

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

US News and World Report – Best Colleges Rankings 2018 September 15, 2017

On September 12, *US News and World Report* (USNWR) released updated *Best Colleges* rankings. For the ninth consecutive year, Drake ranked 3rd in the Midwest region of regional universities (n =173). Additional lists on which Drake appeared were “Best Value Schools” (9th in region), the “A+ Schools for B Students” (unranked list), “Undergraduate Business Programs” (183rd for Top Programs), “Best Colleges for Veterans” (2nd in region), and new to us this year is being 2nd in our region on “Best Undergraduate Teaching.” It is worth noting within “Academic Programs to Look For” Drake is mentioned for First-Year Experience.

Overall Rank

Drake retains its 3rd place rank in the region (table 1). Once again Creighton and Butler hold spots 1 and 2.

Table 1: Drake Historical Rankings

2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Creighton	Creighton	Creighton	Creighton	Creighton	Creighton	Creighton	Creighton
Butler	Butler	Butler	Butler	Butler	Butler	Butler	Butler
Drake	Drake	Drake	Drake	Drake	Drake	Drake (tied)	Drake (tied)
Valpo	Valpo	Bradley	Xavier	Valpo	Valpo	Xavier	Xavier
Xavier	Xavier	Valpo	Bradley	Xavier	Xavier	Valpo	Valpo

Sub-Category Ranks

The factors that contribute to the *US News and World Report* rankings are listed in table 2, along with Drake’s rank on each factor among institutions in the Midwest region. Drake’s rankings improved in almost every subscale of the rankings, including the Graduation and Retention Rate, Faculty Resources, Student Selectivity, and Alumni Giving subscales.

Table 2: Summary of *US News* Component Rankings

Evaluative Area	Percent item Contributes to Overall Ranking	Ranking 2018	Ranking 2017	Ranking 2016	Ranking 2015	Ranking 2014	Ranking 2013
Peer Assess. of Academic Quality	22.5%	3	3	3	3	3	3
Graduation and Retention Rate	22.5%	5	10	7	5	3	6
Faculty Resources	20%	6	7	12	6	9	5
Student Selectivity	12.5%	2	3	2	2	2	3
Financial Resources	10%	7	7	9	15	22	26
Graduation Rate Performance	7.5%	N/A	N/A ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Alumni Giving	5%	29	35	33	37	37	35

US News continued with a very similar ranking methodology compared to last three years, which places less emphasis on inputs and more on outcome measures.

Drake's **Peer Assessment** was 3.9 this year, which places Drake as tied for the 7th rank among 659 master's institutions nationally. This year the peer score used two sets of results (spring 2016 and 2017) to reduce year-to-year volatility.

Drake's **Graduation/Retention** rank remains consistent. Drake's six-year graduation rate for the 2010 cohort is 78%. Table 3 provides longitudinal data on retention, predicted graduation rate, and six-year graduation rate.

¹ Calculation has a ceiling effect for institutions with a high predicted graduation rate, negating the meaning of ranking.

Table 3

US News Reporting Year	Average First-year Retention Rate	Predicted Graduation Rate	Actual Graduation Rate
2018	88%	78% (10 cohort)	78%
2017	88%	76% (09 cohort)	75%
2016	89%	76% (08 cohort)	78%
2015	86%	75% (07 cohort)	73%
2014	86%	75% (06 cohort)	74%

Drake’s **Faculty Resources** rank is 6th in our region. The Faculty Resource rank is comprised of: class size index (proportion of undergraduate classes with <20, 20-29, 30-39, and 40-49 students), faculty compensation, proportion of faculty with the highest degree in the field, student-faculty ratio, and proportion of full-time faculty.

Student Selectivity - Drake placed 2nd best on the Student Selectivity rank in the Midwest region. The Student Selectivity rank includes: SAT/ACT test scores (25th – 75th percentile = 24 – 30), first-year students in the top 25% of High School Class (69%), and acceptance rate (67%).

Financial Resources - Drake shows consistency in the rankings, remaining 7th in our region this year. The Financial Resources rank includes the 2-year average of per student spending on instruction, research, student services and related educational expenditures. Recent adjustments through Finance and Administration allow us to now include amounts expended for research.

Graduation Rate Performance – Drake performed as US News expected on its graduation rate (78%). This scale measures the difference between the six-year graduation rate for the Fall 2010 cohort and US News’ predicted graduation rate. Ranking institutions based on the magnitude of the difference between predicted and actual graduation rate is difficult, given the variable nature of the predicted rates (which range from 62% – 82% for the top ten ranked schools).

Alumni Giving Rate - Drake improved its rank by moving from 35th to 29th in the region. This subscale is based on the 2-year average of living alumni who received a bachelor’s degree and gave to Drake (12% - same as previous three years).