

Pros and Cons of Community Colleges

If the idea of going to a four-year college or university seems a bit daunting, you may want to consider a community college. Take into account the following pros and cons of community colleges to help you make a decision.

Pros

Small class sizes – Because classes at community colleges are smaller, you would have the opportunity to interact more with your classmates than you would at a larger, four-year college or university. Small classes allow for small-group discussions where active participation and hands-on learning is encouraged. This may be beneficial to you if that kind of interaction helps you learn more information than if you were just listening to a lecture.

Interaction with professors – Since professors at community colleges have fewer students than those at larger colleges, they have more time to get to know each student individually. They will be more involved in helping you make the most of your college experience. Furthermore small school courses are usually taught by the actual professor. This is in contrast to larger universities where classes are sometimes taught by teaching assistants.

Gives you time to try again – If you are unable to meet initial entrance standards required by the four-year school of your choice, a community college can give you a second chance. If your ultimate goal is to go to a four-year school, you can transfer after you have improved as a student. Going to a community college will give you the opportunity to improve your grade point average, score higher on standardized test scores, and have a broader knowledge of specific academic subjects. Once you have enhanced your academic record, you will have a better chance of being accepted at the four-year school of your choice.

Spend less money – Community colleges are cheaper than four-year colleges and universities. If you want to get a four-year degree, but you're not exactly sure what you want to major in, it may be beneficial for you to go to a community college for the first two years. That way you can take all of your core classes (just make sure they will transfer) and not spend as much money as you would if you went to a four-year school for all four years.

Cons

Smaller variety of courses/majors – Since community colleges are two-year schools, they don't offer the range of courses and majors that a four-year school offers. If you want to go to a school with a variety of classes and majors to choose from, a community college may not be your best option.

Miss experience of living on-campus – Most community colleges do not offer the option of living on-campus. By not living on campus, you miss out on many college experiences such as sharing a dorm room and many living-on-campus conveniences such as rolling out of bed ten minutes before your class starts.

Not as socially involved – Because many community colleges do not offer as much when it comes to campus life, you may find it harder to be socially involved with fellow students. Community colleges offer less in terms of big sporting events and other social opportunities. If you want a college with an abundance of social activities, a community college may not be for you.

Difficulty transferring credits – If you decide to transfer from a community college to a four-year school, keep in mind that some credits may not be transferable. Sometimes when you transfer from a two-year school to a four-year school, you may be required to retake courses that you have already completed at the community college. This may delay your graduation date. Before you decide to attend a community college, you should find out what courses are transferable between your community college and the four-year school that you want to attend.

Before you make a decision about whether or not to attend a community college, you need to weigh the pros and cons. Just remember that in order for you to be content during your time in college, you need to pick the kind of school where you are most comfortable and the kind of school that is most conducive to your needs. Good luck!

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