

Stuart L. Nachbar

College Counselor

Member: HECA, NACAC, NJACAC, PACAC

322 Windsor Court

Ewing, NJ 08638

(609)406-0062

stuart@educatedquest.com

www.educatedquest.com

The Catholic University of America

Founded in 1887 as a graduate institution in Washington D.C., The Catholic University of America (CUA) is the national university for the Catholic Church in the United States. Three Popes have visited CUA: Pope John Paul II in 1979, Pope Benedict in 2008 and Pope Francis in 2016. While many U.S. colleges and universities have a Catholic affiliation, CUA is the only papal-chartered university in the country. It is also the only American university to have hosted more than one papal visit.

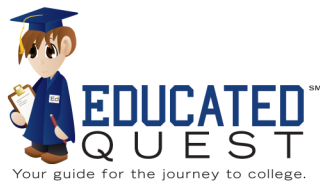
CUA is a national research university with 12 schools, of which 10 grant undergraduate degrees. It has a small (just over 3,700 students) undergraduate enrollment for such a university—there are 68 undergraduate majors, including Architecture, Engineering and Nursing—as well as more than 3,100 graduate students.

Last year, CUA received approximately 6,000 applications for an entering class of 800 students. About 74 percent were offered admission. The university ended up over-enrolling the class by 100 students, though the yield rate, the percentage of admitted students who decided to come, was 21 percent. Admission is “major-blind” for most programs, including Nursing, where students are first enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences. While CUA is a Catholic school, with a student body that is 80 percent Catholic, the majority of incoming students did not attend Catholic high schools or private, non-religiously affiliated schools.

CUA has appealed to the B to A-minus student with a ACT composite between 23 and 38 or SAT Critical Reading and Math scores between 1000 and 1250 (out of 1600). A student who is in the upper quarter of the admit pool at CUA will probably be in the middle of the pool at American University or George Washington University as well as the lower end at the University of Maryland-College Park.

CUA has become a “test optional” school starting in this year’s admissions cycle. Applicants will not need to submit scores to be considered for admission to the university as well as its honors program or for consideration for merit scholarships. The university made the decision to go test optional because its enrollment management office had learned that high school grades and courses had far more impact on student success.

CUA retained 86 percent of the freshman class that entered in 2015, according to its admissions office, up from 82 or 83 percent in recent years. The university graduated 60 percent of the students who entered in 2008, according to its most recent Common Data Set. These numbers, while good, are not as high as other private schools of similar size. However, similar-size schools including Fairfield University (CT), Loyola University-Maryland and Providence College (RI) do not offer the Architecture program nor as many advanced degree programs as CUA. Nor do they offer as in-depth an education in the arts, religion or philosophy.



Stuart L. Nachbar

College Counselor

Member: HECA, NACAC, NJACAC, PACAC

322 Windsor Court

Ewing, NJ 08638

(609)406-0062

stuart@educatedquest.com

www.educatedquest.com

Notable undergraduate alumni include Martin O' Malley, former governor of Maryland and current Democratic Presidential candidate; Brian Cashman, general manager of the New York Yankees; actors Susan Sarandon, John Slattery and John Voight; *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd; and, celebrity announcer Ed McMahon, among many others.

Costs

CUA estimates direct charges of approximately \$54,200 including tuition and fees and room and board. For students interested in going to school in Washington D.C., CUA could qualify as a "best buy," unless you choose the University of Maryland-College Park or George Mason University (VA) which are located on the outskirts of the city. The university's pricing starts at around \$10,000 less than the costs of attending American University or George Washington University. CUA's pricing is also quite competitive with private liberal arts colleges as well as Jesuit universities such as Fairfield, Loyola-Maryland and Saint Joseph's.

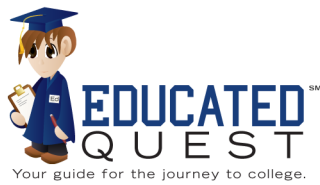
CUA requires the FAFSA as well as the CSS Profile for students interested in applying for financial aid. CUA offers merit-based scholarships between \$5,000 and \$25,000 as well as a limited number of full-tuition merit awards. Last year, the average merit award was approximately \$16,400. The students who qualify for the full-tuition awards will be at the very top of the admit pool; they might have also qualified for admission to one of the more selective Catholic universities including Boston College or Georgetown.

