

# An Analysis of the 2025 U.S. News & World Report Rating of SAU



Prepared by

**Indrani Singh, Ph.D.**  
**Interim Vice President**

**Division of Institutional/ Undergraduate Research & Effectiveness**

**[ISingh@st-aug.edu](mailto:ISingh@st-aug.edu)**



## Executive Summary

Each year, U.S. News & World Report (USNWR) publishes its Best Colleges rankings. This ranking by US News & World Report assesses the quality of undergraduate education at historically Black colleges and universities. These HBCUs were compared only with one another for this ranking. To be included on the list, an institution must be currently designated as an HBCU by the US Department of Education. To be eligible for the U.S. News rankings, an HBCU must also be an undergraduate baccalaureate-granting institution that enrolls mostly first-year, first-time students and be included in the Best Colleges rankings for 2024. The USNWR is one of the most critical surveys for federal regulatory compliance, and it is used to compare Saint Augustine's University against other HBCUs across the country.

The Higher Education Act of 1965 defines an HBCU as "any historically Black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary (of Education) to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation." The USNWR report provides a deeper look into the data measures behind the U.S. News & World Report rankings and Saint Augustine's University performance based on these measures.

In the 2024 U.S. World Ranking, 79 HBCUs were eligible for inclusion and were assigned a rank. Schools in the top 90% of the 79 ranked HBCUs had their individual rankings shown. The remaining bottom 10% of ranked schools are listed alphabetically and represent the bottom decile numerical ranking range. Except for the peer survey findings, which were based on a separate HBCU peer evaluation survey, U.S. News used the same data in the HBCU rankings that was used in the Best Colleges rankings in 2024. Because there was no structure for assessing peer institutions, SAU did not participate in the peer assessment survey. In addition, this year we did not have any data to submit for the financial section. Last year, we ranked lower than expected, and it is our goal to improve our position on the list of HBCUs this year. Fortunately, Saint Augustine's University moved from 59 – 77 in the 2023 ranking to 69 in the 2024 National HBCU ranking.

## Introduction

Each year U.S. News & World Report (USNWR) releases its Best Colleges rankings. U.S. News collects data on approximately 1,466 schools with over 1,000 schools described as "rank not published." U.S. News releases its rankings each fall as many prospective students are deciding where to attend college. Consumers of the data often look to rankings reports to determine the "quality" of an institution.

The survey methodology is continuously refined each year based on user feedback, literature reviews, trends in data, and the availability of new data. Yearly changes to the rankings methodology make it difficult to make comparisons from one year to the next. A college that is ranked 3rd one year and 6th the next may have had no change in its performance relative to other schools, yet still move in rank because of changes in the ranking methodology. It is important to understand that changes in rankings often do not correlate to changes in quality at an institution, but rather to changes in survey methodology. This report provides a deeper look into some of the data elements behind the USNWR rankings and Saint Augustine's University performance based on these measures.



In 2024, the annual U.S. News Best Colleges rankings underwent significant methodological changes, including the elimination of five longstanding factors and the addition of several new factors. Those adjustments led to some notable year-over-year position changes, particularly among schools in the middle of the pack. Even so, the top-ranked colleges stayed mostly steady from last year. Despite some opposition to the rankings, most of the schools U.S. News surveyed continued to report data. About 80% of the nearly 1,500 ranked institutions returned their statistical information in the spring and summer of 2023, compared to about 84% last year. This includes 99 of the top 100 ranked National Universities and 97 of the top 100 National Liberal Arts Colleges.

U.S. News used the same data in the HBCU rankings that was used in the 2024 edition of the Best Colleges rankings, except for the peer survey results, which were based on a separate HBCU peer assessment survey. The HBCU rankings are based on nearly the same statistical indicators, but with different weights, as were used in the other ranking categories in the 2024 Best Colleges rankings. The indicators and weights in the HBCU ranking have changed from last year's ranking. *Outcomes indicators* – More than half of a school's rank comes from its success at retaining and graduating students within a normal time frame, social mobility, earnings of graduates compared with high school graduates, and graduate indebtedness, all of which are outcomes. It receives the highest weight in our rankings because degree completion is necessary to receive the full benefits of undergraduate study from employers and graduate schools – account for 52% of the HBCU rankings. The weight of the *HBCU peer assessment* factor is 20% of the rankings. This is the same weight that the peer-assessment score has in the overall rankings. Other input measures count 28%.

## **ANALYSIS OF RANKING METRICS**

### **Understanding How Rankings Work**

USNWR Best Undergraduate College rankings are the sum of weighted, normalized scores across 17 indicators of academic quality to determine each school's overall score and rank. The top performers in each ranking display an overall score of 100. Schools that are not the top performer in the rankings score 0 to 99 points reflecting the distance from each ranking's top-performing school(s).

Critics have pointed out that the use of overall scores to rank schools magnifies small—and often insignificant—differences among schools and that small changes by the school or the magazine can move a college half a dozen places up or down the ranking list (Crenshaw, 1999). It is important to recognize and understand how USNWR measures relate to the SAU environment and overall ranking. Although SAU has made significant improvements in several measures, it is important to recognize that a school does not go up in the rankings by simply improving certain metrics. The improvement in each metric must be above and beyond what the overall average improvement is for all schools. For example, Saint Augustine's University traditionally performs well in terms of Alumni giving.

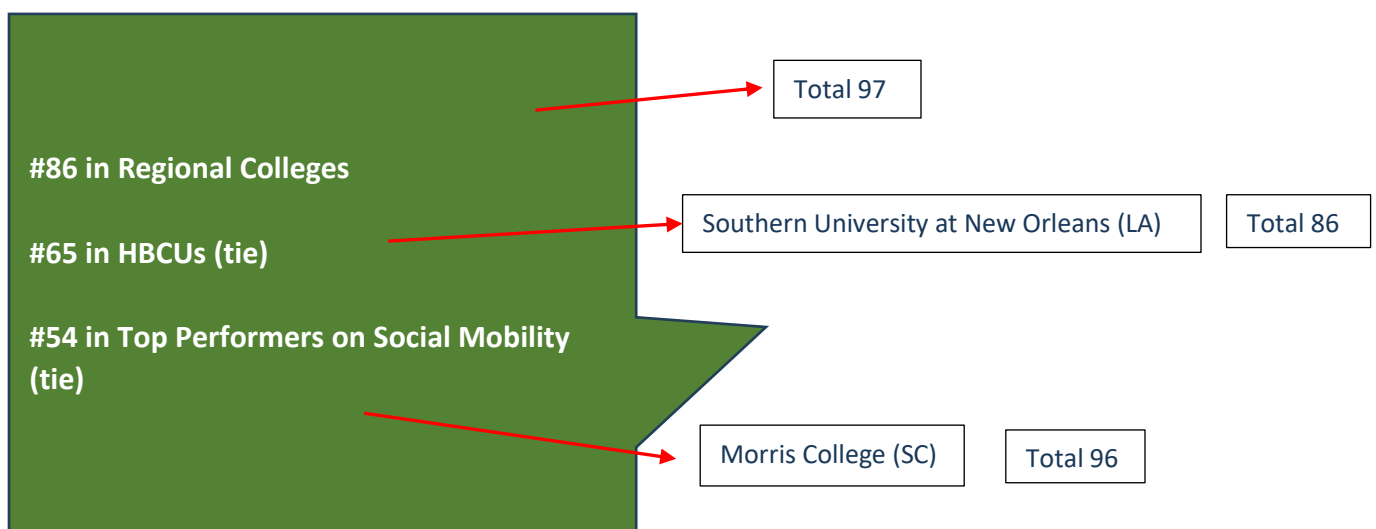


Graduation rates have also been increasing nationally. SAU has improved its graduation rate by 4.3% as compared to the previous year in addition to surpassing several schools that have received a higher ranking. Scores that are well above the average for each measure are strongly rewarded with points in the scoring measure, while scores below the average are severely punished with few or no points for the scoring measure. The rewards or punishments to the institution vary based on the factor weight. Schools that are the highest ranked are those that have scored significantly above their competitors in a few key elements. Further examination of why one or a few schools are ranked above SAU comes down to just a few specific categories wherein the higher-ranked school outperformed both the national average and those schools that are close in rank. Table 1 is a detailed description of the indicators and changes made to the 2024 Best Colleges' rankings.

