<<<superwizard188>>>
So...Berkeley or Yale? I want to major in CS, which is fairly amazing at Berkeley and still developing at Yale... but Yale is smaller and you obviously get more individual attention, which is crucial. And Yale is YALE, and at times it does seem nice when thinking about going there. But since I'm a math/CS guy, I don't know how well I'd "fit" at a college more known for its liberal arts.

<<<sentimentGX4>>>
Is this a gross hypothetical? Come back when you've been accepted to both universities.

For the record, I vote Stanford.

<<<FailSafe>>>
I think you're forgetting, Berkeley is Berkeley! And in terms of math CS, I think it is one of the best schools in the country, so I would not let the fact that Yale is Yale stop you. The main difference between the schools (I think) is culture, but also, things you might want to look into are housing and internship or research opportunities in your field. Good luck with your win-win decision

<<<superwizard188>>>
Well, I have been, unofficially, I guess you could say, accepted into both, so its not a "gross hypothetical." And I was rejected from Stanford EA, so.. :P

Thanks FailSafe!

<<<bluebayou>>>
Simple: Y undergrad, and leverage that grade inflation to end up at S or Cal or MIT for Masters.

<<<tk21769>>>
I'll repeat what I wrote earlier in another thread.
If you want to rise above a certain plateau in the information technology market - and here I'm not talking about academia - what usually makes the biggest difference in the long run is not your technical skill. It is the "soft" skills (team leadership, communications, understanding of the "business problem", etc.) The Yale undergraduate environment will be much better at cultivating these skills than the Berkeley undergraduate environment (although you can certainly build a good social network from Berkeley, too).

Now, if you see yourself becoming a hard-core Computer Scientist, that's different. In that case (and all the more so if we're talking about a big cost difference favoring Berkeley) then I'd agree w/RML.

Either way, a CS degree from either school will be very marketable.

<<<lesdiablesbleus>>>
I would always go with the university that provides the best undergraduate environment for you to grow and develop regardless of what you want to study. Berkeley is simply not in the same league as Yale in the

undergraduate level and there will be a large difference in the strength of your peer group at Yale and the amount of access you get to top faculty vis-a-vis UCB.

Unless UCB is $100,000 cheaper AND you're sure about majoring in Computer Science and/or Engineering, do not pass up Yale.

<<<gadad>>>
<quote>If you want to rise above a certain plateau in the information technology market - and here I'm not talking about academia - what usually makes the biggest difference in the long run is not your technical skill. It is the "soft" skills (team leadership, communications, understanding of the "business problem", etc.)</quote>

TK - You ought to start a thread about this. It's the great hidden secret of lifelong success that the vast majority of CC prospective students and parents don't understand. Many, if not most top students in tech fields will go on for graduate degrees. They need to build up their soft skills in their undergrad career - that's where those skills are most directly focused upon.

I also vote Yale for the same reason that TK stated.

<<<MrPrince>>>
Yale. Period. Unless you pay less for Cal. But even still, Yale.

Who knows? Maybe you'd end up NOT doing computer science. Yale for undergrad. Then if you really decide comp sci, then go to MIT or Stanford or even Berkeley for grad.

Still this is hypothetical? Wow...you must either naive or too good to be sure you'd get into Yale.

<<<FailSafe>>>
Just want to balance the conversation a bit: both schools are phenomenal, well respected institutions and if you attend either of these schools and keep up the work, you will undoubtedly do well. So keep that in perspective. Also, one plus about Berkeley (in the eyes of future employers) is that its culture teaches you to work hard and persevere in order to do well, so you'll come out with the understanding that success doesn't come easy. Again, having to choose between Berkeley and Yale should be the least of your worries.

<<<bluebayou>>>
<quote>So keep that in perspective. Also, one plus about Berkeley (in the eyes of future employers) is that its culture teaches you to work hard and persevere in order to do well..</quote>

So true, but that same [competitive, perhaps cut-throat] "culture" ensures that many will not do "well" at Cal...in contrast, Y has a mean gpa of ~3.5.

<<<compaq10>>>
I will add my 2 cents

If you are an independent mind, go getter type of personality, Berkeley is a good choice. Because Berkeley is a larger pond, you would meet all kind of crazy teachers and students.
And since CS at CAL is already a strong program, you will meet good teachers and students of the field. Silicon Valley is another attraction if you want jobs in the Bay Area
All the good things about Yale people mentioned above are corrected, and Yale is working hard to build their reputation on Science divisions, but somehow I think they d

<<<sefago>>>
Some statements are so wrong its unbelievable. Yale CS is a small department but the students would have tons of opportunities. What most people are arguing here is that a CS degree at yale would enhance ones soft skills- the ability to communicate and write effectively- while still providing a strong CS program. This is very very true.

And how exactly does Berkeley have a better CS program than Yale at the undergraduate level? Everyone has been saying its amazing but how exactly is it better than Yale at the undergraduate level?

Yale students will have just as much opportunity as students from Berkeley- I find it hard to believe that getting a job at Google, Yahoo! e.t.c would be difficult at Yale when I know kids from worse departments who have jobs in these places. Ignore the fact that if you decide to go to Wall street or finance then obviously you know which is better.

<<<sefago>>>
<quote>For your information, this isn't just about Yale undergrad vs Berkeley undergrad period. This is about comparing Berkeley Computer Science to Yale Computer Science. It's like comparing Berkeley MBA to Yale MBA, or Berkeley prelaw vs Yale prelaw. Do you understand that? LOL...</quote>

You are wrong. Yale CS is under Yale College so its really part of the undergraduate program.

You are definitely **** around if you think Berkeley offers a superior education in CS compared to Yale except you can provide evidence.

As for employers can you be more specific? Like if you mean Tech companies well . . . would it not come down to experience and what you can bring to the table in terms of programming ability and versatility as well as the soft skills taught under a liberal arts education? Or would it just be about the degree? Like would an employer be like Berkeley>Yale (which is not even true) for CS so let me trash the Yale guy in the bin.

