

**If You
Apply
To** ➤

St. Mary's: Early decision: Nov. 1. Regular admissions: Jan. 1. Financial aid: Mar. 1. Campus interviews: recommended, informational. No alumni interviews. SATs or ACTs: required. Essay question.

Saint Michael's College

One Winooski Park, Colchester, VT 05439

Roman Catholic liberal arts college located in a top college town with breathtaking views of the Adirondack and Green mountains. Cheerful academic community with most students being New Englanders. Proximity to UVM makes for vibrant social scene. Easy access to Montreal and to some of the best skiing in the East.

Website: www.smcvt.edu

Location: Small City

Private

Total Enrollment: 1,900

Undergraduates: 1,830

Male/Female: 48/52

SAT Ranges: CR 510–630,

M 510–620

ACT Ranges: 22–28

Financial Aid: 94%

Expense: Pr \$ \$

Phi Beta Kappa: Yes

Applicants: 3,363

Accepted: 82%

Enrolled: 20%

Grad in 6 Years: 79%

Returning Freshmen: 89%

Academics:   

Social:   

Q of L: ★ ★ ★

Admissions: (800) 762-8000

Email Address: admission@
smcvt.edu

Strongest Programs:

Biology
Chemistry
English
History
Religious Studies
Mathematics
Psychology
Accounting

Saint Michael's College carries the distinction of being the only Edmundite institution of higher learning in the world. The college was established by the Society of Saint Edmund, a group of Roman Catholic country priests who took Saint Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, as their patron and spiritual inspiration. The Society of Saint Edmund maintains an on-campus presence to this day, and the influence of Saint Edmund can be found in the college's dedication to meaningful residential experiences, comprehensive liberal arts, and social justice. "There is something special to St. Mike's which is hard to put into words," says one sophomore. A junior adds, "Saint Michael's teaches students to go out into the world and work to make it a better place."

Founded in 1904, Saint Michael's College sits on 440 acres overlooking Vermont's breathtaking Green Mountains and the winding Winooski River. Just five minutes from Burlington, the campus features three-story, red-brick architecture and a central tree-lined rectangular green, anchored on one end by the glass-front library and the other by the chapel. To the east, Mount Mansfield—Vermont's tallest peak—provides a spectacular backdrop. The \$2 million Pomerleau Alumni Center is the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified facility on campus. The two-story center includes offices, a multifunction meeting room, the Trinity Conference Room, and a spacious living area.

Saint Michael's offers a plethora of solid programs, including biology, chemistry, English, history, religious studies, mathematics, and psychology. The elementary education and business programs are top draws, too. "There are a lot of business and education majors on campus," a political science major says. "Our education department does an incredible job of preparing us for our licensure and to be passionate, socially just educators with lots of tricks up our sleeves," adds one junior. A popular 3–2 program with the University of Vermont allows students to earn an engineering degree, and there are hybrid summer courses, including an art history course based partly at the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. Students may also take advantage of cross-registration options with Champlain College and Burlington College.

Regardless of major, students agree that courses are challenging. The revised general education curriculum includes a writing- and research-intensive First Year Seminar, and other requirements that fall into the categories of Foundations in Faith, Values, and Thought (courses in philosophy, religious studies, and ethical decision-making), Pathways to Understanding the World (including courses in

literary and historical studies, quantitative reasoning, global issues that impact the common good, scientific reasoning, and second-language acquisition), and Participatory Learning and Competencies, which includes an experiential learning requirement for all students. “The liberal studies requirements are difficult, but allow students to have a broadened understanding of fields they would not necessarily explore on their own,” says one freshman. Nearly 10 percent of Saint Michael’s students take part in undergraduate research, and many receive stipends for full-time work as research partners with faculty. Study abroad options include international study trips to such far-flung locales as Ghana, Guyana, Tanzania, France, Italy, Brazil and Costa Rica; 39 percent of undergraduates participate.

Back on campus, students praise professors for their knowledge and willingness to make themselves accessible. “Professors are experts in what they teach and they pass their expertise onto their students,” says a junior. Sixty percent of classes taken by freshmen have 19 or fewer students and “freshmen are taught by full professors,” according to a sophomore.

Most students who attend Saint Michael’s are “down to earth, compassionate, and looking to make a change,” according to a psychology major. Sixty-one percent are Roman Catholic but “everyone is respectful of one another,” says one student. African Americans account for 1 percent of the student body, Hispanics 3 percent and Asian Americans 1 percent. Seventy-nine percent come from outside Vermont and 30 percent ranked in the top tenth of their high school class. Campus politics lean left, students say, although conservatives are well represented too. “Students are engaged and active on campus and in our greater community,” a junior says, and hot-button issues include sustainability, social justice, and homosexuality. The college offers merit awards averaging \$21,335 to qualified students, and student-athletes vie for 20 basketball scholarships. The school also doles out Pell Grants to 19 percent of freshmen.