**Table 1.**

Outcomes 52%	Social mobility 31%	Pell Graduation Rates Pell Graduation performance Graduate Indebtedness College Grads earning more than a high school graduate	8.5% 8.5% 9% 5%	5% 5%
	Graduation & Retention rates 21%	6-year graduation rate Average first-year student retention rate	16% 5%	17.6% 4.4%
Other Input measures (28%)	Faculty Resources	Faculty salary	8%	7%
		Student-Faculty Ratio	4%	1%
		Full-Time Faculty	3%	1%
		Financial Resources	8%	10%
Peer Assessment (20%)		SAT/ACT Scores	5%	
<b>Total</b>			<b>100%</b>	

### The U.S. News & World Report (USNWR) Ranking of SAU



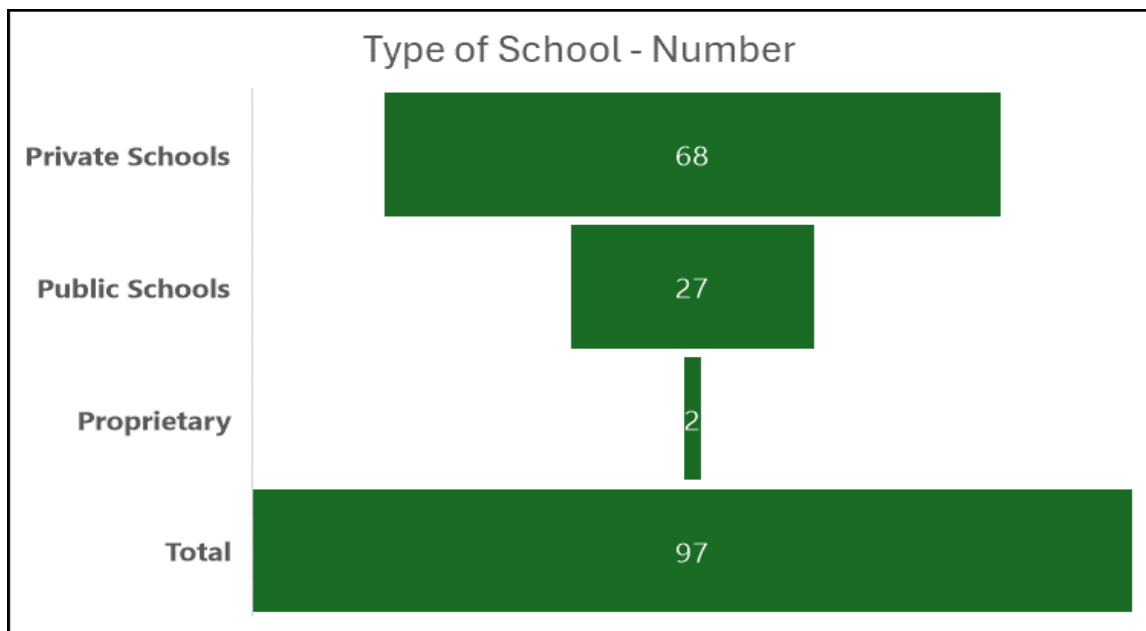


**Table 2.** SAU's U.S. News & World Report Summary

Criteria	Weightage	SAU Rank 2025	Value 2025
Actual Graduation Rate	16%	90	20%
First-Year Retention Rate	5%	53	53%
Student- Faculty Ratio	4%	56	11:01
Faculty Salary Rank	8%	50	
College Grads earning more than a high school grad	5%	50	
Percent Full-Time faculty	3%	55	50.40%
Pell grad rate	8.5%	90	17%
Non-Pell grad rate	8.5%	55	27%
Social Mobility	31%	54	
Financial Resources Rank	8%	19	
%new entrants submitting SAT	5%	27/49 (Partial)	
%new entrants submitting ACT		26/48 (Partial)	
ACT/SAT 25Th percentile		26/51(partial)	
ACT/SAT 75Th percentile		26/51(partial)	

This year's rankings like last year, placed a greater emphasis on social mobility and outcomes for graduating college students, demonstrating the most significant methodological change in the rankings' history. Most changes in this year's surveys mirror CDS. But one break from CDS is U.S. News now collects ACT/SAT using IPEDS standards (used in admissions decisions only), for fair comparisons.

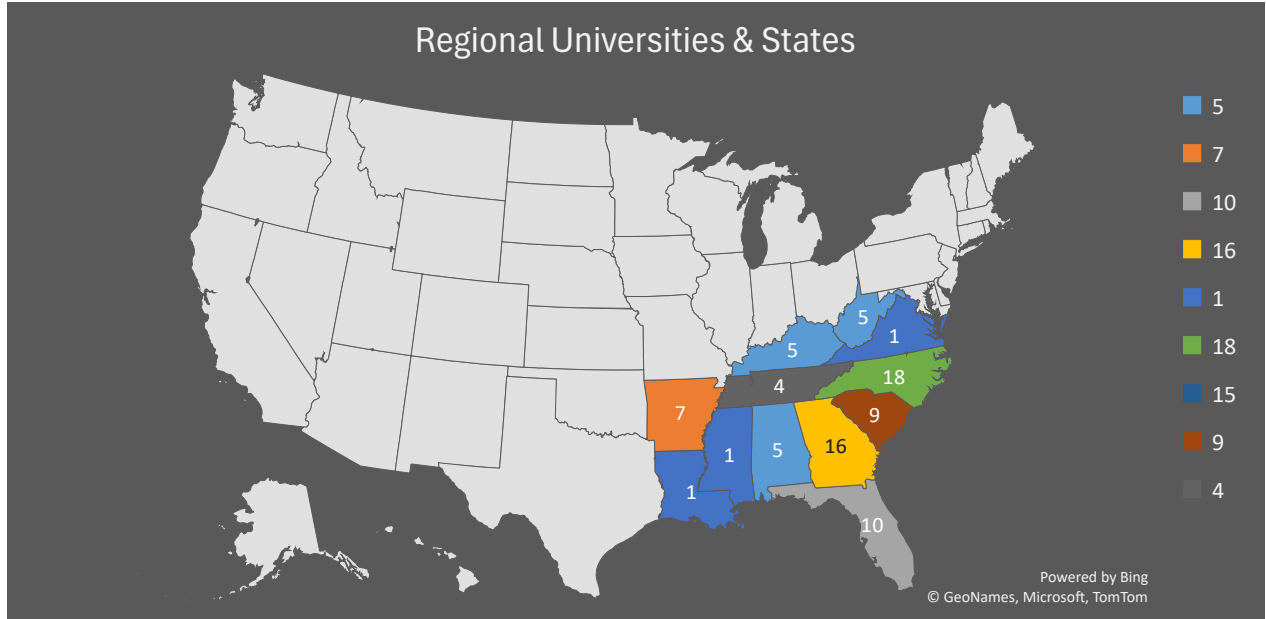
**Fig.1** Type of School



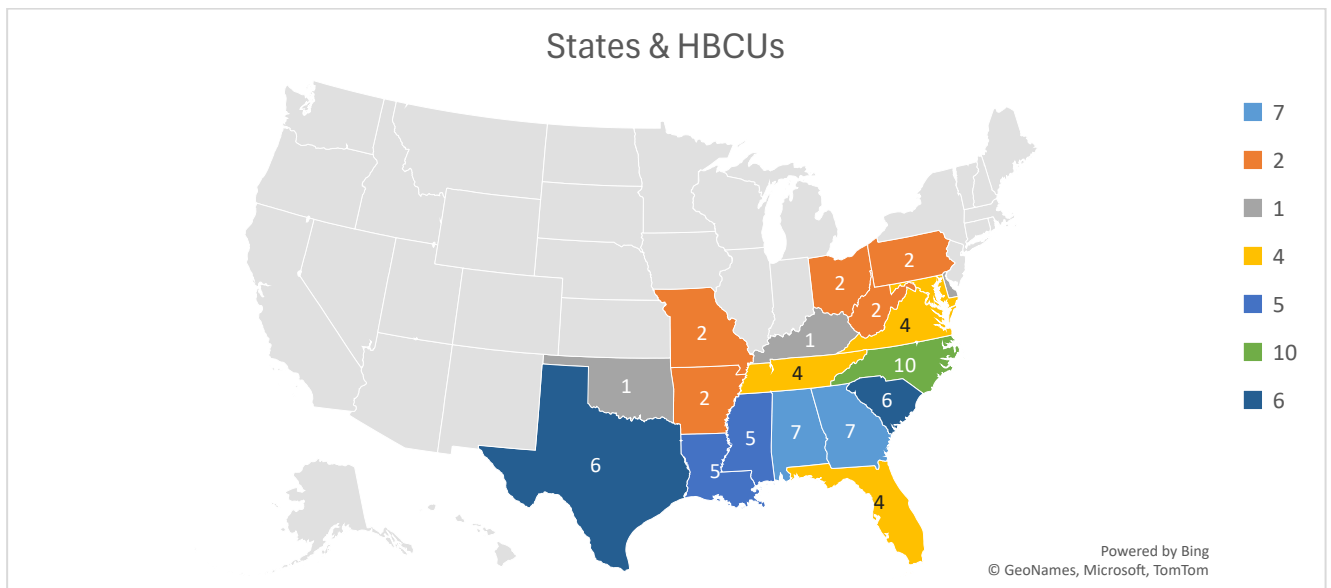


**Figs 2 and Tables 2.** Number of HBCU & Regional Universities (South) by States

Serving as a guide for prospective students and their families, the rankings evaluate 97 Regional Colleges (South) and 77 HBCUs for 2025. These universities were compared only with one another for this ranking. In regional colleges (South), maximum participation was more the NC state.



