



By Rachel Sandell

Published Aug 13, 2023, 9:15 AM EDT

Rachel Sandell is an experienced editor and proofreader with a love for language and storytelling. A graduate of the creative writing MFA program, The Rainier Writing Workshop, she is the author of five short stories and analyzes the different facets of fiction her spare time. She's also a huge...



See more Collider stories on Google.

Add us on Google

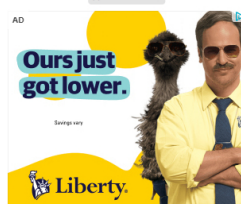
SUMMARY

- Community's very eccentric community college was based on a real-life, public educational institution based in Glendale, California, first established in 1927.
- The school was actually inspired by the real-life experiences of the show's creator, Dan Harmon, who attended Glendale Community College and joined a study group that made him care about strangers.
- The TV show depicts a very skewed version of Harmon's past with Glendale Community College, a quirky and nonsensical setting that allows lovable misfits like Jeff Winger to explore their lives and relationships in an environment where anything can happen – and we mean anything.

With six seasons under its belt and a **film on the horizon**, *Community* is well known for having some of the goofiest, and most endearing, characters doing fun off-the-wall things in probably the least professional college setting imaginable: Glendale Community College, where you can take a class on literally anything (learn how to hold your breath, seize the day, or become an elite member of the secretive air conditioning repair program) and the school flag features a butt.

With a dean that cares too much and students that care too little, Glendale Community College is a setting that comes off as almost magical and a character all its own, as it allows the cast of lovable misfits to explore their lives, relationships, and futures in an environment where **anything can happen**. Glendale is often too silly and nonsensical to ground itself in reality, but believe it or not, the school was actually based on a very real place.

X Remove Ads



RELATED:

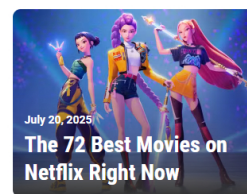
Joel McHale Confirms Donald Glover Will Return For 'Community' Movie

Is Glendale Community College Real?

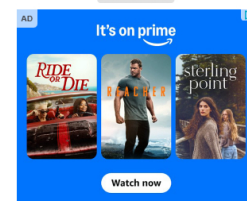


Ad

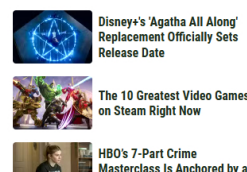
WHAT TO WATCH



X Remove Ads



TRENDING NOW



Add Us



Like



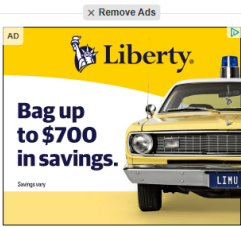
Follow



My Profile



In Greendale, Colorado, there's only one community college to attend that'll be worth your while! Boasting a wide array of classes (usefulness varies) and professors that may or may not care about what they're teaching, Greendale Community College is proud to accept anyone from anywhere for any reason. With its own "original" song (haven't gotten sued yet, at least) and alumnus **Luis Guzmán**, Greendale will give you the best education of your life: not necessarily practical career skills, but life lessons about friendship, family, relationships, growing in life, and, of course, the power of community.



Greendale's campus might look normal at first glance, but here you'll find a student in a top hat sporting star-shaped sideburns, a psychotic Spanish teacher turned student turned dictator turned amnesiac turned student again, and the most overexcited dean you'll ever see. Anything can happen at Greendale. The possibilities are literally limitless, and that doesn't just go for the main cast, dubbed the Greendale Seven: Jeff (**Joel McHale**), Britta (**Gillian Jacobs**), Abed (**Danny Pudi**), Troy (**Donald Glover**), Annie (**Alison Brie**), Shirley (**Yvette Nicole Brown**), Chang (**Ken Jeong**), and Pierce (**Chevy Chase**). As magical as it all sounds, it's not real. So, where did all this quirkiness come from?

How Glendale Community College Inspired 'Community'



Ad

In 2003, series creator **Dan Harmon** took classes at **Glendale Community College** for one and a half semesters, including Spanish, biology, and psychology. Already, the parallel between Harmon's time at Glendale and the study group's time at Greendale is pretty clear, considering the core group of friends started as a Spanish study group and later took biology and psychology classes together as well. At this point, Harmon was getting good grades and had no real incentive to get any more invested in community college than he had to be, but some other students wanted to start a study group with him. Harmon says that he was "very standoffish," but he felt pressured to join, not realizing just how helpful the new experience would be. During one study session, he was overcome with an odd realization: that he actually cared whether each member of the study group passed their tests.

