Welcome to Williams! The Office of Admission is currently closed, but that should not stop you from getting to know the college through our self-guided tour! In italics you will see walking instructions, accompanied by information you would hear on a student-guided tour. Please use a campus map, and if you get lost, stop anyone and ask for directions—it’s a very friendly campus. This is YOUR tour, so read what you are interested in and skim the rest. If you’re ready, off we go!

The tour begins in front of the Admission Office, located in Weston Hall on the corner of Main Street and Stetson Court.

Williams was founded in 1791 when Colonel Ephraim Williams, a colonel in the French and Indian War, bequeathed $9,297 to Massachusetts to start a free school to educate the sons of farmers. He had three stipulations: 1) the school had to be in Massachusetts, 2) the school had to be named after him, and 3) the town that the school was in had to be named after him. At the time Harvard was the only other institution of higher learning in Massachusetts—they lobbied against Williams’ founding, arguing that there were not enough students to support two schools in the state. Despite the lobby, Williams received its charter in 1793.

Walk towards Main Street, also known as Route 2, where you will cross the street, then turn right to walk past the ’62 Center for Theatre and Dance, which will be on your left. Feel free to look inside the building; if the front doors are locked, then the doors on the right side of the building should be open.
The ’62 Center opened its doors in April of 2005. The building has three main performance spaces: the 550-seat Mainstage, the 220-seat Adams Memorial Theatre, and the 150-seat Centerstage, built in the black box theater style. All theatre performances at Williams have open auditions, meaning any student can participate regardless of previous experience or involvement in the theatre department. Cap and Bells, the oldest student theatre organization in the country, puts on many shows throughout the year, while the theater department itself puts on one big show each semester. In addition, any student can apply for funding from Cap and Bells to produce their own show. In total, there are over 70 theater productions each year.

The professional performance series, the CenterSeries, brings world-class performers to campus each year (recently: Savion Glover, New York City Ballet, Bill T. Jones, and Laurie Anderson). The Williamstown Theatre Festival, held in this space each summer, is the only summer-stock theater festival that has won a Tony Award for best regional theater. Every summer Williamstown becomes a mini-Broadway—recent performers include Justin Long, Bradley Cooper, Gwyneth Paltrow, Blythe Danner, and more.

The ’62 Center also houses Williams’ dance programs. Williams has many dance groups, all of which are open to all students regardless of their background in dance. We have an African dance group, an Irish dance group, a modern dance company, a hip-hop group, a step team, and many others. If you are interested in dance, stop into the ‘62 Center and check out the dance studio on the second floor, which is one of the most beautiful spots on campus.

Continue to walk down Route 2 toward Park Street and the Faculty House.

The building on the left is the The Faculty House, which hosts events throughout the year that bring students and faculty together. One of these events is the Lyceum Dinner, which was designed to encourage dialogue between faculty and students. Every month, students have the opportunity to invite a faculty member to share a catered, three course meal.
sponsored by the college. This is just one example of how Williams fosters opportunities for students and faculty to develop personal relationships.

Continue to walk down Route 2, cross Park Street and turn left on the first paved walkway after the large yellow house.

The large yellow house that you’ll pass on the left is Sloan House. Sloan House was built in 1801, acquired by the college in 1858, and has been home to many Williams presidents. Our current president, Adam Falk, lived there until the fall of 2013, when he and his family chose to put down roots in a neighborhood right beside campus where many other faculty and staff members live. President Falk, a theoretical physicist, was appointed in April of 2010. The president invites students to Sloan House for dinner many times throughout the year, to dine with visiting distinguished speakers or to be recognized for specific or significant involvement on campus.

As you walk down the pathway toward Paresky Center, you will get a great view of the surrounding mountains. This is a good place to hear about Mountain Day, one of the most beloved Williams traditions. On one of the first three Fridays in October, classes are canceled and the college hosts a big picnic on the lawn in front of you. In the afternoon, students have the opportunity to hike up to Stony Ledge, where there is singing, doughnuts, and apple cider. Mountain Day is run by the Williams Outing Club (WOC), one of the most popular clubs on campus. For just $10 per year, WOC provides students with many great benefits, such as discounted ski passes and free rentals of everything from snowshoes to sleeping bags to fly fishing equipment.

You are now approaching Paresky Center. Please walk in.

