

Mennonite education



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Phone: 800-522-1887

Bluffton University
www.bluffton.edu
Phone: 800-488-3257

Eastern Mennonite University
www.emu.edu
Phone: 800-368-2665

Goshen College
www.goshen.edu
Phone: 800-348-7422

Hesston College
www.hesston.edu
Phone: 866-437-7866

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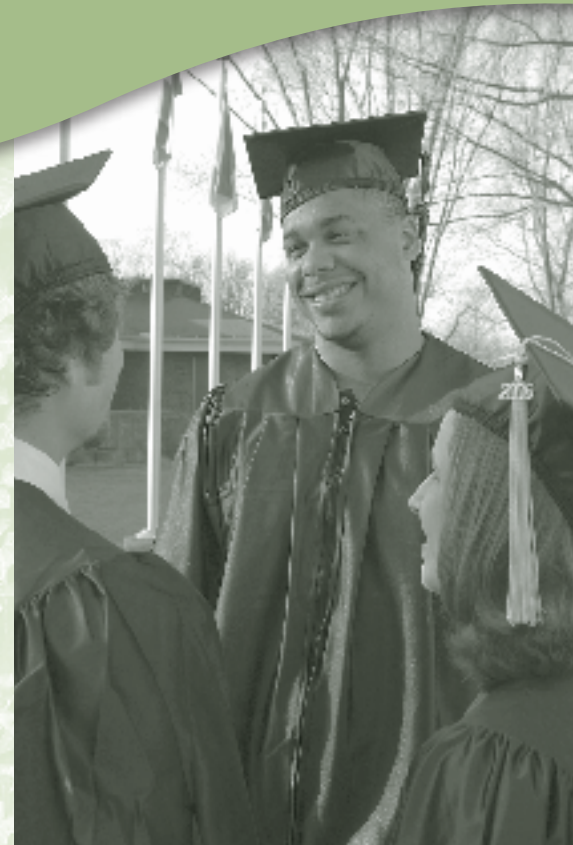
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**Mennonite
Education
Agency**

Mennonite colleges and universities:
**Accessible &
affordable**



Why choose
a Mennonite college/university?

How do I choose
which Mennonite college/university to attend?

How do I pay for
education at a Mennonite college/university?

Why is congregational student aid important?

How can congregations support students?

Look inside for answers!

Why choose a Mennonite college/university?

Your daughter or son is bombarded with literature from state schools; their friends buzz about plans to attend. A Mennonite congregation was central to your child's upbringing. But faith community voices grow faint in the cacophony of promises of a lower-cost education at a state school which supposedly can't be found at private, Christian schools.

Students aren't the only ones facing a crossroads. Families must wade through a mountain of information. There are many alternatives vying for attention. As a parent, your head may be spinning with thoughts like these:

- A cheaper state school can be just as effective in preparing my child for a career.
- God lives everywhere, even where there isn't a familiar faith community.
- Kids can stay connected to Mennonites through their home church. In the meantime, they're broadening their perspective in a way we can afford.

But other voices remind you of the cost of ignoring the merits of a church school education. It's not possible to put a price tag on pursuing Christ-centered values.

"Learning how to live is more essential than learning how to earn a living."

—Former CEO of a Mennonite agency

"I know my son, who has just recently made a commitment to Jesus, needs to understand about whose he is, the Lord to whom he belongs. I expect him to experience that kind of identity but also identification with Christ and Christ's church, particularly the Anabaptist-Mennonite expression of the church."

—Parent

"My friends didn't understand why I would leave a city with a population of more than 450,000 to go to a school with a total enrollment barely more than my own graduating class. What they can't realize is that [this Mennonite college] is not merely an institution, but a life-shaping experience. It has nurtured every aspect of my life, guiding me to be the kind of person I want to become."

—2006 graduate

Mennonite Education Agency and the five colleges/universities of Mennonite Church USA believe a truly comprehensive liberal arts education requires students to engage in spiritual discernment, something public schools and nonreligious private schools by conviction or law do not provide.

Our academic programs feature valuable content and excellent instruction by knowledgeable, caring and available faculty who are themselves committed to Christ-centered values. We call forth not only intellectual gifts but also the development of personal mission.



How do I choose which Mennonite college/university to attend?

You've surveyed the choices and decided with your daughter or son that attending a Mennonite college or university is the path to take. But now you face another fork in the road. How do you know which school is the right one?

Visit. That is the simplest and best answer. Visiting one of Mennonite Church USA's five colleges/universities is the best way to know what fits a student's individual gifts and personality.

Just like children in a family, each school has its own flavor—though all of them strive to be grounded in Christ-centeredness, academic excellence, community life, mission and service orientation, peace and justice concerns and anti-racist efforts.

Choices include Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., Bluffton (Ohio) University, Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., Goshen (Ind.) College and Hesston (Kan.) College.

Even though each school is similar in that it adheres to Anabaptist values and is part of Mennonite Church USA's broader mission, each school also is very different.

Parents and students need to physically be present to figure out what is best for them.

The Web can be helpful in searching for ways to visit campuses. All of the Mennonite colleges/universities have special weekends or day events for visits by prospective students and their families. These special visits include opportunities to attend classes, talk with financial aid experts, meet faculty and staff, experience chapels and dorm life and enjoy sports and arts activities.

