



***presents***

# Looking for a University in the United States: A myUface Guide

***REMEMBER:  
It's Not Only About Rankings!***

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Alexandria, VA, USA



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## INTRODUCTION

So, you want to study at a university in the United States. The only question is, Which one?

Because there are over **4,000 of them**.

Now, for some people, the answer to this question is easy: What university am I going to study at? Well, obviously one of the good ones. You know, Harvard, Yale, Stanford, those kinds of universities.

After all, you can go online to the U.S. News and World Report Rankings and get a tidy list of the best U.S. universities.

Easy, right?

Well, maybe. But you might not be pleased by the results of such an approach. For example, let's say you want to study engineering. Of the following universities, which one do you think has the highest rated undergraduate program in engineering?

- a) Harvard
- b) Yale
- c) Carnegie Mellon
- d) Georgia Institute of Technology

"Easy. It's gotta be Harvard. No? Well, then, Yale. NO? Well then, I think I've heard of Canregie Mellon?"

NO!?! You mean that the highest rank program is at the **Georgia Institute of Technology**? I've never even heard of it!"

We don't mean to suggest that universities like Harvard or Yale aren't great universities - they are. What we are suggesting is merely that different universities are going to have different strengths and weaknesses. Hard as it may be to believe, the "best" universities aren't the "best" at everything, and if you base your decision-making solely on the basis of a composite ranking, you may end up in a program that just simply **isn't right for you**.

So in this guide, we're going to be looking at other factors - besides rankings and test scores - that you should take into consideration when choosing a university. We're hardly going to talk about the traditional measures of what makes a university "good" at all. Our hope is to get you to start thinking about all the different qualities a university possesses, and then identify which ones matter to you.

*"Hard as it may be to believe, the "best" universities aren't the "best" at everything, and if you base your decision-making solely on the basis of a composite ranking, you may end up in a program that just simply isn't right for you."*

### Questions to Consider:

Quick, name all the U.S. universities you've heard of. Do you think those are the best universities? Are you willing to consider others? Why or why not?

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## Cost of Living

We'll start off by taking a peek at something that will have a huge impact on your years in the U.S.: cost of living. If you take the same amount of money to New York, NY, and Fargo, ND, you're going to have vastly different spending power. Why should this matter to you? Well, you'll probably want to do things besides studying while you're in the U.S.. You might want to, for example:

- \* go to an amusement park
- \* go out on the town
- \* take a date out to a restaurant
- \* see a movie
- \* hit the road and see some tourist attractions

All of these things will be more expensive in some cities than in others - meaning you'll get to do them less often. For that reason, when you're looking at a particular university, it's a good idea to research the cost of living in that university's home town.

There are nifty cost of living calculators online<sup>1</sup> that allow you to compare two different cities. For example, it turns out that, if you lived in Fargo, North Dakota and were contemplating a move to New York, you'd need to increase your salary by 136% in order to maintain your standard of living (i.e., if you make \$50,000 now, you'd need \$118,000 in Manhattan. Ouch).

Money magazine<sup>2</sup> compiles a lot of different data into a list of the best places to live. Although this is intended for families (or at least for people who have already graduated), it's still interesting to note that Fort Collins, CO (home of Colorado State University) is #2, where as Cambridge, MA (home of a few fairly well-known universities) doesn't crack the top 100.

There are many other indexes, lists, and calculators available. Whichever one you use, the bottom line is this: the cost of living of the town in which a university is located will have a big impact on the kind of life you'll live while studying there. For that reason, it's important to do research on cost of living as you look into different Universities in the U.S.

1-<http://www.bankrate.com/calculators/savings/moving-cost-of-living-calculator.aspx>

2-<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/bplive/2008/>

*"If you take the same amount of money to New York, NY, and Fargo, ND, you're going to have vastly different spending power. "*

### Questions to Consider:

You probably have a few universities you're already interested in. What towns are they located in? What data can you find on the cost of living in those towns?

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## The Weather

When people plan a week-long vacation, they spend hours and hours and hours worrying about the weather. What's the temperature going to be? Is it going to rain? Do I need to bring an umbrella? Sunscreen?

But for some reason, when people are going to go to study at a university, not just for a week, but for four entire years of their life, they often don't seem to care at all about the weather!

The weather is important. For one thing, there is evidence to suggest that the weather can affect your mood, especially specific aspects of the weather like humidity and sunshine. But at a more basic level, just ask yourself, what kind of weather do you like? Take a moment to think about that. Then ask yourself, wouldn't it be nice to study in a place that has that kind of weather?

