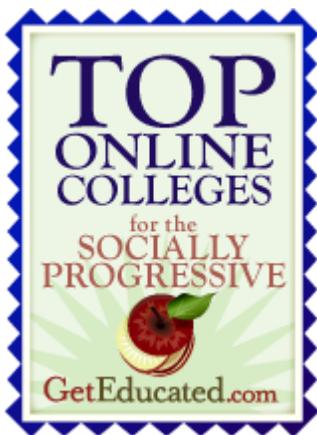


Top Progressive Colleges Online for Old Hippies and New Hipsters

By Vicky Phillips

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Attending college in search of truth, that's like so 1960s. So old hippie. So not what today's [top online colleges](#) are all about. Or is it? Old hippies and new hipsters, take heart. All online colleges are not alike. If you crave an online education that feeds your social beast, get grooving with the official Get Educated list of top progressive colleges online. **If your educational goal is to make the world a better place -- and yourself a better citizen -- try college online at one of our editor's Six Sisters of Intellectual Hope for social progressives.**

Top Online Colleges: The Socially Progressive Six Sisters?

1. **Goddard College**
2. **Burlington College**
3. **Warren Wilson College**
4. **Antioch University**
5. **Union Institute & University**
6. **The New School**

1. [Goddard College](#), Plainfield, VT



America's most enduring socially progressive college sparked to life in 1863 in the woods of Vermont. Dr. Tim Pitkin ached for a no-nonsense college where any man could revel in "plain living and hard thinking." Every Goddard student I know still glows with this home-spun idealism. Students who have drawn inspiration from Goddard include playwright David Mamet, [Bread and Puppet](#) political puppeteer Peter Schumann, actor William H. Macy, two Phish band members, and activists the likes of [Mumia Abu-Jamal](#), a former Black Panther oft-cited as "perhaps the world's best known death-row inmate." In 1963, Goddard opened the first low-residency adult degree program for socially-conscious commoners. Higher education has been on a long, strange trip ever since. Goddard threw out letter grades. Students are required to write narrative contracts that outline what they will study, and how their studies will make a difference in their lives – not their careers, mind you -- but their everyday existence.

Today, Goddard mentors 600 distance students who taste campus life at the beginning of each semester by attending week-long residencies at the Plainfield, VT or Port Townsend, WA campuses. Art, writing, social justice, psychology, and environmentalism are among the most popular online degree majors.

2. [Burlington College](#), Burlington, VT



Burlington College, Goddard's sassy little sister, sits on the lip of Lake Champlain in the urban hipster hub, Burlington, VT. BC was founded in 1972 as the Vermont Institute for Community Involvement (VICI). Back in the day – we're talking the 70s here, cool cats – a group of activists decided that higher education should focus on civic change. BC's mission was, and still is, to make the world a more just place one socially enlightened mind at a time. Students can study 100% on campus or through online learning with pot-luck residencies every six months. Online students are encouraged to crack the curriculum and design majors in integral psychology, the expressive arts, writing and literature, film, and justice studies.

3. [Warren Wilson College](#), Asheville, NC



Warren Wilson graduates more Peace Corp volunteers than any other college. The Warren Wilson mountain campus includes a 300-acre farm and a 600-acre forest.

Students can enjoy “25 miles of hiking trails, numerous cows, pigs, and a few bears.” And oh, yeah, all students are required to work 15 hours per week to mow, weed, and harvest this organic menagerie. Sharpen your digital quills, hep cats. WWC’s online [Master of Fine Arts for Writers](#) is the cat’s pajamas. Writers convene in the Blue Ridge mountains for ten days, then fly away home. Students swap stories online until it’s time to meet up with their mentors in the mountains again. This online MFA program boasts esteemed faculty, including two national poet laureates, a MacArthur Genius, and several Guggenheim Fellows.

4. [Antioch University](#), Yellow Springs, OH

“Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity.” --Horace Mann, Antioch College Founder, 1859 Horace Mann, architect of the American public school system - and the first educator to admit women and blacks to college as the equals of white men - founded Antioch College in Ohio in 1859.



Antioch alum are infamous for turning radical ideals into social campaigns and businesses. In fact, one of the founding hallmarks of the college was its requirement that all students engage in co-operative work for college credit in tandem with their book learning (a rad idea in the 1800s). Antioch fell on hard times in the 21st century. The flagship Ohio campus closed briefly in 2009 but has re-opened. Yellow Springs is again a mecca for young progressive minds. To lure back residential students, the college currently offers bachelor students 100% free tuition. Antioch University, the graduate school that offers professional masters degrees, never closed. AU in Los Angeles and Ohio both offer low-residency degrees for working adults. Antioch Los Angeles offers a low-residency distance [Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing](#) and a [Master of Arts in Urban Sustainability](#). Among AU’s [famous online alumni](#) on the West Coast is Desperate-Housewife-turned-therapist Marcia Cross.

5. Union Institute & University, Cincinnati, OH



The doctorate degree (PhD) was protected from experimentation until the Union Institute was forged in 1964. The Union Institute was the first American university to allow working scholars to earn doctorate degrees while remaining productive in their communities. Today, the scholar/practitioner online PhD pioneered by the Union has gained wide acceptance among working professionals.

The Union Institute also offers low-residency online bachelors, masters, and doctorate degrees in creativity, the arts, business, education, the environment and sustainability, global studies, health and wellness, education and psychology, and social work.

6. [The New School](#), New York City, NY



In 1899, a group of New York intellectuals launched a free school for working men. This “New” School quickly assumed status as the place for immigrants to test out ideas in urban design, architecture, art, politics, and psychology. Greenwich Village, and a new era of American intellectualism, was born. In the 1930s, the University in Exile – the New School’s first graduate school – opened as a harbor for European intellectuals fleeing Nazi oppression. Today, the New School claims hep cats Marlon Brando, Tennessee Williams, Harry Belafonte, and Jack Kerouac as former students. The contemporary New School houses the New School for Social Engagement. The latter offers a 100% online bachelor degree that fuses civic engagement with the arts and social activism.

Did our editors miss any top online colleges for hep cats? Let us know, daddy-o ...



About the Author: [Vicky Phillips](#) was cited in 2009 by US News & World Report as "for 20 years the leading consumer advocate for online college students." In 1989 she designed America's first online counseling center for distance learners on AOL. In 1998 she authored the first print guide to online graduate degrees - Best Distance Learning Graduate Schools put out by the Princeton Review. In 2001 she authored Never Too Late to Learn the Adult Student's Guide to College.