

A.R.T. Institute in the Big Picture

According to the Hollywood Reporter's annual report on the "Best Drama Schools for an M.F.A.", A.R.T. ranked #14 of the Top 25 Best Drama Schools for an MFA in 2015; and #9 in 2016.

Top Ten Ranking, M.F.A. Programs 2016

- 1) Juilliard
- 2) Yale School of Drama**
- 3) NYU
- 4) Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (London, England)
- 5) UCLA
- 6) UCSD
- 7) Old Globe at University of San Diego
- 8) Columbia University**
- 9) American Repertory Theater at Harvard University***
- 10) Bristol Old Vic (Bristol, UK)

*At this time, while A.R.T. meets the qualifications for M.F.A. conferral at the above institutions, Harvard does not offer an M.F.A. degree.

**Other Ivy League Institutions.

While A.R.T. seems to be rising in rank, the Top 5 US schools for the last two years have consistently been: Yale, Juilliard, NYU, UCSD, UCSD.

Let's Break This Down Further...

We have amassed the following descriptions of financial aid offerings at other institutions based on extensive research and personal accounts.

Yale (#2*, #1):** Students of great financial need are required to take out a \$7,000 federal loan in their first year. Once this loan is taken out, full tuition and living costs are provided for the remainder of the student's 3 year stay. Additionally, living stipends and ample work study are provided to these students.

Juilliard (#1*, #2):** Need based and alumni-provided scholarships are available to students with need. Limited full tuition scholarships are provided. Fourth year of program is entirely free to students. \$1,000 stipend is given to each student for travel and accommodations to/from graduate showcases. In cases where more aid may be needed, students are able to submit financial aid appeals for additional institutional financial assistance. Appeals are honored and granted by case and need.

New York University (#3*, #3):** In recent years, a significant commitment has been made to lowering costs for students. Director Wing-Davies is on record saying that they are prioritizing making the program one that will also be tuition free. Personal accounts from colleagues indicate that they are providing significantly more scholarships across the board than they were even 5 years ago. Institutional aid in the form of full and half tuition scholarships are already made available. A colleague who wishes to remain anonymous is getting "10X more than you're [ART student] being offered." And even in pursuit of outside scholarships, Tisch connected this student with those venues. In cases where more aid may be needed, students

can submit financial aid appeals for additional institutional financial assistance. Appeals are honored and granted by case and need.

University of San Diego (#7*, #7):** Entirely tuition free to students; a living stipend is provided to cover all living costs. Class of approx. 8 accepted. Donor “families” are appointed to help alleviate the stress of transition for students; providing them with meals and connections within the community. They become aids for the students while in school and beyond.

U.C. San Diego (#6*, #6):** Has now made its program primarily tuition free. Students are also granted paid assistantships to teach and earn income while in the program. In cases where more aid may be needed, students can submit financial aid appeals for additional institutional financial assistance. Appeals are honored and granted by case and need.

Columbia (#8*, #20):** While they are not on par with Yale’s stellar financial aid offerings, Columbia’s drastic jump in ranking has much to do with the revamping of its financial aid paid support of its students. Students can teach and earn a stipend while in the program. In the first two years of the program, acting students in need receive \$20,000 - \$25,000 (\$20,000+ in year one; \$20,000+ in year two), and \$9,000 plus increased teaching hours in their third and final year. In addition, students are offered various work/study opportunities that can allow for an additional \$10,000+ in their final year. In cases where more aid may be needed, students can submit financial aid appeals for additional institutional financial assistance. Appeals are honored and granted by case and need.

American Repertory Theater (#14*): Provides a \$2,500 annual scholarship. Students of great need easily amass a debilitating \$130,000 - nearly \$150,000 in student loan **debt**.

* Hollywood Reporter, “Best Drama Schools for an M.F.A.”, 2016

**Hollywood Reporter, “Best Drama Schools for an M.F.A.”, 2015

While correlation may not mean causation, it should not go unnoticed that programs offering significant and comprehensive scholarship packages are consistently ranked higher. The ramifications of insufficient funding for graduate students extends beyond their experience at the institution. Their ability to succeed professionally and, in turn, attract greater recognition for the institution is directly related to the amount of debt a student is saddled with upon completing (or being forced to drop out from) their training program. Theater students succeed when they are expertly and professionally trained, and financially prepared to survive and thrive in an often unstable and low-paying profession. *While A.R.T.’s training is ostensibly comparable to those institutions that rank highest, it falls short in providing its student a financial advantage.*