It doesnt really work that way

<<<sefago>>>
<quote>Can you prove this? granted that is true, how would that make you a better software engineer (as many CS would want to have such career)? Name the superstars of Yale CS. Give names of Yale CS grads who are now the who's who in CS/IT industry and let's compare that to Berkeley's.</quote>

Yale has a small CS department seems you glossed over that part. Like they graduate 14 students a year.

Also you have not shown me how Berkeley is better than Yale. Can you prove that these superstars would have been otherwise if they had gone to Yale?
<quote>As a software engineer at those companies? Really? Like who?</quote>

You have a laptop. You studied Computer science. One word

GOOGLE

I see no reason why I should randomly put people's personal information. Most had to move to the Bay area though or Washington and did not like it since they were form the Northeast. So it would make sense that even less kids from the NE would pursue software engineering jobs.

I have already done some work for you and found profiles online of students at Yale who work as software engineers at google. Go and do the search yourself. I am sure you learned that much.

<<<sefago>>>
Ok, whatever you say man. Just elaborate on how the OPs life will transform from the average joe to a CS superstar if he attends Berkeley over Yale. We do know that all CS majors are IT/Software stars at Berkeley.

No need to shout, I dont want you to burst an artery. That would make me feel very bad.
<quote>You are fooling yourself if you think Yale is as great as Berkeley for engineering.</quote>

But the question- why do you think Yale engineering is not so great? Have you ever been to their department? Apart from glossing through ranking sites, do you know anything about the program? Except reputation- one that yale has been unable to build for several reasons I hope you are at least aware off.

<<<sefago>>>
<quote>So??? Do you think that makes it an attractive school to the sight of top employers?</quote>

No it shows that it would likely not have the number of superstars you are claiming
<quote>Methodology: We typed the following search terms into Google: Computer Science, Computer Sciences, and Computer Engineering. The second plural form of Computer Science was included because some departments (particularly the author's own institution) are known as a Department of Computer Sciences for strange and historical reasons. We then copied the top 30 results, excluding links to Wikipedia and other non-academic institutions and advertisements, thus leaving 26 or 27 schools. The results are listed below. We include, for the sake of comparison, the most recent U.S. News and World Report rankings.</quote>

Wow, quite scientific. Probably the best way to judge a computer science department. LOL

RML stop joking around, because I honestly think you must be lol- can you show me how berkeley is better than yale for CS? Like based on real things like academics and opportunities not webometrics.
<quote>but the real gold standard in the industry is in-depth knowledge of programming languages such as C++, Java, and C# , as well as other highly specialized programs that vary widely by industry. Also, unlike software programmers, engineers aren't always knee-deep in code. Positions will require technical skills, an understanding of how complex software systems function, and a knack for communicating between members of technical and business teams in a company. </quote>

Refer to my post 18. I see no mention of where you went to undergrad affecting your job opportunities as long as that program provides the prerequisite skills.

Can you show me how Yale is deficient in preparing their students in these areas? Of course apart from webometric rankings.

Best Careers 2011: Computer Software Engineer - US News and World Report
<quote>Look where Yale stands against Berkeley for CS</quote>

I think a bit better than Berkeley stands compared to Yale on USNWR.

<<<sefago>>>
<quote>LOL... Admit it that you can't win in this debate! I have a feelig you only post to annoy me. Or, maybe just so people here would think you know something about this topic. lol</quote>

Well tbh, I was going to post before you even saw the thread. Decided not to. Personally I only post on threads that really have to do with people claiming that departmental rankings are more important that overall university or that schools that lack renowned departments do not offer the same standard of education as those who have large and famous graduate departments but average students too daft to understand difficult material.
<quote>But we also have to admit it that it is not great for all the major fields they offer. WhileYale would be great for those who intend to join in a career in politics, government, wall street, banking and finance, it is NOT the best venue to have a training in computer science or any engineering field for that matter. Engineering, IT and technology are the waterloo of Yale. It is still quite good on those areas, but there are obviously a few schools that are just better... and Berkeley is one of those schools, along with MIT, Stanford and Caltech.</quote>

Engineering yes, CS no. See the problem is that the difference between a top 20 departments is really not that significant. Its like a couple of 0.x or maybe 1. If you dont find it interesting that a Top 20 department

has only 14 students and is capable of lavishing its attention on these 14 students then wow.
<quote>it is NOT the best venue to have a training in computer science or any engineering field for that matter. Engineering, IT and technology are the waterloo of Yale. It is still quite good on those areas, but there are obviously a few schools that are just better... and Berkeley is one of those schools, along with MIT, Stanford and Caltech.</quote>

And you know this because . . .

PS: I am not trying to win anything.

Computer science and engineering are very different IMO and there is good reason why I might not consider Yale a great place for engineering but still a very good place for CS

<<<sefago>>>
<quote>The only Ivy schools that are phenomenal for CS are Princeton, Harvard and Cornell.</quote>

The gap between Harvard and Yale for CS is really nonexistent if you are going to even use departmental ranking/reputation. I think the only reason you think Harvard might be better is that you might know/met a larger number of Harvard CS majors. Because all this claims you are making dont even make sense. Smaller department does not mean bad department ok?

Could I get another LOL

<<<sefago>>>
<quote>Yale CS is no match to Princeton/Cornell/Harvard CS, for example, and none of those three are superior to Berkeley for CS. At most, they are on par with Berkeley CS. So, if this was about Berkeley CS vs Harvard CS, then Harvard would win hands down as Harvard is the better overall university and has superb CS program too. But Yale CS is nowhere near Harvard/Princeton/Cornell CS.</quote>

Refer to post #27. Harvards CS reputation to academics is not that far ahead compared to Yale. Infact they are the nearly the same lol

<url>http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-science-schools/computer-science-rankings</url>

Following from your advise we know which one the OP should choose. Seems you should have stopped posting a long tym ago.

