

WASHINGTON & LEE UNIVERSITY, LEXINGTON, VA



The Colonnade

Campus and Location

Founded in 1749, Washington & Lee began as an all-male university and only became coed twenty-five years ago in 1985. The University shares the historic city of Lexington in the Shenandoah Valley at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia with Virginia Military Institute. The picturesque group of buildings forming the Colonnade seen above, together with Lee Chapel, where Robert E. Lee is buried, is a National Historic Landmark. In 1796 George Washington made a donation of \$20,000 to the then Liberty Hall Academy, rescuing it from insolvency. In gratitude, the school was renamed Washington Academy and then when it became chartered in 1813 it was renamed Washington College. At the end of the Civil War Robert E. Lee was named President until his death in 1870, after which the school went through another name change to Washington and Lee College.

W&L, as it is affectionately known, is divided into three schools: The College, where all undergraduates begin their studies, encompassing the liberal arts, humanities and hard sciences; the Williams School of Commerce, Economics, and Politics; and the School of Law. The most recent figures available from the college show a total enrollment of 2,155, with 1,752 undergraduates. The average SAT scores for the Class of 2013 were Critical Reading: 697; Math: 695; Writing: 689. The average ACT scores were 31, with 84% of its freshmen in the top 10% of their high school class. According to the 2009 Fiske Guide to Colleges, Washington and Lee is the most selective small college in the south, rivaled only by Davidson. Students applying to W&L also applied to UVA, Duke, College of William and Mary, Vanderbilt, Davidson and Wake Forest.

While there is no set formula for a successful application to Washington and Lee, the admission review is holistic. From the college's website comes, "We are looking for an exceptional group of 455 students who are passionate about learning and will enliven our classrooms, who will excel on the playing fields and in the arts, who will produce high quality newspapers and magazines and who will participate in the 160+ clubs and student organizations on our campus. We read your application looking for what impact you will have on Washington and Lee and what W&L can offer you... The most important part of your application is your daily record – what courses you have taken and how well you have done in them. We are looking for students who have a superior record of achievement in the most challenging curriculum available to them."

The college's strongest programs are Business, History, Politics, English, Journalism and Economics. Classes are small, with an average size of 16 students, and because there are no teaching assistants, professors teach the classes. Most students belong to sororities and fraternities, and Greek life pervades the social scene, though those that are independent aren't made to feel like outsiders. W&L competes at the NCAA Division III level in the Old Dominion Athletic Conference, a 14-team league, with most schools located in Virginia. Tuition for the 2008-2009 school year was \$36,525, with room, board and fees being an additional \$11,000. Approximately half the class receives financial aid. Last year the college received a \$100 million grant, ensuring that leadership and integrity, the signature element of W&L, continues to be the hallmark of its graduates. Ten percent of the first-year students are awarded the Johnson Merit Scholarship, designed to attract students with exceptional academic and personal promise. These students will have their tuition, room and board paid in full by this generous scholarship program.

Prominent alumni include Meriwether Lewis, 1793, Soldier, Private Secretary to Thomas Jefferson, and Explorer who was sent by Jefferson to explore the lands the United States had recently acquired through the Louisiana Purchase, now remembered as the Lewis and Clark Expedition; John J. Crittenden 1805, Speaker of the Kentucky House of Representatives, U.S. Senator, Governor of Kentucky and U.S. Attorney General under Presidents William Henry Harrison and Millard Fillmore; John W. Warner Jr. '49, former secretary of the Navy and retired U.S. Senator from Virginia; Roger Mudd '50, Journalist and Congressional Correspondent for PBS and CBS; Tom Wolfe '51, author of numerous books, including The Bonfire of The Vanities; Cy Twombly '53, noted abstract artist; Lloyd Dobyns '57, News Commentator; Bill Johnston '61, President of the New York Stock Exchange; and Joseph Goldstein '62, Nobel Prize Winner for Medicine for research in cholesterol metabolism and discovery that human cells have low-density lipoprotein (LDL) receptors that extract cholesterol from the bloodstream.



Lee Chapel