

# Williams College

## A Self-Guided Tour

Welcome to Williams! The Office of Admission is currently closed, but we hope you will learn more about the college through our self-guided tour! In italics, please find walking instructions, accompanied by information you would hear on a student-guided tour. We've also provided you with a campus map for navigation, though should you find yourself 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!

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



Williams College 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.

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*Walk towards Main Street (also known as Route 2) and cross the street. Turn right and walk towards 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, the doors on the right side of the building should be open.*

The newly renovated '62 Center opened its doors in April of 2005. The building has three performance spaces: the 550-seat Mainstage, the 220-seat Adams Memorial Theatre, and



the 150-seat CenterStage, a black-box theater. 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 theatre department itself produces one main

performance each semester. Any student can apply for funding from Cap and Bells to produce their own show.

The professional performance series, the CenterSeries, brings world class performers to campus each year (recently: Alvin Ailey II, New York City Ballet, Bill T. Jones, and Laurie Anderson). The '62 Center is also home to the Williamstown Theatre Festival, the only summer-stock theatre festival that has won a Tony Award for best regional theatre. Every summer, Williamstown becomes a mini-Broadway—recent performers include Justin Long, Bradley Cooper, Marisa Tomei, S. Epatha Merkerson, and more.

The '62 Center also houses Williams' dance programs, all of which are open to all students regardless of their background in dance. Students participate in our African dance group, modern dance company, step team, as well as other student-run groups. If you are interested in dance, stop into the '62 Center and check out the main dance studio on the second floor, one of the most beautiful spaces on campus.

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

The building on the left is the Faculty House, a common meeting space for students and faculty. One of the events hosted here is the Lyceum Dinner, which aims 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 deeper relationships outside the classroom.

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



The large yellow house that you've passed 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. Sloan is currently the home of President Maud S. Mandel, the 18<sup>th</sup> President of the College and Professor of History, as well as her family. Throughout the year, the president invites students to Sloan House for dinner to dine with

distinguished guests, for holidays and special events, as well as to be recognized for significant involvement on campus.

As you walk down the pathway next to Sloan House, please check out the panoramic views of the surrounding mountains. This is a great place to learn 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 an all-campus picnic on the lawn in front of you. Throughout the day students have the opportunity to commune with nature; a favorite activity is the hike up to Stony Ledge for 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 outdoor opportunities, such as discounted ski passes and free rentals of everything from snowshoes to fly fishing equipment.

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*You are approaching **Paresky Center**, which is located on your left. Please walk in.*

Paresky Center opened in February of 2007 and serves as the campus hub for students, open to them 24 hours a day. The great hall in the center of the first floor is called Baxter Hall. This is the main meeting and lounge area. To the left of the entrance doors is Lee Snack Bar, where students use dining points to buy mozzarella sticks, cheeseburgers, gelato, salads, etc., during the day as well as during "late-night" (until 1 AM). The snack bar is a bustling social space, especially during weekend nights, and is open to the public. The



first floor is also home to 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 the college accommodates all dietary preferences at each dining venue.

If you go downstairs, you will find the Leutkemeyer Lounge, where air hockey, pool, foosball, and ping pong tables are available to our community. In the round brick area downstairs is the '82 Grill, which serves pub fare until 1 AM. Downstairs Paresky is also home to an all-purpose theater as well as Grab 'n' Go, where students short on time can grab a bagged lunch on their way to class.

On the top floor of Paresky are two study lounges. The lounge facing the quad, the '58 Lounge, has a large balcony, where students can go study during the warmer months. The other lounge, the Henze Fireplace Lounge, is home to a Sunday tradition called Storytime, where a community member shares a personal story (and their favorite baked treat). Upstairs Paresky also houses a quiet study lounge, the Chaplain's office, the school newspaper's office, The Office of Student Life, as well as other student-facing departments. The building contains many study rooms and classrooms which students can reserve for meetings or group study sessions.

