
BEST COLLEGES


Graduating cadets hurling their caps at Michie Stadium in 2007.

America's Best College

HOW WEST POINT BEATS THE IVY LEAGUE. BY HANA R. ALBERTS

COLLEGE SENIOR RAYMOND VETTER GETS UP AT dawn to fit in a run or a workout. Then, hair shorn neatly and pants pressed, he marches into breakfast, where he sits in an assigned seat. After six hours of instruction in such subjects as Japanese literature and systems engineering, two hours of intramural sports and another family-style meal with underclassmen, Vetter rushes to return to his room by the 11:30 p.m. curfew.

Most college students, we think, do not march to meals. A goodly number of them drink into the wee hours, duck morning classes and fail to hit the gym with any regularity. But Vetter, 21, is a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., where college life is a bit different.

According to students, alumni, faculty and higher education experts, the undergraduate experience at West Point and the other service academies

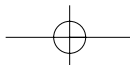
is defined by an intense work ethic and a drive to succeed on all fronts. "We face challenges and obstacles that not every college student has to face, but we are able to be competitive in all the different areas, from sports to academics," Vetter says.

No alcohol is allowed in the dorms and freshmen are given only one weekend leave per semester. That rigor, combined with the virtue of a free education, has made West Point tops in FORBES' list of the best colleges in the country, up from sixth place last year. The rankings are compiled in conjunction with Ohio University economist Richard Vedder and his Center for College Affordability & Productivity.

West Point excels in most measures. It graduates 80% of its students in four years. It is fourth in winners of Rhodes scholarships since 1923 (ahead of Stanford), sixth in Marshalls since 1982 (ahead of Columbia and Cornell) and fourth in Trumans since 1992 (ahead of Princeton and Duke). This year 4 out of 37 Gates

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A LONG GRAY LINE

Some notable West Point alums.



Buzz Aldrin '51, Apollo 11 astronaut



Joe DePinto '86, CEO of 7-Eleven



Ken Hicks '74, CEO of Foot Locker, as of Aug. 17



Marshall Carter '62, Chairman, NYSE



Mike Krzyzewski '69, Duke basketball coach



Bob McDonald '75, CEO of Procter & Gamble

scholars, who earn a full ride to study at the University of Cambridge in England, graduated from the service academies. The Gates roster includes four Yale grads, one from Harvard and none from Princeton.

"I think I got a lot out of it," says Joseph M. DePinto, USMA class of '86 and chief executive of 7-Eleven. "Just the discipline, the approach I take to leadership, the understanding of the importance of teamwork. All of that stuff I learned at West Point, and I think that's what helped me be successful."

Classes are small, with no more than 18 students. Cadets work their way through a core curriculum in which an English major has to take calculus and a chemist has to take a philosophy course. Since there are no graduate programs, faculty and administrators can focus on the undergraduates.

"If you really look at Brown University or Boston College or Stanford, their number one mission is likely not to teach. It's to bring research dollars to the campus ... to write the next book that will get them on CNN," says James Forest, an associate professor at West Point who is the director of terrorism studies. "Pressure to be that kind of new academic star isn't there [at West Point]."

A big factor in its top rank is that grads leave without a penny of tuition loans to repay. The Army picks up all costs and pays the cadets a stipend of \$895 a month. On graduation, they start as second lieutenants, earning \$69,000 a year. They have to serve in the

Top Colleges

RANK	NAME STATE	IN-STATE TUITION	TYPICAL DEBT LOAD
1	United States Military Academy NY	\$0	\$0
2	Princeton University NJ	34,290	13,708
3	California Institute of Technology CA	34,437	9,414
4	Williams College MA	37,640	9,398
5	Harvard University MA	36,173	14,607
6	Wellesley College MA	36,640	11,467
7	United States Air Force Academy CO	0	0
8	Amherst College MA	37,640	11,404
9	Yale University CT	35,300	18,428
10	Stanford University CA	36,798	19,038
11	Massachusetts Institute of Technology MA	36,390	17,982
12	Swarthmore College PA	36,490	9,814
13	Columbia University NY	39,326	13,319
14	Centre College KY	29,600	13,733
15	Haverford College PA	37,525	19,027
16	Boston College MA	37,950	15,543
17	Northwestern University IL	37,125	17,439
18	Bowdoin College ME	38,190	16,454
19	Vassar College NY	40,210	13,062
20	Whitman College WA	35,192	14,554
21	University of Chicago IL	38,492	19,127
22	Kenyon College OH	40,240	13,418
23	Carleton College MN	38,046	20,506
24	Colby College ME	48,520	13,310
25	Middlebury College VT	49,210	18,354