"I remember while sitting in the study room book-marking that emotion because it was so odd to me," Harmon told the *Glendale News-Press*. He later added with *The Independent*, "I've been really distorted in my view of the universe..." Somehow, he'd unknowingly gotten roped into caring about strangers in a school with extremely low stakes.

Ad

While community colleges differ from universities in several ways, one of the most helpful differences is that of **rolling admissions**, which lend more flexibility to those with busy lives or hectic schedules than the strict deadlines of four-year universities. As a result, you can typically find a diverse group of students that aren't constricted by age, gender, religion, etc. You can find high school students getting a head-start on their college degrees. parents taking classes on the side. older people going back to school. and a whole host of

other people from all walks of life. This type of diverse setting was the perfect backdrop for a TV show with an ensemble cast, and the casual flexibility and low pressure that comes with attending community college is the ideal setting for shenanigans and zany fun.

Thanks to Glendale, Greendale Elevated 'Community's Setting



Ad

The classes themselves (Spanish, biology, and psychology) aren't the only parallels when it comes to Harmon's time at Glendale compared to the study group's time at Greendale. The flexibility of community college in comparison to "real universities" laid the groundwork for the loose rules at Greendale that allow the students to be able to get away with pretty much anything, whether it's creating a chicken finger crime family, ruining school property during an epic game of paintball, or burying (like a shameful secret) the truth about a hostile takeover of the school paired with a doppelgänger (or, more accurately, a dopple-deaner) conspiracy.

Despite not caring as much about rules (or just not having enough money or authority to enforce them), Greendale is a setting that fosters togetherness and encourages creativity and growth. One need not look much further than **Community's leading man, Jeff Winger**. Because Harmon admits to behaving standoffish during his time at Glendale, as well as joining a study group composed of strangers despite not wanting to, the beginnings of Jeff's character are not too difficult to see if you squint.

Ad

As a character, Jeff grows immensely throughout the series, but he starts out only going to community college and joining a study group as a means to an end. Through the course of time (and with many, many shenanigans), Jeff realizes how much he's grown to care for these people, much like the feeling Harmon described with his own study group. While they aren't one-for-one matches, of course, every storyteller puts a bit of themselves into their characters, and Jeff's character growth truly did begin with Harmon's revelation.

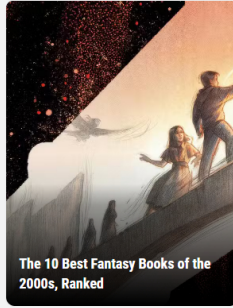
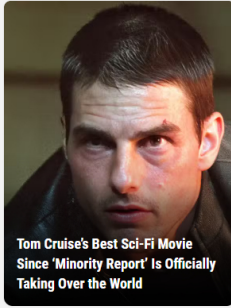
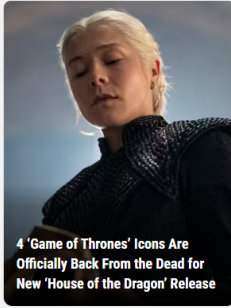
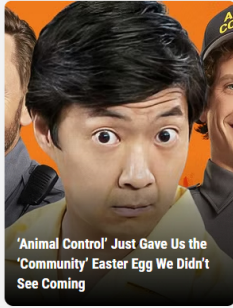
If you're at all interested in learning more about this real-life community college that sparked the imagination of Dan Harmon and became the basis for the quirky adventures of the Community study group at Greendale, **Glendale Community College** in California is still accepting admissions. Though Harmon doubtlessly exaggerated some of the real-life silliness and charm of community college, the feeling of community and stumbling our way through life together is as grounded a feeling as you'll ever find at Greendale – all thanks to Glendale and community colleges everywhere that encourage flexibility and creativity, as well as a healthy dose of ridiculous fun.

Ad



Google is updating how content is shown. Don't miss our industry-leading content, written by humans, by setting [Collider as a preferred source](#).

RECOMMENDED



Ad

Collider
Part of the [Valnet Publishing Group](#)

SUBSCRIBE

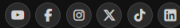
The best of Collider, directly in your inbox.

Email Address



By subscribing you agree to receive newsletter and marketing emails, and accept our [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). You can unsubscribe anytime.

FOLLOW US



EXPLORE

Movies

TV

Music

Gaming

Screenings

Collider Signature

Streaming Guides

Lists

Reality TV

Reviews

Interviews

FYC

Trailers

Videos

Got A Pitch?

ABOUT

Join Our Team

Our Audience

About Us

Press & Events

Media Coverage

[Subscribe to Premium](#)

CONTACT

Contact Us

Careers

Advertising

[Have a News Tip?](#)

LEGAL

Terms

Privacy

Policies