

Rankings Taskforce Report Fall 2022

In recent years the U.S. News and World report implemented a new methodology in its rankings of national universities¹. Under it, Andrews University remains the only Adventist national university, but our position significantly fell. In prior years, we consistently ranked in the 150-200 range (around 50th percentile). Beginning in 2020, our ranking fell to the bottom 25% of national universities. As such, in 2021 our rank was not published and we were listed along with the other universities in the bottom quartile as #299-391. Consequently, we were also no longer included in the public rankings for *Campus Ethnic Diversity* and *Most International Students* despite having been consistently in the top ten of these lists. This lack of published rankings in these areas directly challenged our branding as a diverse, global campus and presented the larger risk of threatening our national university status.

In Spring 2022 the Faculty Senate formed a taskforce to study the matter of national rankings. The 2022 U.S. News and World Report rankings, publicly released on Sept. 12, returns Andrews University to having a published rank among national universities, ranking 299th of 430 national universities (32nd percentile). We also tied for the nation's #1 most diverse campus. However, even with this #299 ranking (nearly 20 national universities were tied for #299 rankings), expected and ongoing annual fluctuations in the number of universities classified as a national university and in our metrics risks us again falling into the bottom quartile. Being classified as the only Adventist national university is both an honor and presents a challenge as the national rankings compare us against larger, better endowed, more prestigious and better known universities rather than those we often regard as our peer institutions.

Although the U.S. News and World Report is the best known university rankings report, we also looked at other rankings such as that of the Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education and [Niche.com](#). Niche's 2022 rankings presented a particularly favorable picture, ranking Andrews as the top private, Christian, and small college in Michigan. They also ranked us the 11th top Christian university in America, the only Adventist University to be ranked in the top 100 Christian universities, and ranked us highly in several other categories (#2 most diverse colleges, top 10% for best college food, etc.). We also ranked in the top 15% of all colleges overall (1,555 ranked) and private universities (954 ranked). Additionally, the National Science Foundation's Survey of Earned Doctorates found Andrews to be in the [top 100 universities](#) for the highest percentage of undergraduates to go on to earn a doctorate in Education (#18) and the Arts & Humanities (#77), which includes theology, testifying to our unique contribution to the global church, Adventist education, and society more broadly.

We recognize the danger of chasing rankings at the cost of losing sight of our distinctive mission, but we believe that many of the metrics that contribute to rankings can and do serve as valuable and relevant benchmarks for our institutional values and commitments.

In particular, the taskforce identified five key metrics for growth that contribute to national rankings² and are important to our mission as well as securing and advancing our status as a ranked national university. These metrics include: 6-Year Graduation Rate, Faculty Compensation, Reputation, Faculty Publications, and Alumni Giving Rate. There are a number of other metrics not included where Andrews has consistently done well, such as a high first year retention rate (85%) and a low student-faculty ratio (9:1).

This report was prepared by the national rankings taskforce to be presented to the faculty senate. The taskforce's membership comprised: Jochebed Ade-Oshifogun, Anthony Bosman (Chair), Gary Burdick, Jerry Chi, Gustavo Gregorutti, and Bourbakar Sanou.

We would like to express appreciation to the Provost Christon Arthur and several others, including Stephen Payne, Amy Rosenthal, Darcy de Leon, and Donald Bedney, for many helpful conversations and generous feedback.

¹ National universities offer a range of undergraduate majors, plus master's and doctoral programs, and emphasize faculty research or award professional practice doctorates. By way of contrast, our peer Adventist universities are generally classified as regional universities which offer a broad scope of undergraduate degrees and some master's degree programs but few, if any, doctoral programs.

² see [U.S. News and World Report metrics and weighting](#)

6 Year Graduation Rate

Determines **17.6%** of U.S. News and World Report ranking.

Overview:

- This is the percentage of entering first-year students who graduated within a six-year period. This excludes students who graduated from another university.
- Recent changes that should improve graduation rates in upcoming years include a reduction in the General Education requirements and the implementation of Freshman *Explore Andrews* program that should reduce the number of major changes made by students in their later years of college.

Recommendation:

- Comprehensive assessment of program requirements.
- Review academic policies to support students graduating on time.

Faculty Compensation

Determines **7%** of U.S. News and World Report ranking.

Overview:

- Research shows there is a link between academic outcomes and compensation of faculty. In the rankings, the average faculty pay is adjusted for regional differences in cost of living. Benefits are not included.
- Andrews ranks at the bottom of national universities for faculty compensation, placing 386 of 389 national universities (bottom 1st percentile) in the 2020 US News and World Report ranking.
- We currently report a 12-month salary whereas many institutions report a 9-month salary. It seems US News adjusts our 12-month salary into 9-month (25% decrease) for comparison, helping to explain our extremely low ranking. Nevertheless, even when our (unadjusted) 12-month salary is directly compared to 9-month salaries, we fail to measure up to similar, regional institutions.

