

U.S. News and World Report Analysis – 2005

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Summary of Rankings

The 2005 *U.S. News & World Report* rankings were released August 20. Once again, Drake University is ranked among the top Master's Universities in the Midwest. Drake moved from 5th place overall in 2004 to 4th in 2005. In addition, Drake moved to 3rd place in the Best Buys rankings from a 6th place positioning 2004.

The rankings compare Drake University on a number of factors to other Master's Universities in the Midwest Region in reference to five areas of performance. These are listed in the first table below. From the 2004 to 2005 rankings Drake improved on Graduation and Retention Rate, Faculty Resources and Student Selectivity. Our rankings dropped on Peer Assessment, Financial Resources and Alumni Giving.

Summary of *US News* Component Rankings

Evaluative Area	Percent item Contributes to Overall Ranking	Ranking 2005	Ranking 2004
Peer Assessment of Academic Quality,	25%	2	1 (tied)
Graduation and Retention Rate	25%	7	9
Faculty Resources	20%	33	59
Student Selectivity	15%	3	5
Financial Resources	10%	22	15
Alumni Giving	5%	50	49

Best Value

US News also provides a Best Values ranking. Only schools ranked in the top half of their category rankings are included. The higher the ranking and the lower the cost, the better the value rating. Drake is rated as the 3rd best value among Master's institutions in the Midwest

***US News* 2005 Ranking Components**

In the following section, ratings for the top five Midwest Master's institutions are compared and some historical perspective on Drake University's ratings is provided. This analysis attempts to provide some insight into the elements that contribute to each of the ranking component, and some analysis of changes in Drake's position on each of these.

Overall Ranking

Each of the past four years Drake has ranked among the top five Midwestern Universities-Master's. After two years at a rank of 5, in 2005 Drake improved be rated number 4 in the Midwest. In 2005, Creighton ranked number one in the Midwest Region while Valparaiso and Xavier were tied for second. Drake's Overall rating improved from a score of 88 in 2004 to 91 in 2005.

History of Drake Overall Rankings		2005 Rankings		
Year	Ranking	School	Overall Rating	Rank
2002	3	Creighton University	100	1
2003	5	Valparaiso University	96	2
2004	5	Xavier University	96	2
2005	4	Drake University	91	4
		John Carroll University	90	5

Peer Assessment

Peer Assessment accounts for 25% of an institution's final score. Presidents, provosts, and directors of admission are asked to rate each school's academic programs on a scale from 1 (marginal) to 5 (distinguished). Drake ranked second in the 2005 rankings receiving a score of 4.0, the same rating as last year. Creighton was ranked first with a score of 4.1.

Drake Peer Assessment Ranks – 2002-2005

Year	Drake Ranking	
2002	1	Tied with Creighton
2003	1	Tied with Creighton & Valparaiso
2004	1	Tied with Creighton
2005	2	

Graduation and Retention Rate

The Graduation and Retention Rate accounts for 25% of an institution's final score. Within that 25%, retention of first-year students comprises 20% and the six-year graduation rate contributes 80% of the score. A four-year average is used for both first-year student retention and the six-year graduation rate.

2005 Graduation and Retention Rankings- Top Midwest Master's Universities

University	EFR Retention	Six-year Graduation	Graduation and Retention Rank
Creighton	86%	70%	4
Valparaiso	86%	73%	3
Xavier	89%	74%	2
Drake	82%	69%	7
John Carroll	86%	77%	1

Drake Retention and Graduation Rates: 2002-2005

Year	EFR Retention	Six-Year Graduation
2002	82%	66%
2003	82%	66%
2004	82%	68%
2005	82%	69%

Drake first-year retention rates have improved steadily. However the four-year average is still 82%. Retention for the classes that entered fall of 2001 and 2002 was 83%. Drake has experienced a steady increase in the percentage of students graduating in six years. Continued improvement will be needed to raise our ranking among the top Midwest schools, all of which have graduation rates of 70% or above.

Faculty Resources

The faculty resource category makes up 20% of a university's composite final score and is determined as follows:

Percent of classes under 20 students	(30%)
Percent of classes with 50 or more students	(10%)
Faculty compensation	(35%)
Professors' highest degree	(15%)
Student-faculty ratio	(5%)
Percent of faculty full-time	(5%)

The following table shows Drake's scores along with those of the other top five Midwest Master's schools.

2005 Faculty Resource Rankings- Top Midwest Master's Universities

University	% of classes under 20	% of classes 50 or more	Student/Fac. ratio	% Full-Time Faculty	Faculty Resource Rank
Creighton	46	6	14/1	88	75
Valparaiso	50	3	13/1	86	10
Xavier	50	1	13/1	73	6
Drake	41	10	14/1	85	33
John Carroll	44	.2	13/1	81	14

Drake's percent full-time faculty members and student to faculty ratio are within the range of scores for the other top institutions. Drake has somewhat less favorable scores for proportion of classes with fewer than 20 students and classes with 50 or more. The overall Faculty Resources rank reflects the somewhat mixed positioning among the five schools. Creighton has a very poor Faculty Resources rank (interestingly they dropped from a rank of 8 in 2004 to 75 in 2005). Drake on the other hand improved from a 2004 ranking of 59 to a rank of 33 in 2005. This very likely reflects the increase in salaries.