The United States is such a big country, with so many different climates, that I can almost promise you there's a university situated in the kind of climate you like. Like tropical weather? Florida or Hawaii are good bets. Enjoy dry climates with lots of sun? The American Southwest would be a good destination. Enjoy winter sports? How about Colorado?

So, when you're researching a university, make sure you look into the climate. How to do that? It's remarkably easy. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (try saying that five times fast) has a great page called "United States Climate Page<sup>1</sup>." There you can click on a state, then on cities and towns in that state. It doesn't have every town, so you may need to choose a city that's close by to your university. The available data includes average temperature, yearly precipitation (that's rain and snow), the percentage of days that are sunny, and so on and so forth.

You can also go to any of the countless weather sites and get a good, detailed look at the weather on a particular day. Most of these sites will have some kind of historical data as well. For example, Accuweather.com allows you to look at the average temperature for a city on a month-by-month or day-by-day basis. Weather.com provides good summaries of temperature and precipitation (look for the button that says "Averages").

The bottom line is that you're not only going to study at a university, you're going to live there. And the weather is something that can drastically impact the quality of your life. So spend some time researching the weather at the universities you're interested in. That way, you won't forget to pack your sunblock. Or your umbrella.

1 - <http://www.cdc.noaa.gov/data/usclimate/states.fast.html>

*"The weather is important. For one thing, there is evidence to suggest that the weather can affect your mood, especially specific aspects of the weather like humidity and sunshine."*

### Questions to Consider:

What is your ideal temperature?  
What's your favorite season? Do you like a particular type of weather? How do you feel about humidity? What is the weather like in your home town?

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## The Surrounding Neighborhoods

The people that live in the neighborhoods around a university are going to have a huge influence on the lives of students at that university. Some universities are going to be situated in the hearts of bustling metropolises, full of business and activity. Others are going to be nestled in small, quiet towns. The type of neighborhood surrounding a university will impact what you, as a student, can do there. Do you dream of going out to clubs night after night after night? You need to go to a university in an urban area. Do you like the quiet life? Maybe a university in a neighborhood filled with older, married couples would suit you.

You ought to look at the demographic data for the neighborhoods surrounding your university. This data will tell you a lot of interesting things: how many people live there? What is their average age? What is their ethnic background? What kind of lifestyle do they lead? These are important things to consider in choosing a town in which to spend four years of your life.

And once again, we've got some very good resources to allow you to check up on the demographics of your university's town. First, for the raw data, you can't get much better than Zipskinny<sup>1</sup>, which provides all the latest census data in an easily-understood format. For a little more fun, go to Claritas<sup>2</sup>, a target marketing firm. Claritas categorizes each and every American as one of sixty-six types, and will tell you which five types are most prevalent in any given location. For example, where I live, "American Dreams" are very common:

American Dreams is a living example of how ethnically diverse the nation has become: just under half the residents are Hispanic, Asian, or African-American. In these multilingual neighborhoods—one in ten speaks a language other than English—middle-aged immigrants and their children live in upper-middle-class comfort.

At either site you'll need the zip code of your university. You may want to check surrounding zip codes as well.

The bottom line is that, as you research universities, it's a good idea to do some basic research into the surrounding community.

1 - <http://zipskinny.com/>

1 - <http://www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/Default.jsp>

*"The type of neighborhood surrounding a university will impact what you, as a student, can do there."*

### Questions to Consider:

What kind of town or city would you like to live in while studying at university? What kind of people would you like to live in that town?

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## Using Facebook to Research Universities

Facebook can be a great resource to research U.S. universities. Let us show you how to use Facebook in your research. It's very easy.

First, sign into Facebook. If you don't have an account you can easily start one, even if you're only going to use it to do this research. (QUICK NOTE: If you have a Facebook page already, be careful about what you put there. A lot of U.S. universities are using Facebook to do research on students who apply<sup>1</sup>)

Second, go to the "Search" box and type in the name of the university you're researching. A few different resources should appear:

**1. The university's official facebook page.** Most universities have an official facebook page at this point. Generally, this is going to be the least useful thing you can find on facebook, since most of the information will come from the university website, which you've probably already been to.

**2. Student groups and networks.** There will probably be many different groups and networks for a particular university. Looking at these groups - reading the message boards, for example - will give you a very interesting look into the kind of students that go to a particular university. You will also see the different kinds of groups associated with a particular university. For example, there might be a group for athletes, or a group for students of foreign languages. Now, do NOT jump to conclusions about a university based only on these student groups. Facebook will provide you an interesting pictures of student life at a university, but remember, it's just a picture - it isn't the entire reality.

