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A Naropa University Education

Naropa University is a private, nonprofit, nonsectarian liberal arts institution dedicated to advancing its mission of contemplative education. This approach to learning combines the best of Eastern and Western educational traditions, enabling students to integrate academic knowledge with self-knowledge through contemplative practice. The goal of this educational philosophy is to offer students a highly experiential and transformative learning path that brings both academic rigor and a spiritual component to the student's educational experience.

The curriculum blends rigorous academics, the arts, civic engagement and traditional practices for training in awareness to help students cultivate an understanding of themselves, their field of study and the world. Through disciplines such as sitting meditation, yoga and t'ai-chi ch'uan, students develop mindfulness and awareness and are trained to acknowledge the direct experience of learning, moment by moment.

Naropa University comprises a four-year undergraduate college and graduate programs in the arts, education, environmental leadership, psychology and religious studies. The university offers BA and BFA degrees through its four-year undergraduate college, as well as MA, MDiv and MFA degrees through its graduate school. Professional development courses are available through Naropa University Extended Studies.

Boulder, Colorado

Naropa University is located in Boulder, Colorado, a town of about 100,000, nestled at the base of the Rocky Mountains and twenty-five miles northwest of Denver. Boulder offers a great quality of life with a dynamic arts community and numerous cultural events. *Outside Magazine* called Boulder the "Best all-around town" for outdoors experience, and it's easy to understand why. Boulder offers a wealth of opportunities for hikers, climbers, skiers, snowboarders, cyclists, kayakers and nearly any other type of outdoor sport enthusiast. The city is also home to a vibrant, eclectic network of spiritual communities and interest groups that generate Boulder's unique energy. An ecologically conscious city, Boulder recently initiated a "Go Green" Campaign to reduce the community's carbon footprint and highlight the ease of alternative transportation.

Naropa is located on three campuses in the city of Boulder: the Arapahoe Campus in central Boulder; the Paramita Campus at 30th Street in north Boulder; and the Nalanda Campus in east Boulder. The Arapahoe Campus and surrounding grounds include a performing arts center, a meditation hall, classrooms, faculty and administrative offices, the Naropa Bookstore and the Allen Ginsberg Library. The Paramita Campus houses the Graduate School of Psychology. The Nalanda Campus is the center for the performing and visual arts and houses the BFA in Performance program, art studios for Visual Arts and the Art Therapy program, and an events center for Extended Studies and Naropa community events.

Accreditation

Naropa University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Faculty

Naropa faculty members are dedicated to teaching, learning, research and Naropa's mission of contemplative education. They share an interest in and an experience of contemplative practice that helps create and sustain the educational environment. Community thrives at Naropa, where teachers are mentors and friends who care about their students and who are passionate about their subject areas. Often active practitioners in the field they teach, faculty members may be publishing a book of poetry, speaking at a seminar on religious diversity or performing in a New York play. Many of those in the psychology department are licensed counselors who know the ins and outs of the careers their students seek. Naropa University's student/faculty ratio is 10-to-1 and the average undergraduate class size is 14. There are 31 full-time faculty members, 65% of whom have PhDs or terminal MFAs, who teach undergraduate courses. Some courses are taught by graduate faculty or adjunct faculty who are professionals in their field from the Boulder community.

Diversity

Naropa University draws on vital insights of the world's wisdom traditions and is simultaneously Buddhist-inspired, ecumenical and nonsectarian. A commitment to diversity flows from these overarching values and is carried forward throughout the institution, informing a student's course of study and encouraging openness, understanding and cultural competence. Through a contemplative education, Naropa students seek compassionate and active means for addressing the essential issues of diversity and difference.

Naropa students explore systems of power and privilege in relationship to race, class, gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexuality, nationality and religion.