States	AL	AR	FL	GA	KY	LA	MS	NC	PR	SC	TN	VA	WV
Count of Schools	5	7	10	16	5	1	1	18	15	9	4	1	5



States	AL	AR	DC	DE	FL	GA	KY	LA	MD	MO	MS	NC	OH	OK	PA	SC	TN	TX	VA	WV
Count of Schools	7	2	2	1	4	7	1	5	4	2	5	10	2	1	2	6	4	6	4	2



**The U.S. News & World Report Ranking of SAU**

Table 3 gives a detailed description of the criteria, statistical indicators, and weights that U.S. News used to measure academic quality among the ranked HBCUs and a comparison of SAU's ranking by U.S. News & World Report from Academic Year 2020-2021 to 2023-2024.

**Table 3.** Comparison

Categories	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Best Colleges Rank	No Rank	#59 -77 (no rank)	69	<b>65</b>
HBCU Peer Assessment	2.4	2.5	N/A	2
Ave. First Year Retention	54%	52%	64%	53%
Average Graduation Rate	24%	21%	25%	20%
Student Faculty Ratio	12:01	12:01	10:01	<b>10.7</b>
Percentage Full-Time Faculty	N/A	N/A	79.01%	50.40%
SAT/ACT 25th Percentile	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>704</b>
SAT/ACT 75th Percentile	780-940	780-940	N/A	<b>848</b>
Pell grad rate	N/A	N/A	34%	17%
Non-Pell grad rate	N/A	N/A	<b>9%</b>	<b>27%</b>
Social Mobility	N/A	54	45	54
Percent Full-Time faculty	N/A	N/A	52	<b>56</b>
Faculty Salary Rank	N/A	N/A	39	50



Improved score

Exceptionally Low

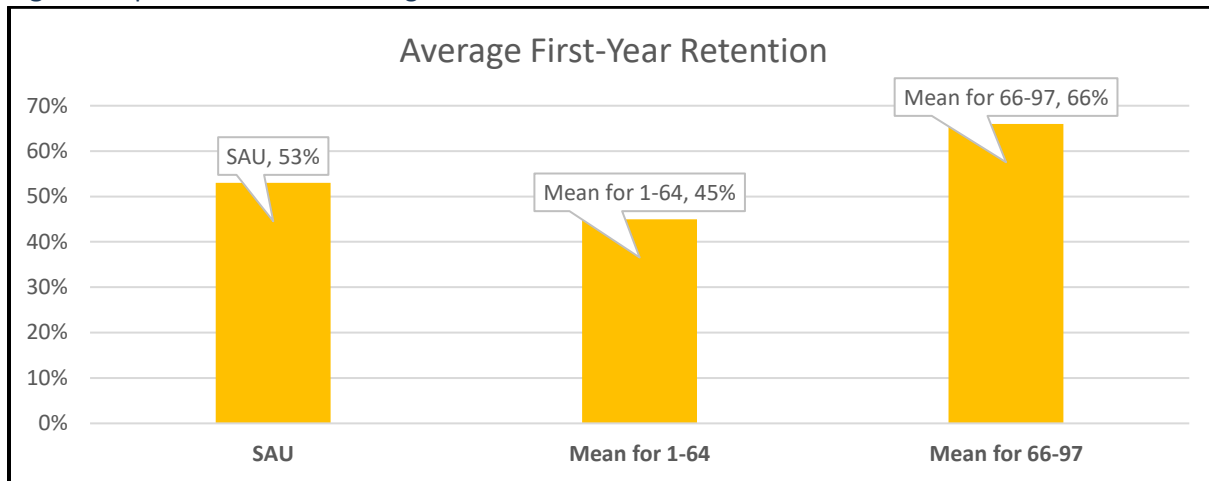
The next set of tables and figures compare SAU's rating for 2023-'24 to the average ratings of the schools ranked 1-97. Table 4. Is a comparison of SAU's Average First-Year Retention to the Mean Rating of Schools Ranked 1-64 and ranks 66-97.

**Table 4.** Comparison of SAU's Average First-Year Retention

	Average First-Year Retention
SAU	53%
Mean for 1-64	45%
Mean for 66-97	66%



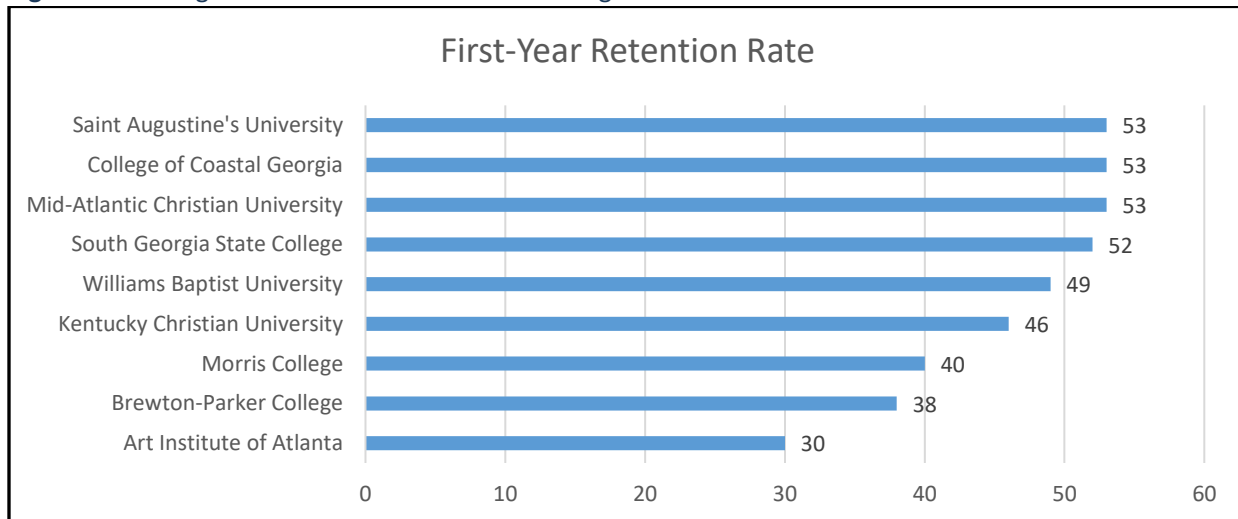
**Fig 3.** Comparison of SAU's Average First-Year Retention



First-year student retention indicates the average proportion of first-year students entering each fall from 2019 through 2022 who returned the following fall. A higher average first year retention rate scores, key indicator of institutional effectiveness is better than a lower average retention rate in the ranking model because students staying enrolled demonstrates a school's continued appeal and reflects how well an institution can attract, engage, and support students to complete their academic programs and achieve their educational goals.

The three historic years of retention-rate data were consistently sourced from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, because they had the same reporting standards as those in U.S. News' survey. The fall 2023 data was from the spring and summer 2023-2024 U.S. News' statistical survey. SAU scored an overall first-year retention rate of 53%, as compared to an average of 39% against schools ranked 1-64. SAU ranked 13% higher than the average of all schools ranked in the bottom 25% (66-77). Table 2 shows the 9% decrease in the average first-year retention rate in 2023-2024 as compared to the previous academic year 2022-2023. In addition, SAU ranked 65<sup>th</sup> among the 97 regional universities in the same category. A total of ten schools were not a part of this criterion since they did not receive a rank.

