University of Chicago, Northwestern among top 15 in nation: U.S. News

By Lorene Yu
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(Crain's) — University of Chicago climbed a notch to fourth place while Northwestern University remained at No. 12 in U.S. News & World Report's 2013 ranking of national universities.

The two schools were the only ones in the state to land in the top 20 of the magazine's list of best colleges, which was published today on its website and will be included in the print issue that hits newsstands next week.

Harvard and Princeton universities again tied for first place. University of Chicago was tied with Columbia University.

Click here to jump to the list of how some Midwest schools performed in the 2013 rankings.

Both Northwestern and University of Chicago landed on the list of best picks among high school counselors. They were tied at No. 17 with Rice University, California Institute of Technology and University of California, Berkeley.

Loyola University Chicago saw the largest improvement among Chicago-area schools, rising 13 places to No. 106.

The magazine bases its rankings on a several factors including the school's undergraduate reputation, graduation and retention rate, faculty resources, student selectivity and alumni giving.

U.S. News & World Report also ranks schools based on best value, undergraduate engineering programs and undergraduate business programs. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign was the only Illinois school to land on the list of best undergraduate business programs.


4. University of Chicago (No. 5)
12. Northwestern University (No. 12)
17. University of Notre Dame (No. 19)
29. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (No. 28)
How Chicago-area schools rate in terms of value, which the magazine determines based on the school's ranking and the total cost for a student who receives an average amount of need-based financial aid.

11. University of Chicago

23. Northwestern University

35. Illinois Institute of Technology

49. Loyola University Chicago

The following is a list of how Illinois schools where the highest engineering degree is a doctorate performed against peers.

5. University of Illinois

13. Northwestern University

64. Illinois Institute of Technology and University of Illinois at Chicago

While U.S. News and World Report is considered one of the authorities on college rankings, it's not the only one in the game. On Monday, the Alumni Factor of Atlanta released its inaugural college rankings based on surveys and interviews of 42,000 alumni of 450 colleges. Washington & Lee University in Virginia took the top spot based on the Alumni Factor's algorithm.
Here's how Chicago-area schools played out on that list:

83. Northwestern University

86. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

114. University of Chicago

168. Loyola University Chicago

177. DePaul University

Parchment.com last week released its college rankings, the second year it has compiled such a list. The Scottsdale, Ariz.-based company's main business is serving as electronic middleman between students at 7,500 high schools and the colleges where they send transcripts. But through a college search function, the site has collected valuable and otherwise hard-to-come-by data: It knows the names of the colleges where 200,000 students nationwide applied, got accepted, and chose to attend.

Parchment.com's rankings are based on which school a student enrolls in when accepted at multiple institutions. If, for example, 75 out of 100 students accepted to both Yale University and the University of Virginia choose Yale, then Yale moves up relative to Virginia in the model.