This building opened in February of 2007 and serves as the central hub of campus. It is open to students 24 hours a day. The great hall in the center of the first floor is called Baxter Hall. This is the main meeting and lounging area. To the left of the entrance doors is
Lee Snack Bar, where students use their points to buy mozzarella sticks, cheeseburgers, gelato, salads, etc, during the day as well as “late-night” (until 2 am). The snack bar is usually a bustling social hub, particularly on weekend nights. On the first floor, behind the snack bar, is Whitman’s Marketplace. Whitman’s is the only dining hall that is not buffet-style (we have two other dining halls on campus—Mission and Driscoll). The food is delicious and many options—including vegetarian and vegan—exist in every dining hall.

If you go downstairs you will be in the Leutkemeyer Lounge, where air hockey, pool, foosball, and ping pong tables reside. The room in the round brick area downstairs is the ’82 Grill, which serves pub fare. Also downstairs is an all-purpose theater and Grab ‘n’ Go, where students short on time can grab a bagged lunch as they rush to class.

On the top floor of Paresky are two main study lounges. The one on the left, the ’58 Lounge, has a large balcony, where students like to study during the warmer months. The other lounge, the Henze Fireplace Lounge, is home to a Sunday tradition called Storytime, a weekly event where a community member shares a personal story (and their favorite baked good). This floor also houses a quiet study lounge, the Chaplain’s office, the school newspaper’s office, and other student offices. The building contains many study rooms, which students can reserve for meetings or claim for group study sessions.

If you walk back out the front doors of Paresky and take a left, you will see two identical brick buildings facing each other. These buildings, Sage Hall and Williams Hall, comprise the Frosh Quad.
Half of the first-years at Williams live in the Frosh Quad; the other half live in Mission Hall, the large, gray building that you may be able to see if you look down the hill past the Frosh Quad. Roughly 60% of Williams first-years live in singles. All first-years live in entries—a group of roughly 20 first-year students and two Junior Advisors (JAs). There is a competitive application process to become a JA, but unlike a typical RA, JAs do not have disciplinary power and they do not get paid. Rather, each JA serves as a mentor, resource, and friend during what can be a challenging transition from high school to college life. The entry brings together a diverse group of students who grow and learn from each other in their year together.

Walk out of the Frosh Quad and stop in front of Chapin Hall.

Chapin Hall contains the largest auditorium space at Williams, capable of sitting roughly 1,000 people. A lot of time is spent during the first week of freshman year—officially named First Days, but nicknamed Camp Williams by students—when the freshmen class comes together for addresses by the President, panel discussions, the singing of the school song and more. Over the past few years this building has also hosted speakers and performers like Tom Friedman, Howard Dean, Ben Stein, Salman Rushdie, Pat Buchanan, Run DMC’s Jam Master J, Noam Chomsky, Angela Davis, Arianna Huffington, the Congressional Black Caucus, and James Taylor, among others. Many of the school’s musical groups also perform here.

To the right of Chapin you should take the pathway into the new library quad.
To your left you will see a concrete building, the Bernhard Music Center, which is the headquarters for the music department and all of the musical groups on campus. 25% of students are involved with music on campus in some capacity. There is a wide variety of instrumental and vocal groups—a percussion ensemble, a jazz ensemble, a flute choir, student symphony, symphonic winds, seven a cappella groups, choir, and the Berkshire Symphony, a group comprised of both professionals and Williams students. Williams also subsidizes music lessons for anyone who is interested in taking lessons with one of our instructors.

Schapiro Hall, ahead and to your right, houses many professors’ offices and humanities classrooms. Across the quad is its twin, Hollander Hall, which serves a similar purpose. These buildings opened in the fall of 2008 and they are both LEED-certified, meaning that they are held to the highest environmentally friendly building standards.

Looking ahead towards Sawyer Library, you will see a white building with solar panels to your left. This is the Class of 1966 Environmental Center. This building is typically unlocked—feel free to explore before heading into the library.

The Environmental Center, made possible by the Class of 1966, opened in the summer of 2015. The building is designed to be net zero energy and to harvest and treat its own water. It is centrally located, versatile, and open 24/7 to students. It houses faculty and staff offices, a classroom, student study spaces, meeting rooms, a beautiful kitchen space, and a garden. The building is home to the Environmental Studies department, as well as the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives. The Zilkha Center is committed to protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment in which the Williams community learns, works, and lives.
The center researches, investigates, supports, promotes, and implements sustainability programs and educational initiatives around campus and in our broader community.

