

# Finding the School For Me

By Rachel Clift

Colleges I Researched: University of California  
at Berkeley, Humboldt State University, and  
Cabrillo College

Date Due: June 8, 2018



UC Berkeley Campus (Nguyen wikimedia.org)



Humboldt State University Campus (Adbar wikimedia.org)



Cabrillo College Campus (Prabhu sevaashram.org)

Rachel N. Clift

Ms. Darrough

APEL&C

8 June 2018

## Finding the School For Me

### **Introduction**

I have always known that I wanted to go to college. My parents have been saving money for my college education for the entirety of my life, something for which I am very thankful. For this I-search, I chose the University of California at Berkeley as my “dream” college, Humboldt State University as my “I’d be very happy here” college, and Cabrillo College as my “Fall-Back Plan” college. Going into this assignment, I had already done a fair amount of research on both UC Berkeley and Humboldt State, especially Humboldt State because I feel that I am much more likely to be accepted there. Everything I already knew about Cabrillo, I knew from what I had heard from counselors, attendees, and friends who were hoping to attend the college. I chose UC Berkeley as my “Dream” college because I know that as an animal rights activist I would have many opportunities to get internships and volunteer opportunities in the area (what with the Berkeley Animal Rights center and several animal rights groups such as The Humane League San Francisco and Direct Action Everywhere being right there). I also appreciated the fact that students at the university celebrate liberal politics, and that the university and the area in general are very vegan-friendly. Other attractions include an excellent and highly rated political science program, fairly small distance from home, cool weather, and an easy entrance into San Francisco (where I am familiar with the area and have done a lot of charitable work). I chose Humboldt

State University as my “I’d Be Very Happy Here” college because while its political science program is not as highly ranked, it is also in a very liberal area with cool weather. It is slightly farther from home than I would like to be, but still manageable. Additionally, the school is one to which I am likely to get in. I chose Cabrillo College as my “Fall Back Plan” college because I am guaranteed admission no matter what and I can easily afford it, but it is a little bit too close to home, there are no on-campus living options, and I would rather go straight to a four-year university. I know that I would like to major in political science so I may then go to Lewis & Clark Law School and study to become an animal lawyer. With these goals in mind, I hope that at least one of these three colleges will suit my ambitions.

**College #1: The University of California at Berkeley**

I first became interested in UC Berkeley when watching Missy Franklin swim in the 2012 Olympics (I am a competitive swimmer myself). I asked my parents if I could see her swim live. They took me to a UC Berkeley swim meet where she swam for the university, and all my eleven-year-old mind could think about was going to the same school as my newfound idol. I became even more pleased when I did further research and found out that their political science program “has long been regarded as one of the finest places to study politics and government” (University of California Berkeley, “Political Science at Cal: The Department Today”).

Because my family has been saving money for my college education for a long time, I hope that money will not be too much of an issue, although since I intend on attending Lewis & Clark Law School after my first four years, I purposefully wanted to avoid private school and out-of-state schools. Added up, the combined tuition and fees at UC Berkeley would add up to \$8,685.75 for each year (University of California Berkeley, “2017-18 Fee Schedule”).

Living on campus for at least the first two years is really important to me, and I would like to live in a single dorm due to my social anxiety disorder. It appears as though there are quite a few options for those who wish to live without a roommate, although it seems like they are somewhat hard to qualify for (University of California Berkeley, “Housing: Undergraduate Students”). I do like how many on-campus housing options there are, though. For my last two years, when I am likely to live off-campus, I was pleased to find that the university is partnered with a service called Cal Rentals which provides “Housing and roommate listings for UC Berkeley students, faculty and staff, and UC Berkeley affiliates, message boards to find roommates, sublets, buy/sell furniture, etc., easy access to off-campus housing listings for

students, parents, faculty, and staff, and a place for area property owners/managers to reach the UC Berkeley community” (University of California Berkeley, “Off-Campus Housing”). All of this potential help with off-campus housing gives me a lot of relief and comfort.