<<<tk21769>>>
<quote>Because Berkeley is a larger pond, you would meet all kind of crazy teachers and students.</quote>

That depends on how you measure the pond. Berkeley has more students, that's for sure. The vast majority of them are Californians; probably a plurality of those are Asian Americans (many of them first gens) from several counties surrounding San Francisco. In contrast, Yale attracts the best and brightest from all over the USA and the world. It provides

undergraduates an intimate, hothouse environment for spawning ideas and turning them into reality.

An example of one such idea in the Information Technology realm is the problem of searching maps, which two Yale graduates (along with a McGill alumnus) turned into a successful company called MetaCarta : <url>http://www.metacarta.com/Collateral/Documents/English-US/MetaCarta_article_Red_Herring.pdf</url>

(note that Eric Rauch's mentor at Yale was the late, great mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot, inventor of fractal geometry)
<quote>but the real gold standard in the industry is in-depth knowledge of programming languages such as C++, Java, and C# , as well as other highly specialized programs that vary widely by industry.</quote>

Hundreds of institutions can help you develop these skills. The ACM establishes clear undergraduate curriculum standards for Computer Science (Curricula Recommendations - Association for Computing Machinery). Colleges much less selective and prestigious than Yale or Berkeley follow those standards (more or less). However, the Big Ideas in Information Technology (like the problem of searching maps) are not bounded by programming skills. They exist in a space that is shared by Computer Science, Physics, Mathematics, any number of liberal arts disciplines (Geography, even), and everyday practical problems.

If you want to swim in that big space, Yale is a good choice. If you want to become an excellent computer programmer, Berkeley is a good choice (a cheaper one at that, if you are full-paying, and with proximity to major IT employers).

<<<Ghostt>>>
The prestige whores are out in full force, I see.

If you're absolutely certain comp sci is the field for you, go to Berkeley.

<<<rjkofnovi>>>
^^^Absolutely!

<<<bluebayou>>>
^^uh, not really. I've been accused of being one of Cal's biggest boosters, and drinking the Blue and Gold koolaid, but this one is the simplest no-brainer on cc: Yale. (Heck, in ~95% of the students, Y will be cheaper out-of-pocket than Cal will be at instate rates.)

<<<tk21769>>>
<quote>The prestige whores are out in full force, I see.</quote>

My argument for Yale is not based on its prestige (except indirectly, because that prestige does attract money and brains). What I'm saying, again, is that over the course of your whole career (and even early in the career of an IT entrepreneur) it is not technical skills that will push you past a certain plateau of salary and influence. You need an additional

set of skills to learn to frame a big problem well, then convince investors and other stakeholders to address it. Yale, it seems to me, provides a better environment for developing those skills (in addition to a much more than adequate environment to develop your technical skills).

Of course, movers and shakers (big thinkers, too) do come out of major state universities as well. Bill Joy and Larry Page (Michigan), Mark Adreessen (Illinois), and Sergey Brinn (Maryland) are all famous examples. Nobody has locked down the formula for educating the next big inventor of the next big thing.

<<<bluebayou>>>
P.S. Perhaps, the 'hoes need to look within. The ONLY reason folks are recommending Cal is due to it's prestige in CS (and engineering). :rolleyes:

<<<Ghostt>>>
<quote>What I'm saying, again, is that over the course of your whole career (and even early in the career of an IT entrepreneur) it is not technical skills that will push you past a certain plateau of salary and influence.</quote>

The idea that someone might be more interested in becoming very good at something than in networking opportunities seems to be completely alien to you.

<<<1234d>>>
Check out the comments of comp science majors who actually go to Yale.
<url>http://talk.collegeconfidential.com/yale-university/1078180-yale-sciences-technology.html</url>
<quote>Furthermore, job placement is ridiculously good for engineering/comp sci at Yale. I can't speak for the engineering as much, but I'm a comp sci major, and I've spoken with many juniors/seniors, and people all agree that placement is terrific. This year, 13 people have been hired by Microsoft for a job/internship already, and our comp sci department graduates about 20 majors a year. This is simply an anecdote, but the point is that people get really good jobs.

Lastly, I'd say that engineering/comp sci here is just as good as a lot of other places, but the culture is different. A lot of the people I know love their major, but they also take a lot of cool classes outside their major and have broad interests. This fact is true at all the top schools. What we lack is department size [we don't graduate hundreds of engineers like MIT does], and I'd say that overall we have less resources. If you look at it on a per student basis though, I've never heard of a person saying they couldn't get money for some project because they just support you with tons of stuff.</quote>
<quote>Completely agree. I also don't know specifically about engineering, but have heard similar anecdotes about Yale comp sci grads placing extremely well in the job market. It is not as well-known as Stanford or MIT for this major, but as mentioned above, this is largely due to small department size and not incapability of the students ... for instance, one

of my friends at Yale is a nationally-recognized programmer and chose to come to Yale (because he's also a nationally-recognized musician).

After seeing the responses, I do agree that Yale's science environment might not be right for everyone. I think most of the science majors are not focused completely on science and have many interests in the humanities and social sciences. There aren't many science discussions at dinner that I imagine might happen at MIT, but rather discussions about music, art, literature, philosophy, etc. I suppose this just never came to my attention since it seemed pretty normal to me.</quote>

If you want to argue that Berkeley CS is better ranked at the GRADUATE level, you might as well argue that Harvad CS is average at best. And this is the same department that has helped to educate the likes of Bill Gates and Mark Zukerberg (until they dropped out.)

<<<sefago>>>
<quote>The idea that someone might be more interested in becoming very good at something than in networking opportunities seems to be completely alien to you.</quote>

And how exactly does a BS in CS at Yale prevent this? Apart of course from graduate reputation

There is no evidence that Yale CS is inferior at the undergraduate level to Berkeley especially for an ambitious student. With such a small number of student and a top 20 faculty I could imagine the opportunities available to him might surpass that at Berkeley.