**Fig 4.** SAU Average First-Year Retention Rate Ranking







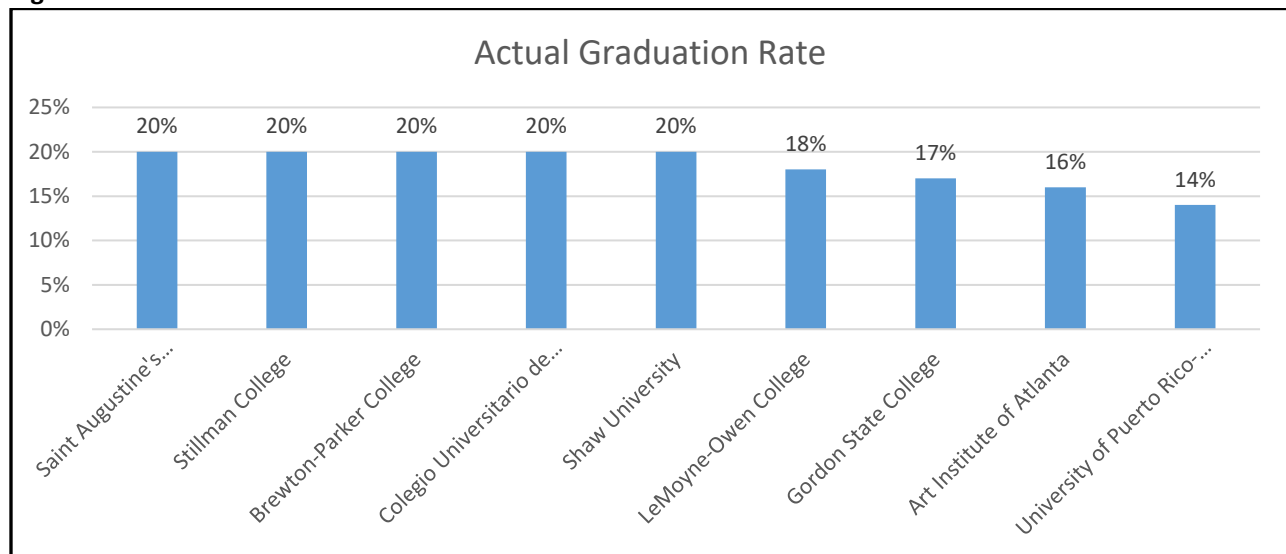
**Table 5.** Comparison of SAU's Graduation Rates as compared to the Mean Rating of Schools Ranked 1-64 and rankings 66-97.

	Actual Graduation Rate
SAU	20%
Mean for 1-64	39%
Mean for 69-77	18%

The graduation rate average is the percentage of entering first-year students who graduated within a six-year period. U.S. News considers first-year classes that started from fall 2013 through fall 2016. For standardized comparisons, this excludes students who transferred to the school after their first year. A higher average graduation rate scores better than a lower graduation rate in the ranking because completion is integral for students to get the most value in their careers from their education.

The Fall 2017 data were reported by schools in 2023 on the U.S. News statistical survey and are also used in the graduation rate performance indicator. SAU's graduation rate is 20%, compared to 39% for institutions ranked 1-64, a 19% decrease. SAU's average was 2% higher than the national average for regional universities(South) placing it in the bottom 25%.

**Fig.5** Actual Grad Rate



**Table 6.** Comparison of college grads earning more than a high school graduate as compared to the Mean Rating of Schools Ranked 1-64 and rankings 66-97. Three institutions did not submit data bringing the total number of schools to be counted for this criterion to 94.

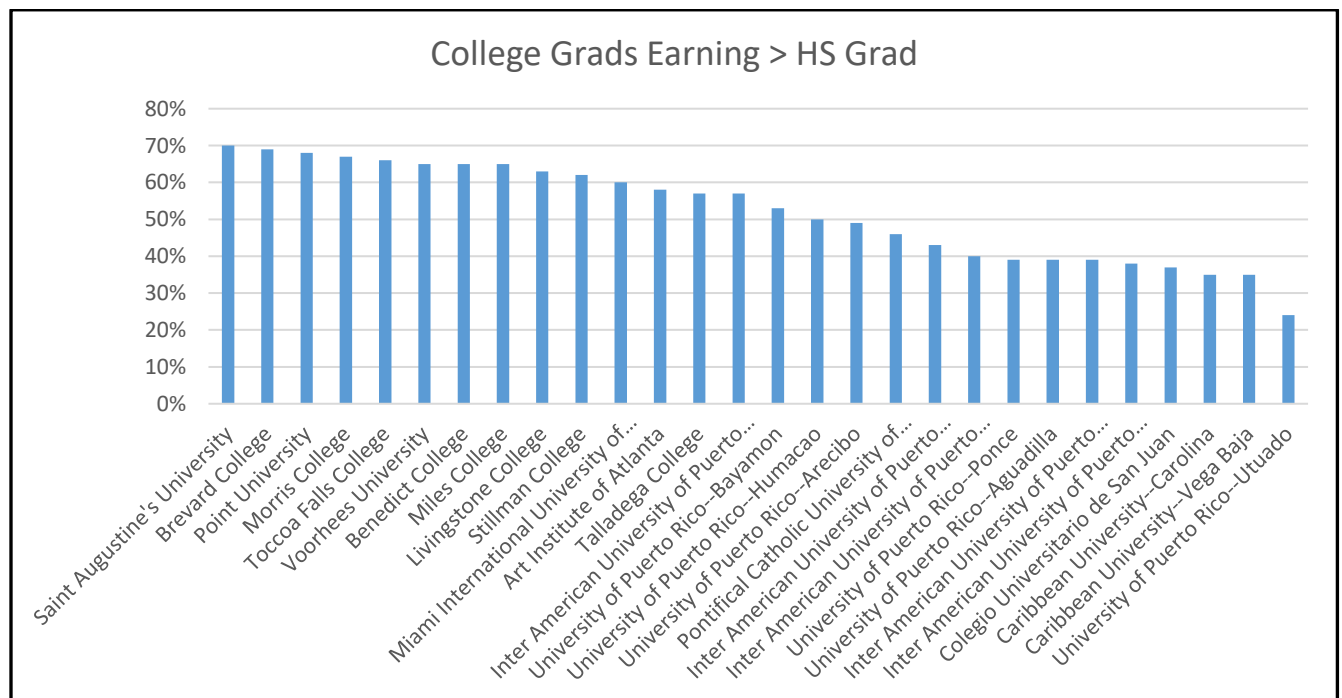
	College grads earning more than a high school graduate
SAU	70%
Mean for 1-69	79%
Mean for 70-77	51%



College grads earning more than a high school graduate is a new criterion that was introduced this year. This assesses the proportion of a school's federal loan recipients who in 2020-2021 – four years since completing their undergraduate degrees – were earning more than the median salary of a 25-to-34-year-old whose highest level of education is high school as determined by, and reported in, the College Scorecard. The statistic was computed and reported by the College Scorecard, which incorporated earnings data from the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The College Scorecard documented that the median wage of workers ages 25-34 that self-identify as high school graduates was \$32,000 in 2021 dollars. Most jobs utilizing a college degree, even including those not chosen for being in high-paying fields, exceed this threshold.

The data only pertained to college graduates and high school graduates employed in the workforce, meaning nongraduates, or graduates who four years later were continuing their education or simply not in the workforce, did not help or hurt any school. U.S. News assigned a perfect score for the small minority of schools where at least 90% of graduates achieved the earnings threshold. The remaining schools were assessed on how close they came to 90%. The cap was chosen to allow for a small proportion of graduates to elect low-paying jobs without negatively impacting a school's ranking. SAU scored relatively low in college graduates earning more than a high school degree, thereby bagging the 69th position. However, colleges with better 2025 USNWR ranking namely Brevard College(NC -rank34) , Toccoa Falls College (rank#30) scored lower than SAU in this category (See Fig 6)

**Fig.6** College Grads of SAU earning more than Universities





### Social Mobility

The notion of 'social mobility' is increasingly visible in public policy on higher education. Over the past half century or so, policy discourse has shifted from simple expansion (more places), through increasing diversity and 'widening participation' to higher education (different people) to explicitly using higher education to engineer social mobility (different outcomes). Social mobility is defined as the movement of individuals or groups between social strata; it correlates one's economic background with their ability to "climb the social ladder." Social mobility is dependent on society's ability to factor in and provide extra assistance to students—or strivers—who are met with obstacles due to their previous life experiences.

U.S. news factored a school's success at promoting social mobility by graduating students who received federal Pell Grants (those typically coming from households whose family incomes are less than \$50,000 annually, though most Pell Grant money goes to students with a total family income below \$20,000). New this year, U.S. News added in new factors on first generation graduation rates as part of the social mobility measure. According to the 2024 USNWR social mobility study, a total of 96 organizations participated, with 68 being private institutions, 27 being public, and only two being proprietary (See figure 8). SAU bagged the 40<sup>th</sup> position among 68 private schools(See figure 7) and 54<sup>th</sup> among 96 participating schools in 2025( see figure 9), ranked 45<sup>th</sup> in 2024, 65<sup>th</sup> in 2023. However, the rank in 2025 has seen a nine-place decrease.

