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Consumers Digest ranks University of Minnesota, Morris in top five in nation in college value

Summary: Consumers Digest, designed to inform and educate readers, performed the analysis to help families make informed higher education decisions.

(May 16, 2011)—Consumers Digest has ranked 100 colleges and universities as “top values” out of more than 2,000 United States institutions that offer four-year degrees. The rankings are based on attributes that validate or define the institutions’ academic prowess factored against annual cost of tuition, fees, and room and board. Among 50 public institutions cited, the University of Minnesota, Morris scored second in the nation. Truman State University, Kirksville, Missouri, ranked number one. Among 25 private institutions, Yale University took top honors.

The rankings, published in Consumers Digest's June 2011 issue, were derived from a formula that blended the academic excellence of first-time freshmen at a school (standardized test scores, high-school rank, grade-point average) with the institution’s educational quality (4- and 6-year graduation rate, student-retention rate, percentage of faculty holding doctorates). That “value index” score was factored with the cost of attending each school to determine which schools offered the most academic value per dollar.

“Expert opinions and solid recommendations are two of our strengths,” says Randy Weber, publisher of Consumers Digest. “And we applied well-developed standards and thorough analysis to this examination of our country’s higher-learning institutions to help parents and students find schools that will meet families’ performance and financial requirements.”

Consumers Digest first whittled down the list of schools based on a minimum level of academic performance by students that institutions accepted. For public schools, Consumers Digest considered only nonresident tuition figures. Military institutions and extremely specialized colleges were excluded. Financial aid wasn’t factored in because of inconsistencies in the way colleges distribute aid.

The average annual cost of attendance at Consumers Digest's top schools was $47,156 at private colleges/universities and $26,344 at public colleges/universities. The University of Minnesota, Morris’ cost of attendance is $18,582 for both in-state and out-state students.

“Our analysis is designed to help families make an informed decision that puts their hard-earned money to the best use,” Weber says.

Editor Rich Dzierwa points out that his publication decided to exclude schools’ acceptance rates from the data used to rate performance. “Acceptance rate, which also is known as selectivity, can be dramatically manipulated by colleges and universities,” Dzierwa says.

The top five in values public colleges and universities in order are Truman State University in Missouri, the University of Minnesota, Morris, State University of New York at Geneseo, Appalachian State University in North Carolina, and...
California Polytechnic State University. The top five in values private colleges and universities in order are Yale University in Connecticut, Princeton University in New Jersey, Rice University in Texas, and Harvard University in Massachusetts, and the University of Pennsylvania. The top five private liberal arts colleges and universities in order are Grove City College in Pennsylvania, Williams College in Massachusetts, Pomona College in California, Amherst College in Massachusetts, and Claremont McKenna in California.

Consumers Digest is designed to inform and educate readers so they can buy with confidence. It is committed to providing practical advice, factual evaluations and specific recommendations that lead consumers to exceptional values in today's complex marketplace.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.