The new building is designed to meet the guidelines of the Living Building Challenge, the highest sustainable building certification. To become certified, it must complete a performance year in which it operates as a net-zero energy and net-zero water building. So far only a large handful of buildings in the world have completed their performance year and are LBC certified. The Environmental Center, which combines a historic building and a new addition, will likely become the first historic campus renovation LBC building.

The college invests approximately $1 million each year on energy efficiency and conservation on campus. All of our new construction meets LEED Gold standards and ambitious energy goals. In 2015, President Falk and the Board of Trustees committed to further action regarding climate change, including reducing the college’s net greenhouse gas emissions to 35 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, and to achieving carbon neutrality by the end of 2020.

Walk into Sawyer Library.

Sawyer Library, our largest library, was completed in 2014 and like Hollander and Shapiro Halls is a LEED certified building. Sawyer was designed with a focus on people, offering a variety of study spaces catered to student needs, including group study areas and individual carrels. Sawyer contains over one million print books and over 300,000 ebooks, and students have access to materials beyond Williams through the Boston Library Consortium, New England Express, and hundreds of electronic journal subscriptions and article databases. Students have the opportunity to schedule one-on-one time with research librarians who will guide students through print and electronic resources and help find the best resources for research projects and papers.

In addition to being our central library, Sawyer houses College Archives, the Chapin Library of Rare Books, and a branch of the Office of Information Technology. The Chapin Library has original copies of the four founding documents (Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Constitution, and Bill of Rights) and is utilized by classes in all disciplines.

Sawyer is also home to faculty offices, three classrooms, a videoconferencing classroom, computer labs and public computers, and a pending café for students. Sawyer is
open 8:00 am–2:30 am throughout the school year, with a 24/7 study space available to students as well.

As you leave the library, stick your head into the Mabie Room on the south side of the entrance hall—this is an example of a typical classroom at Williams. Our average class size is 13 students and our student to faculty ratio is 7:1. Only 2% of Williams classes enroll over 100 students, and these are introductory courses like Biology 101, Psychology 101, Art History 101. In addition to a lecture, students in these classes will meet regularly in smaller conference or lab sections of ten to twenty students, led by a professor.

Exit Sawyer Library and walk towards Hopkins Hall, the brick building ahead and to your right—go down the stairs and inside.

Hopkins Hall is the home of the college’s administrative offices—those of the president, deans, registrar, etc.—and a handful of classrooms. At Williams, classes are divided into three divisions—Division I consists of languages and the arts, Division II consists of the social sciences, and Division III consists of the laboratory sciences and mathematics. While we have no required core courses, we do ask that students take three classes in each division by the time they graduate. Students must also take two writing intensive classes, one class with a quantitative aspect (math, economics, statistics, etc.) and at least one class focusing on a non-Western culture. Many students fulfill requirements without thinking too hard about it, and depending on a student’s area of interest, they may complete one or more of these requirements many times over. Others may need some nudging, which is why first-years are assigned an advisor before they even arrive on campus to help navigate course selection and offer general academic advice. This advisor will stay with them until they declare a major at the end of sophomore year, when they will choose a major advisor to work with for their remaining two years at Williams.

Two things that are unique about Williams’ academic life are our tutorial program and Winter Study. A tutorial is a class with just two students, who meet once a week for about an hour with a professor. In a typical humanities tutorial, the two students will be
assigned an extensive reading assignment each week, and one of the two will write a lengthy paper on that week’s topic (6-8 pages). The person responsible for writing the long paper will email it 24 hours prior to the class meeting to the other student who will then write a response of about 3-5 pages. When they arrive in class, the student who wrote the longer paper will read it out loud, and then the critique will begin. This leads to back-and-forth intellectual engagement on an intense level (remember, there are only two students in the class, so you cannot hide!). Every department (including math and sciences) offer at least one and may require different assignments including problem sets, music compositions, art projects, etc. Tutorials are offered at every level, and can be taken as early a student’s freshman year. Although tutorials are not required, nearly two-thirds of our students will take at least one tutorial before they graduate. Tutorials ultimately improve your writing, speaking, reading, and critical thinking.

Williams is on a 4-1-4 calendar, meaning students take four classes in the fall and spring, and one class during January, known as Winter Study. Winter study is unlike a typical semester class in that it is structured to fit in a four week period, taught pass/fail, and will only meet about 6 to 8 hours a week. Winter study courses allow students to explore an interest deeply, perhaps in a more vocational or experiential way than a typical semester class (some examples are: “How to Start a Startup,” “Stand-up Comedy: Joke Writing and Performance,” “The Mathematics of Lego Bricks,” “The World of Wes Anderson”).

