

U.S. News, 2010 Edition Rankings Analysis Report

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On an annual basis *U.S. News and World Report's* America's Best Colleges issue is released in late August. Aside from the high profile the ranking system receives, review of the current release provides ample information on how Drake compares to its peers on several key variables.

This year Drake moved up to a position of tied for 3rd in the rankings of Masters' Universities-Midwest. This is the highest rank obtained since being 3rd in 2002, but it is still within an expected range of the last several years (see table 1).

Table 1: 2002-2010 Drake Rankings in *US News*

Year	Ranking
2002	3
2003	5
2004	5
2005	4
2006	4 (tied)
2007	4
2008	4 (tied)
2009	5
2010	3 (tied)

The basic components of the U.S. News rankings remain unchanged from past years. They include:

- Peer Assessment Rank: 2nd in region (25% of final rank)
- Graduation and Retention Rank: 8th in region (25% of final rank)
- Faculty Resources Rank: 24th in region (20% of final rank)
- Student Selectivity Rank: 3rd in region (15% of final rank)
- Financial Resources Rank: 31st in region (10% of final rank)
- Alumni Giving Rank: 33rd in region (5% of final rank)

Peer Assessment

This portion of the rankings remains, as a single measure, the most heavily weighted at 25% of the total rank. While it is subjective in nature, based on surveys of presidents, provosts, and deans of admissions at all institutions in our region, it does represent the prevailing sense of our reputation among this group of peers. Nationally, only 48% of those surveyed responded to the peer assessment survey, though it is unknown what the response was in our region specifically. The final peer assessment figure is an average of all responses (ranging from '1' for marginal to '5' for distinguished), minus the top two and the bottom two to mitigate rankings manipulations.

This year Drake received its highest peer assessment of the last several years. Indeed, it is the 2nd highest of our region and tied for the 4th highest among all master's universities nationally. Table 2 displays the regional comparisons. National comparisons appear in table 3. This peer assessment score is an increase from 3.9 last year, and Drake is the only institution in the Top 10 of the Midwest to have a higher peer assessment score than it had the previous year.

Table 2: U.S. News Master's Universities Peer Assessments-Midwest Region Top 10

Rank	Midwest Region	Peer Assess. Score (5.0 highest)	Peer Assess. Score Rank (2010)
1	Creighton	4.1	1
2	Butler	3.7	4
3	Drake	4.0	2
3	Xavier	3.6	6
5	Valparaiso	3.8	3
6	Bradley	3.7	4
7	John Carroll	3.6	6
8	Truman State	3.6	6
9	Hamline	3.3	9
10	Evansville	3.3	9

Table 3: U.S. News Master's Universities Peer Assessment-National Top 10

Rank in region	National	Peer Assess. Score (5.0 highest)	Peer Assess. Score Rank (2010)
1-W	Trinity (TX)	4.3	1
1-N	Villanova	4.2	2
1-M	Creighton	4.1	3
3-M	Drake	4.0	4
6-W	Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo	4.0	4
2-W	Santa Clara	3.9	6
2-S	Elon	3.9	6
4-N	James Madison	3.9	6
9-N	Rochester Inst. Of Technology	3.9	6
1-S	Rollins College	3.8	10
3-W	Gonzaga	3.8	10
5-M	Valparaiso	3.8	10
5-S	The Citadel	3.8	10

Graduation and Retention

The graduation and retention rank consists of only two factors: a 3-year average of the six-year graduation rate (80% of rank) and a 3-year average of the first- to second-year retention rate (20% of rank). Average six-year graduation rate constitutes 80% of the Graduation and Retention Rank and has the second greatest impact of any single data point on the rankings. Drake maintained its graduation rate from last year of 71%, a figure that has seen improvement over the past several years (from 66% in 2003). The other 20% of this ranking is the average

retention rate which was also unchanged from the prior year (86%). Table 4 displays the results for the top 10 institutions in our region. Drake's position relative to its peers is unchanged from the prior year. Improvement in the graduation rate is an important objective for the institution in general that will have a positive side effect of improving this ranking as it is achieved.