Best Buys

RANK	NAME STATE	IN-STATE TUITION	TYPICAL DEBT LOAD
1	Berea College KY	\$866	\$8,742
2	New College of Florida FL	4,065	13,841
3	United States Military Academy NY	0	0
4	United States Air Force Academy CO	0	0
5	University of Wyoming WY	3,621	16,458
6	United States Naval Academy MD	0	0
7	University of Florida FL	3,778	15,317
8	University of California, Los Angeles CA	7,551	18,353
9	Cooper Union ¹ NY	0	11,664
10	University of California, Berkeley CA	7,656	17,473

¹Cooper Union awards full-tuition scholarships (valued at \$34,450 for the 2008-09 school year) to undergraduates.

Behind the Numbers

Our college rankings are based on five criteria: graduation rate (how good a college is at helping its students finish on time); the number of national and global awards won by students and faculty; students' satisfaction with their instructors; average debt upon graduation; and postgraduate vocational success as measured by a recent graduate's average salary and alumni achievement. We prize the undergraduate experience and how well prepared students are for the real world rather than focusing on inputs such as acceptance rates and test scores. Our data are from publicly available sources rather than surveys filled out by the schools themselves. Special thanks to Richard Vedder and his research team at Ohio University. —H.R.A.

FROM TOP LEFT TO RIGHT: MICHAEL LOCCISANO / GETTY IMAGES; NEWS.COM; JIM SPELLMAN / WIREIMAGE; MARSHALL CARTER; JAMIE SQUIRE / GETTY IMAGES; AP PHOTO/TOM UHLMAN

BEST **B-SCHOOLS**

armed forces for five years plus three more years of inactive reserve duty. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have pulled 15% of reservists into active duty.

West Point has plenty of critics. In April Thomas E. Ricks, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who has covered the military, wrote an op-ed in the *Washington Post*, calling on the government to shut the military academies. West Point doesn't produce officers of any higher caliber, he argues, than a graduate from another elite school who has participated in an ROTC program. "It's not better than Harvard," he says, citing the fact that the majority of West Point professors don't have Ph.D.s and the school's traditionally weak treatment of crucial subjects like anthropology, history and foreign languages.

It also produces young people more prone to groupthink than to groundbreaking ideas. W. Patrick Lang, a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and a professor of Arabic at West Point in the 1970s, says the service academies "haven't been very good at producing people who were very good at humanistic, open-ended problems."

Bruce Fleming, who has been teaching English for 22 years at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., faults the service academies for their rigidity. "I really love my students. I just do. It's an institution that grinds students down," he says.

But the cadets know the drill: job security. Leadership training. Lifelong friendships. "A West Point diploma is at least as impressive as a Harvard diploma for a lot of things," says Robert Farley, an assistant professor of national security at the University of Kentucky. "Were I an employer, I'd have utter faith in a graduate of the service academies."

"We are giving up what may be the quintessential college experience. But we're getting a job where we're immediately in a leadership position, not a back-room job where who knows what your chances of promotion are," says Elizabeth Betterbed, 20, of Fox Island, Wash., one of the 699 female cadets at West Point. "Like any other school you incur a debt, and for us it only takes five years to pay off. It's really nothing." **F**

The new Education section of Forbes.com has an extensive database and complete rankings of the U.S.' 600 best colleges and 75 best M.B.A. schools, plus the best overseas business schools. You can find all of our methodologies; essays by noted experts, including Jill Biden, Pete Peterson and Louis Menand; videos on how to get into elite programs; a B-school return-on-investment calculator; and customizable screeners to find the best school for you. Head to WWW.FORBES.COM/EDUCATION.



