

GW Slips Down One Spot in *U.S. News* Rankings, Remains Number-One School for Financial Aid

By Amit Agarwal

The George Washington University slipped down another spot for the second year in a row in *U.S. News & World Report's* "America's Best Colleges" rankings. However, the university remained a leader in financial aid, according to the magazine. The survey ranked GW's need-based financial aid program first in the nation.

U.S. News's financial aid rankings are based on the average need-based aid packages provided by schools; GW provides an average of \$33,809 in need-based aid per student. According to Tracy Schario, director of media relations at GW, the university does not use *U.S. News's* financial aid rankings for marketing purposes.

GW's news release on the rankings was sent to a limited number of campus news outlets in late August without any mention of the need-based aid ranking. Schario stated she was not aware of the financial aid statistics at the time. This year, GW increased its total budget for financial aid by 4.7%.

One of the most expensive universities in the country, GW recently announced that it was the first school to cross the \$50,000-per-year mark for tuition, room, board, books, and other expenses. Daniel Small, director of financial aid at the university, said, "We want to make sure that we don't deter somebody from applying to GW purely because of cost." Regarding the school's financial aid provisions, he added, "I think we now have a little more of a story to tell than we did previously."

GW was ranked 54th in *U.S. News & World Report's* annual listing of the nation's top 100 undergraduate programs, sharing its ranking with Pepperdine University and the University of Maryland. The university was ranked 53rd in the magazine's 2007 rankings and 52nd in 2006 and 2005.

U.S. News & World Report's rankings are based on graduation and retention rates, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources, alumni giving, graduation rates, performance, and peer assessments obtained by sending surveys to leading academics.