

MAINE WORD ABOUT COLLEGE

The Maine Word About College

Questions about college from young Maine students, answered by old Maine students.

Today's writers

Monica Ouellette, a senior at Wheaton College from Madison, ME

Kylie Donovan, a first-year at Husson University from Calais, ME

Leanna Laws, a sophomore at Kennebec Valley Community College from Winslow, ME

Offered by Maine College Circle and the Mitchell Institute to great young students throughout Maine.

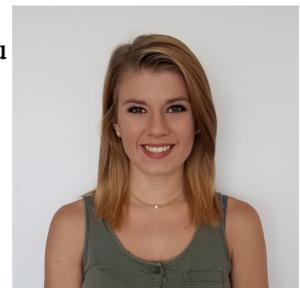
Q. In college, can you do anything?

A. Depending on which college you attend you can take whatever classes you would like! One of the best feelings is achievement, and it's an even better feeling achieving academically. For me, it's what gives me the "oomph" to continue succeeding and working toward my degree. —Leanna



College is a time when a lot of things change. You become an adult and take on many new responsibilities. This means you will be responsible for taking care of your things, doing your own laundry, and making sure you eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Being able to do anything in college means first staying clean, healthy and happy. The next step is going to all of your classes and getting all of your homework done. If you can do all of these things, stay out of trouble, and get good grades, then you really can do anything in college. Many colleges and universities offer study abroad programs where you can even do your classes in another country!

There are also opportunities to work with career service centers to help you find places to volunteer at jobs you might be interested in. Another way to do anything you want in college is to join a club or start your own! Clubs are kind of like sports teams but for anything you want! Clubs can include anything from rock climbing to ultimate frisbee, social justice, dance, singing, music, art, technology and so much more. —Monica





Q. What happens if you get in trouble at college?

A. I would try your hardest not too! College is a lot different from elementary, middle, and high school though. By the time you get to college, you should be old enough to make your own choices and keep out of trouble, but sometimes it does happen. It really depends on what you do, but, if it's bad enough, your school could decide to kick you out. But, chances of that happening are slim as long as you follow the rules and focus on your classes. —Kylie

Q. Is every college the same just with different classes?

A. Every college is different in every way. The professors, students, campuses, etc. are different everywhere that you go and each one has its own atmosphere. I've only lived at Husson, but when I go to different campuses, even for just a few minutes, I can feel a difference. Not in a bad way, but each school is definitely very different. —Kylie

Q. Where do you live at college?

A. I live on campus in one of the four residence halls, but some people live in the apartments on campus as well as apartments off of campus. If you live close enough to your school, some people even live at home. I think that it is really beneficial to live on campus your freshman year because it is a great way to make friends with people your age who are in the same boat as you. —Kylie



Q. How big is college?

A. Colleges range in size, but my college (Kennebec Valley Community College) is fairly small with about 2,500 students. I prefer this because the largest course I've had there was a 40-1 student to professor ratio, and that's still very small compared to other universities. This allows you to really establish a connection with your professor. —Leanna

Q. How hard is it to get into college?

A. The difficulty of getting into college depends on how hard you work and how well the college or university matches your interests. If you work really hard on your application to get into college, then it will show that you are dedicated and motivated and it will be a lot easier to get in. But just as importantly, it is much harder to get into a college that doesn't fit your interests. When you apply to a college that is a good fit for you, the application process will seem much easier because you are pursuing something valuable to you. —Monica

STUDENT STORIES ABOUT PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Every month we will feature profiles of Maine students, sharing their experiences with paying for college, in order to show that affordability is possible!

I'd always known I wanted to go to college, but I never knew how I would do it. Neither of my parents had attended college and my sister dropped out during her first semester, making me a first generation college student. That was a lot of pressure.

When I was a senior in high school applying to colleges, I had a few friends applying to colleges outside of Maine and I saw how huge the tuition was. Those numbers felt insurmountable to me even though I was told that financial aid would help. The first thing I did to minimize my college costs was to remain in state. There are a lot of benefits to remaining in state such as being close to your family, the lower tuition costs, and having that hometown pride. This isn't to say that going to college out of state can't happen; anything can happen if you work hard enough at it. But I knew that I wanted to remain close to my family even during my college experience and so the lower tuition of an **in-state college** was extra helpful.

The second thing I did to minimize my college costs was to apply, APPLY, APPLY to scholarships! You can never apply to too many scholarships. The scholarship application process can be daunting, but it's well worth the effort. My senior year of high school I applied to 30+ scholarships and received over half of them, including the **Senator George J. Mitchell Scholarship** which has completely and totally changed the game of my college costs. I won so many scholarships that during my first year of college, I received a refund check! That's right; the college cut me a personal check because I had so much funding in addition to my federal financial aid. Now, this doesn't happen often and I'm extremely fortunate that it did, but it just goes to show how much of an impact that scholarships can make.

The major choice I made which I feel made the biggest difference in my college education costs was going to a **community college** first. There was a lot of pressure to go to a big name school like University of Maine at Orono, Thomas College, Farmington, or even out of state schools like UCLA, RIT, or UMASS. Instead of succumbing to the pressure, I attended Eastern Maine Community College for the first year and a half (or three semesters) of college. I did this not because I couldn't get into a big name school, but because I wanted to