Fig. 7

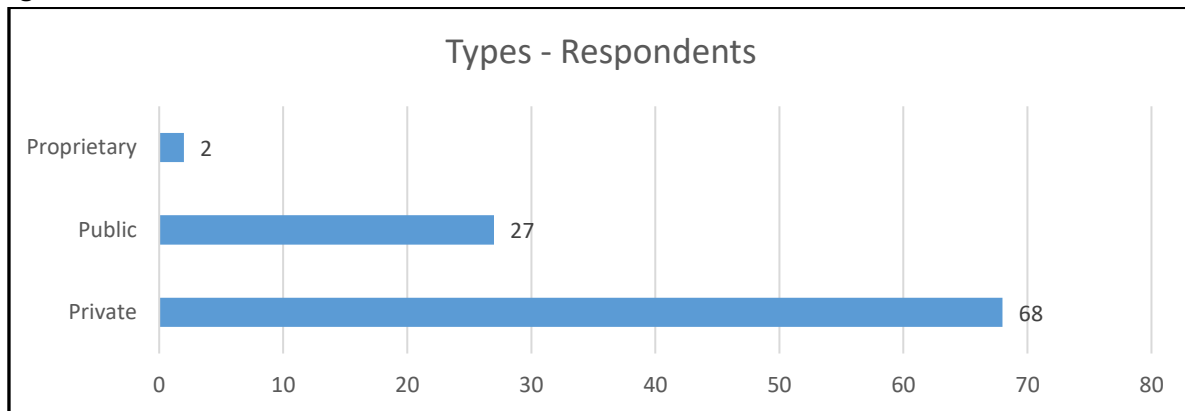


Fig. 8

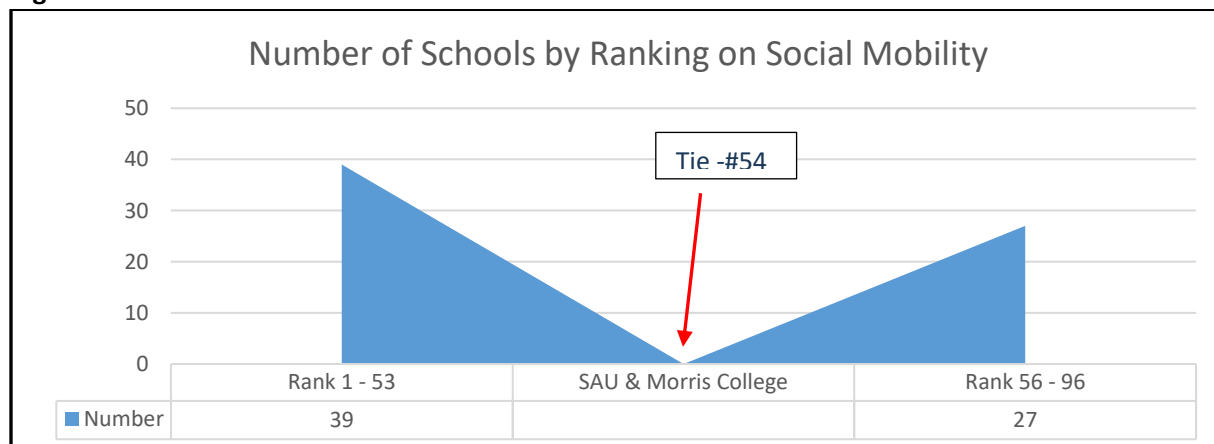
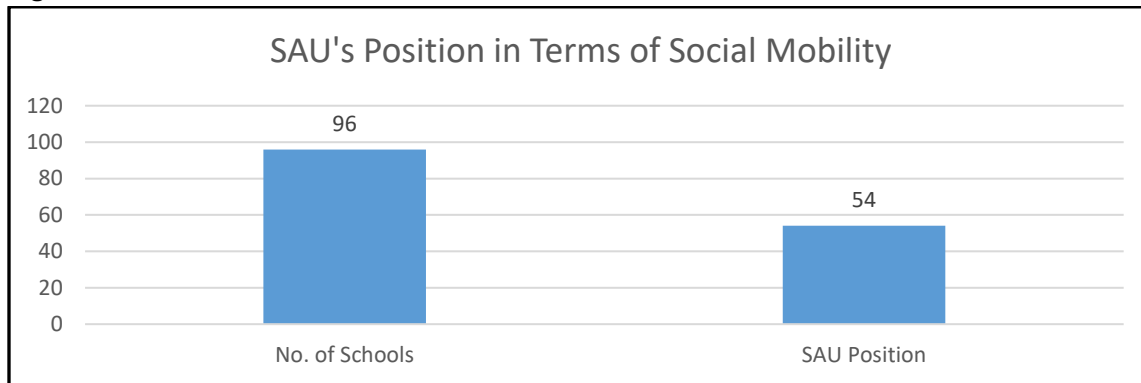




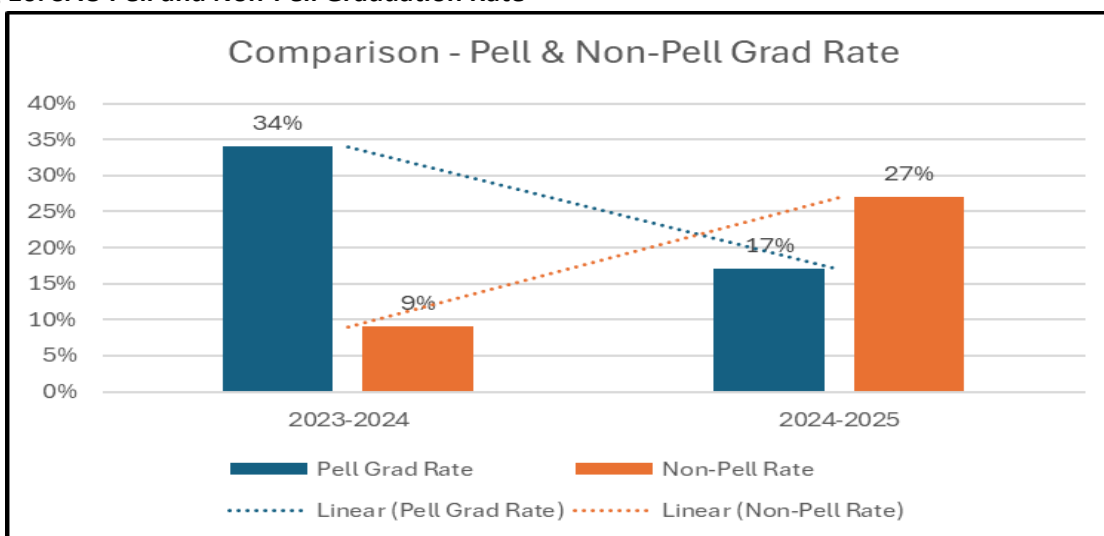
Fig. 9



### Pell and Non-Pell Graduation Rate

Pell recipients among the fall 2017 entering cohort of full-time, first-year, bachelor's degree-seeking students was reported directly by schools to U.S. News. This indicator of social mobility measures the success of Pell Grant students on an absolute basis. To calculate this indicator, U.S. News used a school's six-year graduation rate for a four-year moving average among new fall 2013 through 2016 entrants receiving Pell Grants. This assesses each school's performance of graduating students from low-income backgrounds. A higher Pell Grant graduation rate scores better than a lower one. Scores for both these two social mobility indicators were adjusted by the proportion of the entering class that was awarded Pell Grants because achieving a higher low-income student graduation rate is more challenging with a larger proportion of low-income students. SAU's performance in this indicator was the lowest among all the participating schools in 2024. In 2025, the non-Pell grad rate improved from 9% in 2024 to 27% in 2025 and Pell grad rate has dropped by 50% (17%) in comparison to last year(34%) (See figure 10). This had stark implications on SAU's ranking which otherwise would have improved further.

