

living. “Most of the dorms have suites that house one to four people, though there are cheaper double-occupancy dorms as well,” notes one student. “Most of the dorms are co-ed.” A freshman gives high marks to the living/learning communities, some of which are for first-year students and others that bring together students from a particular school or college. Twenty-three percent of men pledge fraternities and 33 percent of women join sororities, and they may live in chapter houses. Students report that campus dining options are edible, diverse, and expensive.

Much of 'Bama's social life revolves around the Greek system and athletic events. “The social life ranges from Greek life to campuswide activities to departmental events,” says one student. Partying has remained a staple of the social scene in recent years, despite administrators' efforts to weaken it by prohibiting fraternities and sororities from having parties on campus. Those under 21 can't have alcohol in the dorms—or elsewhere, for that matter, per state law—but a student says, “Unless someone is walking around, noticeably drunk, underage offenders don't get caught. If someone is going to drink, they'll find a way to do it.” Those who don't go Greek, or who don't wish to drink, will find everything from the Society for Creative Anachronism (medievalists) to Bible study groups. A modern trolley service connects the 'Bama campus to the city's thriving downtown. Tuscaloosa is described as “an awesome college town,” that is “mostly centered around the university.” Road trips to New Orleans (for Mardi Gras and Greek weekend formals), Atlanta, Nashville, Birmingham, and the Gulf Coast and Florida beaches are popular, too, but “many people never leave UA!” says a sophomore.

'Bama football remains the cornerstone of the university's competitive athletic programs and has regained its former glory under the direction of head coach Nick Saban. The team brought home the Southeastern Conference title in 2012. The annual Auburn–Alabama game—the Iron Bowl, one of the most intense rivalries in college sports—is the highlight of the school year. “Any Alabama football game is a festival,” a sophomore says. Alabama competes in Division I, and most sports teams, including basketball, baseball, and softball, are competitive. The wheelchair basketball team has brought home a number of national titles, and women's gymnastics and women's golf were recent conference champs. 'Bama also sports a number of solid nonathletic teams as well, including the debate team and the Alabama Forensics Council, which competes in 16 regional and national speaking events and debate tournaments.

Although sports are still an integral part of the UA experience, the university's emphasis is now on technology, merit scholarships, global perspectives, and undergraduate research.

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Overlaps

Auburn, Florida State, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Tennessee

If You Apply To ➤

Alabama: Rolling admissions. Application fee: \$40. Campus and alumni interviews: optional, informational. SATs or ACTs: required. Subject Tests: optional. Accepts the Common Application. No essay question.

Albion College

Albion, MI 49224

Next to evangelical Hope and Calvin and out-there Kalamazoo, Albion is Michigan's middle-of-the-road liberal arts college. Think Gerald Ford, the moderate Republican president who is the namesake of Albion's signature Institute for Public Service. Future doctors, lawyers, and businesspeople are well served.

Website: www.albion.edu
Location: Small Town
Private
Total Enrollment: 1,348
Undergraduates: 1,348
Male/Female: 51/49
SAT Ranges: CR 520–630,
M 480–640
ACT Ranges: 22–27
Financial Aid: 99%
Expense: Pr \$
Student Loans: 62%
Average Debt: \$ \$ \$ \$
Phi Beta Kappa: Yes
Applicants: 2,383
Accepted: 70%
Enrolled: 22%
Grad in 6 Years: 76%
Returning Freshmen: 73%
Academics:   
Social:  
Q of L: ★ ★ ★
Admissions: (800) 858-6770
Email Address: admissions@albion.edu

Strongest Programs:

Anthropology
Geological Sciences
International Studies
Education
Music

Albion continues to attract an ambitious, involved group of students.

Albion is a small, private college in Michigan whose motto is “Liberal arts at work.” The school’s motto emphasizes the importance Albion places on combining learning with hands-on experience. Students at Albion often participate in leadership and service-learning seminars. Albion helps students achieve their goals “through classes, internships, projects, and a strong alumni network,” says a senior. And when the work is through, students here enjoy a close-knit social life. “Albion is where I have built lifetime friendships,” says a student.

Founded in 1835 by the Methodist Church, Albion is located near the banks of the Kalamazoo River. In addition to its newer Georgian-style architecture, the college has retained and restored several of its 19th-century buildings. The campus is spacious, with statuesque oaks and a beautiful nature center. Robinson Hall, the campus centerpiece, houses myriad departments, including the Gerald Ford Institute for Public Service, the Gerstacker Liberal Arts Program in Professional Management, and the Anna Howard Shaw Women’s Center. The college is also home to the largest collegiate indoor riding arena in the United States.

