CARROLL UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL PIONEERS

CARROLL UNIVERSITY | INTERNATIONAL ADMISSIONS

Why Carroll?

A Guide for Students & Families

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Many families begin the U.S. university search with a short list of well-known names. This is understandable. But the data on U.S. graduate outcomes tells a more complicated story. Where you go to school matters. How you use that time matters more. This document addresses the assumptions that most families bring to the decision, honestly.

THE RANKING ASSUMPTION

What the evidence actually shows

Does a higher-ranked university lead to better career outcomes?

For a narrow slice of students and careers, yes. For most, the relationship between institutional ranking and long-term earnings is much weaker than families expect. Economists **Stacy Dale and Alan Krueger** found that students admitted to highly selective schools but who chose less selective ones had essentially the same earnings over time. What predicted earnings was the student's own ambition and engagement, not the school's rank.

What about name recognition with employers?

Name recognition matters most in a narrow range of fields: investment banking, elite consulting, and big-law. In technology, engineering, healthcare, and business operations — where the majority of international STEM graduates work — **employers hire based on skills, portfolio, and interviews.** GE Healthcare, Rockwell Automation, Fiserv, and Northwestern Mutual all recruit Carroll graduates. Not because of a Top 15 ranking. Because of who can do the work.

What selective universities do not advertise

At a research university with 30,000–50,000 students, the typical undergraduate — especially in years one and two — has limited faculty access, large lecture halls, and competes internally for research and mentorship opportunities. **International students at these institutions often report feeling invisible** until they have already built enough credentials to stand out on their own. The access gap is real and it compounds in the first year.

How does Carroll's STEM catalog compare to similar-sized institutions?

Liberal arts colleges of comparable size often have limited or no STEM OPT-designated programs. Carroll's Sullivan School of Business, Engineering and Technology integrates business coursework into engineering degrees — graduates leave prepared for both **their first technical role and their first management role.** Programs like Drone Engineering and Artificial Intelligence are fields where U.S. employer demand is growing and where dedicated undergraduate programs remain rare.

What does "small institution" actually mean for a student arriving from abroad?

International travel is unpredictable. Flights get delayed, rebooked, or rerouted — sometimes across multiple time zones with no warning. Carroll's international admissions team works directly with arriving students to coordinate airport pickup around their actual schedule, not a fixed window. **There is no automated check-in portal and no outsourced welcome desk.** A staff member knows your name before you land. At a 30,000-student institution, that is structurally impossible.

How does Carroll support students through the transition, not just arrival?

The first semester is where international students most often struggle — not academically, but logistically and socially. Banking, phone plans, health insurance navigation, Social Security paperwork, homesickness. At Carroll, the DSO, academic advisors, and international student staff are reachable by name, by WhatsApp, and in person. **Students are not routed through a ticketing system.** The people who recruited you are the same people who help you once you are here.

> *Students who attended more selective colleges do not earn more than other students who were equally ambitious and able.*
>
> Dale & Krueger — Princeton / Mellon Foundation research, widely replicated

Sources: Dale & Krueger (2002, 2011), "Estimating the Payoff to Attending a More Selective College," NBER Working Papers. LinkedIn Workforce Report. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics employer demand data. GE Healthcare Waukesha campus records. U.S. News & World Report 2024–25. WalletHub Best Value Colleges. Carroll University published COA 2026–27. STEM OPT designation subject to USCIS review; Carroll cannot guarantee OPT approval. Scholarship renewal requires 2.0 GPA and full-time enrollment.

Common Assumptions vs. What the Evidence Shows
— for families researching U.S. universities

THE ASSUMPTION	WHAT THE EVIDENCE SHOWS	CARROLL'S POSITION
"***A higher ranking means a better education.***"	Ranking systems weight research output and endowment size heavily. Neither measures how much attention a student receives. **Dale and Krueger (2002, 2011)** found earnings outcomes were driven by student ambition, not institutional selectivity.	Carroll's 12:1 student-faculty ratio means students work directly with professors, not graduate teaching assistants, starting in year one.
"***Big universities have more opportunities.***"	Large institutions have more resources in aggregate, but those resources are spread across tens of thousands of students. Access to research, internships, and mentorship is competitive internally. **The opportunity gap at small institutions is often smaller than the competition gap at large ones.**	Carroll students are not competing against 4,000 other applicants for 40 research spots. The funnel is structurally different.
"***STEM OPT is only available at large research universities.***"	STEM OPT eligibility is tied to program CIP code designation, not institutional size or research status. Any accredited university with an approved STEM-designated program qualifies. **Smaller institutions with strong STEM programs grant the same 3-year OPT extension as flagship state schools.**	Carroll's Drone Engineering, AI, Business Analytics, Video Game Design, Industrial Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering programs all carry STEM OPT designation.
"***A higher price signals higher quality.***"	Cost of attendance at U.S. universities ranges from $28,000 to $90,000+ per year. That spread reflects endowment strategy, location, and branding — not instructional quality or graduate outcomes. **WalletHub and similar ranking systems consistently show mid-size private universities delivering better value per dollar than elite institutions for students not receiving elite-institution financial aid.**	Carroll's total COA is significantly lower than comparable private institutions, and merit scholarships are guaranteed, not conditional on a separate competition.
"***You need to be in New York or California to get a good job.***"	**LinkedIn's Workforce Report has ranked Milwaukee a top-two U.S. city for career launch** — measuring hiring rate relative to applicant pool size. Coastal markets have more absolute jobs but also far more competition. The ratio that matters is jobs available per qualified candidate, not total job count.	GE Healthcare (2,000+ employees in Waukesha), Rockwell Automation, Fiserv, and Northwestern Mutual recruit Carroll graduates locally. Chicago, 90 minutes away, expands the market significantly.
"***International students won't get jobs in the Midwest.***"	Employer hiring decisions in technical fields are driven by skills and work authorization status, not geography. STEM OPT gives international graduates three years of U.S. work authorization — sufficient time to demonstrate value and build a sponsor case. **Midwest employers in engineering, healthcare tech, and manufacturing actively seek STEM OPT candidates** because the talent pool relative to coastal markets is less competitive.	Carroll's Career and Professional Development office provides dedicated international student support for internship placement and OPT employer navigation.

LOCATION

Waukesha, Milwaukee, and why the Midwest is not a compromise

20 min
to Milwaukee
6 Fortune 500 companies. 11 Fortune 1000 headquarters. Mitchell International Airport is 20 minutes from campus.

90 min
to Chicago O'Hare
One of the busiest international hubs in the world. Direct or one-stop routing from Asia, Europe, South America, and Africa.

2,000+
GE Healthcare employees in Waukesha
One of the largest medical technology employers in the world, directly adjacent to Carroll's campus.