

## CHRIST COLLEGE FAQs

### *Honors in College—The Basics*

What are the advantages of being in Christ College?

Christ College offers an exciting interdisciplinary curriculum with small (12-18 students) discussion-oriented classes taught by outstanding teacher-scholars who enjoy strong mentoring relationships with students. Christ College students form a real community of learning that encourages them to *think deeply* not only about academic subjects, but about their beliefs, values, and goals. CC students form deep friendships with one another that



often last for life.

Fine academic advising actively assists CC students in achieving their goals and helps them develop professional resumes in order to apply for graduate school, competitive fellowships, jobs, or volunteer opportunities. CC students receive the honors designation Christ College Scholar or Christ College Associate on their transcripts. The CC alumni network of 2,000 graduates offers strong professional contacts in the “real world” for internships and career assistance.

Does participation in honors really matter at college? Yes! It speaks volumes about your abilities and goals. Students in honors colleges and programs are widely recognized as having both the academic ability and the motivation to make the most of their college experience. Many employers and graduate schools—including medical schools and law schools—look favorably upon students who have distinguished themselves through distinctive honors programs. CC graduates have exceptional records of success.

What is an honors college, and how does it differ from an honors program?

An honors college is an independent unit of a university, comparable to other undergraduate colleges (Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Engineering, and Nursing) that offers special opportunities and benefits to students who enjoy academic challenges and want to get the absolute most out of their education. Unlike honors *programs*, a true honors college like Christ College has its own faculty, dean, and curriculum, and does not “borrow” its faculty from traditional departments. CC faculty specialize in working with academically talented students in unique interdisciplinary courses.

What is “interdisciplinary” about Christ College? Christ College emphasizes the integration and “wholeness” of knowledge, rather than the specialized knowledge and training characteristic of traditional disciplines (like political science, biology, or art). CC faculty and students actively look for connections across all fields and constantly consider the relationship of all forms of learning to a thoughtful and meaningful life.

Will participation in Christ College lower my grades or jeopardize my scholarship?

Not at all. The *first* semester of the CC Freshman Program is graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis—which enables all entering CC students to test their performance level and comfort in CC without jeopardizing their grade point average. After that, honors college courses are graded no harder than other courses. Our data show that a CC student's overall grade point average is usually positively impacted by grades earned in honors.

How do I know if CC is right for me? If you are invited to apply to Christ College, it means that the CC faculty and dean have carefully reviewed your records and believe you have the ability to succeed in the honors college. The best way to demonstrate to *yourself* that this is true is to apply for membership and enroll in the CC Freshman Program. You'll quickly gain confidence in your own abilities by working together (not competing) with strong students like yourself.

*How Does Christ College Work?*

How will Christ College studies fit with my major? Christ College students come from all majors and colleges at Valparaiso University. Most CC courses fulfill your general education requirements. Others may count toward your major or minor, and thus do not add time to completing your degree. Careful planning and academic advising help students achieve their academic goals and lay foundations for their futures.

Will I take only honors courses? / How much time does CC take? You'll take 25-30% of your coursework in Christ College, and most of the rest of your coursework in your major and minor. CC requires a minimum 30-38 credits to complete Christ College commencement honors. *About half of that work is completed in your first year*, leaving ample time during your sophomore, junior, and senior years to concentrate on your major and minor, international study, internships, undergraduate research, and other activities to enrich your education.

How much time does a student put into CC coursework as a freshman? As an upperclassman? A good rule of thumb is that there should be two hours of study time for every hour in class—very similar to that for any other course. So the eight-credit Freshman Program should involve about sixteen hours a week of study, and upper division courses of three or four credits would mean six or eight hours per week. These commitments will vary throughout the semester.

How much writing is there in the Freshman Program? In a typical Christ College course? Students in the 8-credit Freshman Program write about ten small (1-3 page) papers in the fall semester. In the spring semester they write three or four papers of 3-4 pages each, plus a research paper of about 15-20 pages. Other CC courses and seminars differ in their requirements, but something around 12-18 pages would be the average for most courses (with 4-credit courses being somewhat higher). However, individual courses with special agendas may vary

from this average. Students receive advance course descriptions that include such information.