Fig 10. SAU Pell and Non-Pell Graduation Rate





**Table 7. Percentage Faculty Full-Time**

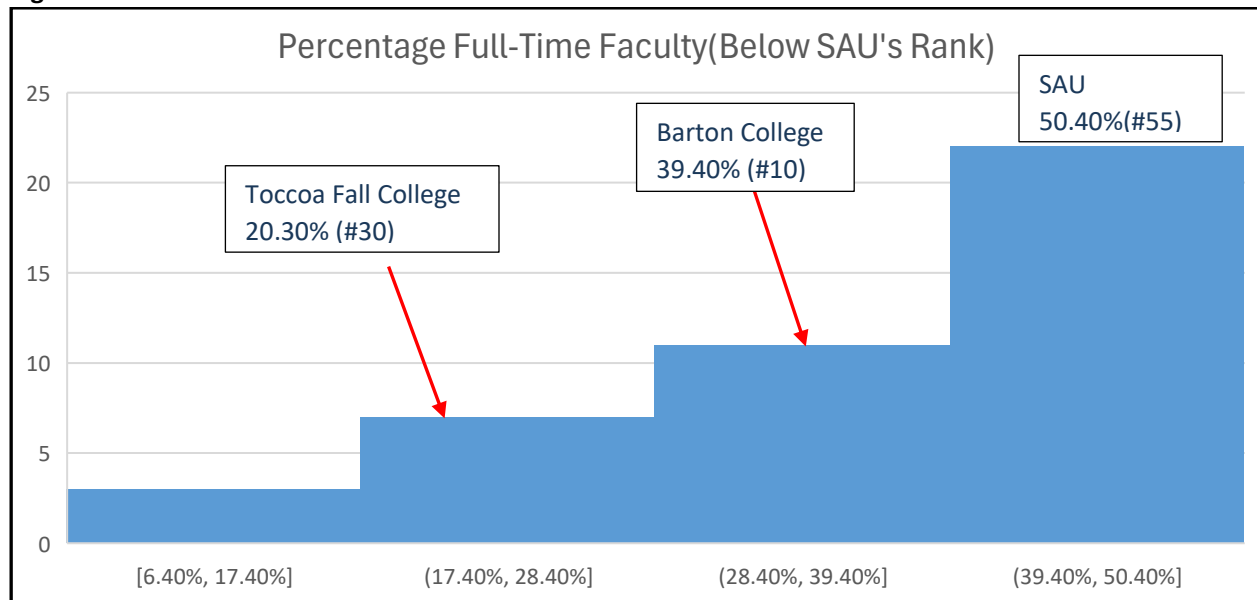
	<b>% Faculty Full-Time</b>
SAU (Rank #55)	50.40%
Mean for 1-54	66%
Mean for 56-97	36.42%

The percentage of faculty full-time is a representative of faculty resources. This is the proportion of the fall 2022 faculty that is full time. U.S. News compared the count of full-time instructional faculty members with the count of full-time-equivalent faculty members (full-time faculty members plus one-third the count of part-time faculty members). A school scores higher the greater its proportion of faculty members who are full time.

In alignment with the 2022-2023 Common Data Set (CDS) instructions, U.S. News does not include faculty in preclinical and clinical medicine; administrative officers with titles such as dean of students, librarian, registrar, or coach, even though they may devote part of their time to classroom instruction and may have faculty status; undergraduate or graduate students who are teaching assistants or teaching fellows; faculty members on leave without pay; or replacement faculty for faculty members on sabbatical leave.

Previously weighed 1% of all ranking's formulas, for this edition it was weighted 2% in National Universities and 3% in all other rankings (in which faculty research factors were not included). The reason for the increase was because of the growing utilization of non-full-time faculty in classroom instruction, and to slightly counterbalance the faculty salaries ranking factor that assesses only full-time faculty salaries for standardization reasons. SAU has a full-time faculty percentage of 50.40%, which is 16% lower than the institutions ranked 1-54 in this category, with a mean of 66%. When compared to colleges that ranked lower on this criterion, SAU outperformed numerous institutions that had higher regional rankings. Furthermore, SAU performed 14% better than schools, with a mean score of 36.42% (Table 7). However, SAU outperformed 41 other schools in this category (see figure 11).

**Fig.11**



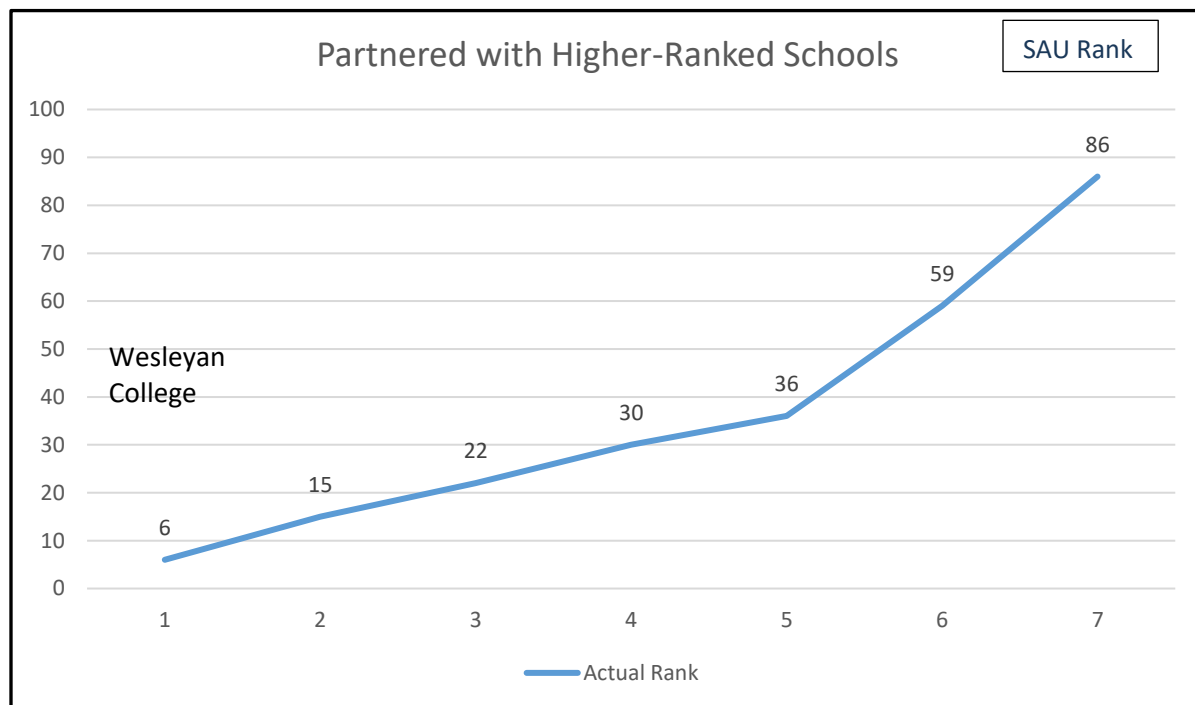


### Faculty Salary Rank

Research shows there is a link between academic outcomes and compensation of faculty. This indicator averaged salaries – excluding non-salary benefits – from all a school's full-time instructional tenured and nontenured faculty who were professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers, and those having no rank. Altogether, higher average faculty salaries score better than lower average faculty salaries. U.S. News annualized all reported salaries, when necessary, so they were on the same scale. The annualized cumulative salaries were then divided by total faculty to produce an average salary for each school. This amount was then adjusted by differences in cost of living using the December 2022 update to the Regional Price Parities by State and Metro Area indexes from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis.

A change this year was salaries of full-time instructional faculty categorized as either including instructors, lecturers and faculty having no rank were added to those of professors for a more comprehensive measure of the staff teaching students. This increasingly matters, as many schools utilize faculty who are not professors to teach students. As can be seen from figure 17, when comparing with other colleges and universities, SAU bagged the 50<sup>th</sup> position, a rank that is considerably high out of 97 regional colleges and universities that were ranked by U.S. News. SAU's faculty salary rank is comparable with some of the well-known schools like Wesleyan College(rank# 6), Devis and Elkins College (rank #15), Brescia University (rank #36) to name a few. Figure 12 depicts a sample of schools that received similar faculty salary ranking, an indicator that indicates persuasively SAU's contribution to education.

