

North Georgia places 18th among public universities in the South in 2012 U.S. News rankings

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(Sept. 13, 2011) - North Georgia College & State University is ranked 18th among the South's public regional universities in the 2012 edition of Best Colleges by U.S. News Media Group. Additionally, North Georgia was the second-ranked regional university in the South for the least amount of debt load for the class of 2010.

"This highlights the incredible educational value that North Georgia provides its students and the region," said President Bonita C. Jacobs. "Our comparatively low tuition, our low student/faculty ratio, and our academic rigor combine to create an exceptional academic environment and experience."

Though North Georgia is ranked 18th, it is among 25 public universities placing at that level or higher in the report. In the lists published by U.S. News Media Group, schools that tied in the rankings were given the same place-number designation. For instance, two schools tied for fifth place are listed as No. 5; the next school in the rankings is listed as No. 7; there were several ties in the top 25.

Over the past two decades, the U.S. News college rankings, which group schools based on categories created by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, has grown to be commonly used research tool for students and parents considering higher education opportunities. As a regional university, North Georgia is compared to peers in the South that offer undergraduate and master's-level programs but few, if any, doctoral programs.

The 2012 Best Colleges guidebook provides an examination of how 1,378 accredited four-year schools compare on a set of up to 16 widely accepted indicators of excellence. Among the many factors weighed in determining the rankings are: peer assessment, graduation and retention rates, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources, alumni giving, and, for National Universities and National Liberal Art Colleges, "graduation rate performance" and high school counselor ratings of colleges.

For the past five years, the average high school grade point average of North Georgia's entering freshmen has been the third-highest among all 35 schools in the University System of Georgia. Similarly, the SAT scores for its entering freshmen are consistently among the highest in the state.

"Our six-year graduation rate is at about 50 percent and is much higher than the average of 34 percent for other state universities in Georgia, and our retention rate of 81 percent is exemplary," Jacobs said. "We have outstanding students and a world-class faculty and staff that contribute to an excellent academic reputation."

North Georgia College & State University, a member of the University System of Georgia, is the state's second-oldest public university and is designated as a state leadership institution. This fall, the university enrolled about 6,100 students in its pre-professional, professional, master's, and doctoral programs.

A further distinction North Georgia enjoys is being one of only six senior military colleges in the United States. The university's Corps of Cadets comprises about 15 percent of the student population, and North Georgia is designated as The Military College of Georgia. The other five senior military colleges are the Citadel, Norwich University, Texas A & M, Virginia Military Institute, and Virginia Tech.

North Georgia's 120-acre main campus, located in Dahlonega, is readily recognized by the gold-covered bell tower of its administration building, Price Memorial Hall. In addition to its campus in Dahlonega, the university offers courses online, through the University Center at Gainesville State College, and at various sites in Forsyth County. North Georgia is currently collaborating with Gainesville State College to open a new University Center in Cumming, Ga., in fall 2012.

The 350-page 2012 edition of the Best Colleges guidebook, which includes the rankings for 1,378 schools nationwide, is available at USNews.com and will be on newsstands Sept. 20. The rankings also are available at www.usnews.com/colleges.