Founding History and Life Today

When Naropa University founder Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche—a significant figure in the Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism—came to Boulder, Colorado, in 1970, he had no shortage of ideas. The community he developed explored psychology, the arts and spiritual traditions with such freshness and vigor that people of notable stature, such as Beat poet Allen Ginsberg, moved to town and started planning a way to share their knowledge using a new pedagogical strategy deemed "contemplative." This would become the Naropa Institute. By 1974, the small collection of scientists, activists and artists had advertised their fledgling school and predicted that approximately four hundred students would partake of their classes. They got far more than they expected. That summer, approximately two thousand people flooded the streets of Boulder in a brilliant intellectual gathering—one that confirmed the drawing power of Trungpa's vision.

Trungpa continued to teach from 1974 to 1986, and the Beat writers went on to form the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics,

where Ginsberg, Anne Waldman and company mentor poets, novelists and overall critical thinkers.

Intent on creating a dialogue between the world's major wisdom traditions, Trungpa enlisted Judith Simmer-Brown and Reggie Ray to administer a Buddhist Studies program and build it into what would, eventually, become the Department of Religious Studies. Today, in addition to its offerings in Buddhism, Naropa offers courses on the contemplative approaches to Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

With time, the Naropa Institute honed its offerings, expanding on a tradition of visual and theater arts, as well as a growing interest in environmentalism and education. In recent years, the term 'Buddhist-inspired' has been used to describe the institution's alignment with the ethical values prominent in the religious tradition of the school's founder while abstaining from the adoption of the accompanying dogma, thus remaining nonsectarian. Naropa has been accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools since 1986. In 1999, the school's name changed to Naropa University.

Academics

The intention of a Naropa University education is to balance rigorous academics with contemplative practice to ensure that both outer knowledge and inner development are cultivated, thus broadening the student's academic study. Grounded in a tripod of service, diversity and practice, the undergraduate curriculum provides a strong base for the four-year course of study. The Diversity Seminar and the Contemplative Practice Seminar invite Naropa students to look directly at why and how they think the way they do. Together these seminars deepen the educational experience and prepare the ground for students to first discover their work and then find ways to take it into the world through the Civic Engagement Seminar.

Built on the foundation of the core curriculum, the major offers students the opportunity to engage rigorously with a specific discipline, further deepening their study and practice. In an environment of mutual discovery, students enter into scholarly work with skilled faculty members who are leaders in their respective fields. The student's course of study is further informed by internships and additional opportunities for service work through courses with a community-based learning component.

Academic Year

Naropa University operates on a semester system, with limited summer offerings. The academic year has two fifteen-week semesters, fall and spring.

Core Curriculum

The core curriculum introduces students to the values, modes of inquiry and essential skills of contemplative education at Naropa University. Grounded in Naropa's mission, core courses attempt to strike a living balance between scholarship, contemplative practice, artistic expression and civic engagement. This multidimensional approach to teaching and learning is unique to Naropa, reflecting its singular goal to bridge the gap between knowledge and wisdom.

Core Seminars

The **Contemplative Practice Seminar** introduces students to the concepts and practices of contemplative education with an emphasis on its vision, purpose, history and application to the students' academic career.

Through the **Diversity Seminar**, students awaken a greater understanding of self and others to promote ethical behaviors and values that support a diverse world. Through the two **Writing Seminars**, students practice the art of scholarly and expressive writing, reading and research.

In the sophomore year, writing and research skills are honed in the **Humanities Seminar**. Students may choose courses such as the History of the Avant-Garde, the Invention of Landscape, and Mythopoesis: Cosmologies and Cosmogonies.

The **Civic Engagement Seminar** offers second-year students the opportunity to explore ways of integrating their first-year learning with service in the greater community.

Core Area Requirements and Sample Classes

Artistic Process: music, visual arts, writing, dance and theater • ART 260, Calligraphy and Book Arts

Body-Mind Practice: yoga, t'ai-chi, contemplative dance • PFAR 245, Dance of Africa I

Cultural and Historical Studies: diverse perspectives on human culture and history • PAX 253, Women and the Expansion of Democracy

Scientific Inquiry: an introduction to science through Environmental Studies or Contemplative Psychology • ENV 220, Ecology and Systems Science

World Wisdom Traditions: major religious and indigenous spiritual traditions • REL 250, Spirituality and Creative Expression

After earning 30 semester credits, students may declare a major. Majors range from 24 to 60 (most are 36) credits. Students must earn 120 credit hours to receive the BA or BFA degree from Naropa University. Minors are 12 credits and are optional.

