

If You Apply To >

Bentley: Early decision, regular decision. SATs or ACTs: required. No Subject Tests. Accepts the Common Application.

Birmingham–Southern College

Box 549008, 900 Arkakelphia Road, Birmingham, AL 35254

One of the Deep South’s better liberal arts colleges, BSC is smaller than Rhodes (Tennessee), larger than Millsaps (Mississippi). Strong emphasis on service, and the Greek system is a throwback to the way college used to be. “Tuition reset” initiative aims to mitigate the problem of sticker shock by significantly lowering the school’s published sticker price.

Once an old-school conservative Southern institution, BSC is now striving to prepare students for all aspects of the modern world, with high-tech facilities and a curriculum that prioritizes critical thinking, teamwork, and global awareness. Affiliated with the United Methodist Church, the college continues to emphasize the value of service: more than half the student body volunteers through the Bunting Center for Engaged Study and Community Action. Attentive faculty add to a sense of commitment to both personal and community growth.







Known as the Hilltop for obvious topographical reasons, BSC is the product of the 1918 merger of two smaller colleges: Birmingham College and Southern University. The 190-acre campus, a green and shady oasis in an urban neighborhood, contains a pleasing hodgepodge of traditional and modern architecture, all surrounded by a security fence for added safety. After a major financial crisis several years ago, student enrollment is back on the rise, and the school has reestablished some previously cut programs and is beginning to introduce new majors.

The Explorations general education curriculum is designed to help students develop effective communication and problem-solving skills, connect with their social and political world, and direct their own learning. It comprises 32 units across several disciplines and includes three global and local citizenship courses. All seniors complete a capstone experience and a public presentation of their work. The Explorations term, a four-week term between the fall and spring semesters, allows students to explore new interests and areas of study, from courses like Bob Dylan in America to teaching English in Uganda.

Biology, business administration, psychology, and mathematics are the most popular majors. Students interested in medical or law school can participate in special advising programs, and new majors are available in health sciences and architectural studies. The art, theater, and music programs are all among the best in the South, and the college offers a major in musical theater as well. Students stage several major productions each year, often including American and world premieres. Other notable majors include media and film studies and applied computer science. Dual-degree programs in engineering, nursing, and environmental studies are offered in partnership with such institutions as Auburn, Vanderbilt, and Duke.

Each student at BSC is assigned a faculty member who serves as his or her academic advisor from freshman convocation to graduation, an arrangement that students praise for its effectiveness. Equal praise goes out to faculty in the classrooms,

“Undergraduate research opportunities and internships are easy to come by.”

Website: www.bsc.edu
Location: City Outskirts
Private
Total Enrollment: 1,261
Undergraduates: 1,261
Male/Female: 48/52
SAT Ranges: ERW 520–640,
M 520–610
ACT Ranges: 22–28
Financial Aid: 93%
Pell Grant: 24%
Expense: Pr \$
Student Loans: 48%
Average Debt: \$ \$
Applicants: 3,628
Accepted: 57%
Enrolled: 16%
Grad in 6 Years: 68%
Returning Freshmen: 80%
Academics:   
Social:   
Q of L: ★ ★ ★
Admissions: (205) 226-4696
Email Address: admiss@bsc.edu

Strong Programs:

Art
Theater
Music
Musical Theater
Media and Film Studies
Applied Computer Science
Biology
Business Administration

The Explorations term, a four-week term between the fall and spring semesters, allows students to explore new interests.

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Overlaps

Rhodes, Berry, Sewanee, Centre, Millsaps, Belmont University, University of Alabama, Auburn

where 69 percent of classes have fewer than 20 students. An education major says professors “love to challenge our beliefs and ideas by making us defend what we think.” The honors program allows 30 exceptional first-year students to take small seminars with one or more professors. The Krulak Institute coordinates opportunities for experiential learning, such as service-learning projects, study abroad programs, and an entrepreneurial scholars program. Fifteen percent of BSC students study internationally, and 25 percent collaborate with faculty on research projects. “Undergraduate research opportunities and internships are easy to come by for those who are looking,” says a biology major.

Sixty percent of the students are homegrown Alabamians, and practically all the rest hail from Deep South states; many have family ties to BSC, and 19 percent are Methodist. “Students at BSC tend to be overcommitted by most standards,” says a freshman. Fourteen percent of BSC students are African American, 2 percent are Hispanic, 3 percent are Asian American, and 1 percent are multiracial. Just 1 percent of students are international, but, “The college is taking steps to diversify,” a student says. The student-run Cross-Cultural Committee sponsors cultural events to promote awareness of diversity on campus.

“Unlike other schools, Greek organizations do not limit or turn away anyone from parties.”

Politically, the student body leans conservative, and issues like abortion have been divisive on campus, students report. Birmingham–Southern has reset its sticker price back to 2002 levels—decreasing costs by more than half—in an effort to avoid the sticker shock caused by high published prices that can deter applicants. With this change, merit- and need-based financial aid is still awarded to eligible students, although in smaller amounts.