<<<rjkofnovi>>>
"Perhaps, the 'hoes need to look within. The ONLY reason folks are recommending Cal is due to it's prestige in CS (and engineering)."

I guess you're right. Prestige is determined by many here on CC as to who your academic peers are and not as much based on departmental quality. To each his own I suppose.

<<<sefago>>>
Because there is no such thing as departmental quality. Only departmental prestige as a result of graduate rankings.

Quality is based on the education and research opportunities you receive at a university. I find it hard to believe that Berkeley provides more. No one has been able to prove that . All I got was a lousy webometrics ranking by UWisconsin that was on the verge of the elementary school rant " Who is more popular me or them"

<<<tk21769>>>
<quote>The idea that someone might be more interested in becoming very good at something than in networking opportunities seems to be completely alien to you.</quote>

Your remark suggests you are more interested in polemics than in a give-and-take discussion of the OP's choices. But I agree, of course, that

technical skills are extremely important in the IT marketplace. Good programmers are paid well; some people find the work very satisfying. Berkeley is an excellent school to develop these skills. So is Yale (see 1234d's post).

On the other hand, liberally educated people who can frame new problems will tend to be paid even more. They perceive a need, imagine a solution, then turn the implementation over to people who work for them. Yes, it takes "networking" to marry the vision to the money and the engineering. I think it takes effort as well as opportunities to become very good at that.

We have not talked much about academic careers. Perhaps that is where the OP's real interests lie. Berkeley is a huge research powerhouse. So maybe someone can speak knowledgeably about how undergraduates participate in that activity. According to Washington Monthly, among national universities Yale ranks 3rd and Berkeley 16th in Bachelor-to-PhD production overall. For CS and Math Bachelor-to-PhD production, according to a NSF database covering 1994-2003, Yale ranked 12th and Berkeley 27th among LACs and universities combined. I would not base my choice very heavily on this one metric, but it does seem to suggest that Yale is not likely to hold you back from becoming very good in this area. (<url>http://talk.collegeconfidential.com/swarthmore/60986-phd-production-math-computer-science.html</url>)

<<<phantasmagoric>>>
From my perspective as a CS major at a top CS school soon to attend a top CS program for PhD: go to Yale. The ranking of CS departments can have a significant bearing on the undergrad quality of CS, but there are additional factors you need to take into consideration here. For undergrad what matters most is your actual experience. So look at: diversity of classes (Berkeley has the edge), top faculty (Berkeley), research opportunities (Berkeley), internships (Berkeley), etc.

But what is the point in any of that if you're competing so heavily with thousands of other students? Yale is smaller and while it might not have the resources in CS that Berkeley, it doesn't spread itself so thin. Consider another important fact here: Berkeley is going through significant trouble with funding with no end in sight, whereas Yale has no problem with it and continues to expand heavily (capital improvement, faculty hiring, internships, Science Hill, etc.). Classes at Berkeley have been cut, majors have been cut, etc. Not to mention it can be very difficult to get into classes you want, even the classes you need to graduate; the professors are more concerned with doing research with graduate students than they are with undergrads; and so on. Now consider perhaps the most important point here, that at Berkeley, you can intend on doing CS, do the CS prereqs, and then get denied entry to the major. This will not happen at Yale. And even if you do get into the major, let's say you want to go to grad school; good luck getting in when your GPA is horrible and you barely have any research experience or strong recommendations because it was difficult to get involved with professors long-term. (By comparison, grad schools won't care that you didn't study under Turing Award winners; that you did research is what matters, even if

it's Yale CS.) Berkeley's also experiencing an exodus of faculty, and has been for years; this is only going to get worse with its funding problems.

Let's say you get into the CS major but decide you want to switch to EE or psychology or another; good luck trying to change it, since impacted majors are a real problem, whereas at Yale you can change it as much as you want, no problem. Believe me, your overall undergrad experience is far more important than a departmental ranking, and it's especially true here: Berkeley has a great departmental ranking, but its undergrad experience in CS is poor compared to that of Yale CS. And let's not forget that Yale CS may not be one of the best, but it's decent.

This isn't even taking into consideration other very important aspects of undergraduate life--advising, study abroad, funding in student activities, etc. Yale wins there hands down. These will be more important than they seem now.

To me it seems those who are championing Berkeley are more likely to be prestige-whores here over CS rankings, because in light of all the above, Berkeley is really not the better option.

Anecdotal evidence: I know of quite a few renowned CS people who did their undergrad in CS at Yale. Consider that Yale CS has also improved significantly since then. Yale CS will not doom you--far from it. It's just a much surer bet to go to Yale and do well in CS there than to go to Berkeley and do poorly.

Just take a few looks at the Berkeley board; everyone there just complains and hates on their own school. It's very telling.

(If this were a grad school discussion, I would tell you Berkeley, hands down, no contest.)

<<<phantasmagoric>>>
For the record, I usually argue for using departmental rankings, especially recent graduate rankings, to determine which undergraduate programs are best (anyone who doesn't think that the two have a strong correlation needs to consider what makes a graduate program 'the best' and how much those factors affect undergrads--the two aren't as separated as people on CC want to make them seem). But there's a lot more to consider here, and ultimately, following the departmental ranking will likely harm you here, not help.

<<<rjkofnovi>>>
^^^^So are you saying it's better to go to Yale in this case, or in ANY case? If you think Yale is better for all disciplines at the undergraduate level because of your reasoning, then I suppose departmental rankings would be meaningless to you. Btw, I am not necessarily disagreeing with your assessment. It just seems to me that, once again, the assumption here on CC is that HYPSM trump all other major universities for undergraduate education no matter what discipline. If that is the case, than the "prestige whores" should be siding with Yale over Berkeley and not the other way around.

