worcester	MA	Private	$76,980	F
CUNY Bernard M Baruch College	New York	NY	Public	$42,053	F
CUNY Brooklyn College	Brooklyn	NY	Public	$21,610	F
CUNY City College	New York	NY	Public	$44,400	F
CUNY Hunter College	New York	NY	Public	$40,317	F
CUNY Lehman College	Bronx	NY	Public	$21,532	F
Endicott College	Beverly	MA	Private	$58,028	F
George Washington University	Washington	DC	Private	$82,220	F
Gonzaga University	Spokane	WA	Private	$69,707	F
Grinnell College	Grinnell	IA	Private	$79,228	F
Hawaii Pacific University	Honolulu	HI	Private	$52,818	F
Howard University	Washington	DC	Private	$51,150	F
Indiana University-Bloomington	Bloomington	IN	Public	$56,619	F
Johns Hopkins University	Baltimore	MD	Private	$81,705	F
Le Moyne College	Syracuse	NY	Private	$55,190	F
Mount Holyoke College	South Hadley	MA	Private	$78,678	F
New York University	New York	NY	Private	$83,193	F
North Carolina A & T State University	Greensboro	NC	Public	$31,241	F
Purdue University-Main Campus	West Lafayette	IN	Public	$41,080	F
Radford University	Radford	VA	Public	$40,364	F
Rice University	Houston	TX	Private	$75,110	F
Rochester Institute of Technology	Rochester	NY	Private	$71,850	F
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology	Terre Haute	IN	Private	$75,133	F
School of the Art Institute of Chicago	Chicago	IL	Private	$74,660	F
Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania	Slippery Rock	PA	Public	$28,939	F
Smith College	Northampton	MA	Private	$82,083	F
St. John's College	Annapolis	MD	Private	$52,750	F
State University of New York at New Paltz	New Paltz	NY	Public	$37,508	F
Stetson University	DeLand	FL	Private	$71,810	F
Stockton University	Galloway	NJ	Public	$42,700	F
Stonehill College	Easton	MA	Private	$68,568	F
SUNY at Binghamton	Binghamton	NY	Public	$47,624	F
SUNY Maritime College	The Bronx	NY	Public	$38,949	F
SUNY Polytechnic Institute	Utica	NY	Public	$37,798	F
Syracuse University	Syracuse	NY	Private	$80,872	F
Texas A & M International University	Laredo	TX	Public	$43,750	F
Texas A & M University-College Station	College Station	TX	Public	$60,016	F
Texas Woman's University	Denton	TX	Public	$37,123	F
The New School	New York	NY	Private	$55,014	F
The University of Texas at Dallas	Richardson	TX	Public	$61,944	F

Towson University	Towson	MD	Public	$44,672	F
University at Buffalo	Buffalo	NY	Public	$48,162	F
University of California-Irvine	Irvine	CA	Public	$70,826	F
University of Central Florida	Orlando	FL	Public	$40,134	F
University of Cincinnati-Main Campus	Cincinnati	OH	Public	$47,230	F
University of Connecticut	Storrs	CT	Public	$59,696	F
University of Florida	Gainesville	FL	Public	$44,088	F
University of Houston	Houston	TX	Public	$42,488	F
University of Maine	Orono	ME	Public	$49,552	F
University of Massachusetts-Amherst	Amherst	MA	Public	$55,922	F
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	Ann Arbor	MI	Public	$73,481	F
University of Michigan-Dearborn	Dearborn	MI	Public	$32,559	F
University of Nevada-Las Vegas	Las Vegas	NV	Public	$43,998	F
University of Nevada-Reno	Reno	NV	Public	$44,278	F
University of North Carolina at Asheville	Asheville	NC	Public	$39,034	F
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Chapel Hill	NC	Public	$53,762	F
University of North Carolina at Greensboro	Greensboro	NC	Public	$35,514	F
University of North Carolina Wilmington	Wilmington	NC	Public	$41,249	F
University of Richmond	Richmond	VA	Private	$78,330	F
University of Virginia-Main Campus	Charlottesville	VA	Public	$71,518	F
University of Washington-Seattle Campus	Seattle	WA	Public	$58,824	F
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse	La Crosse	WI	Public	$27,944	F
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater	Whitewater	WI	Public	$28,468	F
Virginia Tech	Blacksburg	VA	Public	$47,479	F
West Chester University of Pennsylvania	West Chester	PA	Public	$35,259	F
Worcester Polytechnic Institute	Worcester	MA	Private	$78,854	F
Worcester State University	Worcester	MA	Public	$32,502	F
Yeshiva University	New York	NY	Private	$67,513	F

The N/As

Some schools simply do not provide merit-based aid, or the instances of merit aid are extremely rare. This group includes some of the most popular and sought-after colleges and universities in the country, so we would be remiss if we excluded them.

One could argue that they deserve an A in this report card, since they are typically forthcoming that they do NOT provide merit aid. As we felt that would be potentially misleading for our readers, we have opted instead to list them as "N/A."

