

wallyball, and the eating clubs and residential colleges offer recreational athletic programs too. Every fall the freshman and sophomore classes square off in Cane Spree, an intramural Olympics that has been a tradition since 1869.

Princeton's unofficial motto is "Princeton in the nation's service and the service of all nations," and the oft-repeated notion that with privilege comes responsibility lives on as part of its culture. It's easy to be humbled at Princeton. Even the most jaded students must be awed and inspired when they think of those who've traversed the campus paths before them, including former U.S. presidents James Madison and Woodrow Wilson. While some may find the ambiance too insular, not many turn down membership in this very rewarding club.

## Overlaps

Harvard, Yale,  
Stanford, MIT

## If You Apply To

**Princeton:** Single choice early action: Nov. 1. Regular decision: Jan. 1. Financial aid: Feb. 1. Application fee: \$65. No campus interviews. Alumni interviews: optional, evaluative. SATs (with essay) or ACTs (with writing): required. Subject Tests: recommended (any two; engineering applicants required to take either physics or chemistry and math I or II). Letters of recommendation: required. Essay: required. Accepts the Common Application with supplement. Applicants with a special talent may submit an optional arts form.

# Principia College

Elsah, IL 62028

**BEST  
BUY**

**Prin is a tiny college in a tiny town about an hour from St. Louis. All students have ties to Christian Science. Prin is mainly liberal arts, though its most popular program is business administration. Nearly two-thirds of the students study abroad. Campus tenor is similar to places like Pepperdine and Wheaton (IL).**

Students come to Principia College with a common bond—ties to Christian Science. They shun smoking, drinking, drugs, and sex in favor of God and learning. Prin graduates are culturally, spiritually, and intellectually well rounded, the product of a liberal arts education that promotes critical thinking and a broad worldview. As the only college anywhere for Christian Scientists, Prin attracts a lot of international students. The historic campus is reminiscent of Harry Potter's Hogwarts. But the fictional school of wizardry never had a woolly mammoth to unearth between the dormitories as Prin did. Says one senior, Prin "has a warm, calm, and cozy atmosphere that reminds me of a second home."

Principia's 2,600-acre campus, on limestone bluffs above the mighty Mississippi River, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1993. The dominant architectural influences are colonial American, Tudor, and medieval, and many buildings—including most dormitories—were designed by California architect Bernard Maybeck. A contemporary of Frank Lloyd Wright, Maybeck urged Principia trustees to bring the college to its current spot when they relocated from St. Louis in 1935. The College Chapel, whose bells ring out hymns every Sunday evening, is the symbolic center of campus.

In addition to 10 to 12 courses in their major, students must complete a broad range of distribution requirements in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, as well as two physical education courses. All freshmen participate in a first-year experience program their first semester, and all seniors must complete a capstone course or project. Of the 25 majors offered, the most popular are business administration, educational studies, mass communication, and biology. Students

**Website:** www.principiacollege.edu

**Location:** Rural

**Private**

**Total Enrollment:** 450

**Undergraduates:** 450

**Male/Female:** 49/51

**SAT Ranges:** CR 460–590,  
M 470–608

**ACT Ranges:** 21–27

**Financial Aid:** 96%

**Pell Grant:** N/A

**Expense:** Pr \$

**Student Loans:** 81%

**Average Debt:** \$

**Phi Beta Kappa:** No

**Applicants:** 159

**Accepted:** 75%

**Enrolled:** 66%

**Grad in 6 Years:** 80%

**Returning Freshmen:** 88%

**Academics:**   

**Social:**   

**Q of L:** ★ ★ ★ ★

**“[Prin] has a warm, calm, and cozy atmosphere that reminds me of a second home.”**

architectural influences are colonial American, Tudor, and medieval, and many buildings—including most dormitories—were designed by California architect Bernard Maybeck. A

say that the music, political science, and religion programs are also strong. The sociology and anthropology major was recently dropped, but a new dual-degree program was added in engineering science, in conjunction with the University of North Dakota.

Academics are challenging, but students can count on each other and their professors for help. “The atmosphere in the classroom is very friendly,” says a senior. “Most classes take advantage of group work in small teams, and this helps you develop teamwork, leadership, and collaborative skills.” Most of the faculty members receive high marks. “Professors at Principia take a personal interest in your learning and challenge you to not only be better students, but better people as well,” says an educational studies major. Fifty-nine percent of Principia students participate in the five or six study abroad programs the school organizes each year. Each program enrolls 18 to 22 students and sites are determined by academic subject and focus. Recent locations have included Greece, Turkey, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Ireland. Others participate in a prairie restoration program, gather data for the study of the Mississippi River’s aquatic life, or build solar cars to be entered in races around the world.

“We are all Christian Scientists who strive to be the most moral people we can be,” says one junior. The minority population is minuscule—2 percent are African American, 4 percent are Hispanic, and 1 percent are Asian American. Still, 16 percent of students arrive from abroad, one of the largest percentages of international students on a college campus in the country, and only 4 percent of students are from Illinois. One international student says of the student population, “I’ve found that diversity positively impacts me. I’ve learned that there are more good things that bind us than negative things that divide us as human beings.” Principia does not accept any governmental financial aid, so Pell Grants and the typical federal loans are not available to students, but the school does offer merit scholarships averaging \$21,792, grants, and private, institutionally funded loans. No athletic scholarships are available.