<<<sefago>>>
TBH Phantasmagoric has been unable to- like most people have- to argue for why departmental rankings could affect an undergraduate education. I think he should also explain to me how LACs are renowned to train their undergraduates well despite having no departmental reputation at the graduate level. There are only two direct benefits- research and a diversity of graduate level classes which you can likely find at other less known depeartments.

Still waiting for someone to tell me why Berkeley's undergraduate CS program is even better than that at Yale.

Silence as usual.

<<<UCBChemEGrad>>>
Good Lord, let's just rehash all the rhetoric about these two universities...that's all this thread has done...Berkeley undergrad sucks, you can't graduate on time, Yale will teach you better "soft skills", if this was Berkeley graduate school it would be different, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah...

First of all, the OP hasn't even been accepted to these universities yet.
Second, if the OP is smart enough to get into Yale, he or she will likely have no problems graduating Berkeley EECS in 4 years.
Third, Berkeley engineering requires its undergrads graduate in 4 years...this policy stands despite the hand wringing about budget cuts.
Berkeley is very generous with AP credits. Freshman Admission FAQ UC Berkeley College of Engineering
Fourth, current Berkeley EECS majors have had seen no impact due budget cuts.
Fifth, Berkeley is expanding enrollment of international and domestic OOS students to help shore up its finances.

The OP will be fine whichever university he or she ultimately decides.

And, for the record, phantasmajoric is a Stanford student. :)

But, like phantasmajoric said:
<quote>phantasmajoric wrote:</quote>
<quote>But what is the point in any of that if you're competing so heavily with thousands of other students?</quote>
You're forgetting that a Yale admit at Berkeley will likely be a very strong student and be capable of using Berkeley's resources to his/her advantage.

Bored down on the Farm? ;)

<<<phantasmagoric>>>
<quote>So are you saying it's better to go to Yale in this case, or in ANY case?</quote>

No, definitely not; this case is special for many reasons, e.g. Berkeley's funding is in serious jeopardy and it shows; Berkeley has already had many problems before the economic downturn related to classes, like denying students entry to a major, crushing their GPAs in engineering (among other majors) and making it hard to get into grad school, etc.
<quote>Phantasmagoric has been unable to- like most people have- to argue for why departmental rankings could affect an undergraduate education.</quote>

That's because it wasn't the point of my post, but I'll gladly explain, though it's quite simple. First ask, what makes a graduate department a 'top' one? The top-ranked graduate departments have more renowned faculty in their field (they tend to be the ones with all the accolades, publications in the most prestigious journals and conferences, etc.); as a result of this, they tend to have the best funding (attracting all the top grants, donors, etc.); as a result of that they tend to have the best facilities; they will attract the best graduate students and will also be the most selective; they will have larger and more diverse course offerings; because of this perception of excellence and because of funding, they're able to attract (and retain) more top faculty; they tend to be very well staffed, again, because of funding; they tend to have more organizations (centers, institutes, groups, labs) dedicated to their areas of study; and so on.

Each of these areas has a direct influence on the undergraduates there. They're taught by the same faculty; they have access to the courses; they can work with the graduate students on research, academic activities, etc.; they can work with the faculty members, either in research or independent study; they have access to those top facilities; the department tends to offer the undergraduates more opportunities, like internships, with those faculty, often under the auspices of the organizations (center this or institute that); recruiters tend to come to the department in droves. You get the idea.
<quote>I think he should also explain to me how LACs are renowned to train their undergraduates well despite having no departmental reputation at the graduate level.</quote>

There's no contradiction--LACs fundamentally have a very different mission and they're quite good at what they do. Nobody will deny that at universities (the ones in the graduate rankings) will offer a greater diversity of courses, faculty, research, opportunities, etc. than at an LAC, as a mere function of size. That's not to say that the LAC model of education is inferior, it's just different: they focus more on small classes, a broader education, liberal arts, mandatory interaction with professors, etc. and less so on research, organizations for scholarly study, a ton of different courses covering every topic in the field, etc.
<quote>research and a diversity of graduate level classes</quote>

...and diversity of undergraduate courses, and faculty, and library holdings, and facilities, and reading groups, and organizations... not to mention the best undergraduates are going to be attracted to the school for these same reasons. Let's face it: a student interested in, say, the arts is more likely to choose Yale over Harvard; a student interested in econ will choose UChicago over JHU; and so on. The graduate programs have

a strong 'trickle down' effect on their undergraduate counterparts. It doesn't make sense that the two would be separated.

This isn't to say that a lower-ranked department won't have those. Rather, top-ranked departments tend to have a greater diversity of those opportunities, and those opportunities tend to be higher-quality overall (for example, going to Princeton for mathematics means you could have the opportunity to work at the Institute for Advanced Study, which is extremely prestigious; going to Stanford for computer science means you could get to work with people at the Palo Alto Research Center, or in SAIL, or at SRI, or at any of the plethora of lesser-known companies that come on campus to recruit undergraduate students for internships).

The fact that the strong relationship between graduate and undergraduate programs is in doubt is rather surprising to me, actually.

<<<phantasmagoric>>>
<quote>Second, if the OP is smart enough to get into Yale, he or she will likely have no problems graduating Berkeley EECS in 4 years.</quote>

That would make sense, if it weren't for the fact that many factors influencing that are out of a student's control, like unreasonable curves on classes, getting into a class that you want or need, etc. What if the OP wants to change his major? What if the OP wants to have strong recommendations but can't get involved with a professor long enough?

I'm not saying that all of these things make it impossible for students, because many do just fine. But the difficulty associated with it is just not worth it when you have an option like Yale on the table. (The OP mentioned being in unofficially at both, so I assume he/she got Regents at Berkeley and/or a likely letter at Yale.)
<quote>And, for the record, phantasmajoric is a Stanford student.</quote>

I hold no ill will toward Berkeley and had long wanted to go there, but being saddled with $20,000 in debt at graduation didn't seem like much fun in comparison to a full ride at Stanford.

