

EDUCATION

These Georgia schools ace U.S. News college rankings

Several Georgia universities top closely watched rankings in various categories.



Georgia Tech cheerleaders walk down Yellow Jacket Alley prior to an NCAA college football game between Georgia Tech and Colorado at Bobby Dodd Stadium, Thursday, Sept. 3, 2026, in Atlanta. Georgia Tech was first among the state's public universities in U.S. News & World Report's college rankings released on Tuesday. (Jason Getz/AJC)

By Jason Armesto

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Gift

Universities across Georgia almost certainly had Tuesday circled on their annual calendar, as they eagerly awaited — or perhaps dreaded — the annual release of the U.S. News Best Colleges [rankings](#).

Just how useful the rankings are in determining the quality of a college is up for debate. Some question the U.S. News' methodology and argue colleges can game the system to increase their metrics and obtain a higher ranking.

Regardless, schools, students and parents still value the list. Highly rated universities often tout their accomplishment in press releases and marketing materials. With an expected "enrollment cliff" spurred by declining birthrates, it can help them compete with other schools for a decreasing number of college-age students.

Many of those students, as well as their parents, often consult the rankings when choosing between schools.

While the annual overall rankings get the most attention, U.S. News does a myriad of rankings and categories. Here are five takeaways from where Georgia's schools fell on the variety of lists.

Georgia's top three

Yet again, Emory University (No. 23), Georgia Tech (No. 29) and the University of Georgia (No. 52) are the top-rated Georgia schools on the overall list. The first two crept up the list slightly compared to last year, while UGA fell six spots.

Emory tied with Georgetown University, while GT tied with the University of California San Diego. UGA is in a three-way tie with Virginia Tech and William & Mary.

The top-ranked school in the country was the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, surpassing Princeton University.

Spelman reigns again



People walk past a sign that says "Welcome to Spelman" on move-in day at Spelman College in Atlanta on Aug. 12, 2026. (Arvin Temkar/AJC)

For the 20th consecutive year, Spelman College remains the top-ranked historically Black college in the nation.

Its neighbor, the all-men's Morehouse College, sits at No. 4, while the nearby Clark Atlanta University tied for No. 17.

Georgia's public HBCUs were further down the list: Fort Valley State University tied for No. 29, Albany State University ranked No. 40, followed by Savannah State University at No. 48.

The liberal arts

In addition to being the top HBCU, Spelman tied for No. 34 among national liberal arts colleges.

Another all-women's private school, Agnes Scott College in Decatur, tied for 62nd on the list. But it was also named the most innovative national liberal arts college for the ninth straight year.

Morehouse tied for 83rd in the national liberal arts colleges category.

Good value

Among national universities, Emory ranked 19th on the list of Best Value Schools. Mercer University came in at No. 37 while Georgia Tech moved up 69 spots to rank No. 39.

Berry College was named the best value school among regional universities in the South. It also won the top spot in the region for undergraduate teaching programs, while Georgia College & State University was one spot behind in the undergraduate teaching category. GCSU ranked No. 21 in best value for in-state students among regional universities in the South.

For best value among regional colleges in the South, University of Toccoa Falls was ranked No. 13, with Truett McConnell University just behind it at No. 14.

Ranked in region

Among regional universities in the South, Berry tied for second, the Savannah College of Art and Design tied for fifth, GCSU tied for 14th, and the University of North Georgia tied for 48th.

For regional colleges in the South, Wesleyan tied for fifth, followed by Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College tied at 42nd, Truett McConnell tied for 43rd, with Point University and University of Toccoa Falls tied for 46th.