











Forbes











Exclusive: Employers Are Souring On Ivy League Grads, While These 20 “New Ivies” Ascend

Forbes issued a new report identifying public and private universities across the U.S. outside the Ivy-League that employers report are graduating students highly sought by employers.

Congrats to these universities identified by Forbes with associated AURP member research parks and innovation districts that provide space for university-industry interaction:

UMD College Park, Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, University of Virginia, University of Wisconsin Madison, and Rice University.

	INSTITUTION	STATE	UNDERGRAD ENROLLMENT	ACCEPTANCE RATE	50th PERC. SAT	50th ACT
	Binghamton University	New York	14,752	42%	1430	31
	Georgia Institute of Technology	Georgia	16,183	17%	1480	33
	University of Florida	Florida	32,951	23%	1390	31
	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	Illinois	34,354	45%	1440	32
	University of Maryland-College Park	Maryland	28,883	45%	1460	33
	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	Michigan	31,693	18%	1470	33
	University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill	North Carolina	19,215	17%	1460	32
	University of Texas-Austin	Texas	39,552	31%	1370	30
	University of Virginia	Virginia	17,122	19%	1490	33
	University of Wisconsin-Madison	Wisconsin	33,068	49%	1430	29

	INSTITUTION	STATE	UNDERGRAD ENROLLMENT	ACCEPTANCE RATE	50th PERC. SAT	50th P ACT
	Boston College	Massachusetts	9,964	17%	1490	34
	Carnegie Mellon University	Pennsylvania	6,816	11%	1540	35
	Emory University	Georgia	7,338	11%	1500	33
	Georgetown University	District of Columbia	7,306	12%	1500	34
	Johns Hopkins University	Maryland	5,850	7%	1550	35
	Northwestern University	Illinois	8,652	7%	1530	34
	Rice University	Texas	4,229	9%	1540	35
	University of Notre Dame	Indiana	9,049	13%	1510	34
	University of Southern California	California	21,154	12%	1520	34
	Vanderbilt University	Tennessee	7,109	7%	1530	35

FORBES

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You're not imagining things: The Ivy League is forfeiting its standing as America's producer of great talent. Here are the schools producing the hard-working high achievers that employers crave.

By [Emma Whitford](#), Forbes Staff

For the entirety of America's existence, the Ivy League has provided an essential service. In sorting the best and the brightest upon admission and then rigorously educating them, these "Ancient Eight" universities have provided employers, investors and even voters a meritocratic seal of approval. Some one-third of U.S. presidents and the current [Forbes 400 list](#) of richest Americans are Ivy alums, as well as eight sitting members of the Supreme Court.

But as evident just by reading or watching the news, something feels distinctly off on Ivy League campuses. While it's easy to chalk up the ham-handed protests, policies and presidential resignations to a particular moment right now, this erosion is several years in the making.

"33% of those making hiring decisions said they are less likely to hire Ivy League graduates today than five years ago. Only 7% said they were more likely to hire them."

“42% of hiring managers are more likely to hire public university grads than they were five years ago.”

It started with an abdication of trying to find great, well-rounded students in lieu of, as admissions offices blather, a “well-rounded class” of amalgamated specialists. Weird, if well-intended, admissions policies that can actually hurt different minority groups, as the Supreme Court recently ruled, both through distorted screening and eliminating standardized tests—[the best way](#), paradoxically, for people from under-privileged backgrounds to show they belong. (For all this effort, the Ivies still [inordinately favor](#) the rich and connected.) And then, once the students matriculate, the schools undermine the standard that otherwise makes their degrees mean anything. At America’s two most august universities, [Harvard](#) and [Yale](#), *nearly 80 percent* of all undergraduates average an A or A-minus.

And guess what? Employers have figured this out. Forbes surveyed nearly 300 subscribers to its Future of Work newsletter, with three-fourths of respondents holding direct hiring authority. Among those in charge of employment decisions, 33% said they are less likely to hire Ivy League graduates than they were five years ago, with only 7% saying they were more likely to hire them.



Several of the Ivy League colleges, including Columbia University, pictured above, have drawn ire in recent months from students, alumni, donors and politicians for how they've responded to on-campus antisemitism and the war in Gaza.

