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## COLLEGE PANEL

Fall 2021

### PANELISTS

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### Q & A HIGHLIGHTS

**Introduction:** Please introduce yourself and the school you represent.

**Columbia University:** My name is Ian McClain, I'm a Senior Admissions Officer for Columbia College and Columbia Engineering, the two undergraduate schools at Columbia University in New York City. Our location is Morningside Heights. It's a neighborhood right inside of Southwest Harlem, and we've been around for a while. We're one of the oldest schools in the US, the oldest school in New York City and New York State, and as the city has grown, so have we along with it.

For my background, I graduated from Columbia, where I studied anthropology and music. I was a low-income student, and was really involved in Questbridge, which is an organization that helps first-generation low-income students attend colleges like Columbia and others across the US, and I was also really involved with our first-generation low-income partnership. So, I am happy to speak to different resources that Columbia has for students who are underrepresented and need support at colleges like ours.

I also work in multicultural recruitment and our arts and humanities team within the Office, but to introduce Columbia more fully as I said before, two different undergraduate college options that students can choose between. Columbia College focuses more on the liberal arts. Sort of thinking about why things are the way they are, through various different academic lenses, so that's ranging from arts to science to philosophy. Different courses that allow students to work toward their goals, but also really think about making an impact within those as well.

Within the engineering school, students are thinking about how to make things better, optimizing the world that we live in today to better serve humanity, and so they have a model called engineering for humanity where faculty, students, and staff are all working together through various programs to ensure that not only are they doing work that's at the cutting edge of research and technology and engineering work, but it's also geared toward helping the people in the communities that surround them.

To talk about what it's like being at Columbia, our student body size is about 6,000 undergraduate students between the two schools, and 95% of the students are actually living on campus. It is about 30 acres, not too large in terms of many different campus spaces around the US, but in New York City, it's enough. Most of our students choose to live there throughout all four years. Housing is guaranteed to ensure that students are able to connect with their community and also get to classes with a less than five-minute walk pretty much every day of the week.

We have students coming from all over the world who are interested in studying everything, so all 50 states are represented and over 100 different countries. About 17% are the first in their family to graduate from college, over 60% identify as people of color. About 15% are coming from outside of the United States.

This is just a community of globally minded leaders, thinking about the ways in which they can connect with each other and work toward their goals, all with the backdrop of New York City, and various resources and programs that help students to connect with the city and take advantage of the professional opportunities, arts opportunities, and fun opportunities to interact with folks.

Fun fact: we do have some more unique sports, fencing for instance. We have 16 or 17 national championships. Maybe not scratching the sports itch for football but in the more unique sports like fencing and rowing we do well. There's a tradition of excellence and celebration at Columbia, and a dynamic community excited for their four years together. So that's my brief intro to Columbia, and excited to answer any questions you might have.

**CUNY John Jay:** Over 130 nationalities represented, 47% of our students are first-generation students in their family, which means the first in their families to go to college. And we are a Latino serving institution; 44% of our students are Hispanic so we're very diverse. And we do have students who come from all over the world which makes John Jay unique.

So apart from that, not only do we offer criminal justice-based majors, but we also offer liberal arts majors as well such as economics, anthropology, English, and archaeology. And then of course, our criminal justice-based majors. And if you have any questions regarding John Jay, feel free to ask.

**Morgan State:** Hello everyone, I am Wendy Padin. I'm the Diversity Admissions Officer here at Morgan State University. We are a medium size, public university. As the Diversity Admissions Officer, I focus on making sure the student body is as diverse as possible. We are a national treasure; been around for over 150 years. We are a liberal arts college, public institution, 4-year school. We are about an hour away from Washington DC. We are in Baltimore City, in the residential area. Very close to downtown, but it's far enough to retreat into the quiet residential area of Baltimore. We are about 2 hours away from Ocean City Beach, so there is a lot of different things to do in Morgan as well. I think we are about 4 hours away from NY.