CUA could not meet the full need for the majority of students with demonstrated financial need. On average, the university fulfilled 79 percent of need, according to the data it recently submitted to *U.S. News*. The average need-based scholarship for all undergraduates in 2014 was approximately \$21,600, just over half of tuition and fees.

CUA did not report average student debt information to the College Board, *U.S. News* or the Project on Student Debt.

Curriculum

College-bound high school students interested in a broad education and developing their Catholic identity will probably be the happiest at CUA. The Freshman Experience is built around four courses (English Composition, two Philosophy class, one Religion class) taken as a cohort group with fewer than 20 students. The university also treats each cohort as part of a Living Learning Community within the residence halls. CUA also offers an Honors Program, which is its own learning community. A Freshman Experience instructor serves as the student's academic advisor until s/he has declared a major.



Stuart L. Nachbar

College Counselor

Member: HECA, NACAC, NJACAC, PACAC

322 Windsor Court

Ewing, NJ 08638

(609)406-0062

stuart@educatedquest.com

www.educatedquest.com

Within the College of Arts and Sciences, the largest undergraduate division at CUA, students have more distribution requirements than they might have at more secular schools. To qualify for a Bachelor of Arts degree, CUA students must complete four courses each in philosophy, religion, social/behavioral sciences, and mathematics/natural sciences—as well as three courses in humanities, two courses at the intermediate level in a foreign language, two courses in literature, and one course in English composition. Students who pursue a Bachelor of Science degree, as well as those who pursue the Nursing degree (they begin their education in Arts and Sciences), will face similar requirements although they are lighter towards the non-math and non-science subjects. The same is true for the undergraduate programs in the professional schools.

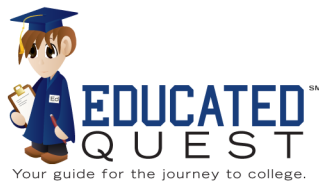
Students who are uncertain about between an education program and a liberal arts major might want to consider CUA, if they also have a Catholic identity. The university offers the same educational specialties as larger schools—Early Childhood, Elementary Education and Secondary Education (certification) as well as a major and minor in Education Studies for students who do not want to become classroom teachers—within its College of Arts and Sciences.

This same uncertainty can be addressed for students who are undecided between business and the liberal arts. It is possible to do a liberal arts minor within the business school or a business-related minor within the College of Arts and Sciences. The university also offers separate Calculus sections for the business, science and engineering majors. The harder the math you can take on, the easier it will be to change majors.

CUA makes it easier for pre-professional students to do service projects or study abroad than most universities. The university also owns a campus in Rome, Italy, acquired in 2015.

Where CUA stands out is in the specialized schools and programs. It hosts the only School of Music in the Washington D.C. area, as well as unique programs in Sacred Music and Musical Theatre. CUA has one of the only schools dedicated to the study of Philosophy in the world, as well as one of the few theology schools that hosts the undergraduate religious education programs. It also has an undergraduate social work program; this is typically limited to graduate schools at most universities.

Within the School of Architecture, students may pursue the Bachelor of Science in Architecture (B.S. Arch), Bachelor of Science in Architecture + Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering (B.S. Arch/ B.C.E.), Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Architectural Studies (B.A. Arch Studies). There is also an Architectural Studies minor as well as a joint degree Bachelors/Masters in Architecture and City Planning. There is also an undergraduate program in Sustainable Design, unique to a small school.



Stuart L. Nachbar

College Counselor

Member: HECA, NACAC, NJACAC, PACAC

322 Windsor Court

Ewing, NJ 08638

(609)406-0062

stuart@educatedquest.com

www.educatedquest.com

Within the School of Engineering, students have the option to design their own major or pursue minors in the humanities, social sciences or Computer Science. The school does not push students into a specialty (Biomedical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Computer Science, Electrical Engineering or Mechanical Engineering) until after the first two years. CUA should be seriously considered by students who are interested in Civil Engineering, given the university's Washington D.C. location as well the opportunity to take an extra year to do the dual degree program in Architecture. CUA also has a three-semester Engineering Ethics requirement, unique for an engineering school.