The simple takeaway for applicants to these schools is they should not expect merit aid from them.

School	City	State	Type	CoA	Grade
Amherst College	Amherst	MA	Private	$84,650	N/A
Art Center College of Design	Pasadena	CA	Private	$50,544	N/A
Bard College	Annandale-on-Hudson	NY	Private	$80,650	N/A
Barnard College	New York	NY	Private	$85,412	N/A
Bates College	Lewiston	ME	Private	$80,440	N/A
Berea College	Berea	KY	Private	$56,068	N/A
Boston College	Chestnut Hill	MA	Private	$84,388	N/A
Bowdoin College	Brunswick	ME	Private	$81,390	N/A
Brown University	Providence	RI	Private	$85,986	N/A
California Institute of Technology	Pasadena	CA	Private	$84,598	N/A
Colby College	Waterville	ME	Private	$82,550	N/A
Colgate University	Hamilton	NY	Private	$83,650	N/A
Columbia University	New York	NY	Private	$84,174	N/A
Cornell University	Ithaca	NY	Private	$84,296	N/A
Dartmouth College	Hanover	NH	Private	$84,410	N/A
Franklin and Marshall College	Lancaster	PA	Private	$83,584	N/A
Georgetown University	Washington	DC	Private	$87,723	N/A
Hamilton College	Clinton	NY	Private	$80,380	N/A
Harvard University	Cambridge	MA	Private	$83,372	N/A
Haverford College	Haverford	PA	Private	$83,830	N/A
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Cambridge	MA	Private	$79,276	N/A
Middlebury College	Middlebury	VT	Private	$82,760	N/A
Pomona College	Claremont	CA	Private	$81,996	N/A
Princeton University	Princeton	NJ	Private	$80,240	N/A
Reed College	Portland	OR	Private	$83,760	N/A
Rhode Island School of Design	Providence	RI	Private	$78,941	N/A
Stanford University	Stanford	CA	Private	$81,740	N/A
The Julliard School	New York	NY	Private	$81,236	N/A
Tufts University	Medford	MA	Private	$86,100	N/A
United States Air Force Academy	Colorado Springs	CO	Public	$0	N/A
United States Coast Guard Academy	New London	CT	Public	$0	N/A
United States Merchant Marine Academy	Kings Point	NY	Public	$0	N/A
United States Military Academy	West Point	NY	Public	$0	N/A
United States Naval Academy	Annapolis	MD	Public	$0	N/A
University of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	PA	Private	$85,738	N/A
Vassar College	Poughkeepsie	NY	Private	$83,860	N/A
Wellesley College	Wellesley	MA	Private	$84,050	N/A
Wesleyan University	Middletown	CT	Private	$85,867	N/A
Williams College	Williamstown	MA	Private	$81,000	N/A
Yale University	New Haven	CT	Private	$84,400	N/A

So What, Now What?

For college applicants combing through this report card evaluating schools, remember this: if you are counting on merit scholarships for college funding, the schools that earned As and Bs give a clear picture of what you can expect to receive. When you add these schools to your college list, do so with confidence that the price you see is the price you are likely to pay.

You may also see many "name brand" or "top ranked" schools earning lower grades. Some of these schools know they are not transparent and are not worried about it. These schools are so sought after that offering merit as an incentive is not necessary. They can use merit aid as an admissions tool and differentiator to recruit specific groups of students, and this is their prerogative. If you apply to these schools, however, understand that you cannot count on merit aid and it should not be factored into your college planning analysis.

We strongly recommend creating a balanced college list that gives you more options from a financial-fit perspective.

For the colleges and universities themselves, we know some of you may disagree with our current analysis and your school's grade. Please reach out so we can start a conversation around how transparency helps consumers determine financial fit and improves their chances of success. This issue is more important than ever and working together to eliminate student loan debt is something we should all get behind.

In the meantime, here are some simple steps to receive a top grade:

- ✓ Clearly identify **specific award amounts** on your website
- ✓ Consistently apply a **well-defined criterion**, noting GPAs and/or test scores required to qualify for your merit-based awards
- ✓ Include **merit awards in your Net Price Calculator** results

College financial aid should not be a zero-sum game. While hiding the ball on projections may help schools hit short-term margin goals, it leads to long-term societal pain that higher education is supposed to relieve.

Getting basic information about scholarship aid from schools should not be difficult; it should be the standard. Clarity and consistency around the cost of college will allow families to make better, informed decisions, create a reliable college budget, and feel confident about their choices.

This is the future we are working towards, and we know it is possible.

Thank you.

The College Aid Pro Team

Additional Resources

If your family has an aspiring college-bound student, go to College Aid Pro, create your free account, and get your own customized college planning outputs and guidance.

If you think your family would benefit from any of the paid services, use the discount coupon TRANSPARENT to receive 20% off (note: limit to 100 redemptions).

Check out our library of college planning blogs and educational resources: here

For other of free college planning resources, visit our Free Resources page here

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By Empowering Families to Shop Smarter for College

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