	Average Salaries at Similar, Mission-driven Universities (Univstats, 2021)			
	Andrews (12 month)	Calvin (9 month)	Hope (9 month)	Wheaton (9 month)
Professor	\$69,943	\$85,011	\$94,700	\$102,101
Associate	\$62,886	\$72,643	\$73,977	\$89,859
Assistant	\$53,620	\$67,004	\$60,171	\$68,464

- Faculty compensation plays a small direct role in national rankings (7% of US News and World Report ranking), but low compensation also significantly hampers our ability to attract and retain talented faculty, contributing to other factors such as faculty publications and institutional reputation.
- The average national percentage change in faculty salaries over the last 5 years has been a 2.1% annual increase ([AAUP data](#)), whereas our wages have remained flat. This compounds the disparity between ourselves and similar institutions.

	Religiously Affiliated Universities		
	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral
Professor	\$90,546	\$105,623	\$169,971
Associate	\$73,418	\$83,593	\$110,746
Assistant	\$65,600	\$72,766	\$98,069

	Private-independent Affiliated Universities		
	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctoral
Professor	\$126,336	\$117,082	\$210,260
Associate	\$93,348	\$90,395	\$126,701
Assistant	\$78,321	\$77,451	\$112,375

- The 2022-25 strategic plan includes a \$3 million investment into faculty/staff pay over the three year period in addition to annual budgeted increases, raising overall wages by 5% including benefits (individual increase will vary based on position, rank, and discipline).
- Ellen White forcefully noted the impact of low wages on institutional mission: “If our institutions would be as prosperous as God designs they shall be, there must be more thoughtfulness and earnest prayer, mingled with unabating zeal and spiritual ardor. To connect the right class of laborers with the work may require a greater outlay of means, but it will be economy in the end; for while it is essential that economy be exercised in everything possible, it will be found that the efforts to save means by employing those who will work for low wages, and whose labor corresponds in character with their wages, will result in loss. The work will be retarded and the cause belittled. Brethren, you may economize as much as you please in your personal affairs, in building your houses, in arranging your clothing, in providing your food, and in your general expenses; but do not bring this economy to bear upon the work of God in such a way as to hinder men of ability and true moral worth from engaging in it.” [Testimonies, vol. 5 p.551]

Recommendation:

- Restructure faculty pay (target: 50th percentile, CUPA) and include annual cost of living adjustments.
- Immediately achieve minimum base pay of at least \$50,000 for all assistant professors to help recruit and retain quality faculty. (Currently below \$45K.)
- Study college/disciplinary salary differences, their rationale and scale. Also, study differing disciplinary practices/expectations related to outside employment and how these may contribute to unequitable service loads.

Alumni Giving Rate

Determines 3% of U.S. News and World Report ranking.

Overview:

- This is the unweighted mean percentage of undergraduate alumni of record who donated money to the university. The percentage of alumni giving serves as a proxy for how satisfied students are with the school.
- U.S. News and World Report records our alumni giving rate at 0.2% (1 in 500 alumni), one of only three national universities to have a rate below 1%. A conversation with the VP for Advancement suggests this data may be inaccurate; he is looking into the correct figure. The national average is 8%.
- We also [rank last](#) in a list of 500 universities for the size of our endowment, though this seems to rely on outdated data (our current endowment is closer to \$70 million) and doesn't account for the significant role of church support.

Recommendations:

- Assess data to make sure accurate figures are being reported.
- Focus on alumni small gift giving to increase our participation rate, cultivate a habit of giving, and maintain an on-going relationship between the university and alumni.
- The upcoming sesquicentennial serves as an opportunity for a campaign to invite alumni to give gifts of \$15, \$150, etc. Regularly challenge recent graduates to contribute \$20.22, \$20.21, etc. Have alumni class representatives lead fundraising efforts, encouraging classmates to hit various goals (eg. 100 small gifts towards a project). Celebrate division/school with the highest giving rate among new alumni. And so forth.

Reputation

Peer Assessment Survey determines 20% of U.S. News and World Report ranking. Times Higher Education survey determines 10% of WSJ/THE.