Majors

- Contemplative Psychology
- Early Childhood Education
- Environmental Studies
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Music
- Peace Studies
- Religious Studies
- Traditional Eastern Arts
- Visual Arts
- Writing and Literature

Naropa also offers a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Performance.

Minors are available in the following areas:

- Contemplative Education
- Contemplative Psychology
- Dance
- Early Childhood Education
- Ecology and Systems Science
- Environmental History and Justice
- Environmental Sustainability
- Horticulture
- Music
- Religious Studies
- Sacred Ecology
- Sanskrit
- Tibetan
- Traditional Eastern Arts
- Visual Arts
- Writing and Literature

Grading

Naropa University does not believe that grades are the single most important measure of education; therefore, the university does not determine or publish a dean's list, nor does it confer degrees cum laude. However, grades remain an important indicator of a student's academic performance, as well as a useful tool for communicating educational accomplishments to others through transcripts.

In addition to grades, Naropa uses a model of five qualities, which is considered integral to the make-up of a fully educated person. These five qualities are openness and respect for one's immediate experience; interpersonal and communication skills; sharpened critical intellect; resourcefulness and appreciation of the richness of one's world; and effective action.

Making a Difference in the World

Naropa University prepares its graduates for a variety of career options. Naropa alumni are pursuing a wide range of careers, including:

- Director, Lostwax Multimedia Dance Theater; Providence, Rhode Island
- Special Education Teacher; Hana, Hawaii
- Program Manager, Microsoft; Redmond, Washington
- Vice President, Marketing, Floodgate Entertainment; Waltham, Massachusetts
- Massage Therapist; Laramie, Wyoming
- Senior Reporter, PC World Magazine; Roxbury, Massachusetts
- Caseworker, Boulder County Department of Social Services; Boulder, Colorado
- Attorney; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Outdoor Adventure Instructor; New Market, Maryland
- Naturopathic Physician; Seattle, Washington
- Environmental Educator; Boulder, Colorado
- Filmmaker/Educator, Helix Entertainment/Mary Pickford Institute; Los Angeles, California
- Lead Counselor, Imagine; Boulder, Colorado
- Assistant Professor, Art Department, Portland State University; Portland, Oregon
- Somatic Therapist, Hakomi Institute; Menlo Park, California
- Artist/Graphic Designer, Antara Media Arts; Portland, Oregon
- Dance/Movement Therapist; British Columbia, Canada

Characteristics of a Typical Naropa Student

Naropa University undergraduate students represent a myriad of backgrounds, personalities and spiritual traditions. They tend to be:

- Adventurous
- Caring
- Civic-minded
- Creative
- Deep thinkers
- Intellectually curious
- Open to new ideas
- Self-aware
- Spiritual

"Naropa students are artistic and creative. They are unconventional and individualistic. They are ethically discerning and morally fervent. They want to save the world. They are often the youngest sibling. They are skeptical about all forms of authority. And—parents often smile lovingly as they say this—they are a challenge to raise! The upshot of all of this is that parents are delighted to see that their student will be in a school where there are other like-minded and like-hearted students, ready to challenge and support each other, ready to change the world."—President Thomas B. Coburn, summarizing the stories that have come forth from parents of new Naropa students at the annual parents' tea

Student Groups and Activities

Some examples of recognized student organizations active in the last academic year are the following:

- AA Group
- Activism Dialogues
- Allies in Action
- Capoeira
- Childcare Cooperative
- Coalition for Student Publications
- Community Writing Group
- Crafts and Conversations
- Dharma Clowning
- Embracing the Feminine
- Gaia Group
- Inner-Mission
- International Students Club
- Modern Meditation Practice
- Naropa Healers
- Naropa Pride Alliance
- Osho@Naropa
- PATH (Peer Assisting in Transformational Health)
- ROOT (Reconnecting On Outer Terrain)
- Snow Rides
- Spiritual Working Group
- Student Government
- Tea Club

Why Students Choose Naropa University

"A caring and efficient administrative staff, and amazing student/teacher ratio and professors with an experienced and broader worldview were of utmost importance."