One concern for business students: the School of Business and Economics, while an educational member of the Assembly for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), is not accredited by that organization. While AACSB accreditation does not assure that business students have received a "better" education, it is an indicator of quality used by universities in recruiting faculty and employers who are recruiting on college campuses.

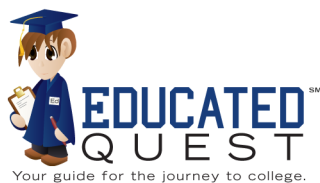
The best academic reason to choose CUA, aside from a fit with the major, is small classes. Less than five percent of all courses have more than 50 students. The student-faculty ratio is advertised as a very low 7 to 1, lower than many schools that have more selective admissions, as well as many liberal arts colleges that have less than half as many students. You are likely to have some larger introductory courses (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math) that are required in the more popular majors but very small classes once you get further into the major.

CUA students gave their faculty a rating of 3.73 (out of a possible 5) on RateMyProfessors.com. That's about the same as students at Fordham's Rose Hill campus (3.73) Providence (3.76) and Saint Joseph's (3.71) rated their faculty, but higher than students at Fairfield (3.68), George Washington (3.66) rated theirs and lower than Boston College (3.94) and Georgetown students (3.81) rated theirs.

Community

CUA has an open urban campus that has a lot of green space. With 193 acres, CUA has the largest campus among the Washington D.C universities, although it also has the smallest undergraduate student body. The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is the signature building. Pope Francis visited campus in 2015; he spoke in the Basilica as well as outside on the Basilica steps.

The architectural mix can best be described as eclectic with buildings from the 19th through 21st centuries; there is no theme to unite building design as you find, for example, at Fordham or Providence. The campus, though open, appears easy to secure; it has proven to be a good host not only to three Popes, but also U.S. presidents



Stuart L. Nachbar

College Counselor

Member: HECA, NACAC, NJACAC, PACAC

322 Windsor Court

Ewing, NJ 08638

(609)406-0062

stuart@educatedquest.com

www.educatedquest.com

including Grover Cleveland, William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and George H.W. Bush as well as church leaders throughout its history.

CUA is located in Brooklin, a neighborhood under revitalization around the campus. Private developers have created a “college town” along Monroe Street near the campus with the university’s book store as well as many eating and drinking places. The campus and the neighborhood are also served by their own Metro stop, along the Red Line. The “college town” complements the campus nicely. There are, however, rough edges in the neighborhood if you venture too far from campus.

Reported incidents of crime are fairly high according to the university’s 2014 Clery Report. There were no fewer than 448 disciplinary referrals for liquor law violations between 2012 and 2014 while drug-related referrals rose from 39 to 100 then down to 83. These are high numbers considering that almost half of the undergraduate student body does not live on campus, the arrest numbers are small (no more than four for drugs or alcohol during the three-year period) and that CUA is a Catholic school. with visitation rules for the residence halls There were also 5 reported sexually-related crimes as well as one reported arrest for weapons possession in 2014 as well as 11 reported burglaries each year in 2013 and 2014.

CUA competes in D-III (non-scholarship) sports. The university competes against Virginia and North Carolina schools in football in the Old Dominion Conference and in the Landmark Conference for all other sports. In 2017, CUA’s football affiliation will move to the New England Men’s and Women’s Athletic Conference. CUA once played football at a higher level. The Cardinals won the 1936 Orange Bowl, beating Mississippi 20-19. Last season the men’s and women’s basketball and lacrosse teams reached the NCAA Division III national tournament. The men’s and women’s soccer teams as well as the women’s field hockey team have also made recent appearances in NCAA Tournament play.

Comforts

CUA houses approximately 60 percent of its student body. The university guarantees housing for first-year as well as second-year students. All but one freshman hall is single sex; the other is single sex by wing. Mixed residence hall living options are available for sophomores while apartment living options (three singles or three doubles sharing a common lounge) are available to juniors and seniors. Greek life does exist at CUA: the university has two Greek social organizations and one Greek service organization. But neither organization has its own housing.

The university requires first-year students to take the unlimited meal plan; sophomore options are less restrictive. Block plans, where students purchase a limited number of meals as well as dining dollars per week, are available to juniors and seniors.