Plus, Stanford's better. ;)

Really, UCBChemEGrad, it's admirable to stick up for Berkeley, but there's no denying that it has significant problems that it's trying to fix, and that those problems are hindering its ability to educate undergraduate students with the quality of its past or of its peers like HYPS. I don't believe that EECS hasn't felt the budget cuts; everyone has. That Berkeley is enrolling more international students makes a tiny impact on the deficit that the school is facing. I'm surprised you didn't mention that the school recently established a separate company to manage its endowment (which it's been meaning to do for years). But again, in the meantime, there are a lot of drawbacks to going to Berkeley for undergrad, and they're simply not worth it when you could go to the decent CS program at Yale.
<quote>You're forgetting that a Yale admit at Berkeley will likely be a very strong student and be capable of using Berkeley's resources to his/her advantage.</quote>

I think it's kind of insulting to many current Berkeley students to assume that only a "Yale admit" would be competent enough to use the school's resources to his/her advantages, the implication being that those who are "only" Berkeley admits are incapable. Like I said, there are problematic factors outside of a student's control, regardless of where he/she was admitted.

<<<UCBChemEGrad>>>
<quote>Really, UCBChemEGrad, it's admirable to stick up for Berkeley, but there's no denying that it has significant problems that it's trying to fix, and that those problems are hindering its ability to educate undergraduate students with the quality of its past or of its peers like HYPS.</quote>
Of course the elite privates can provide more care and feeding to their undergrads. Even in flush times though, Berkeley's resources to undergrads never came close to those at elite privates. It irritates me that people say this whole budget issue is hurting the undergrad experience at Berkeley...perhaps in some majors this is true. From what I've heard, not as much with EECS. If cuts continue, Berkeley will likely cut enrollment since its overenrolled as is with unfunded students. There are numerous levers to pull and Berkeley is working hard to minimize impact. Ironically and sadly, these cuts will most likely affect Berkeley's public mission more than anything else.
<quote>I think it's kind of insulting to many current Berkeley students to assume that only a "Yale admit" would be competent enough to use the school's resources to his/her advantages, the implication being that those who are "only" Berkeley admits are incapable. Like I said, there are problematic factors outside of a student's control, regardless of where he/she was admitted.</quote>
I mentioned this in response to your observation of "competing with thousands of other students"...sure, Berkeley has numerous smart, and capable students, but usually Ivy admits (and Berkeley Regents scholars) are more academically capable on average...esp when you're talking about harsh grading curves, etc...

<<<warblersrule>>>
<quote>lesdiablesbleus wrote:</quote>
Although I think lesdia meant it in a very different sense, I very much agree with this. Fit is not to be underestimated in terms of college selection...both Yale and Berkeley are great universities, and either would serve a student perfectly well. The difference in academics pales in comparison to other quite important factors.

The bickering over the relative strength of the computer science programs is silly. Yale is perhaps not a world leader in computer science, but it is not chopped liver either. Berkeley has a significant CS presence, to be sure, but it does not have a monopoly, and there is little one can't do with a Yale degree and a fair amount of effort and networking. Long time posters may remember this individual:
<quote>evil_robot wrote:</quote>

Shockingly, this individual performed well at Vandy, which - GASP - has a CS program ranked well below that of Yale's (and by extension, Berkeley's).

So, to the OP...do your own research and ignore the squabbling so popular with certain individuals on CC. Sadly there are several posters (usually on both sides of such debates) so concerned with seizing the opportunity to show how their schools are as good or better than others that they neglect the needs and wants of the student in question.

A more appropriate question, then: Where can you see yourself for four years?

Do you want a smaller school or a fairly large one? A smallish city or a suburb of a large city? Nice weather year-round or distinct seasons? A strongly residential college system or life off campus? A strong or weak athletic tradition? I'm sure you have many other factors to consider.

<<<tigerdad14>>>
Berkeley EECS for sure. Yale is not known for CS.

<<<sefago>>>
<quote>That's because it wasn't the point of my post, but I'll gladly explain, though it's quite simple. First ask, what makes a graduate department a 'top' one? The top-ranked graduate departments have more renowned faculty in their field (they tend to be the ones with all the accolades, publications in the most prestigious journals and conferences, etc.); as a result of this, they tend to have the best funding (attracting all the top grants, donors, etc.); as a result of that they tend to have the best facilities; they will attract the best graduate students and will also be the most selective; they will have larger and more diverse course offerings; because of this perception of excellence and because of funding, they're able to attract (and retain) more top faculty; they tend to be very well staffed, again, because of funding; they tend to have more organizations (centers, institutes, groups, labs) dedicated to their areas of study; and so on.</quote>

Diverse course offerings can be found in less strong departments. They are more likely to be found in top departments but in strong undergraduate programs with less famous graduate departments, the professors would definitely try to accommodate the interests of most students.
<quote>Each of these areas has a direct influence on the undergraduates there. They're taught by the same faculty; they have access to the courses; they can work with the graduate students on research, academic activities, etc.; they can work with the faculty members, either in research or independent study; they have access to those top facilities; the department tends to offer the undergraduates more opportunities, like internships, with those faculty, often under the auspices of the organizations (center this or institute that); recruiters tend to come to the department in droves. You get the idea.</quote>

Top research faculty does not translate to great teaching. This has been argued a billion times. Infact a good researcher would probably be preferred at top departments than a good teacher. You dont become a top department by winning teaching awards do you? The culture in the department would be geared towards hardcore research?

I doubt most undergrad get to use some of these facilities except they engage in undergraduate research. I would also wager that you can use these top facilities in REU programs or summer research programs anyways.
<quote>There's no contradiction--LACs fundamentally have a very different mission and they're quite good at what they do. Nobody will deny that at universities (the ones in the graduate rankings) will offer a greater diversity of courses, faculty, research, opportunities, etc. than at an LAC, as a mere function of size. That's not to say that the LAC model of education is inferior, it's just different: they focus more on small classes, a broader education, liberal arts, mandatory interaction with professors, etc. and less so on research, organizations for scholarly study, a ton of different courses covering every topic in the field, etc.</quote>

Personally, I have noticed more LAC undergraduates publish at the undergraduate level than even those from major research universities. The LAC model of education though is no different than that from any university in the US anyways. Except maybe less diversity of classes, and research is emphasised in most LACs. The only problem is that you might not have the diversity of research opportunities that you would find in a major university. But the education you would bet in the true sense of the word is no different.

