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College Advisor

By Elizabeth LaScala



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD, brings decades of admissions expertise to personally guide each student through applying to well-matched colleges, making each step more manageable and less stressful. She has placed hundreds of students in the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. Reach her at (925) 385-0562 (office) or (925) 330-8801 (mobile), or online at www.doingcollege.com or Elizabeth@doingcollege.com.

98 percent of freshmen return for their sophomore year, a retention rate also comparable to other extremely selective colleges. Students typically graduate within four years, although the 72 percent four-year graduation rate receives a boost from California's community college transfer students who enter as juniors.

All of Cal's academic departments are world class; the most popular majors include social sciences, biological and biomedical sciences, engineering and language studies. Students who declare one of the less popular majors may receive a more personal experience than those who declare one of the most popular ones - a fact of life in most public and even some private colleges nationwide. All students must choose an undergraduate division when they apply. But unlike most other large public universities, Cal does not allow freshmen to enroll directly into their first-rate, Haas School of Business. Those interested in business are advised to check undeclared-pre-business administration as their major. The undergraduate program is a general business degree with concentrations (accounting, business communication, finance, marketing and organizational behavior) instead of majors.

UC Berkeley's career center is excellent with more resources than most diligent students would ever have time to use. There are more than 15 internship and career fairs on campus and over 900 employers participated in the job and internship fairs last year. This is one of the few universities that hosts internship fairs during the fall and the spring. That said, a student must be proactive and use the plentiful resources available, as there is little hand holding at Cal. For this reason, scholarly minded students with well-honed study and time management skills as well as those adept at self-directed study are the ones most likely to find academic success at Cal.

The University of California at Berkeley, fondly known as, "Cal" is the first institution of the University of California system; founded in 1868, its nickname is clearly tied to this education milestone in California's history.

Hustle and bustle characterizes the UC Berkeley campus community and adds to its unique culture. Students encourage campus engagement, community action and political activism. There are over 1,200 clubs and organizations built around the diverse cultural, political and social viewpoints represented in the student body. Shops and restaurants lean toward the entrepreneurial and student-oriented, and mass transit into San Francisco is plentiful and inexpensive.

Since its founding, Cal has nurtured its faculty, students and alumni to scholarly achievements comparable to Ivy League and other highly selective universities. A short list of laudatory successes includes 29 Nobel Laureates, and 1,300 of its graduates have received National Science Foundation fellowships, more than any other college in the U.S. Cal is second only to MIT in its production of Sloan Research Fellows. If you are a chemistry enthusiast, you may know that eight elements of the periodic table, including berkelium, were discovered at Cal. And if you are a physics enthusiast, you might know that Cal is the home of the world's first cyclotron.

Given the 17 percent admit rate in 2017, it is not surprising that those who get into Cal usually stay. About

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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