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*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 **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 are assigned to **entries**—a group comprised of roughly 20 first-year students and two Junior Advisors (JAs). Unlike a typical Resident Advisor (RA), JAs do not have disciplinary power and are not paid. Rather, each JA serves as a mentor, resource, and friend during the exciting, but sometimes 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. Many of our students form life-long relationships with those within their entries!



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

**Chapin Hall** contains the largest auditorium space at Williams, capable of seating roughly 1,000 people. Freshmen start their journey at the college gathered together in Chapin during orientation—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. Outside of orientation, the 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 and The Berkshire Symphony also perform in

Chapin throughout the year.

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*To the right of Chapin, please take the pathway into the new library quad.*

To your left you will see a concrete building, the **Bernhard Music Center**, which is the home to the music department and all the musical groups on campus. 25% of the student body is 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 offers free music lessons to any student 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 sister building, **Hollander Hall**, which also serves as a humanities hub. The buildings opened in the fall of 2008 and are both LEED Gold-certified, meaning that they are held to high, environmentally-friendly standards.

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*Looking ahead towards **Sawyer Library**, to your left, you will see a white building and an array of solar panels. This is the **Class of 1966 Environmental Center**. The center is unlocked during business hours—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 a net zero energy building and harvests and treats its own water. It is also open 24/7 to students. The building is home to the Environmental Studies department, as well as the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives. It houses faculty and staff offices, a classroom, student study spaces, meeting rooms, and a kitchen. Outside are perennial herb and

vegetables, fruit trees and berry bushes. The Zilkha Center is committed to protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment in which the Williams community learns, works, and lives. The staff research, investigate, support, promote, and implement sustainability programs and educational initiatives around campus and throughout our broader Berkshire 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, is currently working towards its certification.

The college invests approximately \$1 million each year on energy efficiency and conservation on campus. All new construction meets LEED Gold standards and high energy conservation goals. In 2015, former President Adam Falk and the Board of Trustees committed to 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.

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*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 student preference, offering a variety of study spaces, including group study areas and individual carrels. The library contains over one million print books and over 300,000 e-books. Students, faculty and staff also have access to materials beyond Williams through the Boston Library Consortium, New England Express, and hundreds of electronic journal subscriptions and article databases. Additionally, students can schedule one-on-one time with research librarians, who can guide them through navigating library resources and identifying the best resources for research projects and papers.

In addition to housing our humanities library, Sawyer is home to the College Archives, the Chapin Library of Rare Books, and a branch of the Office of Information Technology. The Chapin Library has original copies of 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 room, computer labs and public computers, as well as the student-staffed Writing Workshop. The program provides students with assistance at any stage of the writing process: from brainstorming to final drafts. Sawyer is open 8:00 am–2:30 am throughout the school year, and a 24/7 study space is available to students as well.

As you leave the library, peek into the Mabie Room on the south side of the entrance hall (towards Route 2)—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; these are introductory courses like Biology 101, Psychology 101, Art History 101. In addition to a lecture, students in large classes meet weekly in smaller conference or lab sections of ten to twenty students, led by a professor.

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*Exit **Sawyer Library** via the side entrance and walk towards **Hopkins Hall**, the brick building ahead and to your right.*



**Hopkins Hall** is home to the college's administrative offices—the President, Deans, Registrar, Campus Safety and Security, 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 curriculum, 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 these requirements easily, and depending on a student's area of interest, may complete one or more of these requirements many times over. To help with course selection, first-years are assigned an advisor before they arrive on campus. Advisors and students meet periodically until students in their sophomore year choose a major advisor for guidance during their remaining two years at Williams.