"The concept of taking a contemplative approach to learning brought me back to a Learning Styles course I took in high school where we studied left-brain/right-brain thinking.... I learned that experience is as important as reading, and that hearing and tasting are, in fact, ways of seeing. I found dimension in what I read, and that was where I built my desire for an education that was holistic rather than fragmented.... I also realized that my perspective is not the only perspective and that therefore it was always important to strive to see all sides of an issue."

"I believe that Naropa's philosophies of a whole education, by not only engaging the mind but the heart and the physical body as well, will allow me to gain the deeper insight and confidence in myself that can facilitate the cultivation of that agent and make it a realistic possibility."

One reason I transferred to Naropa is that "I want to learn about how things connect and where things intersect. I want to learn about what is in between concrete, left-brain, empirical knowledge and 'abstract,' subjective, creative expression, often understood as dichotomous.... What fascinates me so much about the universe is that everything is connected, though we are only beginning to understand how.... I am convinced that [Naropa] is a place where these connections are respected, studied and created."

"I feel that Naropa will be the perfect space for me in balancing and expanding my learning as a whole person. I love to learn and work and I feel I will receive the challenges I need at Naropa from an inspiring faculty. I also look forward to being surrounded by students who value a spiritual and humanistic path as an intrinsic part of their education."

"As I read about contemplative education [a once unfamiliar concept], I felt that it would prove much more fulfilling than common educational techniques. I imagine that the combination of inner exploration and creative and meditative practices produces a deeper, more meaningful education that transcends simply learning facts.... I aspire to attend college not merely to prepare myself for a career—I long to deepen my lifelong intellectual journey."

Housing in the First Year

The Snow Lion Apartments are home to all entering undergraduate students, ages twenty years and younger, arriving with fewer than 30 credits. A limited number of accommodations is also available to Naropa sophomores, juniors, seniors and graduate students through a low-rent/mentorship program. Snow Lion is located four residential blocks from the Arapahoe Campus and is close to the bus line to the Nalanda Campus. New student housing is designed to support the transition to Boulder and to Naropa, allowing students to become members of a dynamic living, learning community.

The mission of Naropa housing is to provide a healthy, sustainable, contemplative and compassionate community where students are supported and holistically engaged. Naropa's residential learning community strives to provide academic support through co-curricular activities, creating intersections between formal instruction, the community and the world. Attending classes and living with other students presents a unique opportunity to learn and develop skills in working with others, diversity awareness, conflict resolution and problem-solving.

The Community Initiative Project (CIP) helps transform curricular and co-curricular experiences into learning opportunities. This organization, which is comprised of Snow Lion residents, sponsors social action initiatives, invites and hosts faculty at the residence hall, creates dialogue around individual and community concerns, and serves as a liaison between the

Residence Life staff and the residential community. The intention of the CIP is to bring students living on-campus and Naropa faculty and staff together effectively bringing the learning experience home.

Through the CIP, students develop student leadership skills and gain experience with group facilitation and community building. They build these skills by learning to voice the concerns of the community, cultivating listening skills and managing creative initiatives put forth by individual community members. Being a part of this organization can also help make the living/learning experience meaningful. All Snow Lion residents are invited to join and become leaders in their community.

Each freshman apartment at Snow Lion is a two-bedroom unit, including a kitchen, full bath, dining area and living room. Every freshman student is provided with a twin long bed, dresser, desk and desk chair. The apartments also include a kitchen table and chairs and high speed internet.

Housing the Following Years

The Office of Student Affairs works to provide assistance to students who are seeking housing. The office has a housing resource sheet that guides students to the best local spots for rentals and lists websites for Boulder Community network, bulletin boards, the local paper, businesses that provide databases of rentals, short-term stay options and more. The Arapahoe and Paramita campuses both have housing bulletin boards adjacent to their student lounges. In addition, there is a housing coordinator who can help students place ads on the Naropa website and bulletin board, as well as answer questions about the Boulder rental market.

