



## **What Goes into the U.S. News & World Report Rankings**

It was back in 1983 when 1,308 college presidents received their first surveys from U.S. News & World Report (USN&WR). The surveys asked their opinions of which schools in the United States offered the best education. This academic-reputation-only method was repeated in 1985 and 1987.

In 1988, USN&WR started to use statistical data as part of the ranking methodology, evaluating the numbers along with the results of the survey. And the rest, as they say, is history.

As noted by the president of Barnard College in 1998, during this time, USN&WR has done an excellent job of capitalizing on America's penchant for ratings and being number one, and also on the high anxiety that surrounds the process of applying to college.

Just what goes into the USN&WR college rankings? Included in the calculation of the final score are several variables on market perception, entering freshman profile, faculty resources, financial indicators and degree attainment.

However, not all variables are created equal. USN&WR evaluates a school's performance on each variable relative to all other institutions then weights these variables to arrive at a final score.

What is most important in the rankings? The peer assessment accounts for 25% of the total (these data are collected through a survey of university administrators; this year recording a 46% response rate). This, along with the six-year graduation rate which accounts for 16%, make up a considerable portion (41%) of the final score.

### **U.S. News & World Report Rankings Final Score Calculation**

#### Variable and Percent of Total Scores—From Most to Least Important

Peer Assessment Score—25%
Six Year Graduation Rate—16%
All Components of Financial Resources*—10%
SAT/ACT Test Score Bands—7.5%
Faculty Salary Variable—7%
Percent of Classes Under 20 Students—6%
Percent Freshmen in Top 10% High School Class—6%
Alumni Giving Rate—5%
Graduation Rate Performance (Actual vs. Predicted)—5%
Freshman Retention—4%
Percent Faculty With Highest Degree—3%
Percent of Classes with 50 or more students—2%
Acceptance Rate—1.5%
Student/Faculty Ratio—1%
Percent Full-time Faculty—1%

*\*Educational Expenditures per student on instruction, research, student service, and related educational expenditures*