Two academic offerings that are unique to Williams 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 are assigned an extensive reading assignment each week, and one of the two will write a paper on that week's topic (5-7 pages). 24 hours prior to the class meeting, the student responsible for writing the long paper will email their work to their professor and partner, who will then write a response of 2-3 pages. When they arrive in class, students read their papers aloud and deeply engage in the week's material. The tutorial format encourages intellectual engagement on an intimate level (remember, there are only two students in the class!). Every department (including the math and sciences) offers at least one tutorial a year,

though the nature of assignments vary. Students may complete problem sets, music compositions, art projects, etc. instead of a traditional paper. Tutorials are offered at every level, and can be taken as early as a student's freshman year. Although tutorials are not required, about 50% of our students will take at least one tutorial before they graduate. Of the students who take one tutorial at Williams, 80-90% take a second or a third tutorial! Tutorials ultimately improve our students' writing, speaking, reading, and critical thinking abilities.

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 the Winter Study term. A Winter Study class is unlike a typical semester class in that it is formatted to fit into a four-week period, is taught pass/fail, and typically meets for only 6 to 8 hours a week. Winter Study courses allow students to explore an interest deeply, sometimes in a more vocational or experiential way than a typical semester class. Some examples of Winter Study courses are: "How to Start a Startup," "Stand-up Comedy: Joke Writing and Performance," "The Mathematics of Legos," "The World of Wes Anderson".

Students are required to be on campus their first year, but after that can travel during Winter Study. In previous years, classes have traveled to France, the Republic of Georgia, Jerusalem, Morocco, Argentina, Liberia, 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.

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*Walk to the left 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 they overlapped). Thompson Chapel is now used for various events, such as choir concerts religious services, and is home to many of the school's religious groups. Thompson is also used during commencement each year and is home to a longstanding tradition: each year,

a watch is dropped from 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 far side of Thompson Chapel is **Griffin Hall**, the second oldest building on campus. Griffin Hall contains classrooms and a beautiful two-story meeting room.



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*Cross Route 2 and walk up the short hill on your left toward the large bronze 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 coffee at night. Goodrich also hosts student parties, concerts, and performances. It is currently offline for renovations and will reopen in Fall 2018.

**Lawrence Hall** is the home of the college's Art History Department. The Art Studio Department is located in the **Spencer Art Studio Building**, which this tour does not pass but is open to visitors during the day. Many Art History courses meet in the lecture hall located in the lower level of Lawrence Hall. Williams is also home to a small Art History graduate program of about 15 students, which is collaboratively offered with the Clark Art Institute. Many of the country's top art museums and institutes (MoMA, the LA County Art Museum, and the National Gallery) are run by Williams grads, endearingly dubbed the "Williams Art Mafia." Lawrence Hall is also home to the **Williams College Museum of Art** (WCMA). WCMA is a dynamic learning environment with more than 15,000 pieces of art in its permanent collection. Feel free to

visit during your tour of Williams! The museum is open every day of the week (except Wednesdays) during standard business hours.

WCMA launched WALLS (Williams Art Loan for Living Spaces), a student art loan program, in 2014. The goal of the program is to allow students to live with art, and to encourage sustained interaction with and deep thinking about original pieces of art. Currently 120 works of art are loaned to students every semester.

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 '69. The museum hosts a wide range of performing arts performances and visual art exhibits by many of today's most renowned artists (and, its current director is another Williams alumnus, Joe Thompson '81).

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*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 facing you, the basketball court to your right, and the **Simon Squash Center** behind you.*

Approximately 35% of all Williams students participate in intercollegiate sports (33% at the varsity level). We have 32 varsity teams, 5 JV teams, 15 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 and is currently a general-purpose gym. When Lasell was built, the ceiling was supported by columns located in the middle of the basketball court. Opposing teams would often run into them, causing the team to lose the ball and, more often than not, lose the game! We no longer have those home court advantages and continue to excel through athletics. In fact, Williams has won the Director's

Cup (awarded to the school with the best postseason performance in each athletic division) 20 out of 22 years and counting.