**3. Alumni groups and networks.** Perhaps the most useful resource will be alumni groups for the particular university. Looking at the alumni groups will give you a sense of how students who graduated from the university view their overall experience. It will also give you some hints as to how graduates of the university are doing professionally. Alumni groups are more useful than student groups, in my opinion, because they are generally a little more serious. Also, a large and active alumni community is a sign in itself of a quality university experience.

But by **FAR** the most useful aspect of facebook in terms of university research is the connection it gives you to students and alumni. If you politely befriend them, chances are they'll be more than happy to answer your questions about the university. And information from students and alumni is just about the best kind of information you can get.

The bottom line is, don't underestimate the value of Facebook when doing your research on U.S. universities. It is a very powerful and useful tool.

1 - <http://www.themanitoban.com/news/1-10-us-universities-check-applicants%E2%80%99-facebook-profiles-kaplan>

*"[B]y FAR the most useful aspect of facebook in terms of university research is the connection it gives you to students and alumni. If you politely befriend them, chances are they'll be more than happy to answer your questions about the university."*

### Questions to Consider:

Have you checked up on universities on facebook? What kind of pages or groups did you find? What, if anything, did it tell you about the university?

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## The Problem With Rankings

In researching universities in the United States, you're likely to look at some lists or information about how the university is "ranked" in comparison with other universities. Everyone naturally wants to go to the best university, and so when we read that University X is ranked #1, and University Y is ranked #100, we quite understandably would prefer to attend university X. But is the ranking system accurate?

The most famous and influential ranking is U.S. News and World Report's annual ranking of U.S. institutions of higher education. It ranks colleges and universities according to several different criteria, and it provides a simple list as a summary. Here, for example, are the top-five ranked universities according to U.S. News and World Report: 1. Harvard, 2. Princeton, 3. Yale, 4. MIT, and 5. Stanford.

Not everyone believes that these rankings accurately reflect educational quality, however. Amy Graham and Nicholas Thompson lay out what they view as problems with U.S. News and World Report's methodology<sup>1</sup>:

U.S. News' rankings primarily register a school's wealth, reputation, and the achievement of the high-school students it admits. At one time, most academics believed in one simple equation: Good students plus good faculty equals good school. The rankings reflect this outlook, tabulating things such as percent of faculty with a doctorate (to measure the quality of the professors) and SAT scores of the freshman class (to get at quality of the students). That's like measuring the quality of a restaurant by calculating how much it paid for silverware and food: not completely useless, but pretty far from ideal.

Alex Usher<sup>2</sup> also has an objection:

[E]ach institution is nothing more than a collection of local chapters of international intellectual fraternities. The quality of each chapter at each institution is more or less independent of the quality of any other chapter at the same institution, except to the extent that financial muscle can attract better quality across the board.

In other words, the quality of education is mostly dependent on individual professors and departments, which are not necessarily reflected in the rankings for their host institutions.

The bottom line is, remember that each ranking system has its own set of criteria, which may or may not apply to your own personal or professional goals. So when you see that University X is #1, that does not necessarily mean that University X is #1 for you. The rankings that are most useful for you are going to be the ones you make yourself.

1 - <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2001/0109.graham.thompson.html>

2 - <http://www.educationalpolicy.org/pub/commentary/080718.html>

*"[R]emember that each ranking system has its own set of criteria, which may or may not apply to your own personal or professional goals. So when you see that University X is #1, that does not necessarily mean that University X is #1 for you."*

### Questions to Consider:

Have you looked at any set of university rankings? What did you think? Did they give you an idea of where you want to study?

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## International Student Population

One thing you may want to consider when researching potential U.S. universities is how many international students study there. A university that has a high percentage of international students is going to provide a different experience than a university that has almost no international students.

U.S. News and World Report has a list of the universities with the highest percentage of international students<sup>1</sup>, just to give you an idea of what a “large international student population” means. Note that the university with the highest percentage of international students still has 78% American students.

Many universities you’re researching won’t be on this list. Finding out the percentage of international students that study there should nonetheless be easy. Many university websites will have that information, or you can write to the admissions office.

Now, the important question is, do you want to go to a university with a high or low percentage of international students? There are benefits to both approaches.

