

Alma College

Alma College is a private, liberal arts college located in Alma, Michigan, United States. The enrollment is approximately 1,400 students, and the college is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.^[3]

Alma College offers five degrees (Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Science in Nursing) in 41 majors.^[4] Academic programs that typically produce the most graduates are Business Administration, Biology, Psychology, Integrative Physiology and Health Science, Education, English, and History. Students are encouraged to participate in service learning and study abroad opportunities designed to enhance classroom learning.

The College's stated mission is "to prepare graduates who think critically, serve generously, lead purposefully and live responsibly as stewards of the world they bequeath to future generations". Publications that have recognized Alma College include the 2013 Fiske Guide to Colleges and The Princeton Review's 2013–14 "Best in the Midwest".^[5]

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History

Alma College



Type	Private coeducational liberal arts college
Established	1886
Affiliation	Presbyterian
Endowment	\$109.9 million (2016) ^[1]
President	Dr. Jeff Abernathy (http://www.alma.edu/offices/president)
Provost	Dr. Michael Selmon
Academic staff	82
Undergraduates	1,378 full-time 41 part-time ^[2]
Location	Alma, Michigan, U.S. <div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div><div>43.380°N</div></div></div></div><div><div></div><div><div>84.671°W</div></div></div></div></div></div>
Campus	small city, rural area <div>125 acres (0.51 km²)</div>
Colors	Maroon and Cream <div><div> </div></div>
Nickname	Scots

The College was founded by Michigan Presbyterians in 1886, and received funding from lumber magnate Ammi Wright, for whom Wright Hall on campus and Wright Avenue in the city of Alma are named. Prior to 1934, the Alma mascot was the Fighting Presbyterians, which became the subject of debate in 1931 due to a series of stories by *The Almanian*, a student-run newspaper, expressing discontent over the limitation on cheers to "Go Presbyterians" or "Go Campbellites", the latter in support of then current football coach, Royal Campbell.^[6] While still maintaining a close relationship with the Presbyterian Church, Alma College offers an environment that welcomes students of all religious backgrounds.

The college's 13th President, Dr. Jeff Abernathy, assumed leadership in June 2010.^[3]

Mascot	Scotty
Website	alma.edu (http://www.alma.edu)
	

Academics

Alma utilizes a 4-4-1 academic calendar with 14-week terms in the fall and winter and a four-week term in May, which students typically use for travel classes, research and internships.

The College has a Nationally Competitive Scholarship Committee, designed to help juniors and seniors apply for funding opportunities for graduate and professional school. This has produced winners of the Fulbright, Gates-Cambridge, Truman, and Udall Scholarships, as well as finalists for the Marshall and Rhodes Scholarships. Since 2003, 45 students have received nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships, including 24 Fulbright scholarships.^[7]

The Posey Global Fellowship program and the Responsible Leadership Institute are designed to further students' awareness of ethical leadership and service in an increasingly global economy and political landscape. In addition, the Presidential Honors Program is an intellectual community centered on collaborative research and a conscious commitment to the liberal arts.

Alma Commitment

Alma College offers a four-year graduation promise, the Alma Commitment, and a pledge that each interested student can participate in an experiential learning opportunity, such as an internship, research fellowship, or study abroad, backed by up to \$2,500 in Alma Venture funding from the college.^[8] The Alma Commitment, offered for the first time to the entering fall 2013 class, applies to all 136-credit majors. If a student meets program requirements but is not able to graduate in four years (eight terms), the college will pay the tuition cost for the student's ninth term.

Majors and Programs of Emphasis

Since 2010, Alma has created several new majors, including Health Care Administration, Environmental Studies, Anthropology, Biotechnology, New Media Studies and Special Education-Learning Disabilities. A new Integrated Health Studies Institute brings together students from across the disciplines with health-related career interests to gain practical experience in health fields and discuss cross-disciplinary issues related to health.^[9]

In February 2014, the College received state approval to offer the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, or BSN, program. In April 2014, the Alma faculty approved new majors in accounting, finance, management and marketing that build on existing foundations and supplement the business administration majors that Alma has had for decades.