Students are required to spend all four years on campus in the “aging but livable” residence halls. “The dorms are comfortable and well maintained,” says a sophomore. “They act as a great ‘home away from home’ for students.” There are a number of housing options, including substance-free, international, and honors halls. Residence halls include traditional dorms with double and single rooms; townhouses with single bedrooms, kitchens, dining areas, and living rooms; and suites with single bedrooms and shared living spaces. Campus dining options include an unlimited meal plan at the Green Mountain Dining Room, which serves a variety of fare, including entrees, pizza, salads, soups, and vegetarian/vegan dishes. “In addition to offering tasty dishes,” says one student, “the dining hall is healthy.” Students report feeling safe on campus and laud the student-run Fire & Rescue Squad, which provides professional emergency services to the campus and a large segment of the surrounding county.

Despite the lack of a Greek scene, “the social life is outstanding,” raves one student. “Some nights there are big parties, some nights students are just hanging out together. There are tons of clubs or sports or activities to be involved in, and if you don’t see something you like, create it,” urges another student. The Residential Initiative Program delivers a slew of weekend programs designed to engage students and provide an alternative to the typical party scene. Campuswide activities include

“The social life is outstanding.”

comedians, coffeehouse music and poetry performances, and talent shows. Every Friday night, the college hosts the Weekend Grilling Program, which provides free food (hamburgers, hot dogs, or pizza) between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. Apart from senior housing, the campus is dry and students report that underage drinking is dealt with swiftly; those who want to imbibe travel off campus to take part in Burlington’s bar

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scene. Popular road trips “are to downtown Burlington or to the mountains and great outdoors like Mount Mansfield or Camels Hump,” says one student. Montreal is a popular weekend trip.

Burlington (pop. 40,000) is “a great college town as it contains three other colleges: UVM, Champlain, and Vermont Community College,” a sophomore says. “The area consists of young people and entrepreneurs offering a fun atmosphere to eat, shop, and go out in.” Saint Michael’s students receive a free bus pass that will take them downtown, and they can often be found volunteering in the surrounding community. “Volunteering is a huge aspect of life at Saint Michael’s,” confirms one student. The Mobilization of Volunteer Efforts (MOVE) program was named the United Way’s Hometown Hero for 2009—the first time an entire organization received the honor—and 70 percent of students get involved in at least one service program over the course of their college careers.

Saint Michael’s fields a number of NCAA Division II sports and competes in the Northeast-10 Conference. Competitive Purple Knights teams include men’s and women’s tennis, men’s lacrosse and hockey, and women’s field hockey, soccer, and basketball. Recreational and intramural programs are popular, too, and include the Wilderness Program, which provides access to sea kayaking, rock and ice climbing, white-water rafting, and other outdoor activities. Students cite P-Day (“centered around coming together as a school to have fun, participate in competitions, and listen to music”) and the MLK Talent Show (“always a packed house”) as popular annual events.

Saint Michael’s attracts students who want to use their education for the betterment of the world and who appreciate the unique vision inspired by Saint Edmund so many years ago. “College is not just about obtaining a degree,” says a junior, “but about learning who you are as a person and deciding what path you want to take in life. Saint Michael’s College offers students the opportunities to do so.”

Overlaps

University of Vermont, Providence, Stonehill, St. Anselm, Fairfield, St. Lawrence, University of Massachusetts, Assumption College

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St. Michael’s: Regular admissions: Feb. 1. Financial aid: Feb. 15. Housing: Jun. 22. Campus and alumni interviews: recommended, informational. ACTs or SATs: optional. Subject Tests: optional. Accepts the Common Application. Essay question: Common Application.

St. Olaf College

1520 St. Olaf Avenue, Northfield, MN 55057-1098

Lutheran to the core, the well-scrubbed undergraduates at St. Olaf are a stark contrast to the grunge of crosstown rival Carleton. The music program is world famous, and two-thirds of students study abroad. Daily chapel is not mandatory, but many students go. With over 3,000 students, St. Olaf is on the big side of small.

Northfield, Minnesota, which bills itself as the city of “Cows, Colleges, and Contentment,” is home to St. Olaf College—and the blondest student body this side of Oslo. Founded by Norwegian Lutheran immigrants and affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, St. Olaf provides a solid liberal arts education and plenty of opportunities to study abroad. One Olie describes her peers at St. Olaf as “Minnesota nice,” adding, “I feel personally valued and supported by the faculty and administrators. I felt at home here from day one.”

St. Olaf’s meticulously landscaped 350-acre campus, featured in several architectural journals, is located on Manitou Heights, overlooking the Cannon River valley

Website: www.stolaf.edu
Location: Small Town
Private
Total Enrollment: 3,096
Undergraduates: 3,096
Male/Female: 45/55
SAT Ranges: CR 600–720,
M 600–710