We offer a lot of Fulbright Scholarships to our students, so if you are interested in traveling the world you will have plenty of opportunity to do that here at Morgan. We have a great balance of historical buildings as well as new architectural design. Our campus is growing we have plenty of projects in the works, I think that now is really a good time to get into Morgan. We are an HBCU, a Historically Black College institution and also an MSI, a Minority Serving Institution.

**SUNY Binghamton:** I'm Craig Broccoli. I'm with Binghamton University, part of the SUNYs. I am the Associate Director of Admissions, but I am based in NYC. I did go to Binghamton. I studied my undergrad years there. I studied engineering and then business for grad school.

Binghamton is a part of the State University of New York, so it's a public university 3 hours from NYC, upstate, right outside the city of Binghamton. Highly residential college area, everyone is living there. Meaning you are a part of this life up there, 14,000 students from all over the world will show up. Many from NY, that is a big part of the experience too that you're getting outside of your comfort zone a little bit, but in a smaller college setting even though we are a big university. That's due to the residential style, these little communities. There are 450 clubs and organizations for students to join and be a part of. Binghamton has Division I athletics, fun fact is we are not that good at all. But we love the Bearcats, they bring a lot of pride and spirit.

The academic front of this though: 6 different academic colleges, lots of choices academically. 130 areas of studying – from engineering, business, the health fields, the people fields, the humanities and the languages, and sciences. Masters through PhDs, we are a #1 research university, a lot of research. In particular, we are known for our first-year research program. You can start off right away doing research, right when you get there if that's something you're interested in.

There's a 200-acre nature preserve on top of campus. My favorite thing about Binghamton is this interesting blend between downtown Binghamton, the campus and then the nature preserve. Last two years now, in a row, we got the #1 spot for sustainability research, which is university wide.

**Question:** What are the general admissions criteria?

**Columbia University:** We don't have any required GPAs, but we do know that 90% of students generally are within the top 10% of their classes. We are a highly selective institution and so we have about 65,000 applicants and in terms of our admits, there was a 4% admit rate.

But speaking to testing, we are test optional as well. But for those students who choose to send in scores, the middle 50% is between 1500 and 1550. Speaking to opportunity programs, the testing bands are below that as well. But again, no testing requirements within ranges for students within either opportunity programs or generally.

Columbia is test optional this year and it is going to continue on a year-by-year basis. We will review each spring whether or not that's something that is going to continue. The average ACT would be around 34.

**CUNY John Jay:** First things first, we're not on the Common App. You can find our application at [www.cuny.edu/prepare](http://www.cuny.edu/prepare). We're looking for an average GPA of 90%. If you have between an 85% and 90%, that's also ok. We are test blind this year due to the pandemic, so we're not looking at ACTs or SATs; we are looking at your transcript, as a whole. If you do submit your college essay recommendation letters as your supporting documents, that's fine too.

What is the average GPA of the students accepted into SEEK, or like college discovery? The HEOP program in the four-year CUNY colleges is called SEEK. At the two-year schools it's called College Discovery. For us now, if you would like to be considered for SEEK, you must have an 83% cumulative GPA.

With SEEK, you have to make sure: (1) you're a New York State resident, (2) you meet economic eligibility requirements, and (3) you have the required GPA. Unfortunately, you can't have one out of the three or two out of the three; you got to be three out of the three to make sure you can apply and be accepted.

And of course, you can look online. There are charts online to see if you qualify for the program based on household income and the amount of people that are in your household, so you could do that way ahead of time to see if you can apply so that's great. Keep in mind that each CUNY has a different GPA for SEEK so you want to ask in advance. The GPA for SEEK for us at the moment is an 83%.