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*Walk past the squash center towards Spring Street.*

Spring Street is the town's quaint, yet lively commercial center. It features everything a college student might need—a bookstore, restaurants, sandwich shops, a coffee shop, a movie theater, a barber shop, a small grocery store, ice cream, and more. **The Williams Bookstore**, at the bottom 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), 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 teams identify as Ephs, named after our founder Ephraim Williams, though the student body voted in 1907 to adopt the purple cow as our mascot. It is assumed that the idea came from an 1895 poem by Gelett Burgess that reads:

*I never saw a purple cow,  
I never hope to see one;  
But I can tell you anyhow,  
I'd rather see than be one.*

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*If you are facing Spice Root, you'll see a large, gray stone building to its right. This is **Morgan Hall**, one of our many upperclassmen dorms. Walk to the right of Morgan Hall along Rt. 2 and you'll see a set of stone steps leading up to a brick, ivy-covered building, **West College**. Continue left to walk through the **Science Quad**.*

You are standing at **Hopkins Gate**, a daily reminder to passing students to "Climb High, Climb Far." The words inscribed on Hopkins Gate are also parting wisdom for graduating seniors, who parade through the gate as part of Fall Convocation, a tradition that celebrates the Senior Class and its many accomplishments. Beyond the gates is West College. **West College** is the oldest building on campus. When the college first opened, it was the only



building on campus, housing the dormitory, library, chapel, classrooms, and cafeteria. It is now used as 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 as well as to add the **Schow Science Library**. Williams began a \$200 million science center renovation and expansion project last year, which will include new lab space, classrooms, and offices, as well as four labs dedicated to flexible, interdisciplinary research. It is slated to be completed by 2020.

Many of our students graduate with degrees in the STEM fields. In fact, 10% of Williams students graduate with a degree in Math, compared to the 1-2% national average, and roughly 30% of our students obtain a degree in STEM fields, which is also well over the national average. Because Williams does not have graduate students in the sciences, many students have the opportunity to participate in research with professors. Each summer, nearly 200 students participate in paid STEM research on campus, and 40% of the papers our professors publish are co-written by Williams undergraduates. Research opportunities are available to all students, regardless of class year or major.

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**, the large, glass building in the center of the quad.*

You are now standing in Schow Atrium, the entrance to **Schow Science Library**. The atrium serves as a general meeting/studying/socializing space, and the Eco Café serves breakfast and lunch throughout the academic year. If you walk to the back of the atrium,

you can look down into the library. Schow Library contains math and science publications and houses public computers, group study rooms and two classrooms.

As you look down into Schow Library, you will see a large window to your left, which faces a circle of houses. Together these houses make up the Davis Center, whose mission is to advance broad campus engagement with complex issues of identity, histories and cultures as they affect intellectual, creative and social life. Originally founded in 1989 by student activists, the Davis Center was created to ensure the support of students, faculty, and staff of underrepresented backgrounds. The Davis Center is all-inclusive and supports coalition-building across groups.

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*Leave Schow Atrium, exit the Science Quad through the corner between **Bronfman Science Center** and **Clark Hall to your left**. Cross Hoxsey Street and walk along Route 2 towards the Office of Admission, Weston Hall.*

Hoxsey Street is where most off-campus housing at the college is located. On-campus housing is guaranteed for all four years, and 96% of the student body lives on campus. Seniors are allowed to live off-campus, and a small number do. However, as you can see, off-campus living is still very much a part of the campus.

The brick houses that line Route 2 are row houses and were home to fraternities until the Greek system was abolished through a student-led movement in the 1969. Once Greek life was abolished, most of the buildings were sold, leased, or given to the school. The houses now are dorms as well as home to various department offices.

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You have arrived at Weston Hall, marking the end of the self-guided tour. This was, of course, only a brief overview of Williams, and we encourage you to continue learning more about Williams! Engage a current student, join a regularly scheduled information session, or stay overnight as a high school senior. We also suggest browsing our website, which has valuable information on academics, athletics, and student life. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us:

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