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NEWS

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Ouachita earns A+ rankings among nation's top universities

By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Earning grades of A+ from multiple college rankings, Ouachita Baptist University continues to be recognized among the top universities in the nation.

This year's ranking marks the fifth consecutive year that Ouachita has been named among *U.S. News & World Report's* top tier of "Best National Liberal Arts Colleges." It also is the seventh year in a row that Ouachita has been named among "America's Top Colleges" by *Forbes* magazine.

"We're always pleased to see external recognition of Ouachita's strength as an outstanding liberal arts university," said Dr. Stan Poole, vice president for academic affairs. "Though such rankings can't begin to tell the full story of what makes Ouachita truly unique, they do point toward the academic excellence and exceptional value of the Ouachita educational experience.

"We're blessed to have dedicated faculty, staff and students whose efforts and achievements exceed even what is suggested by these national rankings," he added.

For students and families looking for an outstanding education combined with great value, *USA Today* and *CollegeFactual.com* ranked Ouachita among the "Best Nationwide Colleges for Your Money," including an A+ ranking among universities both nationally and in the Southeast. Ouachita is ranked among the top 3 percent of universities in both categories.

Enhancing Ouachita's overall financial value, university officials recently introduced the innovative Loan Affordability Pledge to help limit students' long-term higher education costs. The Loan Affordability Pledge provides financial assistance to students and their families, helping repay student and parent loans if graduates' salaries are below \$36,000 annually.

"We're excited that Ouachita once again has been recognized as an exceptional value for students and their families," said Dr. Keldon Henley, vice president for institutional advancement. "When job placement rates, graduate school acceptance rates and the outstanding campus environment are taken into account, the extraordinary value of Ouachita becomes even more distinct.

"Ouachita understands the concerns students and parents have about student loan debt," Henley emphasized. "We believe so strongly in the value of a Ouachita degree that we cover all new students with our Loan Affordability Pledge, providing a safety net that helps repay college loans if the graduate's salary is modest. For many families, this commitment substantially relieves the burden of worry about financing their students' college education."

U.S. News also ranked Ouachita among "A+ Schools for B Students" for the fifth consecutive year – the only national liberal arts college in the state to make the list. According to *U.S. News*, the A+ ranking features universities where B-level incoming students "have a decent shot at being accepted and thriving – where spirit and hard work could make all the difference."

Ouachita, which moved into *U.S. News*' national rankings in 2011, previously was ranked for four years as the No. 1 Regional College in the South. Among this year's best national liberal arts colleges, Ouachita and Hendrix College are the only two schools in Arkansas ranked by *U.S. News* in the top tier.

According to *U.S. News*, national liberal arts colleges "emphasize undergraduate education and award at least half their degrees in the arts and sciences, which include such disciplines as English, the biological and physical sciences, history, foreign languages and the visual and performing arts."

Ouachita offers majors in seven academic schools in the disciplines of business, Christian studies, education, fine arts, humanities, natural sciences and social sciences. The university also launched Ouachita Online earlier this year, offering accredited Bachelor of Arts degrees online with majors in business administration and Christian studies.

According to *Forbes*, its focus on universities' output over input sets its annual rankings apart from other evaluations. "We're not all that interested in what gets a student into college," *Forbes* explained. "Our sights are set directly on return on investment: What are students getting out of college?"

In addition to being named among "America's Top Colleges," Ouachita ranked No. 5 nationally in *Forbes*' second annual #MyTopCollege social media campaign, marking its second consecutive Top 10 finish in the national competition. The campaign involved students, faculty and alumni posting on social media about what makes their university special.

Ouachita Baptist University, a private liberal arts university in Arkadelphia, Ark., has served since 1886 as a Christ-centered learning community. For more information, call 1-800-DIAL-OBUE, visit www.obu.edu or download Ouachita's mobile app.