\*\*\* There is a college support documents drive, and within the drive, we do have that document that lists all the HEOP schools, the economic criteria for SEEK and EOP \*\*\*

**Morgan State:** The admissions requirements are pretty standard right now. We are test optional for the foreseeable future – that includes spring and fall of 2022. That means all we're going to need is the online application and an official high school transcript. That means the transcripts sent in by a school official. We don't need your SAT scores or your essay or your letter of recommendation, but we do look at our students holistically so if you feel like that's going to give you a leg up, you can go ahead and submit those as well. Make sure to submit AP, IB, and club credits as well.

For grades, it's a 3.1 average GPA (86% or B), but that's not the minimum for your application to be looked at. The average SAT is about a 990 and the average ACT is between a 16 and 20. But, do keep in mind that scholarships do still look at test scores. Just because you apply test optional doesn't mean that all the scholarships are going to be test optional. For example, with our merit scholarships, we do have certain requirements for SATs and GPAs. But if you choose to apply test optional, the GPA requirement goes up to a 3.5. It's about a 3.2/3.3 and 1270 on the SATs otherwise. So that's all stuff to keep in mind if you are choosing to apply test optional.

**SUNY Binghamton:** At Binghamton, there are 43,000 students applying, give or take, every year probably more this year than ever, but 3,000 spots. We're trying to say "yes" as often as we can. Time normally helps; if you apply early, it's putting you out there with a lot of lead time for us to make sure we're looking at every little detail.

The average student last year coming into Binghamton, or we'd like to say the middle 50% right, fell between a 93% and a 98% high school average. There are people above the 98% and there are students below the 93%. Particularly our opportunity programs (EOP). The EOP program is looking at students generally at 85% and above, up until the mid-90s. We are test optional this year and we were last year, but the average SAT fell between about a 1300 and 1450.

**Question:** Which are the most popular majors and programs at your school?

**Columbia University:** We have different programs available; over 100 majors between Columbia College and the Engineering School, but I'd say the top five between the two are probably going to be economics and political science or programs that mix the two. Students are really interested in the biological sciences and also biomedical engineering, mechanical engineering is very popular, computer science is another top major. But a rising major, in the top 6, is creative writing. There is a fair amount of breath between social sciences, but also the arts, natural sciences and engineering at Columbia.

**CUNY John Jay:** For us, the top three programs that students usually come to John Jay for are criminal justice, criminology, and forensic psychology. Those are the top three programs that students come for undergrad, and it's what makes us unique, and we're one of the top schools in the nation for it.

We also have the Pre-Law Institute. It's not really a major but it is a support program for students who want to become lawyers, and it provides free LSAT preparation, and we're linked to three different law schools – CUNY Law School, Brooklyn Law School, and then we have a program that connects with Pace University's law school.

We also accept early action applications. If you are a student who's interested in applying to John Jay and getting a seat, partake in early action. It's a great way to get your application speed through. You want to make sure that you have your counselor email us your transcript. And early action is not binding, so if you decide that you no longer want to partake with John Jay in the fall, you can withdraw that application.

**Morgan State:** It does vary since we are a liberal arts college. We do have very popular majors such as engineering, civil engineering and electrical engineering. We also are very known for our nursing program and our music program as well, so it's a bunch of different types of programs.

**SUNY Binghamton:** Binghamton is a bit different than John Jay in this case. In our university, we struggle to be known for key things. There are six colleges so there's the popular majors that fall within those colleges. Biology still edged out everybody yet again; at Binghamton, it's the largest. I wouldn't say it's the most popular in terms of applications, but close to biology was economics, political science, and actually English. Creative writing is on the rise again as a crossover interest – a lot of students are interested in that and something else.

In terms of applications, computer science, nursing, and engineering and business get a lot of applicants. They are smaller programs at Binghamton. The most popular minor, and I want to point this out because at Binghamton there's so many different crossovers, is global studies. And this is because a lot of students, thankfully, want to see the world from another vantage point. There's 1,000 study abroad programs and global studies does require you to study abroad.