Albion has a rich academic history and was the first private college in Michigan to have a Phi Beta Kappa chapter (1940). The school has also produced three Rhodes scholars. On their journey to such success, students are required to take core courses distributed among humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, fine arts, and math. They must also satisfy requirements in environmental science and gender and ethnicity studies. Freshmen must take first-year seminars designed to provide a “stimulating learning environment” in a small-class setting, while seniors participate in a capstone experience.

Albion’s most distinguishing feature is the emphasis placed on citizenship and service. The Ford Institute takes a unique approach for future civic leaders. Students participate in a simulation of city government in which they play the roles of community leaders. Visiting speakers include senators and congressmen, governors and state legislators, and interest group representatives. The premedical and prelaw programs draw dedicated undergrads, and the English and economics departments are well respected. Another option is the Summer Research Program, which allows students to remain on campus during the summer to work with faculty members on different projects. Newer programs include majors in business and organizations, environmental science, and sustainability studies. The computer science and physical education majors have been dropped.

The academic climate at Albion is described as competitive but not cut-throat. One student says, “Albion has a challenging yet inviting academic climate.” Top-notch academic and career counseling and low student/faculty ratios keep students on track and motivated. Class size varies, but 71 percent of classes have 19 or fewer students. Professors are interested in students’ academic performance and their emotional well-being. “With very few exceptions, I have had professors who have challenged and encouraged me,” says a junior. Teaching assistants are used for tutoring, not teaching. Albion’s libraries feature computer facilities, an interlibrary loan service, a listening lab for language or music study, and a helpful staff. If you can’t find what you need at Albion’s libraries, weekly bus trips to the University of Michigan libraries in Ann Arbor provide access to even more resources.

Albion continues to attract an ambitious, involved group of students. “The typical Albion student doesn’t spend the evening playing video games in his room,” explains a junior, “but trying to prioritize between a student senate meeting, soccer practice, or marching band practice.” Michigan residents make up 88 percent of the student population. Two percent are Asian American, 4 percent African American, and 3 percent Hispanic. Up to now, there has been little deviation from

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the white, upper-middle-class norm. In an effort to change this, a host-family program matches minority students with families from within the community. There are a number of merit scholarships available, averaging \$16,627, but no athletic scholarships.

Ninety percent of Albion students call the residence halls home. "Housing is good," says a political science major, "especially options for upperclassmen." The majority of the freshman class inhabits Wesley Hall. During their sophomore year, many students move to Seaton or Whitehouse halls; seniors enjoy apartment-style housing called The Mae. Dorms are co-ed by hall or floor, and the information each student provides in their housing request form is used to assign rooms and roommates. Other housing options include apartment annexes and fraternity houses. Sororities do not have houses; they hold their meetings in lodges. Two large dining rooms feed campus residents on an "eat all day" meal plan. "The dining hall offers a wide variety of options on a daily basis," one junior reports.

Fifty-one percent of Albion men and 43 percent of women belong to one of the school's six national fraternities and seven sororities. Greek parties draw large crowds, composed of Greeks and non-Greeks, making them a primary part of many students' social lives. "Social life on campus is always active," says one student. A well-run union board organizes all sorts of activities—films, lectures, plays, comics, and concerts—to keep students occupied in their spare time. Several students report that the town movie theater shows "free movies if you show a valid student ID!" Those who insist on imbibing can do it at Gina's or Cascarelli's, popular bars in town. Road trips are a big part of weekends for many students. Ann Arbor, East Lansing, and Canada are frequent destinations.

The college's geographic namesake has been a victim of the economic downturn and rates poorly as a college town, according to students. "The city of Albion is going through a rough period," says a sophomore. Students focus some of their energy by working for groups supported by the Student Volunteer Bureau; in fact, half of the students volunteer on a regular basis. They are very involved in the community, including "city clean-up day, Habitat for Humanity, and volunteering at nursing homes and schools." Some traditional events that offer a nice break from academics are the Briton Bash, a fair that familiarizes students with clubs and organizations, and the Day of Woden, which is a picnic held in the spring on the last day of class.

The varsity football team competes in the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association and has won 34 conference championships—the most in Conference MIAA history. Other recent conference champs include women's tennis, women's cross-country, and women's soccer. Hope College is a bitter rival, as is Alma College. Recreational and intramural sports attract 38 percent of students and include soccer, flag football, basketball, and canoeing.

At Albion, professors are accessible and interested, and academics are challenging without being overwhelming. Students cite the appeal of a "small campus with friendly students, caring faculty, and kind staff members."

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Overlaps

**Michigan State,
University of
Michigan, Hope,
Grand Valley State,
Alma, Central
Michigan**

**If You
Apply
To** ➤

Albion: Rolling admissions. Early action: Dec. 1. Application fee: \$40 (paper), free (online). Campus interviews: optional, evaluative. Alumni interviews: optional, informational. SATs or ACTs: required. Subject Tests: optional. Accepts the Common Application with Albion supplement. Essay question.