In addition to the housing preferences, I am a vegan, and have to be extra careful in making sure that universities will have options for me. I was extremely pleased to read that Cal Dining not only offers many vegan options, but marks which items are vegan on their menu (University of California, Berkeley, “Cal Dining”). I already know that in the city there are plenty of vegan and vegetarian restaurants (such as the Saturn Cafe and the Butcher’s Son) but it is nice to know that there would be plenty of options on campus as well.

I was happy to discover that I meet all of the minimum requirements, although there is still a large chance that I will not get in due to the fact that the university is highly selective in admissions (University of California Berkeley, “Freshmen Requirements”). I hope to get involved with a lot of volunteer work in college too, so I was thrilled to see such a full and colorful volunteer page on the university’s website (University of California Berkeley, “Volunteering”). Under the different student-run organizations and groups on campus, I was very pleased to find many were dedicated to LGBT students and animal rights matters (University of California Berkeley, “Organizations”). Seeing as I am aspiring to become an animal lawyer someday, I was very excited by their Boalt Hall Animal Law Society which is an organization dedicated entirely to advocating for animal rights and training future animal lawyers (University of California Berkeley, “Organizations”). I was also excited to see the other main animal rights advocacy group on the list, the Berkeley Organization for Animal Advocacy (University of California Berkeley, “Organizations”).

Overall, I am positively thrilled with what I have found on this university's website, and I am definitely even more excited about this school than I was when starting out. I have no doubts that this school will remain near or at the top of my list of favorite colleges. I look forward to applying.

**College #2: Humboldt State University**

I first became interested in Humboldt State University when a close friend of mine decided she would go there last winter. I became interested in many of the things she told me about the university, such as their liberal politics and the placement between trees and the beach. I did further research on my own and quickly fell in love with the college. I was extremely happy, when researching their political science department, to discover that many of their courses and really the department as a whole is largely focused on the ethical future of law, and a lot of their courses revolve around environmental law (Humboldt State University, “Political Science”), which is mainly what I will be studying in law school as I am working towards becoming an animal lawyer.

I am happy to see that at Humboldt State University, money will definitely not be an issue for me, seeing as the university is priced fairly cheaply, even more so if I choose to apply for a scholarship. Added up, the combined tuition and fees at Humboldt State University would add up to \$7,492 for each year (Humboldt State University, “Costs”).

Living on campus for at least the first two years is important to me, and again, I strongly hope to live in a single dorm. It appears as though there are a lot of options for those who wish to live without a roommate, and it looks as though they are much easier to qualify for when compared with UC Berkeley (Humboldt State University, “Housing Options”). At first glance, I immediately saw that many of their housing options for freshmen included single dorms as well, not just for returning and transfer students (Humboldt State University, “Housing Options”). While searching around for housing help for my last two years, when I am likely to live off-campus, I was not quite as pleased as I was with Berkeley (Humboldt State University,

“Living Off-Campus”). However, there was a guide that seemed somewhat helpful, as well as a small section about transportation saying that students at the university get free public transportation around the city, something that gave me a lot of comfort considering that I may not have a car while attending the school.

Once again, I am a vegan, and have to be extra careful in making sure that universities will have options for me. I was overwhelmingly satisfied to read that Humboldt State University does all-campus “Meatless Mondays” and encourage both vegan and vegetarian diets, offering many different options for both (Humboldt State University, “Dining Services”).

I was happy to discover that I easily meet all of the minimum requirements, and I feel very strongly that I am highly likely to be accepted with hardly any difficulty (Humboldt State University, “Freshmen Eligibility”). I really hope to get involved with a lot of volunteer work in college and continue with my animal rights work too, and was happy, though not quite as impressed as I was with UC Berkeley, to see a couple of clubs that I would most definitely be interested in such as Vegan Club and College Democrats (Humboldt State University, “Clubs and Activities”). I also became immediately interested when I saw that there was a club titled Finding Resources and Empowerment Through Education which is a club made purely to talk about helping and help undocumented immigrants feel safe and get an education (Humboldt State University, “Clubs and Activities”).