**Question:** How can an undecided freshman explore the majors at your school?

**Columbia University:** First, I should say that at Columbia, and for many liberal arts programs, you don't actually have to declare your major for a bit. For Columbia specifically, you don't have to say what your major is until your sophomore year, and then having a liberal arts program where exploration is required or really encouraged. That means that students are exploring different coursework, different pieces, different classes that might help them figure out what they may actually want to do.

And so my tip would be, feel free to take your time but also think about the different programs that you're interested in and see how free you are to explore. Especially for those students who think they know what they want to do but are considering quite a few different programs. Some schools really encourage interdisciplinary learning, checking out multiple options, and it's perfectly fine to use this as a time to learn. That's what college is supposed to be.

Don't try tying yourself down to one thing. Keeping in mind that the average number of times students change their majors, at least for Columbia, is around 1.5; folks are changing here and there even though they may know what they want to do or feel like they know what they want to do. If you know what you want to do, that's great, then look for those programs. If you're undecided, then really dig into it, seeing how the university or college or program might allow you to explore and consider different options.

**CUNY John Jay:** For those who are interested in John Jay, we have open houses currently happening and it's this week and next week and the week after. We have different majors and different professors come. You can actually register and it's a great way to explore what you like and what kind of things you're interested in and ask questions of the professors. As well as talk to them and say, "Hey, I'm interested in criminology, what is it and what kind of jobs can I get?"

So that is one way a lot of students who want to join John Jay usually try to get more information about our majors. You can also join our info sessions to also ask questions. You can look on the website, click on our majors' links too. If you're interested in something in particular, you can always read up on it.

**Morgan State:** At Morgan, we do have a first year advising program for freshmen. The whole first year, freshmen get a little bit of extra attention. Advisors will make sure that they pick out the first major, but even if you decide on that major, it's okay to change it and we make it pretty easy for you to change it later if you were to change your mind.

We do also offer open houses. We also have a Bear Day Program that we're actually reinstating. COVID made it a little difficult but we're trying to get back to normal now. It's basically following around one of the students from our school and seeing just what day-to-day life is going to be like when being a Morgan State student.

My advice would be not to stress too much about your major the first year because you know college is the time to figure out what you want to do with your life. It's not a huge deal if you don't have a four-year plan set out already. If you can your first year, take a couple different courses. See what sparks your interest and then just go from there.

**SUNY Binghamton:** Once you arrive at Binghamton, many of our students (60%) are undecided. That means our sophomores, juniors, and seniors were once like that (undecided) too. When you live on campus, you're living across the hall from sophomores, juniors, and seniors. That's a direct resource right away, you'll notice people like you right there. Your new friends can give you some insight on what it's like to try these different classes out because the key part of everybody's degree is this liberal arts platform, inside of that is where you get exposure by your own choice.

You get to choose this, what you might be interested in, and then if you get really curious about that, you take that to the next level and you walk over or zoom over to the advising offices and ask questions like, "Hey, is this a major that I should pursue?" Or go to the Career Center where they are going to talk to you about the academic options that align with a potential career path. That's the formal way of doing it.

At a bigger public school, it requires you putting some energy into this, but I would say a lot of the students at Binghamton are kind of collectively figuring out their futures; there's a very collaborative spirit around it.

**Question:** What type of tutoring and counseling programs are available to students?

**Columbia University:** There are a lot of resources available for students in regard to tutoring and counseling. Students are available, or tutors are available for students one-on-one, free of charge through their academic advisor. Students have advisors that they're assigned and are able to work with through all four years, and so it's just a matter of speaking with your advisor and asking for one, and then you're able to meet with them depending on the class that you need support for.

There are also different centers on campus that students can work with. For instance, we have an undergraduate Writing Center that just focuses on building an essay or writing a paper or an opinion piece for journals. There are different ways that students can use it. But older undergrads and some masters students with our art school are actually helping in that program as well.