Naropa University Admissions Process

The admission process at Naropa mirrors its educational philosophy. We recognize the inherent uniqueness of our candidates and eagerly look forward to getting to know each of them on a personal basis. We are looking for a good fit, not a rating in a national publication. We encourage prospective students to investigate what they are truly looking for in a college experience. If Naropa is a fit, we do all we can to make it possible for the student to attend. We encourage applicants to visit our campuses, take a tour and speak to current students, faculty and admissions counselors. We admit on a rolling basis but have a suggested deadline for receipt of completed applications.

Suggested Deadlines

January 15 (fall admission)

October 15 (spring admission)

A completed application for admission includes the following items:

- Completed application form
- \$50 nonrefundable application fee
- Three essays
- Two letters of recommendation
- Official high school transcript
- Official college transcripts for every university attended
- Original score reports from ACT/SAT tests (optional)
- Supplemental materials as required by specific departments

We are members of the Common Application (www.commonapp.org) and accept them online or via the mail with one supplemental essay and a \$50 application fee.

Admission Criteria

Naropa University rates students on the following criteria:

Academic Background: We look for students who have the academic ability to succeed in a challenging, highly experiential and personalized academic process. We will consider a student's academic history, activities, teacher or counselor recommendations, awards or merits and writing ability. We also look for a student's ability to reflect upon

his or her academic career and to identify not only strengths and weaknesses, but what type of educational environment is most conducive to academic success.

Readiness: Like other colleges, Naropa can be a very transformative and challenging experience. We desire students who have a demonstrated ability to cope independently with rigor, conflict, challenge and frustration. Students who have the life skills to seek out resources and to ask for support, whether academic or personal, are students whom we consider ready for a Naropa education.

Mission of Contemplative Education: Naropa University looks for applicants who have an understanding of and/or openness to the concept of contemplative education. Students must be excited about participating in an education that focuses on the integration of body, mind and spirit. This approach includes an inward journey that connects students' intellectual studies with heartfelt experience. Connection to community is also a valuable part of contemplative education. We are looking for students who are or have been involved with their larger community, who are engaged in the arts and who have shown commitment to issues of diversity through either formal or informal volunteer activities or community work. An expression of their intentions about how they may be involved in the Naropa community and how they will use their degree to go on to be of service to the world is an important factor in admissions decisions.

Financial Aid and Paying the Bill

Naropa University recognizes that education at a private institution is an expensive undertaking. Limited financial resources need not exclude one from what Naropa has to offer. In our commitment to providing aid that is need-sensitive, Naropa adheres to its mission of supporting diversity, in this case economic diversity, among the student body. Scholarships are awarded to meritorious students who also demonstrate financial need. In addition to scholarships, Naropa awards grants, work-study and loans to lighten the financial burden as students embark on their journey. International students are eligible for all forms of aid, except federal grants and loans.

2008–09 Profile

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| Total Undergraduate Enrollment: 444 | In State: 28% |
| Average Age: 24 | Out of State: 70% |
| Student/Faculty Ratio: 10:1 | International: 2% |
| Average Class Size: 14 | First-Time Freshmen: 57 |
| Class Size Range: 5–41 | Average Age: 19 |
| Female: 60% | GPA Top Quartile: 3.8 |
| Male: 40% | GPA Middle 50%: 3 |
| Caucasian: 74% | GPA Bottom Quartile: 2.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino: 3% | Average ACT: 25 |
| Asian American: 3% | Average SAT: 1756 |
| Black/African American: 2% | Applications Completed: 397 |
| Native American/Pacific Islander: 2% | Applications Admitted: 304 |
| Multiracial: 1% | Enrolled: 147 |
| Did Not Respond: 13% | |
| International: 2% | |

Tuition, Fees and Financial Aid

Tuition and Fees (12–18 credit hours): \$21,984
Books: \$706
On-Campus Room and Board: \$6,640
Miscellaneous: \$3,078
Transportation: \$1,300
Total Cost: \$33,708

Off-Campus Room and Board: \$8,478
Average Aid Package: \$22,614
Undergraduate students receiving aid: 69%
Pell-eligible students: 43%