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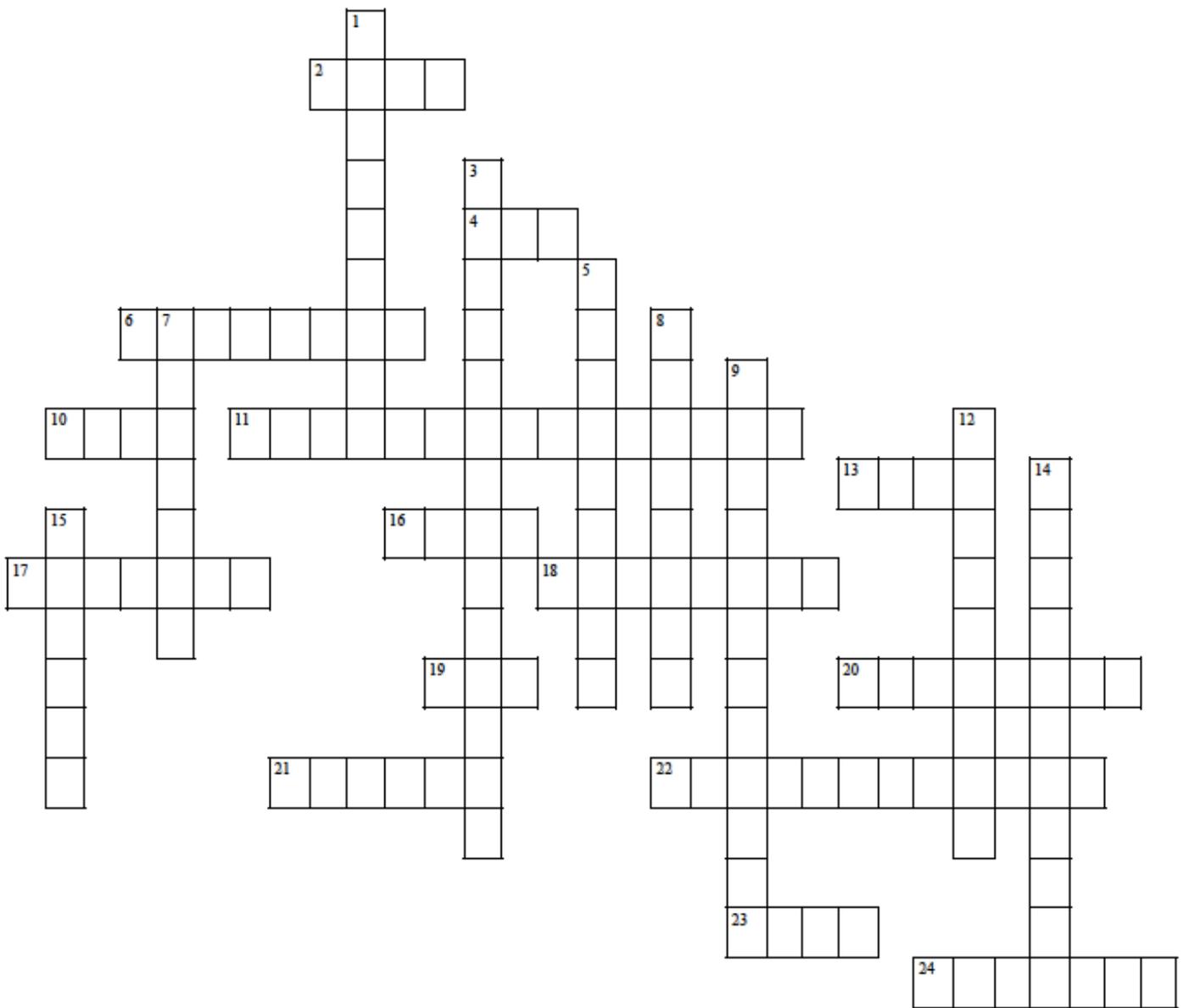
leave college with minimal debt and minimal student loans. The benefit to doing this is that all colleges and universities require the same core classes such as English, math, or Bio 100 even if you're not going into that area. The difference is that a big name school might charge you anywhere from \$600-\$1,000+ per CLASS (of which you take four per semester) whereas EMCC classes run closer to \$300-\$500 per class. I could take the same class at UMO, Thomas, Farmington, and EMCC and get the same credit for it, but would pay a fraction of the cost. So that's what I did. This cut down on my college costs dramatically.

Once I'd covered my core classes, I transferred to the University of Maine at Augusta where I am currently finishing my last semester. **During my time at college, I have always had a job.** This can be hard to do as school really needs to be your priority, but when necessary you can do anything you put your mind to. I have always worked at least part-time, but at times have worked 2-3 jobs in addition to going to school. If you can, work while you're at school as it helps keep you from having to take out student loans. Another way to do this is to apply to a job on campus through **federal work study**. I did this and worked both at EMCC's tutoring center and UMA's writing center. The best thing about a work study is that you work hours around your classes so that you can make the most of your time on campus.

I'm proud to say that I am currently in my last semester of college and will be graduating completely DEBT FREE and with NO STUDENT LOANS. I will be graduating with a Bachelor's degree from UMA in education and English. Going to college should never feel insurmountable. Everybody's path to and through college will be different; you just have to find what works for you.



—Josie Wallace, senior at University of Maine-Augusta, from Alexander, ME



Across

- 2. the sports teams of Unity College
- 4. plant of the league including Yale Harvard and Brown
- 6. town of Bates College
- 10. Texas school or food
- 11. major for helping people recover from injuries
- 13. military program for college students
- 16. product of a naval architecture major
- 17. college major for the study of rocks
- 18. mascot of the University of Delaware
- 19. public college in Machias
- 20. location of McGill University
- 21. student in final year of undergraduate education

- 22. city of the University of Utah
- 23. community college in York County
- 24. major of someone who studies the past

Down

- 1. four year college degree
- 3. college of George Washington
- 5. Vanderbilt University is in _____ Tennessee
- 7. school in Boston for communications and comedy
- 8. mascot of Thomas College
- 9. the study of diseases
- 12. the study of sound
- 14. New England state with the University of Hartford
- 15. home state of UNLV