Students are required to be on campus their first year, but after that can travel or propose their own class if they like. In previous years, classes have traveled to France, the Republic of Georgia, Jerusalem, Morocco, Argentina, and Mexico, to name just a few. Students can also propose an original class (called a “99”), which requires a faculty member’s support but is otherwise self-structured and self-actualized.

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Walk out of Hopkins and towards Route 2.
On your left is Thompson Chapel, where mandatory chapel was held until 1935 (since seating during services was alphabetical, two of our more famous alums, George Steinbrenner and Stephen Sondheim, sat next to each other during the few years that their time here overlapped). Thompson Chapel is now used for various events, such as choir concerts, and is the home of some of the school’s religious groups. Thompson is also used during commencement each year, when a watch is dropped off the top of the chapel’s tower. If the watch breaks, the graduating class is expected to have good luck for the rest of their lives. The brick building on the other side of Thompson Chapel is Griffin Hall, the second oldest building on campus. Griffin Hall contains classrooms and a beautiful meeting room.

_Cross Route 2 and walk up the short hill on your left toward the large metal eyeballs. You should now see Goodrich Hall on your right, East College on your left and Lawrence Hall in front of you._

**Goodrich Hall** is a popular social space on campus. The building is home to the Goodrich Coffee Bar, a student run coffee bar where students can use their meal plan to buy breakfast in the morning and hot drinks at night. Goodrich also hosts student dance parties, concerts, and student performances.

**Lawrence Hall** is the home of the college’s art history department (the art studio department is in the Spencer Art Studio Building, which this tour does not pass but which you are welcome to visit on your own). Art History 101 is a very popular course with Williams students, regardless of major, and we have a small graduate program (roughly 15 students) in art history as well. Many of the country’s top art museums and institutes (MoMA, the Guggenheim, and the National Gallery) are run by Williams grads, dubbed the “Williams Art Mafia.” Lawrence Hall also
holds the Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA), which is worth checking out (it is not open on Wednesdays, is open every other day of the week, and admission is free!).

WCMA launched WALLS (Williams Art Loan for Living Spaces), a student art loan program, in 2014. The goal: to allow students to live with art, and to encourage sustained interaction with and deep thinking about original pieces of art. Within walking distance of campus is the Clark Art Institute, one of the top art museums in the country. Down the road in North Adams is Mass MoCA (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art). Mass MoCA is among the nation’s largest, most respected multidisciplinary centers for contemporary visual, performing, and media arts. It was founded by Williams alum and then-WCMA Director Tom Krens. The museum presents a wide range of dance, theater, film, music programs, and visual art exhibits by many of today’s most renowned artists.

_Walk down the long staircase to the right of Lawrence Hall. At the bottom you will find yourself in a small plaza with the swimming pool is in front of you, the basketball court to your right, and the Simon Squash Center directly behind you._

Roughly half of Williams students participate in athletics—35% at the varsity level and the rest on JV or intramural teams. We have 32 varsity teams, 4 JV teams, 14 club teams, and many intramural teams. Williams is a part of the NESCAC athletic division and competes at the NCAA Division III level. Lasell Gym, which was built in 1886, is the oldest operating gym in the country (it is no longer used for basketball games; it is now merely a general purpose gym). When it was built the ceiling was supported by columns in the middle of the basketball court which opposing teams would often run into, causing them to lose the ball and usually lose the game. Williams has won the Director’s Cup (awarded to the school with the best postseason performance in each athletic division) 19 out of 21 years and counting.

_Walk past the squash center towards Spring Street._

Spring Street is our quaint, lively commercial hub. It features everything a college student might need—restaurants, sandwich shops, a coffee shop, a movie theater, a barber shop, a small grocery store, ice cream, and more. Goff’s, at the top of Spring Street, is the place to go for all Williams paraphernalia. Purple has been our school color since 1860,
when spectators were having difficulty differentiating teams at a Williams-Harvard baseball game. One of the fans, Jennie Jerome (Winston Churchill’s mother, actually), went to the cloth store on Spring Street to buy ribbon to tie to the players’ uniforms. The only color that they had enough of was purple, and the rest, as they say, is history. Our mascot, as you may or may not know, is a purple cow. Technically we are the Ephs, named after our founder Ephraim Williams, but since that is rather hard to represent in costume form, the student body voted in 1907 to adopt the purple cow. It is assumed that the idea came from a poem by Gelett Burgess that reads:

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\begin{align*}
I & \text{ never saw a purple cow,} \\
I & \text{never hope to see one;} \\
But & \text{I can tell you anyhow,} \\
I’d & \text{rather see than be one.}
\end{align*}
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If you are still facing Goff’s you’ll see a large, gray stone building to its right. This is Morgan Hall, popular upperclassmen housing. Walk to the right of Morgan Hall along Rt. 2 and you’ll see a set of stone steps leading up to a brick building, West College. Continue left to walk through the Science Quad.

