

US Colleges That Change Lives – www.ctcl.org

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Colleges That Change Lives, Inc. (CTCL) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement and support of a student-centered college search process. We support the goal of each student finding a college that develops a lifelong love of learning and provides the foundation for a successful and fulfilling life beyond college.

We were founded as a result of a book of the same name—*Colleges That Change Lives*, researched and written by retired *New York Times* education editor [Loren Pope](#). Mr. Pope passed away in September 2008 but his mission lives on through the work of CTCL.

In following Mr. Pope’s ideals, we believe that the criteria most college bound students and their parents and counselors use, such as name and prestige, do not acknowledge the importance of understanding an individual student’s needs and how they “fit” with the mission and identity of an individual college community.

The current record-high numbers of college-bound students coupled with narrowly focused media stories about college admission have led the public, and even the high school counseling community, to believe that college choices are severely limited. CTCL aims to correct this misperception by presenting accurate information about college accessibility at sessions around the country and by providing college counseling information and resources through the CTCL web site and other outreach efforts.

CTCL Members

Agnes Scott College	Kalamazoo College
Allegheny College	Knox College
Antioch College	Lawrence University
Austin College	Lynchburg College
Beloit College	Marlboro College
Birmingham-Southern College	McDaniel College
Centre College	Millsaps College
Clark University	New College of Florida
Cornell College	Ohio Wesleyan University
Denison University	Reed College
Earlham College	Rhodes College
Eckerd College	Southwestern University
Emory & Henry College	St. John’s College
The Evergreen State College	Saint Mary’s College of California
Goucher College	St. Olaf College
Guilford College	University of Puget Sound
Hampshire College	Ursinus College
Hendrix College	Wabash College
Hillsdale College	Wheaton College [Illinois]
Hiram College	Whitman College
Hope College	Willamette University
Juniata College	Wooster, College of

Why These Schools?

When acclaimed education writer [Loren Pope](#) first set out to share with students, families, and counselors his thoughts about colleges, his goal was to provide insights that would allow people to make more informed choices. Too often college choices are made based on [false perceptions](#), misinformation, or a lack of information—and these uninformed choices have led to higher dropout, transfer, and failure rates in higher education. After much research, Mr. Pope began championing a small group of less well-known colleges for their life-changing success with students. These 40 colleges and universities—two public and 38 private from 24 states and with enrollments ranging from 350 to 4,000—were recognized in the book [Colleges That Change Lives](#).

The CTCL schools are a group of distinctive colleges and universities, each of which is unique in its own right. But, as Pope notes in the book,

"These schools share two essential elements: a familial sense of communal enterprise that gets students heavily involved in cooperative rather than competitive learning, and a faculty of scholars devoted to helping young people develop their powers, mentors who often become their valued friends."

This dynamic group of schools also share some other common attributes that have led to their distinction as colleges that change lives:

- Low student-to-faculty ratios that foster collaboration, engaged learning, and personal attention. Classes are taught by professors, not TAs. (graduate student teaching assistants)
- A commitment to undergraduate education that focuses on the liberal arts and sciences. Opportunities for undergraduate research are prevalent.
- A living and learning environment that is primarily residential and emphasizes the benefits of community, personal growth, participation, and involvement.
- Smaller student enrollments that allow students to be known and recognized as individuals.
- Out-of-classroom learning opportunities that provide students with an added perspective about themselves, their interests, and the global community. Participation in internships, study abroad, service to others, and special interest activities is common and expected.
- Holistic admission policies including several with "test-optional" applications for admission. These schools take into consideration everything about an applicant—not just their numbers on an application.
- Alumni networks that help graduates with professional and career development opportunities as well as foster lifelong friendships based on an involved and engaged undergraduate student experience.
- For many talented and motivated students, CTCL colleges provide the ideal living and learning environment for students to meet and exceed their own expectations for personal intellectual growth—indeed, an experience that changes lives.