Check out visitation opportunities by logging onto the Web sites or calling for further information (see the back panel for contact information).



How do I pay for education at a Mennonite college/university?

You may have dreamed since your child was in kindergarten that you could provide a Mennonite higher education. But year after year, the price has gone up and your dream seems to be fading.

When we peel back all the layers of resistance, the money issue is key. But families must realize that the choice of a college or university shapes the rest of their child's life. It may affect who they marry, where they worship and what they do.



Mennonite higher education comes with a price. But the supposed difference in net price between a Mennonite school and state school is a myth that began in the last couple decades because media and government reports look at sticker price without factoring in other things such as mutual aid from congregations and the generous scholarships our colleges and universities provide. Facts show that when all scholarships, grants and other support are tallied, a Mennonite higher education often parallels the cost of attending a state school, or comes in lower.

Our schools want to remove cost as a barrier for anyone who wishes to attend. Few students pay the list price of tuition. Overall, about 98.6 percent of our students receive some form of financial aid—grants, loans and on-campus work compensation, along with congregational and area conference support, which schools match. Families who demonstrate the greatest financial need have on average 89 percent of their need met.

From 1998-2004, the proportion of students receiving institutional grants rose from 93 percent to 97 percent, reducing real out-of-pocket family expenses.

We offer strong programs that allow students to be successful and to graduate on time. Nationally, students at independent colleges are twice as likely to graduate in four years as students in state institutions.



Some facts and figures may help to dispel needless fears, without denying the fact that a church school education is a significant investment:

The tab at a Mennonite school as of the 2007-08 academic year could total \$30,000 each year for four years. But in many cases, students receive between \$10,000 and \$15,000 in grants and scholarships each year, which pares down the total by nearly half in some cases.

Where do these grants and scholarships come from? An example:

- A standard academic scholarship and grant package a student receives from a school could reach up to \$13,000.
- On top of that, a student could receive special departmental scholarships.
- In addition, congregations with a church matching grant program often support a student with a \$1,000 scholarship (or more, or less). All the schools match dollar per dollar up to \$1,000, and 25 percent after that.
- This doesn't factor in scholarships a student may receive for good academic performance from high school.
- Don't forget student and parent loans, part-time work and family contributions.

Our schools are committed to making sure that every student who desires to attend a particular school will be able to do so—and work very hard to put together a financial package that is sustainable.

We are willing to do our fair share because we know you can't put a price tag on the spiritual growth and maturity that happens for students through spiritual and/or emotional growth. Because of close relationships with peers and professors and world learning experiences, their lives are changed.

Families have an important role as well.

Families have to be willing to plow through financial aid and admissions forms as they pertain to their own individual situations. You can't listen to your neighbor or your extended family. Nobody's average—each family is different. Many families, after they do the paperwork, are surprised to see how affordable Mennonite higher education is.

Why is congregational student aid important?

It's Church Education Sunday at your congregation, and the offering plate is coming down your row. Your church board is also in the throes of determining whether your congregation should give—or increase—scholarships to students attending Mennonite higher education institutions. Money is tight. Energy prices, mission and service obligations and church building projects all discourage other generosity.

Tight budgets are something everyone can understand. What is not as readily understood is how congregations can significantly lower the cost of a Mennonite education for students through a church matching grant program—congregational student aid.

For example, Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, taught Amanda Huerta that preparing for a life of service is about both giving and receiving. Because of Zion's generosity, she could attend a Mennonite college.

Affording a Mennonite college education seemed impossible for Amanda, even though she yearned to be the first one in her family to complete college. So when Zion gave her \$7,000—and matching funds from her college of choice brought the total up to \$9,500—she knew that God and God's people cared about her.

"This scholarship shows me that adults in Mennonite Church USA really care about the next generation, and that God really cares about the desires of my heart. This generosity makes me want to give something back. That's why I chose a career in education and why I want to do voluntary service. I want to make a difference in people's lives, too."

—Student Amanda Huerta

Here's how it works: Each Mennonite Church USA college/university will match the first \$1,000 of congregational student aid dollar-for-dollar. Beyond \$1,000 from the congregation, the colleges and universities will provide \$1 of matching aid for every \$4 provided, up to full tuition.

When we really look at the issue of mutual aid, we can see just how important congregational support is.



How can congregations support students?

Remember those care packages stuffed with sugar cookies from Grandma, socks from Mom and a \$10 bill from Dad? E-mail has replaced the old ways of keeping connected. But today's students on Mennonite campuses still need to know that folks back home care in ways that transcend cyberspace communications.

Care packages still work! There's nothing like getting a huge box of granola bars and chocolate from your folks or your home congregation. Or students often receive monthly postcards or bulletins from their home congregation. Students may not verbalize it, but these small gestures become huge reminders that people are thinking of them and caring about them.

Some other suggestions for your congregation:

- Stage a care package creation party and invite the church family to fill boxes for each student.
- Create a schedule for sending postcards and bulletins.
- Youth pastors, pastors and other members of the congregation who are visiting in the area of a particular school should schedule meals with students.
- Invite students home on break to share their school faith journey during a Sunday morning service.
- Invite students to engage in a ministry during the summer that corresponds with their course of study.

We want you and your children to be part of Mennonite colleges/universities.