Table 4: Graduation and Retention rank and components

Rank		Average grad. rate	Average Reten. rate	Grad./Reten. Rank (2010)
1	Creighton	75.0%	87.0%	3
2	Butler	71.5%	87.2%	7
3	Drake	71.3%	86.2%	8
3	Xavier	78.3%	88.0%	1
5	Valparaiso	74.8%	83.8%	5
6	Bradley	75.0%	87.8%	2
7	John Carroll	76.0%	85.0%	3
8	Truman St.	68.0%	86.0%	11
9	Hamline	67.5%	81.5%	14
10	Evansville	61.5%	81.0%	21

Faculty Resources

The Faculty Resources Rank is 20% of the overall ranking and consists of measures of class size (% under 20 and % over 50), student/faculty ratio, percent of faculty that is full-time, faculty salary average (a 2-year average adjusted for cost of living), and the percent of professors with the highest degree in their field, all based on Fall 2008. US News considers these factors indicative of an institution's commitment to teaching, and research does support that smaller class sizes and greater proportion of the faculty full-time is related to a better learning environment.

Drake dropped quite substantially in this category over the past three years after peaking at 6th in 2008 (see table 5). The years of improvement are primarily attributed to efforts directed at raising faculty salaries to better match peer institutions, but the great decline in the 2010 rankings is almost certainly the result of decreased percent of courses under 20 students. The large size of the entering classes in 2007 and 2008 likely created the need to increase the size of smaller courses. Pushed to another decimal point, the student faculty ratio ranged from a high of 14.5/1 in 2006 to a low of 13.7/1 in 2009.

Table 5: Five-year History of Drake's Faculty Resources Rank

Year	% Classes under 20	% Classes over 50	Student-Faculty Ratio	% Faculty Full-time	Faculty Resource Rank
2006	47%	11%	15/1	86%	23
2007	44%	9%	14/1*	84%	15
2008	49%	9%	14/1	83%	6
2009	48%	8%	14/1	83%	10
2010	36%	9%	14/1	86%	24

Aside from the change relative to Drake's own past, in relation to its peers in the 2010 rankings, both % classes under 20 and over 50 are outside of the norm (table 6).

Table 6*: US News 2010 Faculty Resources Rank, Master's Univ. Midwest

Rank		% Classes under 20	% Classes over 50	Student- Faculty Ratio	% Faculty Full-time	Faculty Resource Rank (2010)
1	Creighton	48%	4%	11/1	88%	2
2	Butler	56%	4%	11/1	85%	9
3	Drake	36%	9%	14/1	86%	24
3	Xavier	50%	1%	12/1	75%	3
5	Valparaiso	49%	4%	12/1	87%	8
6	Bradley	50%	3%	13/1	82%	15
7	John Carroll	42%	0%	13/1	78%	22
8	Truman St.	44%	4%	16/1	98%	47
9	Hamline	59%	4%	13/1	62%	27
10	Evansville	55%	1%	13/1	91%	4

*Faculty with highest degree in field not available and faculty salary information not available.

Student Selectivity

A consistent strength for Drake is the student selectivity rank (15% of the total rank). Student selectivity is defined as SAT/ACT scores (25th and 75th percentile), % of entering students in top 25% of high school class, and the acceptance rate for new students (all with Fall 2008 entering student data). A slight change was made in this category this year as all student test scores were included in the calculation, not just the test scores of the most frequently taken test (approximately 90% of entering students have taken the ACT, the remaining 10% the SAT).

The acceptance rate had the most dramatic change of any factor for Drake. In the 2009 rankings Drake reported a 78% acceptance rate, but in 2010 that figure is 69%. With the rate of change in the admissions context in recent years, it is likely to see some variability in acceptance rates in the next couple of years for all institutions.

Table 7: US News 2010 Student Selectivity Rank, Master's Universities, Midwest

Rank		SAT/ACT 25th-75th percentile	Freshmen in top 25% of HS class	Acceptance rate ('08)	Student Selectivity Rank
1	Creighton	24-29	73%	82%	5
2	Butler	25-29	79%	72%	2
3	Drake	24-29	73%	69%	3
3	Xavier	22-28	60%	76%	13
5	Valparaiso	22-28	61%	92%	18
6	Bradley	22-27	64%	81%	7
7	John Carroll	21-26	49%	80%	39
8	Truman St.	25-31	80%	79%	1
9	Hamline	20-28	43%	80%	34
10	Evansville	1010-1230	64%	88%	11

Financial Resources

The Financial Resources rank accounts for 10% of the overall ranking and it is comprised of an average per student spending figure averaged across two fiscal years (FY2007 and FY2008). The combination of expenditure categories (instruction, research, students services and related educational expenditures) into a single per student spending average gives the Financial Resources rank the third highest impact of any single factor in the rankings. As in past years, the *U.S. News* methodology section states that “spending on sports, dorms, and hospitals doesn’t count” in this rank; however, the data used in this calculation does include athletics at some institutions if they classify these expenses within the IPEDS category of Student Services. At Drake, athletics is excluded from the Financial Resources calculation as it is classified as an Auxiliary. Most of the top 10 Master’s institutions (Midwest) do classify athletics as a Student Service¹ (see Table 8).