Typical benefits of going to a university with a high percentage of international students:

- \* students, professors and administrators will be familiar with international students and more sympathetic to problems you might have
- \* there will typically be an international student office to help you with issues specific to international students
- \* there will usually be an international student community which can provide you with a good social network and support system

Typical benefits of going to a university with a low percentage of international students:

- \* because there won’t be a large group of international students to spend time with, you’ll be “forced” to develop more friendships with American students
- \* you’ll be treated exactly like all the other students
- \* because you’ll be one of a few international students, American students may be more interested in your country and your story

1 - <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/college/national-most-international>

*“A university that has a high percentage of international students is going to provide a different experience than a university that has almost no international students.”*

### Questions to Consider:

Would you like to go to a university with a high or low percentage of international students? Why?

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## Tourist Sites

What do you want to see in the U.S.? What historic places do you want to visit? What national parks do you want to experience? What amusement parks do you want to enjoy?

Do these questions seem irrelevant to your search for a U.S. university? They're not. One of the greatest benefits of studying in the U.S. is the opportunity it will give you to see America's social, historical and natural places of wonder.

So as you're researching universities, be sure to ask yourself, "What do I really want to see while I'm in the States?" If you're interested in political science, it'd be a shame if you came to the U.S. for four years and never set foot in Washington, D.C. If you're interested in film, how could you not visit Hollywood? All of this is to say nothing of your non-academic interests. If you ski, visit Colorado, Wyoming or Utah. Are you a surfer? California or Hawaii seem appropriate.

You get the idea.

Check out Forbes' list of the top 25 tourist destinations in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> for a good idea of the most "famous" places. But don't stop there. Visit the state tourist agencies for those states that have universities you're interested in. See what you can visit in that state. For example, if you are looking at a university in Utah, check out the Utah travel site at Utah.com.

Of course, the tourist sites that surround a university shouldn't be the sole basis of your decision to apply to, or attend, a particular institution. At the same time, don't underestimate the extent to which your tourist experiences in the U.S. will impact your overall experience. Visiting tourist sites is not only a great way to see some beautiful and important places - visiting tourist sites gives you crucial insights into a culture and what it finds important.

1 - <http://www.thetravelerszone.com/travel-destinations/top-25-most-visited-tourist-destinations-in-america/>

*"One of the greatest benefits of studying in the U.S. is the opportunity it will give you to see America's social, historical and natural places of wonder."*

### Questions to Consider:

Visit the state tourist agencies for every state in which you are researching a university. What kind of tourist attractions are nearby? Do they interest you? Why or why not?

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## Your Social Life

Of course, the most important aspect of your U.S. university experience is the academic program . . . but, for many students, a close second is social life. U.S. universities have a well-deserved reputation for fostering a fun and active social life, both on campus and off. If having fun outside of class is as important to you as learning inside of it, then the quality of a university's social scene is definitely something you should consider when researching U.S. universities.

Here are some resources that might provide you with some good information:

\* Forbes magazine, which has a "Best of" series for pretty much everything, has a "Best Nightlife" feature<sup>1</sup>. 40 cities are ranked according to their suitability for singles, and "nightlife" is one of the criteria. This will give you a good idea of what cities are considered to have good nightlife, and why.

\* The Princeton Review has several rankings that relate to social life, the most notorious of which is their "Best Party School" ranking<sup>2</sup>. The link provided shows only the top 20 schools in this prestigious list. To get more than the top 20, in addition to other data, you'll need to visit The Princeton Review site, and sign up for a free profile. The rankings aren't only about the best party schools. You can see which universities have the happiest students, the best radio stations, the most beautiful campuses, and more. This is important because for many students a "good social life" is about a lot more than just parties.

\* The Students Review site has a "top social schools" ranking<sup>3</sup> that is a little broader than the rankings that focus only on the "best parties." What's more, you can click on individual universities and see actual quotations from students that study there.

Another great resource will be the admissions office of any university in which you're interested. Most university websites have resources explaining what social life is like on the campus and in the surrounding area. If you can't find this information on the web, feel free to write to someone from the admissions department and ask.

Now, one important warning: remember that in the United States it is illegal to purchase alcohol until you are 21 years of age. Most clubs and bars will check your identification before they let you in. Keep that in mind as well as you're imagining what your social life might be like at a U.S. university. The bottom line is that your social life will be a very important part of your university experience in the U.S., so don't forget to spend time researching the different resources universities have to offer.