Overview:

- A school's peer assessment score is determined by surveying presidents, provosts and deans of admissions, or officials in equivalent positions, at institutions in the school's ranking category. As Andrews is classified as a national university (rather than a regional institution), administrators at other national universities are surveyed.
- Andrews fails to be recognized among peer national universities.
 - We score 0 on the *Times Higher Education Reputation Survey* (10% of WSJ/THE ranking).
 - We score 1.9 of 5 (2020) on the peer assessment score (20% of U.S. News and World Report ranking).
- We found the following best practices for improving reputation:
 - Investment in research: Setting ambitious goals to carry out projects to advance a particular field and contribute to society. Many institutions have developed unique research agendas to be a referent in academia and the community. An initial question to explore may be: What is missing or needs a contribution to which Andrews University can commit efforts and resources? The focus should be on the originality and uniqueness of the contribution, whether it be for the sciences or/and communities.
 - Students: Listening to what students say about the services and opportunities they are engaged in is an essential factor in the indirect advertisement. Internal quality surveys and focus groups can provide the needed information to improve.
 - Branding the university: What is happening at Andrews University that is different from other institutions? This is also relevant in the context of Adventist education. Looking for ways to make this visible and known by others is highly desirable to gain prestige and visibility.
 - Community engagement: Institutions that connect through specific programs to enhance their local, national, or international communities gain a reputation as a relevant organization that changes the world. Andrews would need to answer the following question: How can the institution integrate its rich spiritual inheritance into engagement? Blending and advancing an active community agenda can provide visibility to the university.
- In their August 2019 [report](#), the Liberal Arts Council identified five integrated strengths of Andrews' undergraduate education: diversity/globality, world-recognized scholars/research, undergraduate research leading to peer-reviewed publication and presentation, general education taught by renowned scholars/mentors, and integration of Adventist faith with scholarship/teaching. Additionally, our graduate programs (physical therapy, seminary, etc.), 3+2 programs, and dual degrees distinguish us among peer undergraduate-focused universities.

Recommendation:

- For the Provost's office to engage marketing & enrollment management, the Office of Research & Creative Scholarship, and other relevant offices/individuals to further strategize how we can raise awareness of the distinctive strengths of Andrews University's undergraduate education among administrators at national universities.

Faculty Publications

Determines 8% of Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education ranking.

Overview:

- Citations per faculty: The academic and commercial ranking committees all measure university research quality with a citation per faculty metric, taking the total number of academic citations in papers produced by a university in a five-year period.
- Elsevier's Scopus® Database is the official database of academics from which the ranking committee collects the research publication information for each university. It is not based on self-report surveys by each university. SCI, SCIE and SSCI are three academic journal indexes collected in Elsevier's Scopus Database. SCIE is the expanded form of SCI which also includes some social sciences journals, while SSCI deals with social sciences journals.
- We currently use Clarivate's Web of Science™ as our primary science index at the James White Library. However, Scopus indexes more journals that AU faculty publish in.

Recommendations:

- The James White Library should consider switching from Clarivate's Web of Science™ to [Elsevier's Scopus® Database](#) for its primary science and social science journal index.
- Use Scopus® indexed research papers for the faculty ranking and promotion criteria (along with recognized Adventist journals). The Office of Research should consider only paying publication charges for Scopus® indexed journals.
- Provide additional research resources for faculty, such as professional editing, increased grant writing services and Sabbaticals for research endeavors, and funding for research assistants or methodologists.
- Provide more research classes for undergraduate and graduate students. Note the College of Professions just started a business research class with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and 16 models of research methodology.
- Study compensation of faculty for research productivity recognizing our higher research expectations for advancement compared to peer Adventist Universities. Eg. Supplementary salary for summer (or other non-teaching semester) research.

U.S. News Overall Score

Ranked #299 of 443 National Universities. (See [methodology](#).)

Score (out of 100) **43**

Outcomes (40%)

Outcomes rank **259**

Graduation and retention rank **217**

Average 6-year graduation rate (17.6%) **62%**

Average first-year student retention rate (4.4%) **85%**

Social Mobility Rank **242**

6-year graduation rate of students who received a Pell Grant (2.5%) **55%**

6-year graduation rate of students who did not receive a Pell Grant (2.5%) **76%**

Predicted graduation rate (8%) **66%**

Overperformance(+)/Underperformance(-) **3**

Graduate indebtedness rank **328**

Graduating students who borrowed (federal loans, 2021) (2%) **63%**

Average federal indebtedness of 2021 graduating class (3%) **\$25,819**

Expert Opinion (20%)

Peer assessment score (out of 5) **1.9**

Faculty Resources (20%)

Faculty resources rank **247**

Faculty compensation rank (7%) **433**

Percent of faculty who are full-time (1%) **81.2%**

Full-time and part-time faculty with terminal degree **61%**

Class Size Index (8%)

Classes with fewer than 20 students **72.3%**

Classes with 50 or more students **2%**

Student-faculty ratio (1%) **9:1**

Financial Resources (10%)

Financial resources rank **219**

Student Excellence (7%)

Student excellence rank **177**

SAT/ACT 25th-75th percentile (5%) **1050-1300**

First-year students in top 10% of high school class (2%) **22%**

Alumni Giving (3%)

Alumni giving rank **438**

Average alumni giving rate **0.2%**