This called Hopkins Gate, a daily reminder to passing students to “Climb High, Climb Far.” The words inscribed on Hopkins gate is also the parting wisdom for graduating seniors, who parade through the gate after their graduation ceremony, which takes place in the science quad. West College is the oldest building on campus. When the school first opened it was the only building on campus, which means that it held the dormitory, library, chapel, classrooms, and cafeteria. It is now used for upperclassmen housing.

The science quad is home to our math, psychology, geosciences, physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, and computer science departments. Once three distinct buildings, the quad was renovated in 2001 to connect the physics, chemistry, and biology buildings and add the Schow Science Library. Williams is beginning a $200 million science center
renovation and expansion project this year, slated to be completed by 2020, which will include lab space, classrooms, and offices, as well as four labs dedicated to flexible, interdisciplinary research.

Math and science are strong departments at Williams. Ten percent of students graduate with a degree in math, compared to the 1-2% national average, and over 30% of our students obtain a degree in a laboratory science, which is also well over the national average. Because we do not have graduate students in the sciences, many students have the opportunity to participate in research with professors, positions that are typically held by graduate students. Each summer, nearly 200 students are paid to stay on campus to do research, and 40% of the papers that our professors publish are co-written by undergraduates. Research opportunities are available to all students, regardless of class year. Three Williams math professors (Colin Adams, Frank Morgan, and Thomas Garrity) have won the most prestigious teaching award in math, the Haimo Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics. It is awarded to no more than three professors in the nation each year. No other college or university in the country, regardless of size, has more than two winners.

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Enter the Science Center through the large, black glass section in the center of the quad.

You are now standing in Schow Atrium, the entrance to the Schow Library. The atrium serves as a general meeting/studying/socializing spot, and is open for breakfast and lunch. If you walk to the back of the atrium you can look through the windows and into the library. Schow is smaller than Sawyer, and contains only math and science publications. It has many public computers, eight small study rooms that students can claim for group study sessions, and two classrooms. Feel free to walk down and explore, or just observe from above.

As you look across the large central room in Schow, you will see a large window facing various residential-looking buildings. Together these houses make up the Davis Center, which supports students and the Williams College community, focusing on the unique problems that racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, women, those of LGBTQ identities, and international students face as members of the Williams community. Originally founded in 1989 by student activists, the Davis Center was created to ensure that the college was changing at all levels—not just demographically, but also in
terms of values, curriculum, policies, and practices. The Davis Center is all-inclusive, and acknowledges the value in coalition-building across groups.

Leave Schow Atrium, exits the Science Quad through the corner between Bronfman Science Center and Clark Hall. Cross Hoxsey Street and walk along Route 2 towards Stetson Court and the Admission Office.

Hoxsey Street is where most of the off-campus housing for the college is located. On campus housing is guaranteed for all four years and 96% of the student body lives on campus, but seniors are allowed to live off-campus if they choose. However, as you can see, even if you live off-campus you are still very much a part of the campus; the primary difference is that you are paying a landlord instead of the college.

The brick houses that line Route 2 are the row houses—these were fraternities until the Greek system was abolished in a student-led movement in the 1960s. All frats were gone by 1969, and most of the buildings were sold, leased, or given to the school. These now house upperclassmen.

You are approaching the Admission Office again, and this marks the end of the self-guided tour. This was, of course, only a brief overview of Williams, and we encourage you to discover more. Talking to current students is always useful, and overnight stays are highly recommended for high school seniors, as are tours with student tour guides (if you have time to come back on a day when the office is open). We also suggest browsing our website, which has valuable information on academics, athletics, and student life.

Here’s how to reach us:

Williams College Office of Admission
Weston Hall
995 Main Street
Williamstown, MA 01267
Phone: 413.597.2211
Fax: 413.597.4052
Email: admission@williams.edu
Website: admission.williams.edu

*Enjoy the rest of your stay here in Williamstown, and we hope to see you again soon.*