

BRIEF

U.S. News removes UC Berkeley, 4 other schools from ranking



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Dive Brief:

- U.S. News & World Report unranked the University of California, Berkeley and four other schools in its 2019 edition of its popular Best Colleges list after they acknowledged to the publication they provided incorrect information.
- It moved UC Berkeley into the unranked category after the school notified U.S. News that it misreported data about its alumni donations, which account for 5% of its ranking.
- The four other schools to lose their spots due to providing incorrect data are Mars Hill University, Johnson & Wales University, Scripps College and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

Dive Insight:

All five schools notified U.S. News that they had supplied the publication with incorrect information to calculate their 2019 Best Colleges rankings. For the next three years, the publication will require top leaders at UC Berkeley and Johnson & Wales to write letters certifying the information they provide is correct, according to letters sent to the schools and posted on its website.

Other schools have come under fire for submitting false data. In May, U.S. News announced that the University of Oklahoma had inflated its alumni giving rate for the past 20 years.

And last year, Temple University announced that its business school reported incorrect information in the hopes of boosting its ranking. The college ousted the school's dean over the scandal and agreed to pay \$5.5 million to settle a class-action lawsuit with students.

Even so, U.S. News said in the announcement that "misreporting is rare." Although the publication "relies on schools to accurately report their data," it compares submitted information to federal government data and flags "year-over-year discrepancies," it added.

Many colleges vie for top spots on the annual rankings. However, some higher education leaders contend they don't accurately capture the quality of an institution. Still, research shows the list has considerable influence over where students want to go to college.

The publication has changed the ranking in response to mounting criticism. For instance, the 2019 rankings were the first to factor in social mobility for low-income students and to drop acceptance rate information.

Some, however, say the publication didn't go far enough. Last year, six Senate Democrats suggested it continue to alter its methodology.

"We join others in questioning whether the changes represent a true embrace of social mobility, as your ranking system still fails to consider the extent to which colleges enroll historically underrepresented students," they wrote in a letter.

<https://www.educationdive.com/news/us-news-removes-uc-berkeley-4-other-schools-from-ranking/559745/>