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GCSU having one heckuva year

Christian McKearney
The Baldwin Bulletin

Tuesday was the most anticipated day of the year for colleges and universities across the country, as *U.S. News & World Report* released its annual Best Colleges list.

Basically, Georgia College & State University made the dean's list. Out of approximately five dozen "public regional college and universities" in the South, GCSU came in at No. 4, trailing only Christopher Newport University in Virginia, Appalachian State in North Carolina and College of Charleston in

South Carolina.

"A 'regional' university, according to *U.S. News & World Report*, is one that offers a full range of undergraduate programs and some master's programs but few doctoral programs," according

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GCSU

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to a GCSU press release. "*U.S. News & World Report*'s ranking methodology is based on student-success metrics, including graduation rates, graduate indebtedness and post-graduate earnings."

Here are some other categories and where GCSU ranked:

- Best Value for In-State Students in Georgia – No. 1
- Best Value Public Schools in Georgia – No. 1
- Best Undergraduate Teaching, Regional South – No. 2
- Most Innovative Schools, Regional South – No. 7

Also, among the 17 regional colleges and universities in the Peach State, GCSU ranked first in Business, Psychology, Nursing and Computer Science.

All of this comes on the heels of a record-breaking freshman class, which began classes last month. The average ACT score for this year's incoming freshmen was 25, while the average SAT score was 1178. The Class of 2030's average high school GPA, meanwhile, was 3.8. GCSU is one of the three "most qualified"



GEORGIA COLLEGE

GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

colleges and universities in the 25-member University System of Georgia, trailing only Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia, according to Amanda Respass, GCSU's director of news & media relations.

"We remain one of the state's three 'selective' institutions, along with Georgia Tech and UGA. The top three schools set more rigorous admissions criteria, and they rank number 1, 2 and 3 for the most academically qualified students, in terms of their entering GPAs and test scores," she said.

Also, more than 10,000 students applied to GCSU during the most recent recruiting cycle for the first time. Two events set GCSU up to become a "smart college."

First was the HOPE Scholarship in 1993, which made the parents of high-achieving high schoolers in Georgia think twice before sending their kids off to out-of-state colleges. Then came the big one, when the Board of Regents officially named GCSU as "Georgia's designated public liberal arts institution." This meant more resources and more backing from the Board of Regents. That was in 1996, the same year "& State University" was added after "Georgia College."

The new designation allowed GCSU to hire more talented faculty and lower its class sizes. Thirty years later, the 17:1 class size ratio is perhaps the university's biggest calling card.