Student Selectivity

Student selectivity accounts for 15% of an institution's composite score and is determined as follows:

SAT/ACT Test Scores	(50%)
First-year students in the top 10% of High School Class	(40%)
Acceptance rate	(10%)

2005 Student Selectivity Rankings- Top Midwest Master's Universities

University	SAT/ACT 25 th -75 th Percentiles	EFR in Top 10% H.S. Class	Acceptance Rate	Selectivity Rank
Creighton	23-28	69%	88%	3
Valparaiso	23-29	67%	82%	3
Xavier	23-29	59%	78%	8
Drake	23-28	67%	83%	3
John Carroll	21-26	54%	87%	15

Selectivity rankings are based on percent of the entering first-year students who graduated in the top 10% of their class (higher is better) and the percentage of applicants who are accepted by the university (lower is better). As shown in the preceding table, Drake's scores compare favorably to the other top Midwest schools on selectivity, and are significantly better than the 5th place school.

Financial Resources

The financial resources category accounts for 10% of the composite score and is defined as the average spending per student on instruction, research, student services, and related educational expenditures during the previous two years (2002 and 2003 fiscal years for 2005 report).

2005 Student Financial Resources Rankings- Top Midwest Master's Universities

University	Financial Resources Rank
Creighton	1
Valparaiso	8
Xavier	10
Drake	22
John Carroll	7

Drake's ranking dropped from the previous year and is significantly lower than that of the other top five institutions. In 2004 the Drake Financial Resources rank was 15.

Alumni Giving

Giving by alumni accounts for 5% of the institutional score. *U.S. News & World Report* uses alumni giving as an indirect measure of satisfaction. As shown in the following table, Drake's scores are significantly below those of the institutions that ranked higher in the 2005 Midwest rankings.

2005 Student Alumni Giving Rankings- Top Midwest Master's Universities

University	Alumni giving rank	Alumni giving rate
Creighton	10	29%
Valparaiso	24	22%
Xavier	5	31%
Drake	50	16%
John Carroll	37	19%

Summary Comments

Drake's reputation for academic quality remains strong. While we dropped to second on the peer evaluation, our rating remained a strong 4.0. The move to number 3 among the Best Values is very positive

Our scores in the Faculty Resources and Financial Resources categories continue to pose the greatest challenge to moving up further in the rankings. While the improvement in salaries and the slight improvement from 38% to 41% of our classes with fewer than 20 students improved

our resources ranking, further movement will be a challenge. The Financial Resources (spending on instruction, research, and student services) ranking will need to be examined to determine the reason for the drop in that category.

Less significant but still affecting the Drake score in an unfavorable manner are retention and graduation rates, and alumni giving. The proportion of alumni giving to the University is low although the effect is small since this counts for only five percent of the composite score.

Recent patterns at Drake may lead to higher scores. There have been improvements in retention, the six-year graduation rate, faculty salaries, and in selectivity of students admitted. In addition, aggressive steps are underway to address alumni giving.

Aspirant Institutions

Some perspective on changes that must occur if Drake is to improve its positioning on the *US News and World Report* ratings can be gained by looking at the top rated Master's Universities in each of the four regions of the US.

Number 1 Rated Master's Institutions – Peer Assessment and Graduation Rates

Region	School	Overall Rating	Peer Assessment	EFR Retention	6-yr Grad Rate
North	Villanova	100	4.2	94%	85%
South	U. of Richmond	100	4.2	91%	82%
MW	Creighton	100	4.1	86%	70%
West	Trinity	100	4.4	88%	75%
	Drake	91	4.0	82%	69%

Number 1 Rated Master's Institutions – Faculty Resources

Region	School	% classes		Stud/Fac. Ratio	% faculty Full-time	Fac. Resource Rank
		und 20	50+			
North	Villanova	43%	4%	13/1	82%	27
South	U. of Richmond	60%	1%	9/1	92%	1
MW	Creighton	46%	6%	14/1	88%	75
West	Trinity	49%	2%	10/1	91%	1
	Drake	41%	10%	14/1	85%	33

Number 1 Rated Master's Institutions – Selectivity

Region	School	SAT/ACT 25 th -75 th Percentiles	EFR in Top 10% H.S. Class	Acceptance Rate	Selectivity Rank
North	Villanova	1170- 1330	80%	53%	3
South	U. of Richmond	1240- 1390	87%	42%	1
MW	Creighton	23-28	69%	88%	3
West	Trinity	1220- 1380	81%	64%	1
	Drake	23-28	67%	83%	3

Number 1 Rated Master's Institutions – Financial Resources and Annual Giving

Region	School	Fin. Resource Rank	Alumni Giving Rank	Av. Giving
North	Villanova	13	23	25%
South	U. of Richmond	4	7	27%
MW	Creighton	1	10	29%
West	Trinity	2	4	24%
	Drake	22	50	16%

If we are to approach a number one *US News and World Report* rating, some changes must occur. Not all of the following will need to happen, but we must analyze which actions are most consistent with our mission and values and which might reasonably be accomplished:

- Improve first-year retention by 4%-6%
- Improve six-year graduation rate by 2% to 3%
- Increase percentage of classes under 20 and decrease the percent over 50
- Increase the percentage of students from the top 10% of their class and decrease the acceptance rate
- Increase resources committed to instruction
- Increase alumni giving rate

Keeping Perspective

This final point is critical. While the *US News and World Report* rankings are interesting and important in terms of public relations, they cannot be allowed to determine Drake's educational policy. *U.S. News & World Report* relies on input (resource) measures. They do not directly assess actual student learning or the quality of the student experience. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) does look at those factors. That is the measure that requires more of our attention.