In addition to traditional majors, students may opt to create a Program of Emphasis (POE).^[10] Students work with faculty mentors to create their own major by taking courses from a variety of departments and combining them with internships and research experience that rounds out their POE. Some recent POEs have included Anthropology, Foreign Service and Nonprofit Management.

Model United Nations

Alma College's nationally recognized Model United Nations program has won top honors at the National Model United Nations conference in New York City for 20 consecutive years (1997–2016)—the longest active winning streak of any college or university in the nation. Alma College's all-time 34 "outstanding delegation" awards are the most of any college or university in the 92-year history of the conference.^[11] The Huffington Post has called Alma College's MUN team a "superpower".^[12]

Campus

Alma College is located in a small-town setting, the city of Alma having slightly fewer than 10,000 residents. Its primary academic buildings, built with a red brick motif, are centered around a large square, McIntyre Mall. West of this mall is picturesque Dunning Memorial Chapel. The majority of buildings are located on North Campus, that is, the area north of Superior Street. These include the major dormitory residences, as well as the academic and student life buildings. South Campus is home to suite-style residences ("New Dorms", so named because they were built later in the 1960s than residences in North Campus) as well as the new environmentally friendly apartment-style Wright Hall, inaugurated in 2005 and the second residence of its name, the former being demolished in 1976. South Campus is also home to "Fraternity Row" (Center Street) and "Sorority Row" (Superior Street) as well as several other themed houses. Over 50 percent of the buildings on Alma's campus were built under the long tenure (1956–1980) of Robert D. Swanson, after whom the main academic building is named. Recent additions to the campus include the Alan J. Stone Recreation Center in 2001, the Oscar E. Remick Heritage Center in 2000, Colina Library Wing in 2006,^[13] and the Hogan Physical Education Center^{[14][15]}

In addition to the main campus, the College also owns a 180-acre (0.73 km²) ecological research area containing woodlands, a willow marsh, a sphangnum bog, and a glacial kettle lake, with a full research facility and a bird observatory, located in Vestaburg, about 15 miles (24 km) to the west of Alma.



McIntyre Mall with the Swanson Academic Center in the background



Dunning Memorial Chapel

Athletics

Alma College athletic teams, nicknamed the *Scots*, are part of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) - Division III and the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA). Generally, more than a third of Alma's students participate in sports. In October 2010, the College added men's wrestling,^[16] women's bowling^[17] and men's and women's lacrosse as varsity sports effective in the 2011-12 academic year. With these additions, the college offers 11 men's and 11 women's varsity athletic programs.

The mascot of Alma College is Scotty. Depicted as a Scotsman, he wears a traditional highland Kilt, sporrán, and sash woven in the Alma College tartan pattern.

Honors

- In 2006 Alma College quarterback Josh Brehm was named the recipient of the Gagliardi Trophy, the highest individual honor in NCAA Division III football.
- In 1992 Alma's women's basketball team earned the NCAA Division III championship.
- In 1999 Alma's Men's soccer team made it to the NCAA Final Four.
- In 2016 Alma's Men's Basketball team made it to the NCAA Round of Eight, the first appearance in the NCAA tournament in the program's history.



Oscar E Remick Heritage Center

Performing arts

More than a third of all Alma students take part in at least one performance each year. The College offers majors in theatre, dance and music, but students of all majors may join in productions. The Heritage Center for the Performing Arts is the region's premiere performing arts facility. It houses the Theatre and Dance Department and serves as the performance venue for the College's eight music ensembles. It features a 500-seat concert hall for large performances, an intimate 190-seat theatre, and a dance studio.

Greek life

Several social Greek letter organizations are active on the Alma College campus. There are six social fraternities: Zeta Sigma, Delta Gamma Tau, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Sigma Chi, Tau Kappa Epsilon and Theta Chi. There are five social sororities: Kappa Iota, Alpha Gamma Delta, Alpha Xi Delta, Gamma Phi Beta, and Phi Sigma Sigma. Other Greek organizations on campus include Sigma Alpha Iota, a women's music fraternity, and Alpha Phi Omega, a co-ed National Service Fraternity, in addition to numerous honorary and professional fraternities.



