

Why Swarthmore? College application supplemental essay
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Swarthmore is only one of a number of small liberal-arts colleges in the Northeast that offer first-rate facilities and resources, personal relationships with professors, and a diverse student body. But, there are several distinguishing characteristics that make Swarthmore College uniquely suited to my passions and values.

One is its progressive Quaker origins. Though not a member of the Society of Friends, I fervently embrace many of the social causes that Quakers have historically championed: abolitionism, religious toleration, and opposition to war, to name a few. More importantly, this sense of concern for other human beings remains strong among students, as efforts to provide a living wage for all workers and to purchase a wind-power generator for electricity demonstrate. And the Quaker belief in equality—reflected in the absence of freshmen-only dorms and the presence of just one dining hall—continues to foster an atmosphere of tolerance and community by bringing people together for conversation.

This sense of connectedness is reinforced by an emphasis on mutualistic collaboration and an eschewal of antagonistic competition—general attitudes that are manifested in the abundant availability of tutoring services and the lack of grades during the first semester of freshmen year. Moreover, the option of taking up to four additional classes pass/fail allows students to select courses based purely on interest, without being held back by fears of doing poorly. Attending a high school at which students constantly ask each other about grades, I am excited by the prospect of a college that does not even determine class rank or GPA because it understands that its students are instead motivated by the love of learning and the joy of self-challenge.

In addition to a close-knit student body, Swarthmore College has a strong connection to nature. Having grown up on a small organic farm in the country, I have always felt rejuvenation and awe at the wonders of the natural world. In the midst of a colorful arboretum set off from major streets and urban centers, Swarthmore's campus captures this sublime beauty. [...]

The qualities that make Swarthmore unique, from its Quaker heritage to its strong community atmosphere, are exactly what I am looking for in a college.