The College of Arts and Sciences is the heart of the academic experience at the University of Pennsylvania. Tracing its roots to the founding of the University, “The College” is home to 6,400 undergraduates in the School of Arts and Sciences, and offers a distinctive brand of liberal arts education. Students have access to all the resources of a world-class research university, while also sharing intense intellectual experiences more common in smaller settings. This means you’ll get to know your faculty and classmates very well, leading to engagement both in and out of the classroom.

This brochure is an introduction to the interconnected ideas you’ll encounter in the College at Penn. To explore how your interests align with the curriculum and community you’ll find here, visit our website for prospective students where you’ll learn how our students construct their own paths to success.

Learn more at www.college.upenn.edu/prospective
Tradition Meets Innovation  
ENGAGING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

The College of Arts and Sciences is the intellectual home for academic programs that link tradition with innovation. Our world-renowned faculty engage with students to turn theoretical and experimental ideas formed in the classroom into practical applications used to advance society and remedy problems facing our world. Additionally, the City of Philadelphia serves as a large, non-traditional classroom for Penn’s students to explore questions of science, society, humanities and the arts.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Community engagement is an essential part of the College’s curriculum where students can connect with real issues through a seminar like Making Space and Public Art, or an academically-based community service (ABCS) course in environmental studies called Clean Water—Green Cities where students investigate the link between urban ecosystems and human behavior.

RESEARCH
Students work with faculty members in genomics labs, on archeological digs in Italy, and in music archives studying the history of Jazz. Research brings together classroom knowledge with new and important discoveries, imparting skills and subject expertise that might help them to choose a major, decide on a first job or whether to attend graduate school.

Integration of Knowledge  
LEARNING ACROSS DISCIPLINES

A liberal arts education trains students for more than a particular profession, it imparts skills and knowledge that cut across multiple disciplines, regardless of major, to serve graduates for a lifetime. In the College of Arts and Sciences, students don’t just absorb information—the curriculum teaches them to analyze, communicate and transform facts into knowledge that then gets applied within a real world context. This approach requires students to explore important topics through multiple lenses so that they can understand complicated issues in today’s world.

A FLEXIBLE CURRICULUM
As part of the College’s General Requirement, students choose one course from each of seven Sectors of Knowledge. The sectors allow students to tailor their own liberal arts education while gaining valuable knowledge across a broad spectrum of disciplines. Courses range from Indian philosophy to bioethics and geopolitics, and after completing a few of these interesting courses, many students change direction and begin a new field of study they never considered before.

Along the way, students also encounter six Foundational Approaches that they will apply to any future study or career after Penn. These approaches translate to tangible skills in problem solving, writing, public speaking, foreign language, cultural awareness and quantitative analysis.

7 Sectors, 6 Approaches

FURTHER AFIELD
Students connect with communities far beyond Philadelphia by studying and interning abroad on one of our 150+ programs from Accra to Zurich, gaining vital language skills and cultural capital—traits employers value in a global economy. They also do summer internships in government through the Washington Semester program, or head to Hollywood to learn about the film industry.

RELEVANCE OF ACADEMIC DIVERSITY
All of the majors in the College complement the interdisciplinary exploration that begins with the General Requirement. Seemingly traditional majors like history and German encourage learning from other disciplines like political science and sociology, while explicitly interdisciplinary majors such as Biological Basis of Behavior or Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies integrate courses from multiple fields of knowledge as core components. This exposure to multiple subjects and approaches teaches students valuable analytical skills, enabling them to perceive pattern in complexity and render reasoned judgments under conditions of uncertainty, regardless of the major they ultimately choose.

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Education for a Lifetime
BUILDING AN INTELLECTUAL AND PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

Students don’t have to have everything figured out from the first day they arrive at Penn. Advisors, faculty, fellow students, and the curriculum itself guide them to identify their passions and develop their voices in a way that is uncommon for a research university. As a result, the relationships students develop lead to amazing opportunities for experiential learning both on and off campus, internships and, ultimately, life after Penn in the form of a first job or graduate study.

CAREERS AND THE LIBERAL ARTS

Employers need broadly-educated employees in a constantly-evolving world, and evidence shows that there isn’t a direct correlation between particular majors and careers after Penn over the long term. A company like Google regularly recruits College of Arts and Sciences seniors for its management training program. Why would a technology giant want to hire liberal arts majors? Because they want new hires with strong research, analytical and communication skills, who can think with creativity and agility. Students get these necessary skills through each and every major in the College of Arts & Sciences. Given this fact, students who study areas that interest them tend to find greater happiness, accomplish more academically, and by extension, have more post-graduate options when they leave Penn.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Penn alumni return to campus throughout the year to spend time with current students to discuss academic and professional goals through the College Alumni Mentoring Series, Fox Leadership Program and the Office of Career Services. Student groups also play an important role in the development of personal growth. From the Intellectual Philomathean Society to the theatrical antics of the Mask and Wig ensemble, students spend plenty of time outside of class developing their mental and social skills.

FIELDS OF GRADUATE STUDY

Top 5 Grad Schools: Penn, Columbia, NYU, Harvard, Georgetown

A constantly changing world will require you to draw on finely tuned and broadly acquired analytical skills in order to succeed. This makes an education from Penn’s College of Arts and Sciences invaluable regardless of the path you eventually follow.

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