

College of the Ozarks: A Tradition That Works

Called “Hard Work U.” by *The Wall Street Journal*, College of the Ozarks is a fully accredited, four-year liberal arts college nestled in the bluffs of the Ozarks hills on a 1,000-acre campus just outside of Branson, Missouri. The institution offers deserving students the advantages of a quality, Christian education.

The College charges no tuition. Instead, the institution provides the opportunity for each full-time student to work at one of more than 100 campus work stations to pay in part for his or her cost of education. The remaining portion of each student’s expenses is covered through scholarships provided by gifts and contributions from donors who believe in and support the programs and policies of the College.

Student jobs range from working in the Fruitcake and Jelly Kitchen to milking cows at the campus dairy to serving meals in the College’s public restaurant. Upon completion of the Work Education Program, the College guarantees to meet the entire cost of education, giving students the opportunity to graduate debt free. Debt is openly discouraged and no federal, state, or private loans are made.

History Matters

Founded by Reverend James Forsythe as a high school called The School of the Ozarks in 1906, the institution became a junior college in 1956 before becoming a four-year bachelor’s program in 1965. It has been called College of the Ozarks since 1990.

The mission of College of the Ozarks is to provide the advantages of a Christian education for youth of both sexes, especially those found worthy, but who are without sufficient means to procure such training. The vision of College of the Ozarks is to develop citizens of Christ-like Character who are well-educated, hard-working, and patriotic.

The College has been noted for its academic excellence, character development, and affordability by several national publications including *The Princeton Review Best 373 Colleges*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Forbes*, and *Money Magazine*. *U.S. News & World Report* has ranked College of the Ozarks a top college in Midwest since 1989.

In 2012, College of the Ozarks reopened School of the Ozarks, a classical laboratory high school. The addition of School of the Ozarks followed soon after with the full implementation of a lower school in the fall of 2015, completing the K-college format.

Focus on Goals

To achieve its vision, the College has academic, vocational, Christian, cultural, and patriotic goals.

Academic Goal: Academically, the College’s goal is to provide a sound education, based in the liberal arts. Ranging from nursing and engineering, to culinary arts and agriculture, C of O offers over 40 majors.

College of the Ozarks was even ranked No. 1 Best Value Regional College in the Midwest by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Christian Goal: The Christian goal of the College is to foster the Christian faith through the integration of faith with learning, living, and service. Besides hosting a Christian, interdenominational service each Sunday in the Williams Memorial Chapel, students are given the opportunity to grow and serve in several Christian clubs and activities such as Baptist Student Union (BSU) and Chi Alpha.

Cultural Goal: The cultural goal of the College is to cultivate an appreciation of the fine arts, an understanding of the world, and adherence to high personal standards. Students are encouraged to explore new fine arts throughout their education, and have opportunities in and outside of their majors to enjoy various cultural experiences. Through The Keeter Center for Character Education, many influential speakers have visited the campus, including President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush, General Norman Schwarzkopf, and Dr. Ben Carson, secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Patriotic Goal: College of the Ozarks encourages an understanding of American heritage, civic responsibilities, love of country, and willingness to defend it. On the grounds of the College sits the “Lest We Forget” 9/11 Memorial, the official Missouri Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and The Missouri Gold Star Families Memorial. Funds to build these memorials have come from the generous donations of Johnny Morris and Bass Pro Shops and the PGA Tour Champion’s Tour. The College has served as a charitable beneficiary with the *Bass Pro Shops Legends of Golf at Big Cedar Lodge* golf tournament for the past three years, enabling the College to build these monuments to honor Veterans throughout the nation.

Vocational Goal: To promote a strong work ethic, and encourage the development of good character and value, C of O has more than 100 unique workstations from the radio station, stained glass, the Fruitcake and Jelly Kitchen, and The Keeter Center. Rated *No.1 Top Small Hotel in the U.S.* by TripAdvisor for 2016, The Keeter Center is an award-winning lodging, dining, and conference facility. Every workstation gives the students the opportunity to grow in character, knowledge, and vocational skills.

Working for an education is the continuing distinctive tradition of the campus. The College is committed to cultivating character, work ethic, and promoting Christian values. For 110 years, this unique institution has educated the head, heart, and hands of countless young people.