MIT-Sloan alumna Deborah Schapira in Cambridge.

M.B.A.s in The Real World

THE FINANCIAL CRISIS HAS BUSINESS SCHOOLS UNDER PRESSURE TO TEACH THEIR STUDENTS SOMETHING TANGIBLE AND WORTHWHILE. BY KURT BADENHAUSEN

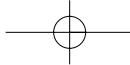
IN THE MIDDLE OF HER SECOND YEAR AT THE SLOAN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT Deborah Schapira left the comfortable confines of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Cambridge campus for the village of Bukasa, 20 miles east of Uganda's capital, Kampala. Bukasa has no roads. Few buildings have running water or electricity. Chickens roam the village, pecking at dirt floors inside people's homes.

Schapira, 30, was being put to work for the Kyetume Community Based Health Care Programme. She traveled to clinics, reviewed financial records, talked to AIDS patients and helped draft a five-year strategic plan to improve health delivery in a country where the average life expectancy is 50 and 13% of children die before the age of 5. One in 16 adults has HIV.

The Kyetume program used this plan to win funding for an ambulance, a dramatic first for the area. "It gave us a feeling of tremendous pride to know that we were a part of this great success," says Schapira, who landed a consulting job in the health care practice of Booz & Co.; she'll start in September.

A recession delivers wins and losses to the M.B.A. industry. If

SHAWN G. HENRY FOR FORBES



BEST B-SCHOOLS

the job market is dismal enough, some recent college grads figure they have little to lose dropping out of it for two years. That helps explain the 12% increase in the number of business school admission tests taken last year over the previous year (and a similar spike in 2002). At the same time the bad economy makes it harder to earn back the cost of going to school. Only half of the class of 2009 was offered a job three months prior to graduation, down from 62% last year, according to the Graduate Management Admission Council. Unemployment is a tough pill to swallow when tuition and two years of forgone salary at an elite program put one out \$250,000.

The answer for a lot of schools is to get more students into real-world situations. Many schools have been accepting greener students. The typical work experience for an incoming Harvard student has, since 2003, dropped almost a full year to 3.3 years. "It is incumbent on schools to produce a graduate who is not just smart and knows the subject matter but knows how to apply it," says John J. Fernandes, president of the accred-

itation body the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management started one of the first of these so-called experiential learning programs in 1990. Today it has 19 courses with more than 500 students participating annually. Michigan's Ross School of Business has been putting students to work since 1992. Emory's Goizueta Business School made experiential learning part of the core curriculum last fall. The University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management will require students to take such a program this fall.

MIT-Sloan started its Global Health Delivery class last year, placing 53 students in six countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The five-month course includes three weeks of living in Africa during the school's independent study period in January. It had a 15-person waiting list, and no student dropped the class. Some worked in a pediatric hospital in Kenya. Others helped an AIDS treatment center in Zambia perform a market analysis. "These

Entrepreneur U

WITH ITS MASSIVE ALUMNI NETWORK, INSEAD IS BECOMING A BREEDING GROUND FOR GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURS. BY CHRISTINA SETTIMI

Recessions can be great times for entrepreneurs. Frenchman Alexandre Douzet graduated from the Insead business school in France in 2002, when the dot-com collapse was still fresh in memory. He moved to New York jobless and frustrated over the lack of prospects. He and Marc Cenedella, a former colleague from their days at career site HotJobs.com, recognized that sites like HotJobs were ignoring higher-paid openings. They started TheLadders, a Web site to help executives find six-figure jobs.

One of the first investors Douzet pitched his idea to was Kevin Ryan, a member of Insead's class of 1990 and at the time the chief executive of online ad service DoubleClick. Ryan liked how

strong the business plan was, liked Douzet's Insead connection and became TheLadders' first backer. With Ryan on board, other investors quickly followed. Last year TheLadders grossed \$65 million from 2.5 million paying subscribers. "It is

only natural that such entrepreneurs beget other entrepreneurs," says Ryan.