Fig. 12





**Table 8.** Tie with 6 schools -Rank #50

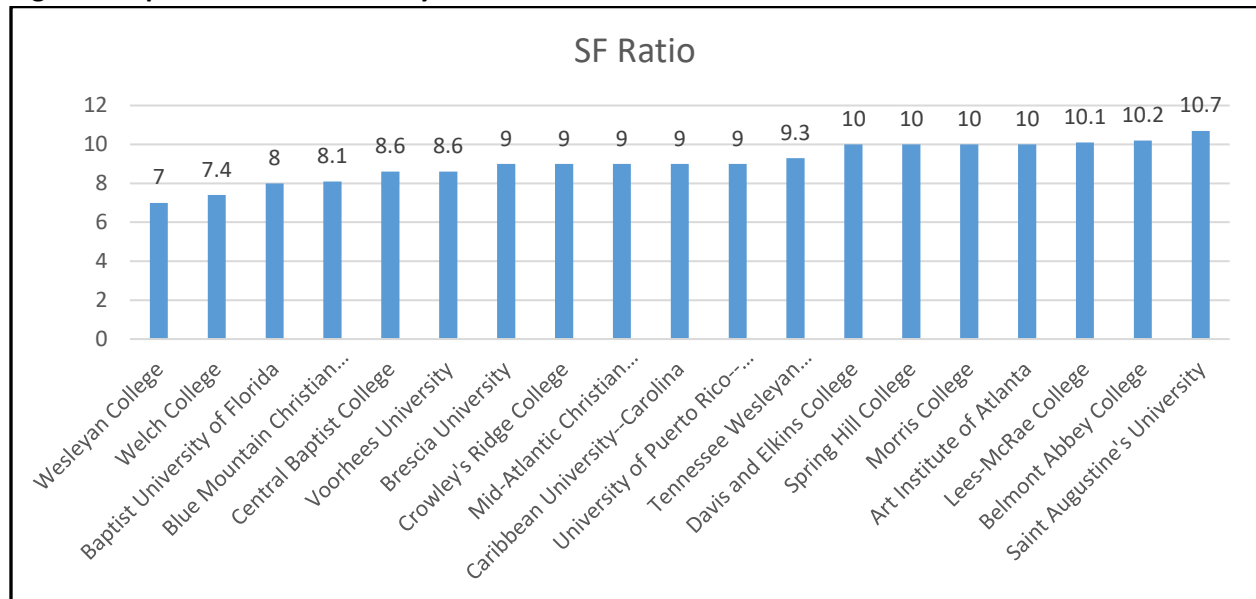
Actual Rank	Names
6	Wesleyan College
15	Davis and Elkins College
22	Lees-McRae College
30	Toccoa Falls College
36	Brescia University
59	Central Baptist College
86	Saint Augustine's University

**Student-Faculty Ratio**

This indicator is the ratio of full-time-equivalent students to full-time-equivalent faculty members during fall 2023, aligned with 2022-2023 Common Data Set instructions for reporting faculty. A lower student-faculty ratio (fewer students per faculty member) scores better than a higher ratio in the ranking. This excludes faculty and students of law, medicine, business, and other stand-alone graduate or professional programs in which faculty members teach virtually only graduate-level students. Faculty numbers also exclude graduate or undergraduate students who are teaching assistants.

U.S. News increased the weight of this ranking from 1% for all prior rankings to 3% in the National Universities ranking and 4% in all other rankings (where faculty research is not incorporated). This was done to compensate for class size being discontinued as a ranking factor.

**Fig.13 Comparison Student Faculty Ratio with Schools**



Thirty percent of the category labeled by U.S. News & World Report as “Faculty Resources” focuses on the percentage of classes that have a class size less than 20. It is in this area that we see no difference between SAU and comparable schools like Lees-McRae College (rank #22) and Belmont Abbey College (rank# 22) (See Fig 14). It



is noteworthy that SAU has maintained the class-size for the past three years. Class size played a significant factor in the change of rank within the faculty resources category.

Fig. 14

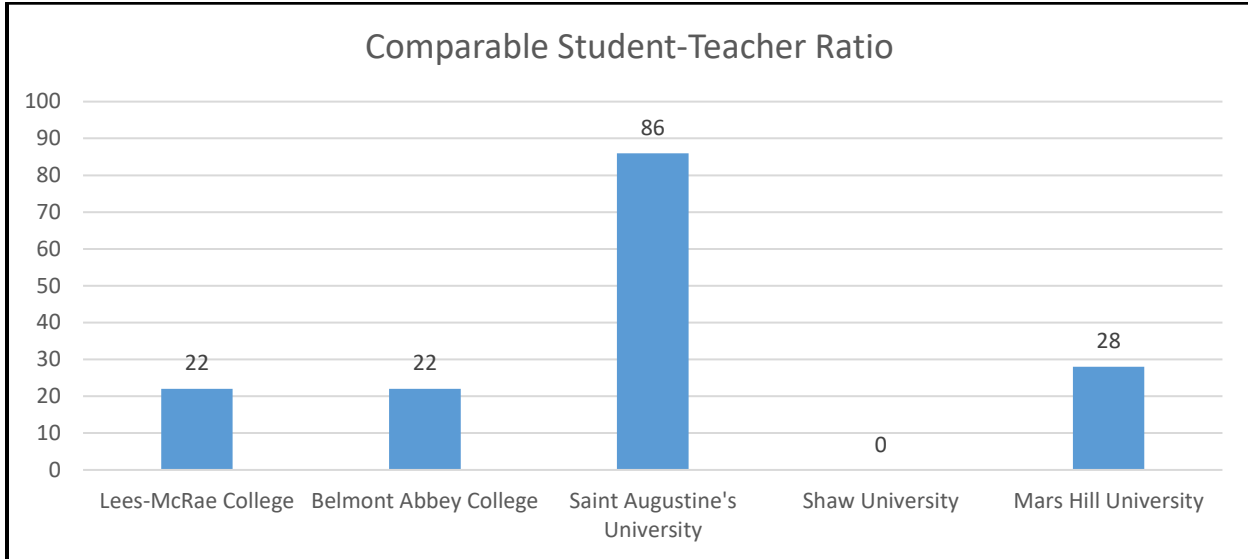
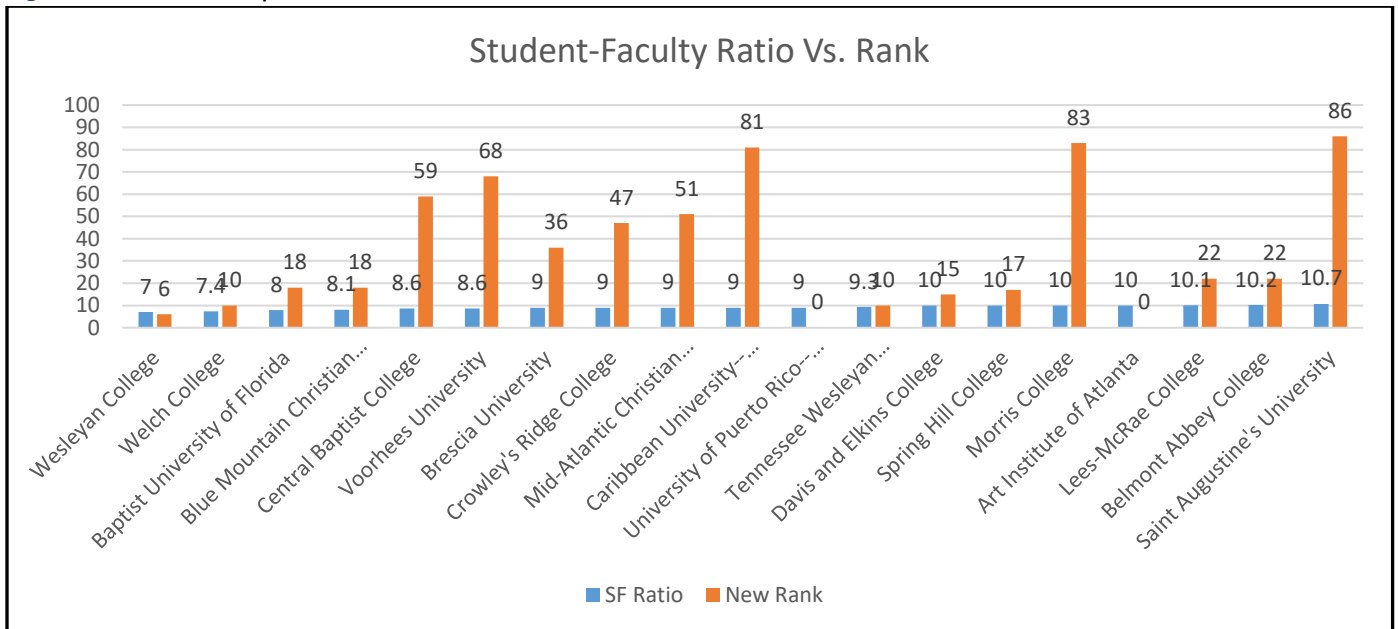


Fig 15. Student-Faculty Ratio Vs. Rank



**Graduate Indebtedness**

This indicator, whose weightage increased to 9% from a previous weightage of 7% in 2022, assesses each school's typical average accumulated federal loan debt among only borrowers who graduated. This is an outcome factor that assesses each school's typical average accumulated federal loan debt among borrowers only. Graduates who covered their expenses without borrowing did not help or hurt schools. In this edition, the data was sourced from the College Scorecard instead of the U.S. News survey for all schools and was of



