



Union Grows on the National Stage

Unprecedented recognitions for
Union programs and overall quality

There are many ways to track a school's national profile, and to put too much stock in any one source probably provides an incomplete picture. But in the case of Union University, there are sources recognizing excellence in a variety of areas.

For example, *U.S. News & World Report* attempts to measure name recognition alongside academic strength and a host of other factors in its annual rankings of colleges and universities.

When the magazine's annual Best Colleges edition hit the newsstands and Internet in August, Union had retained its ranking at 20th among Master's Universities in the South and achieved a top-tier designation for a 12th consecutive year.

But it also received a recognition that had not existed prior to 2008.

Editors opened a new category. It focuses on schools that "have recently made the most promising and innovative changes in academics, faculty, students, campus, or facilities."

Union University was among only 70 schools placed on this new list of "schools to watch," and ranked fifth in the new category among Master's Universities in the South.

Union also was listed among 21 southern schools considered "A+ Options for B Students." Editors explain their definition of "B student" is someone who might not be admitted

to a handful of highly competitive schools yet would benefit from a rigorous academic experience.

"To provide top-flight academics without developing an elitist mindset has been the goal of this university for many years," says Union President David S. Dockery. "To be so recognized as an 'A+' university for a wide array of students speaks to the uniqueness of Union's identity and mission."

Another indication that Union provides access to deserving students from a variety of backgrounds is its inclusion in the annual "College Access and Opportunity Guide." Colleges and universities are chosen based on academic rigor and accessibility. Only 220 schools were selected nationally; Union was one of only four Tennessee institutions in the guide.

As the institutional investment required for providing higher education continues to escalate, a key factor in becoming accessible is cost. The annual "America's 100 Best College Buys" report is an independent evaluation of academic quality and cost.

Union is included among America's 100 Best College Buys for a fourth consecutive year. The newest findings are based on a survey of 1,453 accredited U.S. colleges and universities. ■



U.S. News & World Report
America's
Best
Colleges
2009

Community Service

For the third straight year, Union University has been named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for exemplary service efforts and service to America's communities.

This year, 635 colleges and universities were named to the honor roll, including 12 from Tennessee. Union is the only West Tennessee institution, outside of Memphis, on the list. Union is also one of only 160 institutions named to the list for three straight years, and one of only six four-year schools in Tennessee with that distinction.

Union's sixth annual "Campus and Community: A Day of Remembrance and Service" took on even greater significance in November. The day was originally conceived as an ongoing way to thank the community for its response following a tornado in 2002. Memories of the February destruction and Jackson's kindness led to a huge response in 2008: more than 800 students, faculty and staff formed 60 work teams. ■

Record Enrollment

Despite losing prime recruiting time during February and March, Union's fall enrollment of 3,770 represents a whopping 14 percent increase from the record enrollment of fall 2007; it was up 91 percent from fall 1996.

This 11th consecutive enrollment increase came just a few months after another Union record: a 2007-08 graduating class numbering 950. Replacing so large a number of students and achieving a record enrollment in a year when the campus sustained \$40 million in tornado damage surpassed the expectations of many, including President David S. Dockery.

"Seven months ago, we didn't know if Union University would still exist today," Dockery said. "And now we're celebrating our highest enrollment ever and an unprecedented growth of 14 percent in a single year." ■