How will my AP or transfer credit be applied? AP, college transfer, and other credit always counts toward graduation. Depending on the subject area and your degree program, such credit may also fulfill specific requirements or permit you to take a more advanced course sooner. Your honors advisor will help you see how your credits will work for you.

How about international study and Christ College? Nearly fifty percent of Christ College students spend a semester at one of Valparaiso's international study programs, or in urban study semesters in Washington, DC, or Chicago. CC specifically encourages students to do so by offering three credits toward the fulfillment of CC Scholar or Associate designations for any off-campus experience. CC also supports shorter-term travel seminars and service opportunities in Britain, Europe, East Asia, and Central America, often as part of a CC seminar.

What opportunities do CC students have on campus that they wouldn't have otherwise? First-year Christ College students participate in the Drama Workshop and Freshman Production, leading to the presentation of a full-length play with music near the end of the fall semester. In the spring freshmen students engage in "Oxford-style" public debates on controversial public policy questions. CC students have special opportunities to present their research and creative work at regular CC Scholarship Symposiums. CC funds student participation in the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) and other prestigious conferences. CC supports special international travel seminars and other opportunities for study abroad, for example: Schweitzer Healthcare Travel Fellowships fund CC pre-medical arts and nursing students for service travel to Nicaragua and Costa Rica each spring.

What role does religion play in Christ College? Does the name Christ College imply that all texts are theologically based? Christ College, like Valparaiso University, is based in the principles of Christian higher education and draws from the Lutheran tradition of "scholarship, freedom, and faith." But, Christ College is *not* a seminary or theological school, and it has no requirements of belief or doctrine. Rather, it is a liberal arts college, in which the thoughtful treatment of religious texts and ideas goes along with the equally careful examination and discussion of literary, philosophical, and political texts written by people from many diverse perspectives, including those of other religious traditions. Many students find that their faith is challenged, enlivened, and deepened in an atmosphere where such matters are addressed with freedom and respect.

Can I leave Christ College without penalty? What happens to my credits if I go to the regular track? Yes. A student may leave Christ College at any time with no penalty and no lost credits. All CC credits taken in the first two years will count toward general education requirements of the University, so that no credits are lost. Some upper division seminars or courses may count toward general education or toward major requirements as well as toward graduation.

#### *Student Life for CC Students*

How many students are in Christ College? CC enrolls 80-85 first-year students each fall. Freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors total about 315. A student steering committee of about 20 students helps plan CC events.

Do CC students have time for music, athletics, and other activities? Absolutely! Without exception Christ College students are active on campus. You'll have time to participate in music, theatre, dance, athletics (including NCAA Division I sports), student publications or government, social action groups, religious life, or other activities. In fact CC students are among the most dedicated student leaders and volunteers at Valpo. Your CC courses won't conflict.

What do CC students do for fun? College life is not all studying! CC students join the fun of all Valpo's activities, events, and organizations. CC also offers special trips to attractions in Chicago (such as Millennium Park, the Art Institute, Navy Pier, Chicago River cruises, music, theatre, and Chicago's fascinating ethnic neighborhoods), a series of stimulating speakers, picnics, a fun-filled Christmas Symposium, the CC Senior Banquet, frequent dessert receptions, *CC Cinema* each week, occasional game nights, dinners at faculty homes, to name a few!

Is there separate housing for Christ College students? Many CC students elect to have CC roommates. (*We encourage this!*--Just check a box on your housing form.) But there is no residence hall just for honors students. CC students tell us they prefer to choose from the variety of residence hall options at Valpo.

#### *Other Good Questions*

Does Christ College membership require extra tuition or fees? No.

Does Christ College offer financial aid or scholarships? No, although almost all Christ College students receive merit or need-based aid through Valparaiso University.

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