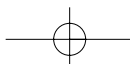
Half of Insead's alumni go on to start their own business or purchase one. This is one of the highest entrepreneurship rates among all elite B-schools

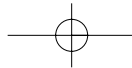
and may explain why Insead is the highest-ranked program by return on investment in our list of the best M.B.A. programs outside the U.S. (see table).

With 937 students admitted last year, Insead led the elite programs in terms of class size. That creates a bigger network to tap for backing and advice. The school offers 19 entrepreneurship courses, up from a single one when it opened 50 years ago. Eight out of ten students take at least one class.

RANK	SCHOOL/COUNTRY	CLASS OF 2004				CLASS OF 2010 ¹		
		5-YEAR MBA GAIN TOTAL ² (\$THOU)	AS % OF EXPENSES ³	YEARS TO PAYBACK	SALARY		TUITION ⁴ (\$THOU)	GMAT SCORE
					PRE-MBA (\$THOU)	2008 (\$THOU)		
TWO-YEAR PROGRAMS								
1	London U.K.	\$121	62%	3.6	\$64	\$209	\$73	700
2	Manchester U.K.	92	60	3.6	41	150	57	633
3	IESE Spain	83	42	3.9	43	178	91	673
4	Ceibs China	76	202	2.2	13	67	36	690
5	Ipade Mexico	73	97	3.2	23	83	31	NA
ONE-YEAR PROGRAMS								
1	Insead France & Singapore	192	162	2.6	64	218	67	704
2	IMD Switzerland	177	126	2.9	77	240	74	680
3	IE Spain	95	92	3.2	33	150	69	680
4	Cambridge (Judge) U.K.	91	82	3.5	60	149	56	690
5	Oxford (Said) U.K.	89	86	3.3	69	167	56	680

Five-year figures are before taxes and adjusted for time value of money. NA: Not available. ¹Tuition and GMAT for one-year programs are for Class of 2009. ²Five-year total compensation after graduation, minus the sum of tuition, fees and forgone compensation. ³M.B.A. profits divided by the sum of tuition, fees and forgone compensation. ⁴Total tuition and fees for out-of-country students.





BEST B-SCHOOLS

skills are very relevant in many careers, but especially for consulting,” says Schapira.

The Haas School of Business at UC, Berkeley launched its Haas at Work program in 2006. Students have gone into service for the likes of Visa, Cisco Systems, Clorox, Walt Disney and Wells Fargo. “We want them to get their hands dirty,” says program director Adam Berman. The students are expected to keep up with their other classes while consulting for the client companies.

Visa contracted with Haas this year to come up with ideas for using social networks to conduct financial transactions. Visa thought it might get one or two worthwhile ideas. The Haas students generated nine, one of which was to use a social network to allow friends to share the cost of a baby shower gift or tickets to a football game. “We were blown away in terms of the level of thinking and the creativity,” says Scott Sanchez, who is in charge of Visa’s global innovation strategy. The \$40,000 fee Visa paid Haas was well worth it. The 1,500 hours of work might have cost ten times that with a big-name consulting firm.

Longtime B-school critic Henry Mintzberg, a professor at McGill University’s Desautels Faculty of Management, is highly skeptical that a group of M.B.A.s can produce any meaningful change, specifically in the public health arena, where legions of aid workers have failed for years. He concedes, though, that these programs are a better alternative to sitting in a classroom going over case studies. “You cannot create a manager in a classroom. It is a fundamental problem that business schools still don’t get,” he says. **F**

Behind the Numbers

Our ranking of M.B.A. programs is based on the return on investment achieved by the graduates of the class of 2004. We surveyed 17,000 alumni at 103 schools and heard back from 24% of those grads. We compared their earnings in their first five years out of business school to their opportunity cost (two years of forgone compensation, tuition and required fees). Only two-year full-time M.B.A. programs were included in the U.S. ranking. For more on the rankings, including profiles on each school and a calculator to figure your own return on investment, visit WWW.FORBES.COM/BSCHOOLS —K.B.