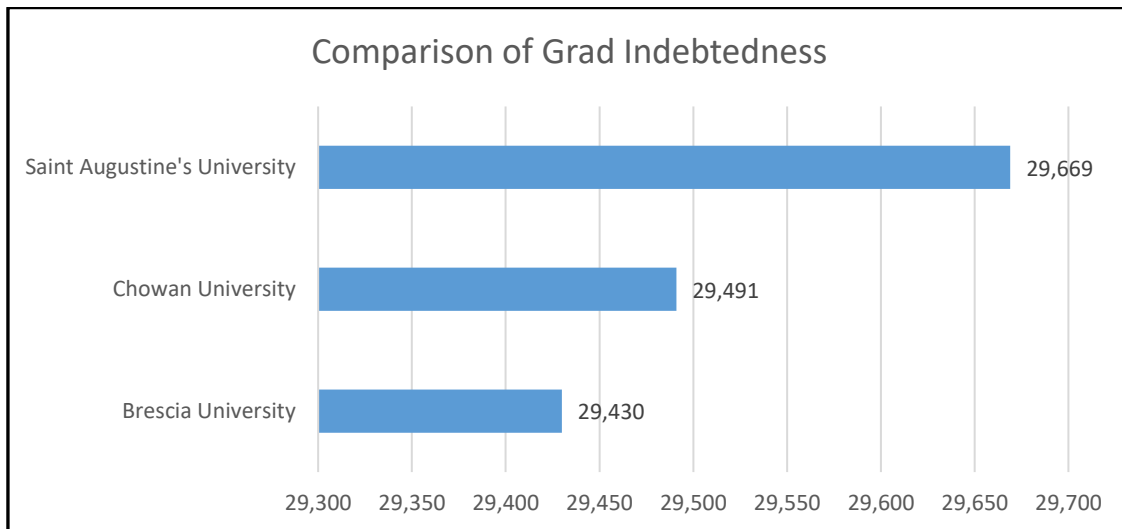


median debt instead of mean debt. Averages for each school were calculated among all years for which data was available, which in some cases was only one year. The small minority of schools without data for at least one release, either because of low borrower cohorts or not accepting federal loans (e.g., military academies) were assigned high performing values under the assumption that their students were well supported. Because the figure is specific to only borrowers who graduated, both nongraduates and graduates who covered their expenses without borrowing did not help or hurt schools' rankings. Figure 16 shows a \$239 difference in median debt for graduates' federal loans between Brescia University (USNWR rank#36) and SAU (USNWR rank#65) at \$29,430 and \$29,669, respectively, and a \$178 difference between Chowan University in North Carolina (USNWR rank#66) at \$29,491. According to US News World Report, the median federal loan debt for SAU graduates in 2024 was \$29,669, which was the same as in 2025. The average for institutions assessed in the bottom 25% was \$31,271, which is closely comparable to SAU's average of \$29,669 (Table 9).

**Table 9.**

SAU	29,669
Mean 1-85	20,409
Mean 87-97	31,271

**Fig.16**

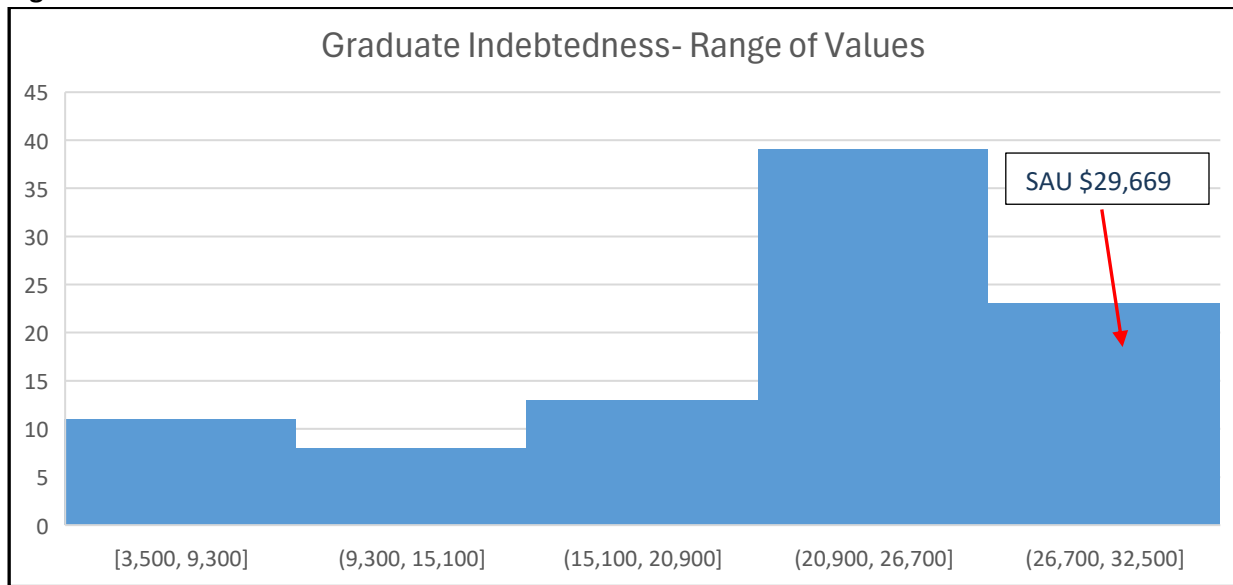


In a change for this edition, U.S. News calculated a school's percentile distribution of its debt value within its ranking before normalizing. In other words, all schools received a score between 1-99. This was done to minimize the effect of outlier values in the rankings on a statistic that has a lot of compression. Otherwise, a difference of only a couple thousand dollars in debt among the best and worst performing schools on this factor had a disproportionate impact on the rankings.

This indicator does not control for the proportion of graduates who borrowed. This is because while there are exceptions, in general whether a student needed to borrow to attend school is more often predicated on their household income than on the school's affordability.



**Fig. 17**



There were 70 schools in the range of \$26,700 to \$32,500 Median debt for grads with federal loans. SAU falls in this category (see figure 17).



## U.S. News & World Report: Conclusion & Implications

### Areas of Reinforcement

Despite challenges with accreditation, it is commendable that SAU's overall ranking among 97 regional colleges has improved by four spots. A comparison with similar schools reveals three areas where SAU ranks higher than institutions with better U.S. News rankings: student-faculty ratio, SAT/ACT 25th and 75th percentile scores (since SAU provided data), percentage of full-time faculty and non-Pell Grad rate which improved by 19%. If SAU aims to improve its U.S. News ranking further, key factors such as graduation rate both Pell and Non-Pell, full-time faculty percentage, and first-year retention rate should continue to be a focus, as they were in the previous academic year.

### Areas of Refinement

Several variables in the U.S. News & World Report rankings are based on indicators, but one heavily weighted factor is the graduation rate. SAU received a particularly low ranking in the non-Pell graduation rate, consistent with schools in the bottom 25%. Additionally, SAU did not participate in the Peer Assessment survey, which holds a 20% weight, due to the absence of a structured evaluation rubric. According to U.S. News, a school's decision to submit or not submit a peer assessment survey had no impact on the peer scores it received from other schools. However, this year, schools that did not submit the statistical survey but completed the peer survey had their ratings excluded from computations.

Another key area of concern is Faculty Salary Rank, which has declined significantly compared to the previous year. Research indicates a strong link between faculty pay and student achievement, meaning that higher faculty salaries positively impact a school's ranking. Lastly, U.S. News assesses social mobility by evaluating graduation rates of Pell Grant recipients. SAU dropped in this category, falling from 45th to 54th, and the Pell graduation rate continues to remain low all the more drawing out attention towards improvement in social mobility scores.



**APPENDIX**

Department	POC	Question numbers	Notes
Registrar	Ms. Archer and Baker	64,65,104,106,127,128,129	
Testing Centre	Ms. Bannerman, Dr. Love	138-149	
Military Enrollment	Dean Brown	169	
2023 Instructional Faculty Members	Ms. Mary and Ms. Barbara	178	
Faculty diversity - Fall 2023 Cohort.	Ms. Mary and Ms. Barbara	182	
Report full-time instructional faculty salaries - Fall 2023	Ms. Mary and Ms. Barbara	183	
Graduation rates - 2017 Cohort.	Ms. Austin Turlington	187	
Alumni Giving	Ms. Williams Shareese	200 - 203	
Honor Students	Dr. James Lyons	207	
Housing	Dean Watts	209	
Student Employment & Internships	Dr. Love	216, 217, 219 , 220	
Athletics	Ms. McLaughlin	253-256	Please confirm the responses rolled over from last year
Student Activities	Deans Brown & Watts	257	
Academic Affairs	Ms. Nakia Anderson	30,31 & 41	

**Note:** The planning chart shown above was created by the Office of Institutional Research and Data Analytics to aid in the process of collecting, evaluating, and submitting the survey on time. This is a fantastic example of implementing Kaizen (a Japanese method) to achieve breakthrough improvements in the 2025 Best Colleges Survey process.