Stuart L. Nachbar

College Counselor

Member: HECA, NACAC, NJACAC, PACAC

322 Windsor Court

Ewing, NJ 08638

(609)406-0062

stuart@educatedquest.com

www.educatedquest.com

The university hosts an off-campus housing fair in late January to assist students in finding shared houses or apartments. But costs are going to be high. Rents and utilities for one-bedroom apartments in Brooklin are more than \$1,000 per person per month; sharing a two-bedroom might be slightly less expensive. However, off-campus living may be the better option for students who want to work in the D.C area during the summer.

Connections

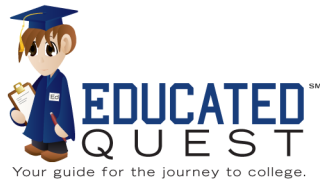
Washington D.C., is not only a great college town; it is also one of the best and easiest cities to network. Not only is D.C the nation's capital; it is also a major center for health care, the arts, telecommunications, technology and the media. Virtually any student who is serious about finding an internship can find one in the city, and find one that is accessible by the Metro. Few other cities offer this advantage. However, there is also tremendous competition for available positions, so CUA students need to be aggressive as their peers at the other schools are also likely to be. Fortunately, CUA has a local alumni base large enough to help its students.

CUA has a more global alumni base than most similar-sized schools. Among the approximately 34,500 alumni registered in [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com), about a fifth live and work outside of the United States. Within the country, over 11,500 percent live and/or work around Washington D.C. More than 3,000 are based around New York while more than 900 are located around Baltimore, Boston and Philadelphia. Education, community and social service organizations employ more than 5,000 alumni though nearly 2,000 work in health care and more than 1,000 work in Engineering, the Media, and Arts and Design.

CUA integrates career development within the Business program through a non-credit course called My Super Curriculum: CEO Lectures and First-Year Career Development. This course not only assists students in the search for an internship; it also teaches career self-assessment skills, resume and cover letter writing skills, interviewing skills, how to build a professional network, how to develop and execute an internship search strategy that includes creating potential employer target lists, and utilizing networking and online internship search resources. The course is part of the curriculum each year for business and economics students, including graduate students, and it is non-credit. Classes are structured to include lecture and Q&A time.

Through another business course: The Vocation of Business, the Career Development Center engages students to assist them in their choice of major. The Myers-Briggs career assessment tool, which is fairly expensive for students to purchase outside of school, is administered to CUA students who take this course.

CUA's Career Development Center also utilizes students as Career Peer Advisors to aid classmates in the job search. The Center hosts Fall and Spring Career Fairs as well as numerous information sessions, instructional programs, panel discussions and



Stuart L. Nachbar

College Counselor

Member: HECA, NACAC, NJACAC, PACAC

322 Windsor Court

Ewing, NJ 08638

(609)406-0062

stuart@educatedquest.com

www.educatedquest.com

networking events throughout the school year. The calendar is extensive considering the small size of the undergraduate student body; this is perhaps due to the wide variety of majors offered by the university.

Conclusions

CUA is a good choice for students who want a small-mid size school and also want to take advantage of the cultural, employment and social opportunities of going to college in Washington D.C. Other options within the city are not only more selective than CUA; they also have larger student bodies.

The most recent over-enrollment in the freshman class suggests that there is a demand for the advantages that the university offers, especially among the Catholic community. The academic mix with CUA is incredible for a small school. Pre-professional education will be more “hands-on” here than it would be at a larger, more selective, public or private university. The neighborhood surrounding campus (Michigan Street and Monroe Street) is into revitalization and, via the Metro, you can go anywhere in D.C. from there.

Students who are Catholic, want to reinforce a religious identity and want to attend a city-based university should put CUA on your list as an alternative to Loyola-Maryland, Providence or Saint Joseph’s. If you have an additional interest in architecture or an allied design field or a more serious interest in exploring philosophy and religion, CUA might be your best choice.

Report Card: The Catholic University of America

- Four-Year/Six-Year Graduation Rates: B/B
- Freshman Retention: B
- Costs: B
- Curriculum: A
- Comforts: B
- Community: B+
- Connections: B+