I am immensely satisfied with most everything that I researched about Humboldt State University, and feel very happy that this is most likely the school that I will attend after high school next year. I believe that between the political activism on campus, and the ethical goals of the various academic programs, this school is an absolutely perfect fit for me and I look forward

to applying very much. Also, being one who likes cold weather much more than hot weather, I am very happy with the location of this university.

**College #3: Cabrillo College**

I have been aware of Cabrillo College for a very long time, and always knew that it would be the perfect back-up plan, should I not get into any of the universities to which I apply. My mother took some classes at Cabrillo, and I have many friends who are taking classes there currently. Everyone with whom I have spoken about Cabrillo has had nothing but good things to say about the school. I like that the school is so close to home, and that should I go there, I can remain living at my house in Scotts Valley without having to worry about paying rent. I love Santa Cruz county and absolutely would not mind continuing to live here for a couple more years after high school. I like that the school celebrates its liberal politics, and I like that they have a large pool so students can swim recreationally, something I enjoy very much and something I saw last time I was there. When researching their political science department, I discovered that after getting my associate's degree, I could complete my political science major at a CSU with an immediate and guaranteed transfer from Cabrillo once I finish my first two years (Cabrillo College, "Majors and Programs: Political Science"). It would be very comforting to know that I would have a place to go no matter what once I finished my two years at Cabrillo College.

Being a community college, Cabrillo College's tuition is very manageable for me, and I would most definitely have a lot of money left over for transferring to a four-year then going to law school. Added up, the combined tuition and fees at Cabrillo College would add up to \$1,288 for each year (Cabrillo College, Fees, Payments & Refunds).

Since living on campus would not be an option for me, I would likely continue to live at home with my parents at our house in Scotts Valley while attending the school so that I would not have to worry about finding a local apartment and paying rent. Even though I would plan to

live on campus, I was disappointed with the lack of help I found on the Cabrillo site for kids trying to find a place to live off-campus. Considering I likely will not have a car at this time, I was disappointed to find that I could not locate a place anywhere on their website where they offered free or discounted transportation around the county.

Just knowing the area, I assumed that being on a vegan diet would not be an issue should I choose to become a student at Cabrillo. Unfortunately, I was wrong. When I looked at the menu of their cafeteria, I was very disappointed to find a number of vegetarian options, but nearly no vegan options at all (WM Cafe, “Catering Menu”). Thankfully, with the Saturn Cafe, Cafe Gratitude, and others nearby, I would probably be able to find food for myself fairly easily.

Since Cabrillo College is a community college, I will be accepted no matter what. Additionally, since I will have taken a few AP’s by the time I graduate, I will likely be placed in harder classes to which I look forward. I really hope to get involved with a lot of volunteer work in college and continue with my animal rights work too. I was terribly unimpressed with the lack of clubs, organizations, and groups on the website, especially when compared with the University of California at Berkeley and Humboldt State University. Despite this, there are a few local organizations (Santa Cruz Indivisible, Anonymous for the Voiceless Santa Cruz, and the Diversity Center) that I already work with, and I would be happy to stay in the area and continue my work with them when not in class.

I am less satisfied with most things that I found out about Cabrillo College than with the other two universities I looked at. Despite this, I love Santa Cruz and I am very happy and content with this being my fall back plan, just in case the other two do not work out. I am happy with the location, the distance from home, the weather (for the most part), and the fact that I

would get to keep my job at the St. Philip's Nursery as well as my work with the various organizations I listed earlier.

## **Closure**

While I entered this project, I mostly expected to love University of California at Berkeley, and feel averagely about Humboldt State University and Cabrillo College. To my surprise, I think that Humboldt State University is now my new favorite college and my top choice. I love the strong focus on ethics and using the skills that you learn from the school to make the world a more ethical place. While I would still strongly consider UC Berkeley if I were to be admitted, I can most definitely see myself choosing Humboldt State above any others school. While I knew I would not love Cabrillo College, I was more disappointed in the school than I thought I would be. The website was somewhat depressing and difficult to navigate, and it seemed as though they hardly had anything going on on campus in the way of clubs or extracurriculars. This I-search mostly helped to confirm a few things about myself: I am definitely college material, I want to go to law school and believe that a political science degree is the best way for me to get there, and I was right in my decision to stay in-state; California has so many excellent colleges that are at a discounted price for me since I live in the state. This project has helped me to see just how excited I am for college, and I feel as though I am ready to apply right now. This I-search was a great tool to help me force myself into exploration. I am so happy I learned more about each college, especially Humboldt State, so that when the time comes, I can make the most educated choice for my future.

