



CAMPUS & COMMUNITY

Maryland Named No. 1 College in U.S. for LGBTQ+ Students

Campus Pride/BestColleges 2020 Lists Recognize Inclusivity, Academic Support, Affordability

By Maryland Today Staff / Jun 16, 2020



Photo by John T. Consoli; flag image by iStock

UMD was named the No. 1 college in the nation for LGBTQ+ students, according to rankings released by Campus Pride and BestColleges

The University of Maryland was named the No. 1 college in the nation for LGBTQ+ students, according to [rankings](#) released today by Campus Pride and BestColleges.

The annual state and national rankings, announced during LGBTQ Pride Month, weigh inclusivity, academic support and affordability to determine which colleges provide the best support for LGBTQ+ students. Maryland moved to the top spot from No. 5 last year.

"This recognition validates our intersectional and collaborative approach to supporting LGBTQ+ students," said Luke Jensen, director of UMD's LGBT Equity Center. "It is an honor—and a welcome challenge to maintain and improve our leadership in LGBTQ+ campus inclusion as we face broad collective challenges related to health and social justice."

The center supports students, faculty, staff and alumni of all sexual orientations and gender identities through educational and outreach events as well as resources for LGBTQ+ people.

Most recently, staff in the center have focused on ensuring full implementation of campus policies, including those on inclusive language for university communications, students' personal data in university databases and all-gender restroom availability around campus.

Other center programs include Quelcome, a social and networking event at the beginning of the academic year; Q Camp, a community-building retreat; the Lavender Leadership Honor Society for advocates of LGBTQ+ rights—the first of its kind in higher education; and the traditional Lavender Graduation.

The ranking recognizes efforts far beyond the work of the LGBT Equity Center. For example, over a dozen campus units have named [liaisons](#) to LGBTQ+ communities. These liaisons conduct outreach and work with colleagues in their units to promote good practices in service of LGBTQ+ people.

The Best Colleges for LGBTQ+ Students ranking recognizes U.S. schools that have established the highest standards for inclusive environments while maintaining strong academic programs. (Others in the top five nationwide are the University of Washington, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton University and Tufts.) The [Best Colleges for LGBTQ+ Students in Each State](#) offers a guide for prospective LGBTQ+ students to identify schools that are culturally inclusive, affordable and closer to their geographic location.

"Every student deserves to go to a college that is inclusive and a safe space to learn, live and grow," said Shane Windmeyer, executive director of Campus Pride. "This June for Pride Month we want to show our 'campus pride' for all the campuses working hard to create safer, more LGBTQ-friendly learning environments."

The rankings combine BestColleges' traditional methodology of academic support and affordability data along with the Campus Pride Index score, which considers eight LGBTQ+ inclusive factors. The rankings also include descriptions of unique campus resources that provide support to students of various gender and sexual identities.

“We commend all the universities listed on these LGBTQ+ rankings for creating educational environments that allow students of different gender and sexual identities to feel safe and welcome,” said Stephanie Snider, general manager of BestColleges.

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