

Keep an Eye on These Schools

These colleges and universities may not be at the top of the rankings (yet), but they're leading the pack in improvements and innovative changes

College rankings tend not to vary much from one year to the next. In many ways, there's virtue in such consistency. But how to identify colleges and universities that have recently made striking improvements or innovations—schools everyone should be watching?

This spring, for the second year in a row, *U.S. News* asked the experts who respond to its annual peer assessment survey to identify schools that fit this profile. The 77 colleges and universities that received the most nominations range from household names such as Arizona State University to Wagner College, a 2,000-student private college on Staten Island, and Claflin University, a historically black school in Orangeburg, S.C.

For prospective applicants, we believe the schools on this list offer the reassurance that whatever their historical reputation (or lack of it), they're firmly focused on improving the job they're doing today—at least in the judgment of their peers.

As happened last year, two midsize schools, Elon Univer-



Focused on the work at hand: UNC–Asheville

sity in North Carolina and Belmont University in Tennessee, were cited most often by their peers. Both appear regularly in one of our most useful resources for college applicants, our list of A-plus schools for B students (story, Page 12). In all, 39 of the 77 up-and-coming schools are on this year's A-plus list. In addition, many of the colleges and universities in this list appear on the opposite page in our new list of schools with a strong commitment to undergraduate teaching. ●

Top Up-and-Coming Schools

These 77 colleges and universities were singled out as schools that have recently made the most promising and innovative changes in academics, faculty, students, campus, or facilities. They are ranked against other schools within their categories in our rankings (Pages 88–119).

National Universities

1. Univ. of Md.-Baltimore County*
2. George Mason University (VA)*
2. Northeastern University (MA)
4. Drexel University (PA)
5. Arizona State University*
5. University of Central Florida*
7. Ind. U.-Purdue-Indianapolis*
8. University of Denver (CO)
8. Univ. of Southern California
8. University of Vermont*
11. Clemson University (SC)*
11. Emory University (GA)
11. Rice University (TX)
11. University of S.C.-Columbia*
15. N.C. State University-Raleigh*
15. Ohio State U.-Columbus*
15. Univ. of California-San Diego*
15. University of Cincinnati (OH)*
15. University of North Texas*

Liberal Arts Colleges

1. Hendrix College (AR)
2. Agnes Scott College (GA)
2. Davidson College (NC)
2. Furman University (SC)
5. Calvin College (MI)
5. Dickinson College (PA)
5. University of Richmond (VA)
5. Ursinus College (PA)
9. Allegheny College (PA)
9. College of St. Benedict (MN)
9. Reed College (OR)
9. Stonehill College (MA)
9. University of N.C.-Asheville*

Universities-Master's

NORTH

1. Wagner College (NY)
2. Arcadia University (PA)
2. Quinnipiac University (CT)
4. Loyola College in Maryland
4. University of Scranton (PA)
6. Marist College (NY)
7. College of New Jersey*
7. Gannon University (PA)
7. SUNY-Oswego*

SOUTH

1. Elon University (NC)
2. Belmont University (TN)
3. Appalachian State U. (NC)*
4. Union University (TN)
5. James Madison U. (VA)*
6. Bellarmine University (KY)
6. Ga. College and State U.*
8. Kennesaw State U. (GA)*
8. Lee University (TN)
8. Radford University (VA)*
8. Rollins College (FL)
8. University of Tampa (FL)
13. Lipscomb University (TN)
13. Shenandoah University (VA)
13. Univ. of N.C.-Wilmington*
13. Winthrop University (SC)*

MIDWEST

1. Grand Valley State U. (MI)*
2. Xavier University (OH)
3. Butler University (IN)
4. Truman State University (MO)*
5. Alverno College (WI)
5. Creighton University (NE)
5. S. Ill. University-Edwardsville *

WEST

1. Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo*
1. Santa Clara University (CA)
3. Boise State University (ID)*
3. Chapman University (CA)
5. St. Edward's University (TX)

Baccalaureate Colleges

NORTH

1. Champlain College (VT)
2. Stevenson University (MD)

SOUTH

1. High Point University (NC)
2. Anderson University (SC)
2. Claflin University (SC)
4. Campbellsville University (KY)

MIDWEST

1. Adrian College (MI)
2. Morningside College (IA)

*Public