Eighty percent of the students live on campus, including many whose families reside in Birmingham. Dorms are described as comfortable and convenient. First-years all live together in four traditional halls that have recently been renovated. “The housing selection process after freshman year depends on year and class rank, so there is definitely an incentive to do your best in the classroom,” advises a senior. Students dine at four locations on campus. “BSC’s food provider covers a wide range of special tastes and always offers variety and tasty options,” says a biology major. Campus security officials are said to be visible and effective.

Thirty-eight percent of the men and 52 percent of the women join Greek life. “Unlike other schools, Greek organizations do not limit or turn away anyone from parties; so although they set the tone, they are very inclusive,” explains a senior. As for alcohol, it’s not allowed on the quad, and elsewhere it must be in an opaque container, a policy most students find reasonable, described by one senior as a “‘don’t see it, ignore it’ policy.” The biggest social event of the year is SoCo, a two-day music festival. Freshmen take part in a square dance during orientation. Other popular events include the E-Fest concert and Halloween on the Hilltop, where students “dress up in costumes and the neighborhood kids go trick-or-treating.” When social opportunities on campus dry up, many students take the shuttle to Birmingham for the city’s nightlife. Road trips to Auburn, Nashville, and Atlanta are popular, and beaches and mountains are less than five hours away.

BSC currently fields 22 varsity teams for men and women. The Panthers compete in the Division III Southern Athletic Association, and the baseball, softball, and men’s and women’s swimming and diving and track and field teams have performed well in recent years. Forty-two percent of students take part in the intramural program. Basketball, flag football, and soccer are popular, but less traditional sports, such as dodgeball and inner-tube water polo, are also offered.

Students at BSC continue to focus on academics while balancing community service and an active social scene. Small classes, a caring faculty, and an expanding menu of academic offerings continue to draw attention to this close-knit liberal arts

school. A junior says BSC is a good choice for those students who “want to spend four years preparing, maturing, and challenging their minds so that they can make a difference in the world.”

If You Apply To ›

Birmingham–Southern: Early decision, early action, regular decision. SATs or ACTs: optional (test-optional applicants must interview and submit academic portfolio). No Subject Tests. Accepts the Common Application with supplement.

Boston College

140 Commonwealth Avenue, Devlin Hall, Room 208, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

One of the main reasons that Boston is the ultimate college town. Set on a quiet hilltop at the end of a T (subway) line, BC is a close second to Notre Dame in the pecking order among true-blue Roman Catholics (though many students clamoring for a spot are not aware of its religious ties). About 70 percent of students identify as Catholic, compared to 50 percent at Georgetown and 80 percent at Notre Dame.

Boston College, one of the largest Roman Catholic schools in the country, is a study in contrasts. The academics and the athletic teams are both well respected. The environment is safely suburban, yet barely 20 minutes from Boston, the hub of the Eastern seaboard’s college scene. The influence of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) on the college provides a guiding spirit for campus life, but the social opportunities still seem endless. Despite the paradoxes (or perhaps because of them), students at BC enjoy a rich college experience.

Don’t let the modest name fool you. Boston College is actually a research university with nine schools and colleges. It has three campuses: the main campus at Chestnut Hill, the Brighton campus across the street, and the Newton campus a mile and a half away. The dominant architecture of the main campus (known as “the Heights”) is Gothic Revival, with modern additions over the past few years. There’s lots of grass and trees, not to mention a large, peaceful reservoir (perfect to jog around) right in the front yard. The university recently completed a multiyear master plan that doubled the size of the main campus. A new dorm, a field house, and a recreation center are some of the latest facilities to open.

Boston College was founded by the Jesuits in 1863 to teach the offspring of Irish immigrants. These days, the college’s mission is to “educate skilled, knowledgeable, and responsible leaders within each new generation.” To accomplish this goal, the Core Curriculum requires courses not only in literature, natural science, history, philosophy, social science, and theology, but also in writing, mathematics, the arts, cultural diversity, and a non-European culture, in addition to specific requirements set by each undergraduate school. “Core Curriculum forces you to take classes you might not want to take but end up enjoying,” says a senior. Students in arts and sciences must also show proficiency in a modern foreign language or classical language before graduation. Freshmen are required to take a writing workshop in which each student develops a portfolio of personal and academic writing and reads a wide range of texts. About a quarter of seniors participate in the Capstone Program,

“Core Curriculum forces you to take classes you might not want to take but end up enjoying.”

Website: www.bc.edu
Location: Suburban
Private
Total Enrollment: 14,107
Undergraduates: 9,377
Male/Female: 47/53
SAT Ranges: ERW 650–720,
M 670–770
ACT Ranges: 31–34
Financial Aid: 68%
Pell Grant: 14%
Expense: Pr \$ \$ \$ \$
Student Loans: 50%
Average Debt: \$
Applicants: 31,084
Accepted: 28%
Enrolled: 27%
Grad in 6 Years: 92%
Returning Freshmen: 95%
Academics: 📖 📖 📖 📖
Social: 📞 📞 📞 📞
Q of L: ★ ★ ★
Admissions: (617) 552-3100
Email Address: N/A

Strong Programs:
Management
Nursing
International Studies