UVa back atop magazine's ranking

BY KATE ANDREWS
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The University of Virginia tied for No. 1 in U.S. News & World Report's latest list of top public universities, school officials announced Thursday.

UVa tied with the University of California-Berkeley for first in the public college rankings, as well as for No. 21 on the list of best national universities, up two places from last year. Only one other public school — University of Michigan — was named to the latter roster.

"I don't think the competition in higher education for top-notch students and top-notch faculty has ever been tougher," UVa spokeswoman Carol Wood said. "The university's success in the rankings is due, in large measure, to strong philanthropic alumni support and the hard work of every member of the university community."

The 2004 edition of "America's Best Colleges" marks an upward swing for UVa, which was ranked the No. 2 public university for the past two years.

Other Virginia schools receiving high marks in the list of public universities included the College of William & Mary, at No. 6, and Virginia Tech, at No. 32.

Duke University was ranked fifth in the list of best national universities, which was topped by the tied Harvard and Princeton universities.

"I am particularly pleased that in the midst of an extraordinary state budget crisis, the University of Virginia has managed not only to hold its own but also to continue to be ranked at the top," UVa President John T. Casteen III said in a written statement.

The colleges were judged on a variety of categories: peer assessment, freshman retention rates, faculty resources, student selectivity, average spending per student, graduation rates and alumni giving.

UVa also ranked high in other categories. The McIntire School of Commerce tied for seventh place in undergraduate business programs with Carnegie Mellon University and the University of North Carolina — a slip from last year's fifth-place ranking. McIntire also tied with Indiana University at No. 4 for best management programs.

In the list of best values among national universities, UVa ranked No. 13.

UVa's engineering school tied with 10 other schools at No. 38 in the list of best undergraduate engineering programs, after placing 37th last year. The university also was ranked in the outstanding first-year experience category.

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