<quote>This isn't to say that a lower-ranked department won't have those. Rather, top-ranked departments tend to have a greater diversity of those opportunities, and those opportunities tend to be higher-quality overall (for example, going to Princeton for mathematics means you could have the opportunity to work at the Institute for Advanced Study, which is extremely prestigious; going to Stanford for computer science means you could get to work with people at the Palo Alto Research Center, or in SAIL, or at SRI, or at any of the plethora of lesser-known companies that come on campus to recruit undergraduate students for internships).</quote>

True but you could also find these opportunities over the summer. I see kids from all over the place getting research opportunities at universities different from theirs lol. Of course having those facilities close to you would be awesome but most times only a very few percentage take part in that type of research.

Also this is all assuming of course that the student wants to do research which is not always the case. I think PhD aspiring students even in the sciences are not always the majority.

Decent points, but as already shown by warblers quote. You can find this in about any other school way lower than Yale. The OP should choose were he or she wants but should do so with the view that Yale would not limit his or her career or prospects in CS as been suggested by most posters. Even academia where Berkeley should have an edge, I have inquired from a

couple of professors non-CS and they repeat that they are more interested in the preparation the student receives (and they believe this preparation can be found at non top departments with rigorous undergraduate curriculums).

I think people are assuming that we are defending Yale because its Yale though. What I want to be convinced is that Yale would honestly hamper the OPs prospect in CS.

<<<sefago>>>
<quote>The schools on these lists are noted by college administrators as paying a particular focus on undergraduate teaching.</quote>

Another subjective survey from "college administrators" but actually:
<quote>You are spreading rumors. Take a look at this.</quote>

Well its quite intuitive actually- a top researcher could be crappy at teaching

See one good example

Lars Onsager - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Anyways, I did not say berkeley was bad for teaching. Dont jump the gun. I was wondering how top research faculty necessary meant good teachers- most of the times they dont.

<<<phantasmagoric>>>
<quote>Diverse course offerings can be found in less strong departments.</quote>

I didn't say that they couldn't. Remember I said, "This isn't to say that a lower-ranked department won't have those."
<quote>Top research faculty does not translate to great teaching.</quote>

I wasn't arguing that though. Side point: you could argue that the top departments are able to attract the best teaching faculty also. But in my experience even the top researchers are great teachers (the only bad teacher I've had was actually someone hired to teach for one year--really bad choice on the department's part, as everyone in the class was ripping their hair out over how bad this guy taught).

In my opinion (not an addition to my argument so don't take it as such), teaching ability isn't very important--if a student is in college and still needs someone to get in front of the class and teach in order for them to learn... well, IMO that person has a lot to learn in skills.
<quote>I doubt most undergrad get to use some of these facilities except they engage in undergraduate research.</quote>

It will vary by school, probably. I'm speaking mostly from my experience in undergrad, where often these facilities, broadly construed, are used both for education and for research, but most facilities are designed for the latter.

<quote>Personally, I have noticed more LAC undergraduates publish at the undergraduate level than even those from major research universities.</quote>

I have no idea--I've never gone to a LAC.
<quote>The LAC model of education though is no different than that from any university in the US anyways.</quote>

For clarification, "model of education" to me includes the role of research in addition to the emphasis on lectures vs. seminars, individualized research projects vs. group research projects, and so on. This is where the LAC model of education is very different--well, not to mention its emphasis on liberal arts, often giving a broad education and/or conferring less-specific degrees (e.g. HMC's general engineering degree).
<quote>Also this is all assuming of course that the student wants to do research which is not always the case. I think PhD aspiring students even in the sciences are not always the majority.</quote>
<quote>True but you could also find these opportunities over the summer.</quote>

True, but depending on how high-achieving you are, you'll want to spend your summers doing stuff like that in addition to during the year. After all, that's how you get into top grad schools, which is surprisingly downplayed on CC; for example, 40% of Stanford's students pursue graduate study directly after undergrad, and another chunk does so down the road, so considering how well a college prepares a student for grad school is an important issue when you consider the students as a whole (obviously it might not be important on an individual basis, but I'd always advise a student to consider these factors, in case they eventually do decide on graduate study).
<quote>You can find this in about any other school way lower than Yale.</quote>

I agree--but there's a reason the top programs are the top programs.
<quote>I think people are assuming that we are defending Yale because its Yale though.</quote>

Yeah I was afraid I was coming across that way. In this case I'm not so much defending Yale as arguing against Berkeley. And not because I'm a Stanford student but because I watch my (relatively brilliant) friends at Berkeley and other UCs struggling to stay afloat because the schools spread their resources thin over too many students, leading to class waitlist problems, trouble declaring their majors, etc. I think Berkeley would be the preferable option in many other cases, but here it's different.

<<<sefago>>>
<quote>True, but depending on how high-achieving you are, you'll want to spend your summers doing stuff like that in addition to during the year. After all, that's how you get into top grad schools, which is surprisingly downplayed on CC; for example, 40% of Stanford's students pursue graduate study directly after undergrad, and another chunk does so down the road, so considering how well a college prepares a student for grad school is an

important issue when you consider the students as a whole (obviously it might not be important on an individual basis, but I'd always advise a student to consider these factors, in case they eventually do decide on graduate study).</quote>

Ok, true you will find some top research institute in a school, and you might even be lucky to work with some big name in a particular field during the year. But as long as these opportunities can be gotten elsewhere its not really a big deal. I knew kids who did research in labs during the school year in less famous departments and then headed to do work at Cold Spring Harbour or MIT and ended up working for the big names anyway even if it was over the summer.