In terms of counseling, psychological services, we have an Office for Counseling and Psychological Services where students are able to meet one-on-one; there's walk ins, there's calls, there's virtual meetings you can opt in for. There's also group counseling that students can choose to use, depending on what their need is and what their want is. There are identity-based groups as well where students are able to connect.

Thinking about transitions, just shouting out the importance of orientation. We have a new student orientation program where over the course of about two weeks, students move onto campus and don't have any classes. They just have programs that are geared toward linking them with the different resources at Columbia that they can use to better reach their goals and do what they want to do throughout their four years. Get used to living in New York City, if they haven't been there before, get to know who their friends and community might be, and just prepare for what comes afterward. And in that period, they're able to meet with counselors, religious life, and advisors that they may see as important resources before the hustle and bustle of classes get started. That's just a few examples of resources we have.

**CUNY John Jay:** We do have a tutoring center that does provide help to our students. In any subject you need some sort of support academically, we do have that.

We also have academic advisement. We have first-year academic advisement for our students who are freshmen, and then you kind of get partnered up with an upperclassman to guide you through the hoops of what John Jay is about. Letting you know what the clubs are like, the organizations. Letting you know about events on campus, how to progress in school, how to study, all that fun stuff so you're always going to have some sort of support on campus.

We have the careers office that also helps you get internships or externships, prepare your resume, and we have a lot of different offices. We try our best to provide you with as much support as possible. Even during the pandemic, we were able to try to accommodate our students. We tried to provide laptops and hotspots and all that stuff.

**Morgan State:** Here at Morgan, we also have tutoring services. We have in-person tutoring services, free tutoring and then we also have 24/7 online tutoring services as well. Like I mentioned before, in your first year, all your instructors are going to make sure that you're staying on top of everything at the same time. It's kind of part of their curriculum for freshmen.

We do offer online counseling services. You can speak virtually to counselors right now as well. And the counseling office is always open, they take walk-ins as well. There are plenty of resources, crisis hotlines, and there's even a chapel for your spiritual needs. Lots of ways to make sure that our students are met in all areas.

**SUNY Binghamton:** There is a lot of tutoring, and it is free for all students, included in the cost of attendance to be there; but it's similar to what I was mentioning about advising, you seek it out. It might be an adjustment. A lot of students who got to Binghamton, they're not used to asking for a tutor, but it's college, it's an adjustment – you got to ask for what you need.

There is free mental health counseling as well, at least as a starting point resource. As to the model of teaching that we have, we have professors who lead the lectures and discussions and there are office hours, and there are teaching assistant in many of the classes that also have office hours. These are typically graduate students or upperclassmen who know the subject really well, they did well in the class. They're really good resources for help, but I will say as a former student, the biggest resource is your peers. We're a very collaborative student body that end up being your tutors by default, in the sense that you might be good in one subject matter and somebody else gets another subject matter. Leverage that to your advantage and that's where you share that knowledge.



**Question:** Do you have internship connections or opportunities available for professional development?

**Columbia University:** We have our Center for Career Education which is an office that has advisors that students can meet with either one-on-one or in groups for a lifetime. These advisors follow you through your four years and even afterward. We can start at the very beginning of what kind of job you want, what you want to do within your professional career, working through understanding how to build a resume, cover letter, everything you might need for an application. Also understanding what classes you might need to prep for particular jobs after you graduate.

But in terms of the opportunities that the CCE will link students with, there are a lot of different partnerships we have with alumni throughout New York City, and even further we have global externships students can do now virtually, but when things are safe, they're able to travel in person.

Many companies throughout the city are looking for Columbia students. We have four-day course weeks for classes typically, so students will use that extra time to either study, explore the city, or take part in an internship. So, most of our students will have at least one internship by the time they graduate, which is something we're proud of. But the CCE is the main conduit through which all these opportunities are explored.

