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The Good College: An Engineering Example

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at Penn State, including separate schools for electrical engineering and computer science. The College of Engineering has its own career development center to support its students and connect them to prospective employers. Of course, the largest schools also have the largest classes, especially in the freshman year, so students may not get all the personalized attention they need. Top engineering students may be admitted to the Schreyer Honors College and receive an education that is more personalized and finish with a senior honors thesis. This experience is also one of the best ways to stand out in a large group of juniors competing for internships as well as seniors vying for full-time jobs. Penn State's 66 percent four-year graduation rate is quite good for a school of its size.

Heading east toward Philadelphia, Drexel University has nearly 17,000 students and one of the nation's largest cooperative education programs. More than 90 percent of Drexel University students take advantage of cooperative education, the majority working in three six-month placements over five years. Once this feature is taken into account, Drexel's low 4-year graduation rate (24 percent) is cast in a positive light. More than half of Drexel's engineering students graduated into a full-time job with a co-op employer in 2013. Drexel has 21 degree options within the College of Engineering as well as a separate school for Biomedical Engineering. It also has the

There has always been great demand for college students with engineering degrees. Engineers and the engineering they do serve to help all of us in our busy modern lives. Engineers design the computers and smartphones we use every day, the medical instruments we rely upon to keep us healthy, the bridges we cross to work in the buildings they help design, and much of the rest of the infrastructure of our daily lives. Good colleges of engineering come in different types and sizes to address all the many different demands for engineers and engineering specialties, and fit the needs of different students. These programs are all properly accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

But accreditation is only one sign of a good engineering program. A good engineering program will also provide opportunities for a rewarding learning experience, often outside of the classroom, as well as connections to employment after graduation. Let's take a look at engineering schools in Pennsylvania.

Check out Penn State's main campus at University Park. It has a large number of undergraduates (over 40,000), larger than any other university in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states. This past fall there were nearly 7,900 students in the College of Engineering, more than most universities have for all of their majors. There are 12 engineering majors

advantage of being in a large city for employment while in school - as well as for knocking on doors after graduation.

About an hour from Philadelphia, Lehigh University is a much smaller school (about 5,000 students) that also offers its engineering students co-op experiences through the sophomore and junior years, and manages to graduate most students in four years. Lehigh engineering students who are President's Scholars may attend the university for a fifth tuition-free year to pursue a second bachelor's degree in business or the liberal arts or complete a master's degree. Lehigh is a smaller program, offering nine engineering degree options. But this program also has a unique option called Computer Science and Business that is accredited by both ABET and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the worldwide accrediting body for business schools. In addition, Lehigh's career services are also excellent. Over two-thirds of seniors graduating in engineering found jobs through the career center, on-campus recruitment and the university's career fair in 2014.

You can also get a fine engineering education at some liberal arts schools, notably Lafayette College, not far from Lehigh. Lafayette has 2,600 undergraduates and 750 are enrolled in engineering. Lafayette grants degrees in four engineering fields, as well as a bachelor's in engineering studies. You can choose electives across the disciplines such as civil, electrical, chemical and mechanical engineering-and a BA and BS in international studies and engineering. With dedication and effort, the dual degrees can be earned in four years. Lafayette may be a smaller school than Penn State, Drexel or Lehigh, but it is a better choice for students who want to work more closely with the faculty - there are no graduate students because Lafayette grants no graduate degrees. Lafayette also has one of the best career services centers for a school of its size.

In almost every state in America you can find various types of schools that offer fine engineering programs. The challenge and the fun lie in exploring the various alternatives to find the best matches for you!

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