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Illinois Wesleyan Rises in Ranks for Fostering Social Mobility

Sept. 19, 2023

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Several national ranking systems show that Illinois Wesleyan University is rising through the charts regarding its commitment to provide greater access to education, and improve social mobility for Titan graduates.

The New York Times Magazine recently published the [College-Access Index](#), a list of the country's 286 most selective public and private universities ranked in order of economic diversity. Rankings were determined by the number of students at each institution receiving Federal Pell Grants, which are awarded to undergraduate students with significant financial need.

Illinois Wesleyan ranked among the top quarter of institutions for economic diversity, with about 26% of first-year, first-time students who received Pell Grants. While most of the colleges on the list saw a drop in the share of Pell Grants received by students, Illinois Wesleyan's rates rose 6% since 2011, ranking above the most wealthy Ivy League institutions such as Princeton, Dartmouth, Yale, MIT and Harvard.

Additionally, Illinois Wesleyan has been ranked #5 among four-year institutions in the nation by Washington Monthly for contribution to public good through social mobility, research and promoting public service. U.S. News & World Report also placed Illinois Wesleyan at #5 for top performers on social mobility among colleges in the midwest.

Social mobility refers to the ability of individuals to move up the socio-economic ladder as a result of their educational experiences or achievements. Measures for social mobility include schools' success at enrolling, retaining and graduating students from different backgrounds with manageable debt and post-graduate success — reflecting that Illinois Wesleyan students graduate and do well.

"These distinctions serve as a tangible statement of our commitment to equity and inclusion, affirming our belief that education is not just about knowledge, but also about empowerment and transformation," said President S. Georgia Nugent. "Fostering a diverse campus that reflects our society means admitting and educating students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. It is exciting to see the effects an Illinois Wesleyan education has on students, especially as Titans contribute to the public good beyond graduation."

Beyond traditional academics, Illinois Wesleyan continues to foster advancement in social mobility through various financial aid and [scholarships](#), by strengthening diversity and inclusion efforts, expanding [transfer agreements](#) and by providing guidance and resources through offices such as the [Hart Career Center](#).

Illinois Wesleyan University continues to be recognized among the nation's best colleges for liberal arts learning and pre-professional career preparation. Additional 2024 rankings include:

U.S. News & World Report

In the Midwest Region, U.S. News & World Report ranked Illinois Wesleyan [#1 College Overall](#), [#5 for Top Performers on Social Mobility](#) and [#7 for Best Value](#). U.S. News & World Report calculates ratings using 17 key weighted measures of academic quality such as graduation and retention rates, social mobility, peer assessment, faculty resources and more.

Washington Monthly

Other than being named #5 baccalaureate college in the nation based on contribution to public good, Illinois Wesleyan was also highlighted among the top midwest colleges by Washington Monthly for ["Best Bang for the Buck."](#)

Princeton Review

Illinois Wesleyan University has once again been named one of the nation's best institutions for undergraduates, according to The Princeton Review's 2024 college guide, [The Best 389 Colleges](#). Rankings are determined by data collected from college administrators about their institutions' academic offerings, while also considering surveys of college students who report on their campus experience. IWU has been included in The Princeton Review's annual college guide every year since the list's inception in 1989.

Niche

According to [Niche's 2024 college rankings](#), Illinois Wesleyan scores #2 for Best Liberal Arts Colleges in Illinois and among the top Best Liberal Arts Colleges in America. Niche rankings are based on analysis of key statistics from the U.S. Department of Education and millions of reviews from students and alumni.

Money

Illinois Wesleyan is among [MONEY's Best Colleges in America](#), a listing of the schools that successfully combine quality and affordability. Money analyzed dozens of data points including graduation rates, cost of attendance, financial aid and alumni salaries to rate colleges where tuition dollars are likely to pay off.

College Raptor

College Raptor ranked Illinois Wesleyan University as #3 among [Hidden Gem Colleges in the Great Lakes Region for 2024](#). College Raptor ranks universities based on a combination of factors, including graduation rates, campus diversity, endowment per student, and other data as reported via the National Center for Education Statistics.

Applications for the incoming class of 2024 are now open, with no application fee and optional requirement to submit standardized test scores. Learn more by visiting IWU.edu/apply.



Several college ranking systems have shown Illinois Wesleyan is a leading institution regionally and nationally for its commitment to providing greater access to education, and improving social mobility for Titan graduates.