**CUNY John Jay:** What makes us so unique, especially with the jobs, is that we have a career fair that usually takes place in the springtime, and we have a lot of government agencies that do come to the campus to recruit our students from different parts of the government. You're able to see that firsthand, and one thing I did enjoy when I first started working at John Jay was seeing that fair because it was really amazing.

You have all different types of organizations, and one of them is the FBI. The FBI does come on campus to recruit our students; we are not directly affiliated with them, just making that clear.

The Career Center will definitely help you reach your goal by fixing your resume and all that stuff. And it's true – you should network with your upperclassmen because they know the deal, so it's good to network also with them and your professors too. Sometimes your professors can help you understand a little bit better the application process for certain types of jobs, especially in John Jay with government jobs. A lot of our students ask for guidance from their professors because you know they've been in the field.

**Morgan State:** At Morgan, we also have a career center and they're going to help you find internships, get your resume ready, and get you ready for interviews as well. They help you find jobs on campus for work study programs. You can also find internships through your own majors as well just by going to the head of the department, they'll help you find different internships too.

**SUNY Binghamton:** At Binghamton, the Fleishman Career and Professional Development Center has a dual purpose. They try to help you: (1) prepare for the professional world, getting you internships and connecting you with alumni and the organizations that are often on campus looking for students, and (2) gear you up for a professional degree or master's degree you may need prior to entering a field or while entering that field.

For counsel on that, it does again require you to show up and be a part of that. There are career counselors that go up to residential communities to be a forward-facing person where they can help you figure out what

you're thinking about. And I know I say this often, but the biggest resource is going to be your fellow students who are probably a year or two or three ahead of you. That's where a lot of that knowledge is passed down.

I'm just going to take a quick aside, and we all could probably echo this; it's not the college or the university that gets you the job. We often think, "I'm paying this money, they're going to get me the job." It's what you did while you were there. And frankly, did you like the school enough to really get involved, to be the student you wanted to be, to be eventually the alumni you want to be. This involves you embracing what these schools offer. You really have to like it there.

Our career development centers can be excellent, but if you don't like our schools, you're not really showing up to that career placement meeting or that job and internship fair or the other things that really matter. College doesn't equal this job or this salary.

**Question:** There's been a common theme about a holistic kind of evaluation of applications but what, if you have to name one thing, do applicants tend to not pay enough attention to?

**SUNY Binghamton:** Holistic means we look at everything that you have submitted, though it doesn't necessarily mean we look at everything equally for every single student, because essentially what we're trying to figure out is: are you ready for whatever the next level is at our institution?

Often, the weight (even in a holistic process) goes to your academics. Not your GPA but what makes your GPA your GPA. What was your performance over essentially your four years? Your first year in high school tends to have the most grade evidence there and we know that everybody's been through a lot of changes, but we're looking at the trajectory right, trying to see where you're going now. Are you challenging yourself? There's a lot of different factors that get weighed out, but we don't compare one student directly to another student and say, "which one do we like more?" When we say holistic review, it's not who did more clubs and organizations. It never comes to that scenario. What it comes to though, is who are you and how are you becoming who you want to be?

And we try to get a better understanding of what you're dealing with in life and your essays, your extracurriculars, and all that show us that. What students tend to think is: "Well they said holistic; therefore, I know I'm not doing so well academically, let me just do more clubs and organizations and sign up for things." They forget the fact that we're still looking at the academics. Like if you feel like you're falling a little behind, it's okay to backtrack off this or try to dial back on some of the responsibilities you have and try to focus on the academics. We know that not everybody can do that. You can't always say "no" to a family responsibility but be comfortable and start to be comfortable sharing that.

The thing is students forget that this takes time. You can't wait until two days before the application deadline and say, "all right, let me tell the colleges all about the stuff I'm dealing with." We want to know what's going on in your life, those things matter, not as much as your grades per se, but they matter. But you need time to kind of convey that.