Alma college's mascot, Scotty, walking in the 2015 homecoming parade

Criticisms of ranking systems

In January 1997, then-president of Alma College, Alan Stone, asked 480 colleges to boycott the *U.S. News and World Report Rankings* due to the peer assessment survey which counts for 25% of a college's ranking. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, in 1996, Alma College surveyed 158 colleges about the rankings. The result of the survey indicated that "84 percent of the respondents admitted that they were unfamiliar with some of the institutions they had been asked to rank. Almost 44 percent indicated that they 'tended to leave responses for unfamiliar schools blank.'" Stone stated, "this makes me wonder just how many votes are being considered for each school's academic-reputation ranking".^{[18][19]} After a June 2007 meeting of the Annapolis Group, Alma college joined others who would be boycotting the rankings. According to a June 22, 2007 article for *The Morning Sun*:

President Dr. Saundra Tracy said she agreed with a majority of her peers at a meeting this week to stop participating in the personality assessment portion of the annual college rankings published by U.S. News and World Report. A consensus was taken at the end of an annual meeting of the Annapolis Group, an

association of liberal arts colleges. Tracy supported the action and criticized the magazine's unscientific process to rate the popularity and reputation of a school based on what presidents, provosts and admission deans say in a survey.^[20]

Presidents of Alma College

The following thirteen individuals have served as president of Alma College from the creation of the office to the present. Those marked with their names **in bold** had graduated from Alma. Where years do not overlap there was a gap of a few months while a suitable candidate was found.

- George F. Hunting (1887–1891)
- August Bruske (1891–1912)
- Thomas Blaisdell (1912–1915)
- Harry M. Crooks (1915–1937)
- **John Wirt Dunning (1938–1942)**
- Roy W. Hamilton (1943–1946)
- Dale Welch (1947–1950)
- Stanley Harker (1950–1956)
- Robert Swanson (1956–1980)
- Oscar E. Remick (1980–1987)
- Alan Stone (1988–2000)
- Sandra Tracy (2001–2010)
- Jeff Abernathy (2010–present)

Notable alumni

- George Allen (1918-1990), NFL coach inducted in Pro Football Hall of Fame
- Jake Boss (born 1971), NCAA Baseball player and coach, head coach at Michigan State University
- Bob Bruce (born 1933), Major League Baseball pitcher from 1959-67
- Paul Hale Bruske (1877–1956), Writer, journalist, advertising executive, and sportsman
- William Skinner Cooper (1884–1978), Botanist and ecologist; former president of the Ecological Society of America and the Minnesota Academy of Science
- Jim Daniels (born 1956), Poet and writer
- Bob Devaney (1915–1997), NCAA football player and Nebraska coach inducted in College Football Hall of Fame
- Brad Guigar (born 1969), Cartoonist
- Jennifer Haase (born 1974), Politician
- Frank Knox (1874–1944), Newspaper editor and publisher; former Secretary of the Navy and onetime Republican Party vice presidential candidate
- Betty Mahmoody (born 1945), Writer and activist, author of *Not Without My Daughter*
- Jim Northrup (1939–2011), MLB player, Detroit Tigers
- Gary Peters (born 1958), Politician, currently member United States Senate (D-MI)
- Dan Scripps, Former politician and President of the Michigan Energy Innovation Business Council
- Lester W. Sharp (1887–1961), Botanist and pioneer in cytogenetics
- Tom Shaw (1945–2014), Fifteenth Bishop of Massachusetts
- Denny Stolz (born 1934), NCAA football player and coach
- Claude Watson (1885–1978), lawyer, businessman, and minister; temperance movement leader and two time Prohibition Party presidential candidate



Gary Peters

- Reverend Arthur Ritter (born 1955), minister at Meadowbrook Congregational Church in Novi, Michigan.

See also

- List of Alma Scots head football coaches

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External links

- Alma College official website (<http://www.alma.edu>)
 - Alma College official athletics website (<http://www.goalmascots.com>)
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