## Works Cited

- Adbar. "Humboldt State University Entrance." 10 April 2013,  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Humboldt\\_State\\_University\\_Entrance.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Humboldt_State_University_Entrance.jpg).
- Cabrillo College. "Dining and Catering Services." Cabrillo College. 5 June 2018.  
<http://www.cabrillo.edu/services/food/>.
- "Fees, Payments & Refunds." Cabrillo College. 5 June 2018.  
<http://www.cabrillo.edu/services/ar/fees-fallspring.html>.
- "Majors & Programs: Political Science." Cabrillo College. 5 June 2018.  
<http://www.cabrillo.edu/home/programs/>.
- "Catering Menu." WM Cafe. 5 June 2018. <https://www.wmcafecatering.com/menu.html>.
- Humboldt State University. "Clubs and Activities." Humboldt State University. 5 June 2018.  
<https://clubs.humboldt.edu/categories/all-clubs>.
- "Costs." Humboldt State University. 5 June 2018. <https://www.humboldt.edu/cost>.
- "Dining Services." Humboldt State University. 5 June 2018. <https://dining.humboldt.edu/>.
- "Freshmen Eligibility." Humboldt State University. 5 June 2018.  
<https://admissions.humboldt.edu/node/5>.
- "Housing Options." Humboldt State University. 5 June 2018.  
<https://housing.humboldt.edu/cost-options/options>.
- "Living Off Campus." Humboldt State University. 5 June 2018.  
<https://housing.humboldt.edu/resident-resources/off-campus>.
- "Majors and Programs: Political Science." Humboldt State University. 5 June 2018.  
<https://www.humboldt.edu/programs/political-science>.

Nguyen, Charlie. "UC Berkeley Campus." 19 February 2008.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UC\\_Berkeley\\_Campus\\_Image.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UC_Berkeley_Campus_Image.jpg).

Prabhu, Giridhari. "The Main Entrance at the Scotts Valley's Campus." September 2008.

<http://www.sevaashram.org/images/galleries/2008/prasadam-distribution-at-cabrillo-09/prasadam-at-cabrillo-09-scotts-valley/prasadam-cabrillo-0809-scotts-valley-01.jpg>.

University of California Berkeley. "Cal Dining." University of California Berkeley. 5 June 2018.

<https://caldining.berkeley.edu/nutrition/food-allergies-and-special-diets>.

--"Fee Schedule." University of California Berkeley. 5 June 2018.

<https://registrar.berkeley.edu/tuition-fees-residency/tuition-fees/fee-schedule>.

--"Freshmen Requirements." University of California Berkeley. 5 June 2018.

<https://admissions.berkeley.edu/freshmen-requirements>.

--"Housing: Undergraduate Students." University of California Berkeley. 5 June 2018.

<https://housing.berkeley.edu/undergraduate-students>.

--"Off-Campus Housing." University of California Berkeley. 5 June 2018.

<https://housing.berkeley.edu/calrentals/>.

--"Organizations." University of California Berkeley. 5 June 2018.

<https://callink.berkeley.edu/Organizations?query=animal>.

--"Political Science at Cal: The Department Today." University of California Berkeley. 5 June 2018. <http://polisci.berkeley.edu/political-science-cal/department-today>.

--"Political Science at Cal: History." University of California Berkeley. 5 June 2018.

<http://polisci.berkeley.edu/political-science-cal/history>.

--"Student Organizations." University of California Berkeley. 5 June 2018.

<https://www.berkeley.edu/campus-life/student-organizations>.

--"Volunteering." University of California Berkeley. 5 June 2018.

<https://www.berkeley.edu/campus-life/volunteering>.