**Question:** What is the best way to get involved with a college of interest while still in high school?

**CUNY John Jay:** One thing I tell students is to go to an open house. Why? Because you get to see the schools in their element, especially if you're lucky to go in person. You get to have the whole experience. You get to visualize, you get to see the school, and you get to see the demographic of the students.

Whether you can visualize yourself on that campus, and that's really important as you're doing your college search, by going to the campus or attending an info session or doing a virtual tour. Whatever it takes for you to understand what the college does and how it can make a great impression on you. Go for it.

Please also get yourself a planner and plan in advance like when are these open houses, when are application deadlines due, etc. This helps you better plan for your college preparation. Now for my seniors, I'm pretty sure you already have that down but for my juniors, that is a piece of advice. Get yourself that planner and write down those deadlines.

**Question:** What kinds of things are there to do in your school's community?

**Columbia University:** It's tough to nail down one thing because it is New York City. There's so much to do, but students find their niche, they find what they're interested in both within the city and on campus. Just for me, one of my favorite traditions on campus every weekend is students will actually take over the basement of our chapel. It's a multi-faith chapel, St Paul's Chapel, where students of all different practices are able to come say their prayers and meditate. But on Fridays and Saturdays, students will take over the basement and turn it into a coffee house, so you can grab cookies, tea, coffee, and hot chocolate for \$1. Local and traveling poets, comedians, and musicians will come and play. And so that was where I would hang out sometimes on weekends as a student, and as an administrator.

Throughout New York City though, it's the city and so there's ways where students can be involved as Columbians. There are 30 different museums you can get into free of charge with just your Columbia ID. But otherwise, there's so much culture from around the world, from within the city, that you're able to discover in the various neighborhoods available to you. So, it's a matter of just exploring and finding what you enjoy the most and then going and bringing your friends with you and having a great time.

**CUNY John Jay:** We are located in the heart of New York City. The best of the best, you know, 59th Street/Columbus Circle. We're connected to the A, B, C and D lines, so you can commute to us very easily and get to the Lincoln Center. You have the MoMA close by, you can walk, take the train. We like to say New York City is your classroom besides John Jay. And yeah, you can go to a Broadway show, you can go to the Lincoln Center, you can eat Chipotle down the block.

**Morgan State:** So, Baltimore is not as big as New York, but it is still called Charm City for a reason. There's so much to do. There are different neighborhoods, and they all have their own little flair.

There's Hampton, which is more of a hipster area, and then we have the Harbor where all the tourists go. Canton is more mature of a crowd and then we have Fells Point, where you can go and get a little bit classy,

go to restaurants. There are museums, lots of art, nightlife, and live music. I graduated back in 2019 and I still hang out in Baltimore.

If you want to try something different, a little bit more history, you can go to DC. It's about an hour drive. If you choose to go on a weekend, you can make it to DC in about 45 minutes and obviously there's so much to do there, the National Mall also their own museums too, so much food, and nightlife.

And then there's Ocean City which is about two hours away. The Maryland Ocean City, which I do go there too and there's a bunch of people from New York who always come down to our Ocean City because they love it there, has so much to do, I promise you won't be bored and that's just off campus.

On campus, there's always something going on. People come from other states to come to our homecoming because it's the most fun homecoming pretty much on the East Coast, not to be biased or anything. There's always stuff going on right on campus as well. Rep Your Flag Day is a diversity event. I love Morgan Day too – everybody dresses up and just comes to campus, so there's a lot going on.

**SUNY Binghamton:** Binghamton is quite a bit smaller. 50,000 people in downtown Binghamton, but it's a college city. It's built around the university these days, art galleries, cafes, and two semi-pro sports teams. Every first Friday of the month is when all the art galleries have their big showings and students are all down there checking it out. There's a light festival, it's like a projection light festival, called Luma every year and it started in Binghamton and 40,000 - 50,000 people come in and watch all these buildings transform in this crazy light show.

But it's upstate New York. I mean you're there for college and maybe for a little bit more to explore but it's a small tight knit community.