1 - [http://www.forbes.com/2008/09/04/best-cities-singles-forbeslife-singles08-cx\\_ee\\_0904singles\\_land.html](http://www.forbes.com/2008/09/04/best-cities-singles-forbeslife-singles08-cx_ee_0904singles_land.html)

2 - [http://campuslife.suite101.com/article.cfm/top\\_party\\_schools\\_for\\_20082009](http://campuslife.suite101.com/article.cfm/top_party_schools_for_20082009)

3 - [http://www.studentsreview.com/top\\_social\\_schools.php3](http://www.studentsreview.com/top_social_schools.php3)

*"U.S. universities have a well-deserved reputation for fostering a fun and active social life, both on campus and off."*

### Questions to Consider:

How do you imagine you will spend your free time in the U.S.? Do all universities have the atmosphere and resources to support the kind of life you'd like to live?

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## Get To Know Potential Professors

The most important people in terms of your university education in the U.S. are going to be your professors - the men and women who will guide your academic program. Yet, when it comes time to research possible universities, most international students spend absolutely no time researching the professors at the departments in which they're interested.

Now, there are some good reasons for this. Researching individual faculty members is difficult, a lot harder than researching an institution as a whole. And of course there's no guarantee that you'll take classes from a particular professor. But if you're seriously considering a particular university - or, better yet, a department within that university - it's not a bad idea to look into their faculty, particularly if the department is fairly small. At the very least, doing so will give you an idea of the kind of topics you might learn at that university and in that department. So, here's how you can do some basic research about the faculty at a particular university:

1. Go the main web site.
2. Find the page that deals with individual departments, often called "majors." It will often be under the heading, "Academics."
3. Click on the major or department that you're interested in researching. Generally speaking, this will give you a link to more information about the major.
4. Look for a list of courses in order to see the subjects taught at the department. Also look for a list of faculty to see the names of the professors. Often the faculty list will include information about each professor's interests.
5. At this point, you'll already have access to a lot of information about the department in which you're interested. You'll know what courses are offered and a little about the professors in the department. If you want more, though, try Googling the name of a faculty member. For really advanced research, you might even go to Google Scholar and type in a professor's name. This will show you publications a particular professor has written, and sometimes provide free links to those resources.
6. Finally, you can find out what students think of a professor at [www.ratemyprofessor.com](http://www.ratemyprofessor.com).

The bottom line is that, in this day and age, you don't have to settle for only the most basic information about a university. You can use the internet to do very detailed research about individual departments and even professors. Doing so will give you a wonderful insight into the academic life at a U.S. university.

*" [I]n this day and age, you don't have to settle for only the most basic information about a university. You can use the internet to do very detailed research about individual departments and even professors. "*

### Questions to Consider:

Do you know what subjects you are interested in studying in the U.S.? Have you looked at the faculty and courses of that department at any individual U.S. universities?

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## Extracurricular Activities

Students at U.S. universities usually involve themselves in the extracurricular activities offered at those particular universities. Extracurricular activities are clubs, sports, and other student groups organized outside of (extra) the normal academic program (curricula).

The main kinds of extracurricular activities available at universities in the United States are: athletics (i.e. the basketball team), academic and social organizations (i.e. the philosophy club), volunteer activities (i.e. cleaning up local parks once a month, or tutoring local schoolchildren), multicultural activities (i.e. French club), The Arts (i.e. the student orchestra, choir, ballet, theatre group, etc.), and student government. There are also many other extracurricular activities available at U.S. universities that don't fit cleanly into any of these categories (for example, Debate Club - is it a sport? A professional organization?).

The point is, no matter what sport you play or hobby you enjoy, there's going to be a club or group in which you can participate. You'd be surprised by the diversity of these organizations. For example, if you like unicycling, you might consider going to Harvey Mudd, where they have a very-well organized unicycling club. Seriously, if you look hard enough, you can find a club for anything.

Most activities offer different levels of involvement. For example, if you're really serious about basketball, you can consider playing on the official university team . . . or you could play in a basketball club for students who like basketball, but don't want to devote all their time to it.

So, why is this important to think about when looking for a university? Well, extracurricular activities are a big part of college life in the U.S., so you want to make sure that you choose a university that has some activities you'd enjoy. Most big universities will have every kind of club, but some of the smaller universities may not offer every kind of activity. For example, although most U.S. universities will have a basketball team, many will not have fencing teams (although many will). If you're passionate about a particular activity, make sure your university offers that activity. You can do this by either:

\* looking on the university's web page, usually under a link called "Student Life" or "Campus Life."

