



Flagler College ranked fourth Best Regional College in the South

By Christen Kelley
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Flagler College came in as No. 4 in the South on the Best Regional Colleges list for 2020. Under that same category, it also ranked No. 4 in Best Undergraduate Teaching and No. 7 in Best Value Schools by U.S. News and World Report.

“It’s an honor and extremely rewarding to be recognized again this year in U.S. News’ rankings, as it is one of the most respected and widely circulated rankings of colleges and universities in the country,” Flagler President Joseph Joyner said in a statement Monday. “We’re proud that we have also made it again on to the Best Value Schools in the South, as well as the top schools for Undergraduate Teaching and Most Innovative Schools in the South lists. These all speak to the level of excellence we are trying to achieve, and the hard work exhibited by our faculty and staff.”

U.S. News and World Report ranks colleges and universities every year in different categories to give incoming students an idea of which school is the best fit for them. Flagler falls into the regional colleges category because it focuses on undergraduate education but grants fewer than half of its degrees in liberal arts.

There are more than 50 different ranking categories such as National Universities, Regional Universities, Liberal Arts Colleges and Top Public Schools.

High Point University in High Point, North Carolina, ranked first overall on the regional colleges South list, followed by Ouachita Baptist University, Maryville College and then Flagler.

The rankings are based on a variety of data and factors including graduation rates, faculty resources and expert opinion.

The largest factor in a school’s rank comes from its success at retaining and graduating students within six years. That ranking also includes graduation rates for Pell Grant recipients and first-generation students. The four-year graduation rate at Flagler is 44%, and the average freshman retention rate is 71 percent.

Schools are also ranked based on faculty resources. This includes class size, faculty salary, faculty with the highest degree in their fields, student-faculty ratio and proportion of faculty who are full time. The student-faculty ratio at Flagler College is 17:1, and the school has 55.7% of its classes with fewer than 20 students.

Of the top five Best Regional Colleges of the South, Flagler had the lowest tuition costs — \$19,500 — compared to the next lowest of \$27,900. The average annual cost is \$22,616 and 63% of full-time undergraduates receive some kind of need-based financial aid.

In 2018 and 2019, Flagler ranked No. 2 in the Best Regional Colleges of the South.