Most importantly, you dont need to perform research with the most famous researcher to be well prepared for graduate school. What you need is exposure to research. That is what prepares you well for graduate school. This is more of a prestige arguement- i.e working in a top research institute were you might never be doing anything but being lab personnel and have little control over the project(an extremity but still valid) is better than the independent research projects performed by undergraduates at LAC. As long as a school offers excellent research which Yale CS department does, then a Yale student would definitely be on equal footing with a Berkeley student.
<quote>For clarification, "model of education" to me includes the role of research in addition to the emphasis on lectures vs. seminars, individualized research projects vs. group research projects, and so on. This is where the LAC model of education is very different--well, not to mention its emphasis on liberal arts, often giving a broad education and/or conferring less-specific degrees (e.g. HMC's general engineering degree).</quote>

LACs do both- you can engage in independent research or in group work. I would not advise anyone to study engineering anyways at a LAC but I am talking of CS which is a bit different from engineering though they do share some topics.
<quote>I have no idea--I've never gone to a LAC.</quote>

That helps a bit. It seems most people are defining before seeing, instead of seeing before defining. LACs and undergraduate-focussed research institutions vigorously encourage their undergraduates to do research. Especially in small departments like Yale. Imagine 20 students having the opportunity to pair up with such a large diversity of professors in a top 20 department. You would likely be able to find a choice without being told that the professor has too many commitments.
<quote>It will vary by school, probably. I'm speaking mostly from my experience in undergrad, where often these facilities, broadly construed, are used both for education and for research, but most facilities are designed for the latter.</quote>

And also by field . . . I think I might as well leave it to the people who studied CS then. Maybe facilities (They probably seem to do from the little I know in CS) play a megarole in learning in the school.

<<<phantasmagoric>>>

^^ most of your points, I already admitted, but emphasized that for things like research, nobody will deny that a research university is better than a LAC (why are we discussing this anyway? not very relevant, since Yale is not a LAC and continues to promote itself as a major research university).
<quote>LACs do both- you can engage in independent research or in group work.</quote>

So does a research university. Again, it's about which one is emphasized more that defines the model of education. At LACs it's the former; at research universities, the latter.
<quote>would not advise anyone to study engineering anyways at a LAC</quote>

Schools like Harvey Mudd are well-respected in preparing engineering students. (Actually, the fact that HMC has been mentioned probably means that a Mudd student will be posting shortly.)
<quote>It seems most people are defining before seeing, instead of seeing before defining. LACs and undergraduate-focussed research institutions vigorously encourage their undergraduates to do research.</quote>

I wasn't saying that they don't, but rather, I can't attest to whether students at LACs publish more than those at major research universities, and it wouldn't matter whether I could, because anecdotal evidence does not an argument make.
<quote>Imagine 20 students having the opportunity to pair up with such a large diversity of professors in a top 20 department. You would likely be able to find a choice without being told that the professor has too many commitments.</quote>

That would make sense if departments that had only 20 students in them actually had a large diversity of professors. Faculty size and student body size in a given department go hand-in-hand. The goal is to keep the faculty size up with the growth of student numbers; when you do that, you also get a greater diversity of faculty and you're more likely to find something that you're interested in, rather than settle for something related but not exactly what you want. Regardless, I still say Yale is the better option here, for the reasons I already stated.

<<<whimsy>>>
If it were my decision, I would be hesitant to do undergraduate CS at either institution, and would have no qualms about doing graduate CS work at either. But that is a personal preference, and irrelevant as I made my decisions 30 years ago (undergraduate Indiana; graduate Stanford).

One suggestion that I do have is to go through the requirements for a CS major and through the course listings and put together a possible schedule for the next 4 years. You can then look at the class sizes for these courses, identify the faculty (full, associate, assistant, adjunct) who are currently teaching them, and the teacher ratings for these faculty. What you do with these data will depend on personal preferences, e.g. whether you mind large classes, whether there are courses you think that you might want to take that are offered in one department and not in the other, whether the distributional or major requirements would prevent you

from taking all of the courses that you would like to take, etc. The likelihood of your actually following through on taking these courses is probably nil, but it will at least help you identify what is important to you currently, and may lead to a qualitatively correct impression of the differences between the two schools.

Personally I don't find much of the previous commentary in this thread particularly enlightening - I do know something abut the faculty at both schools, and even with this information I can't give you any concrete advice. You are going to have to make your own decision, but you may be aided by collecting additional (relevant) data.

<<<superwizard188>>>
Oh... my god. hahah

Thanks to everyone for their insights! After reading the interesting posts on this board, I've learned a lot and have some new criteria to consider... It will be a tough choice, but thank you all for providing your input!

<<<datalook>>>
Berkeley CS peers are Stanford, MIT, and CMU. Yale CS is no match at this level

Berkeley CS faculty members are super stars. Yale CS faculty are generally less known, average good professors. Berkeley faculty at EECS alone have 37 national academy of engineering members. The whole Yale university has 7 national academy of engineering members.

Berkeley CS has generated most Turing award ('Nobel' prize in computing) winning graduates. In this regard, only Stanford, or (perhaps) Harvard, is close.

Berkeley CS is a research power house. Yale is nowhere close.

Silicon valley is nearby. It means more opportunities in industry.

Stanford CS is nearby. It means that you get more chance to interact with people from another learding CS department in the world.

If you drive to become the best in CS, want to invent something in CS in the future, or become a CS professor in the future, or found a start-up in the future, Berkeley is a much better spring board. However, if you worry about difficulty in graduation, need hands holding in learning,Berkeley may not fit you well.

Visit their websites, I think it is not hard to find which department is more attractive.

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<<<datalook>>>
From the link below: The h Index for Computer Science, I only found one person from Yale. But I found about 15 people from Berkeley.