\* asking someone in the admissions department

The bottom line is, don't ignore your non-academic hobbies and interests. Research what universities have to offer, and make sure you make extracurricular activities part of your decision-making process in choosing a U.S. university.

*"[N]o matter what sport you play or hobby you enjoy, there's going to be a club or group in which you can participate."*

### Questions to Consider:

What sports or hobbies are you interested in? Do universities in the U.S. generally offer such activities? If not, can you find a U.S. university that does?

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## iTunes

Many U.S. universities have put a large number of their classes on iTunes. This allows you to listen to actual lectures by actual U.S. professors, on subjects ranging from physics to the historicity of religious figures. This service is called "iTunes U," and it is a potentially great resource for international students, for a few reasons:

1. You can use iTunes U to get a sense of what classes are like at U.S. universities.
2. iTunes U has hundreds of universities participating. There's a good chance one of the universities you're interested in has an iTunes U page, allowing you to listen to actual classes at your prospective university.
3. iTunes U will show you how differences in the reputation of schools don't necessarily translate into differences in academic quality. Some of the lectures you'll listen to from so-called "second-tier" schools will far exceed, in the quality of instruction, lectures from so-called "elite" schools.
4. The lectures themselves are incredibly interesting and educational.

To use iTunes U you'll need to download iTunes itself.

## Activities In The Surrounding Area

When researching U.S. universities, it's a good idea to learn about activities that are available in the geographic area around the university's campus. These activities will serve as yet another key component of your U.S. experience, and every university will have vastly different activities available. This is not about tourist sites. We covered tourism activities in a previous section. This is about things you can do together with the friends you'll meet at your university - things like bowling, skiing, surfing, going to the beach, hiking, camping, waterskiing, etc.

The best way to find out about the local scene is to simply google the name of a city, and then look for websites associated with it. If you're looking for specific activities, you can also locate the city in google maps, and then use the "Search Nearby" feature to look for anything.

This is also an area where Facebook can be helpful. Community groups on Facebook are an excellent source of information about activities nearby campus.

Finally, this is another subject which you can ask the university about. Most universities will have information about activities in the surrounding area. If they don't, it may be because there isn't much in the surrounding area.

*"iTunes U will show you how differences in the reputation of schools don't necessarily translate into differences in academic quality. Some of the lectures you'll listen to from so-called "second-tier" schools will far exceed, in the quality of instruction, lectures from so-called "elite" schools."*

*"This is about things you can do together with the friends you'll meet at your university - things like bowling, skiing, surfing, going to the beach, hiking, camping, waterskiing, etc."*

Join the conversation!  
Visit the myUface blog:

[www.myuface.com/blog](http://www.myuface.com/blog)



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## Get Out There And Research!!!

So we've looked at a lot of factors you might use in your decision of which U.S. universities you'd like to attend. We've tried to focus on some things that students often ignore: things like proximity to cool activities or sites, the style and skill of actual professors, the climate, and the social atmosphere.

In this concluding section I want to hammer home an important point: **do not let other people tell you what is important FOR YOU in a university.** You are the world's foremost expert on you. No one else knows your preferences, your dreams, or your goals nearly as well as you do. So make sure that you take control of your education and research U.S. universities according to your criteria.

If you are a person who really cares about the weather, then pay attention to the climate of your prospective universities. If you love basketball, make sure you understand the sports and clubs your university offers. If seeing a lot of tourist sites is important to you, make sure your university is well-situated for you to do that. Do not, do not, **do not** simply download a list off rankings and make your decisions based on those. When you do that, you're letting someone who knows absolutely nothing about you tell you what your priorities are.

Going to study at a U.S. university is a serious decision. We're talking about several years of your life here. You owe it to yourself to spend some time researching possible schools and coming up with an institution that fits your own needs.

Now get out there and research!

Questions or comments? E-mail [blog@myuface.com](mailto:blog@myuface.com)

## About myUface:

**myUface** connects talented international students with universities and academic programs in the U.S. The service is FREE for students, and administered by a staff with decades of experience placing students in the U.S.

At **myUface.com** you'll be able to create an online academic profile and share it with our university partners. You'll also have access to advice on applying to U.S. universities, studying in the U.S., preparing for standardized tests, and much more - all from the **myUface** staff, who have decades of experience getting international students into U.S. universities.

## About the myUface blog:

The **myUface blog** strives to provide you with all the information you'll need to identify and gain admission to educational programs in the United States.

**Updated daily**, the blog addresses challenges international students face in coming to study in America, and helps them understand the way the admissions process works at U.S. universities.

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