Table 8: US News Financial Resources Rank and Athletics Financial Classification

Rank		Financial Resources Rank	Athletics in Student Services
1	Creighton	2	No
2	Butler	8	Yes
3	Drake	31	No
3	Xavier	14	Yes
5	Valparaiso	10	Yes
6	Bradley	20	No
7	John Carroll	8	Yes
8	Truman St.	61	Yes
9	Hamline	3	Yes
10	Evansville	14	Yes

Drake’s Financial Resources rank has been relatively stable over the last five years, ranging from 26th to 31st. One interpretation of Drake’s high overall ranking in spite of this ranking being somewhat low is that the institution exhibits great efficiency in achieving high marks in retention, graduation and selectivity in the face of more limited resources than our peers. By extension, the institution has limited opportunity to reach greater efficiencies or performance without a broadened resource base.

Alumni Giving

U.S. News considers alumni giving to be an indicator of student satisfaction, thus the final 5% of the overall rank is determined by this factor. For the third consecutive year Drake reported 15% of living alumni contributing to the institution over the course of the fiscal year (2008). The impact on rank was from 38th last year to 33rd this year. There is great volatility within this category as different institutions undertake major campaigns at different times makes a change of

¹ Note: The classification of athletics in either Student Services or Auxiliaries for financial recordkeeping is an institutional decision with either practice being appropriate under Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP) and accepted by the federal government for reporting purposes.

rank of a few places in either direction not terribly meaningful; however, it is clear that Drake falls outside the top tier of institutions in this category.

Table 9: US News 2010 Alumni Giving Rank, Master's Universities, Midwest

Rank		Alumni Giving Rank	Alumni Giving Rate
1	Creighton	4	24%
2	Butler	7	23%
3	Drake	33	15%
3	Xavier	2	26%
5	Valparaiso	12	20%
6	Bradley	25	17%
7	John Carroll	33	15%
8	Truman St.	44	13%
9	Hamline	20	18%
10	Evansville	29	16%

Great Schools, Great Prices

Using both an institution's position within the rankings and the net cost to students receiving the average aid package, *US News* calculates which institutions could be considered a "a better deal" to students. Drake is consistently among the top eight in this list (table 10). The publication also included a list of three relevant factors in calculating the net cost (table 11). Compared to the rest of the top eight ranked schools, Drake has the second lowest number of students receiving grants for need, the second highest average cost, and the second lowest discount rate (all using Fall 2008 figures).

Table 10: Drake History, *Great Schools, Great Prices* Rank

Great Schools, Great Prices Ranking History	
2003	6
2004	n/a
2005	3
2006	8
2007	7
2008	5
2009	8
2010	6

Table 11: *Great Schools, Great Prices* factors, 2010

Rank		% receiving grants based on need	Average cost after grants for need	Average Discount from total cost
1	Creighton	51%	\$22,513	44%
2	Evansville	67%	\$18,433	50%
3	Valparaiso	70%	\$22,610	40%
4	John Carroll	68%	\$22,068	43%
5	Bradley	70%	\$22,450	33%
6	Drake	57%	\$23,390	36%
7	Muskingum	78%	\$16,176	44%
8	Butler	60%	\$25,417	37%

Other Unranked Listings

In addition to the sections noted above, Drake appears on a few other lists created by US News that receive much less attention. In a listing of the top fifty Master's Universities-Midwest for the number of international students, Drake has the 10th highest percent (7% of undergraduates). No institution in the Midwest region that is considered a peer has a higher number of international students.

Among the top fifty Master's Universities-Midwest for economic diversity of students (defined as the percent of students receiving Pell Grants) Drake is 18th with 17% of undergraduates receiving Pell Grants in fall 2008. Some other top 10 institutions are on this list as well: Hamline is the highest with 29%, Bradley reported 18%, Creighton is the same as Drake, Xavier indicated 15%, and Butler reported 12% of students receiving Pell Grants.

Keeping Perspective

While Drake can be proud of its improved position in the overall ranking, as well as the positive picture painted in the areas of peer assessment and student selectivity, there are many areas in which we must improve if we are to achieve our stated goal of becoming a nationally recognized university. As this report points out, Drake has failed to improve or even lost position in relation to our peers on some factors. Drake is falling behind on some elements of the Faculty Resources rank, in particular in the area of class size, an important factor in the educational experience of Drake students. Drake's lag in financial resources is also a potential barrier to addressing class size and other academic issues.