All students live in Prin’s dorms, except for the few who are married or live locally with their parents. “The housing at Principia is superb, in the form of large, historical houses rather than the typical dormitory,” says a senior. The rooms are large and comfortable, and those that aren’t air-conditioned have ceiling fans. Students are expected not to be in the wings of dorms where the opposite sex lives during “house hours” every night. Freshmen live in two modernized dorms with upper-class resident advisors trained to help new students adjust to college life. “Each house has its own sense of house culture and traditions, and houses have brother-sister relationships as well as rivalries,” explains a business administration and mass communication major. A sit-down pub and restaurant on campus provides a nice alternative to traditional dining-hall fare. “Dining facilities are improving, but vegetarians and vegans are still struggling,” says a junior. Students agree that they feel safe on campus, citing the rural location and a strong security presence.

In addition to eschewing alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, students are also asked to sign a pledge of abstention from premarital and extramarital sexual relationships. “Those who sign the contract are committed to those morals for religious reasons,” a political science major says. “It’s a wonderful thing not to have to deal with alcohol on campus,” says a senior. It goes without saying that Greek organizations are nonexistent; instead of partying, students keep busy at school-sponsored concerts, movies, dances, or intramural sporting events that pit one dorm against another. “Prin is remote enough where people stay on campus during the weekends to attend

*(continued)*

**Admissions:** (618) 374-5181

**Email Address:** college  
admissions@principia.edu

**Strong Programs:**

Business Administration  
Educational Studies  
Mass Communication  
Biology  
Music  
Political Science  
Religion

***A new dual-degree program was added in engineering science, in conjunction with the University of North Dakota.***

***The Public Affairs Conference is the oldest student-run event of its type, bringing in big-name speakers.***

**“We are all Christian Scientists who strive to be the most moral people we can be.”**

our awesome social events,” says one student. Each dorm organizes its own annual celebration, and international students show off their native cuisines at the Whole World Festival. The Public Affairs Conference is the oldest student-run event of its type, bringing in big-name speakers to give talks, lead workshops, and provide networking opportunities to students; recent themes have included innovation, sustainability, and youth empowerment. “Elsah is not a college town. I think it was established in the 1800s and not much has changed,” a junior says. Stores, restaurants, and movie theaters are about 30 minutes away, and St. Louis is about an hour’s drive.

Principia’s Panthers compete in Division III, and rugby, women’s soccer, and men’s and women’s tennis and cross-country are especially competitive. Intramural sports including lacrosse, soccer, basketball, and softball are popular. On sunny afternoons, students can be found playing ultimate Frisbee. Campus athletic facilities include a four-court indoor tennis center, a field house with gym and pool, and outdoor courts and running trails.

Prin students embrace the conservative environment at their Christian Scientist school. Gone are the pressures that take hold of most college students. Prin graduates leave their collegiate bubble ready to take on the world. “The school promotes character development and personal growth,” says a political science major, “[it] doesn’t just crank out diplomas.”

**“Houses have brother-sister relationships as well as rivalries.”**

**Overlaps**

**Northwestern, Pepperdine, Purdue, University of Southern California, Stanford, College of William and Mary**

**If You Apply To** ➤

**Principia:** Rolling admissions. Priority financial aid: Mar. 1. No application fee. Campus interviews: recommended, evaluative. No alumni interviews. SATs (with essay) or ACTs (with writing): required. No Subject Tests. Letters of recommendation: required. Essay: required. Only college in the world that admits only Christian Scientists. Accepts the Common Application with supplement.

**Providence College**

Providence, RI 02918

**Strong Roman Catholic atmosphere makes Providence more comparable to Notre Dame than to Boston College or Holy Cross. Liberal arts emphasis rooted in required two-year interdisciplinary Western Civilization sequence, though 35 percent of students opt for business disciplines. Friars athletic teams do well in small but high-profile Big East Conference. No fraternities or sororities, but Providence is a vibrant college town.**

As the nation’s only college or university operated by the Dominican Friars, Providence College wears its Roman Catholic and Dominican identities on its sleeve. Three-quarters of students are Catholic, friars in habits walk the campus grounds, crucifixes adorn the walls of classrooms and offices, and St. Dominic’s Chapel stands tall in the heart of the campus. The school’s mission is grounded in these identities too, as it aims to “provide an education for the whole person—body, mind, and soul—that bridges the common divides between matter and spirit, God and creation, faith and reason.” Students here enjoy solid offerings in the sciences and liberal arts—including a unique and rigorous two-year Western Civ course—and a tight-knit community of like-minded men and women.

Located only an hour’s drive from Boston and just a few hours’ drive from New York City, Providence College’s 105-acre campus is situated in Rhode Island’s capital

**Website:** www.providence.edu  
**Location:** Small City  
**Private**  
**Total Enrollment:** 4,123  
**Undergraduates:** 3,906  
**Male/Female:** 43/57  
**SAT Ranges:** CR 520–620, M 530–630  
**ACT Ranges:** 23–28  
**Financial Aid:** 77%  
**Pell Grant:** 15%