RANK	SCHOOL	CLASS OF 2004					CLASS OF 2010	
		5-YEAR TOTAL ¹ (S\$THOU)	MBA GAIN AS % OF EXPENSES ²	YEARS TO PAYBACK	PRE-MBA SALARY (S\$THOU)	2008 SALARY (S\$THOU)	TUITION ³ (S\$THOU)	GMAT SCORE
1	Stanford	\$85	38%	4.2	\$82	\$225	\$102	730
2	Dartmouth (Tuck)	80	39	4.0	70	205	94	712
3	Harvard	79	34	4.0	82	215	102	720
4	Chicago (Booth)	63	30	4.2	71	210	97	720
5	Pennsylvania (Wharton)	57	27	4.4	75	200	100	715
6	Columbia	57	28	4.2	70	182	99	710
7	Cornell (Johnson)	57	32	4.1	60	168	92	700
8	Northwestern (Kellogg)	52	27	4.2	66	165	96	710
9	Virginia (Darden)	50	28	4.2	60	159	93	700
10	Yale	46	26	4.3	57	160	93	720
11	Texas-Austin (McCombs)	44	29	4.2	57	125	81	690
12	UC Berkeley (Haas)	43	26	4.2	67	163	86	710
13	Duke (Fuqua)	43	24	4.3	62	148	93	700
14	MIT (Sloan)	42	20	4.4	70	190	96	710
15	UNC (Kenan-Flagler)	41	28	4.2	55	142	86	690
16	Brigham Young (Marriott)	41	39	3.9	45	105	38	680
17	NYU (Stern)	37	20	4.3	62	170	89	710
18	Michigan (Ross)	37	20	4.3	62	155	93	710
19	UCLA (Anderson)	35	21	4.4	68	160	83	710
20	Iowa (Tippie)	35	30	4.2	43	112	53	660
21	Michigan State (Broad)	34	26	4.2	53	114	62	640
22	Emory (Goizueta)	34	23	4.2	56	121	81	685
23	Carnegie Mellon (Tepper)	33	18	4.4	60	145	98	700
24	Texas A&M (Mays)	30	29	4.2	47	106	39	650
25	Indiana (Kelley)	29	21	4.3	53	115	76	670
26	Minnesota (Carlson)	29	22	4.2	53	104	79	663
27	Connecticut	29	25	4.4	52	153	51	620
28	Penn State (Smeal)	29	20	4.3	54	120	66	650
29	Maryland (Smith)	29	18	4.3	49	109	86	660
30	Vanderbilt (Owen)	29	18	4.5	53	128	87	650
31	Georgetown (McDonough)	28	16	4.5	60	147	83	678
32	USC (Marshall)	28	18	4.5	56	155	86	700
33	SMU (Cox)	28	20	4.4	52	122	81	640
34	Wake Forest (Babcock)	27	21	4.4	47	108	71	630
35	Wisconsin-Madison	27	19	4.3	51	103	53	666
36	Rollins (Crummer)	27	30	4.1	29	75	59	605
37	Rochester (Simon)	27	17	4.4	49	120	82	680
38	Notre Dame (Mendoza)	26	18	4.4	49	110	77	680
39	Ohio State (Fisher)	26	21	4.4	45	94	76	680
40	Washington (Foster)	25	21	4.3	48	111	68	688
41	Washington U-St. Louis (Olin)	25	16	4.5	52	118	85	681
42	Tennessee	25	26	4.2	39	82	37	615
43	Miami	25	22	4.3	35	85	70	630
44	Georgia Tech	25	22	4.3	47	100	66	680
45	Purdue (Krannert)	25	20	4.5	47	100	72	670
46	Boston College (Carroll)	24	20	4.4	47	125	68	660
47	Rice (Jones)	24	15	4.6	60	140	78	680
48	SUNY Buffalo	24	28	4.2	31	84	32	610
49	William & Mary (Mason)	24	19	4.4	44	110	69	610
50	Georgia (Terry)	23	21	4.4	45	108	58	650

Five-year figures are before taxes and adjusted for time value of money. ¹Five-year total compensation after graduation, minus the sum of tuition, fees and forgone compensation. ²M.B.A. profits divided by the sum of tuition, fees and forgone compensation. ³Includes total tuition for out-of-state students and fees. Statistics: Kurt Badenhausen, Christina Settimi, Chris Smith.