NIKITA PAYUSOV/GETTY IMAGES

“The bloom has been off the Ivies,” says Fred Prager, a senior managing director at Hilltop Securities and a trustee at California’s Claremont McKenna College whose investment firm specializes in higher education. “What has occurred more recently, with the pandemic and with all this nonsense going on, post October 7th, and all the rest has just been a bit of an accelerant.”

Adds Jim Clark, who hires technologists for Kansas City’s HNTB, the nation's second largest architectural firm: “The perception of what those graduates bring has changed. And I think it’s more related to what they’re actually teaching and what they walk away with.”

Perhaps this is an indictment of all of higher education? Absolutely not. Forbes also surveyed the hirers about public university graduates and the grads of good non-Ivy private colleges, and the numbers are almost *precisely the opposite* of the Ivy results, with 42% saying they are more likely to hire public university grads and 37% saying they are more likely to hire grads of non-Ivy League private colleges than five years ago. Only about 5% say they are less likely to hire from either group.

“37% of those with hiring authority said state universities were doing better than five years ago in preparing job candidates.”

“Just 14% of hiring managers said the Ivy League colleges were doing better than five years ago in preparing job candidates, while 20% said they’re doing worse.”

“Being able to put yourself in someone else’s shoes is really important,” says Laura Bier, a San Diego-based management consultant specializing in healthcare and defense. “Kids who've been to a public school have had a broader diversity of friends from different backgrounds, teachers from different backgrounds and are better able to be nimble in those situations.”

It comes down to preparedness. Some 37% of those with hiring authority in our survey said state universities were doing better than five years ago in preparing job candidates and 31% thought non-Ivy League private colleges had improved. Just 14% had similar praise for the Ivy League, while 20% said they’re doing worse, making this the only segment in which negative appraisals of the trend in job readiness exceeded positive ones.



One of Forbes' New Ivies, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, offers a "CS + X" major program that allows students to combine computer science with other arts and science studies.

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The conclusion: great state schools and ascendant private ones are turning out hungry graduates; the Ivies are more apt to turn out entitled ones. And in creating the latter, the Ivies have taken the value they've spent centuries creating—a degree that employers craved—and in just a few years done a lot to forfeit it.

“For some, they believe once they've got the sheepskin, that's their ticket. How dare you question my competency,” says Prager. “I've been running scared my whole life.” (Prager graduated from Stanford in 1969, before it was “Stanford.”) The billionaire energy trader turned philanthropist John Arnold [echoed that sentiment on X](#) last week: “I've had several conversations in recent years with people who hire undergrads for highly competitive jobs (tech, finance, consulting etc) that are moving away from the Ivies and towards flagship state universities, citing better cultural and professional fit.”

So if the Ivies aren't the Ivies anymore, which schools exactly are? Forbes decided to channel these hirers and determine the New Ivies, the 10 public universities and 10 ascendant private ones turning out the smart, driven graduates craved by employers of all types.

Our methodology was as follows. After disqualifying the Ivies (and we used the Ivy-plus yardstick, which includes Stanford, MIT, Duke and the University of Chicago, as well as the eight classics Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Brown, Penn, Columbia, Dartmouth and Cornell), we started with 1,743 colleges of at least 4,000 students (understanding that small liberal arts schools have always

offered a more boutique experience and are hard to compare with research universities). Using 2022 admissions data, the most recent available, we then screened for schools with high standardized test scores (our New Ivies average a robust 1482 SAT and 33 ACT) and where at least half the applicants supplied the scores, regardless of whether they were required to do so for admission—in other words, places that still rely heavily on objective measures of success.

Compared to 5 years ago, are you more or less likely to hire Ivy League graduates?

Why the focus on test scores for our New Ivies list? While many colleges made tests optional during the pandemic, exactly the time when these tests would have been most useful, Opportunity Insights' research shows standardized tests are both [more predictive](#) of success in college than grades and fairer to all applicants than some other admission criteria (such as counselors' recommendations), which favor wealthier private high school grads. (A steady stream of schools, including Ivies Dartmouth, Harvard, Yale and Brown, have recently announced they're reinstating test requirements. [The University of California](#), meanwhile, still refuses to even look at applicant test scores, which is why none of those schools hits our list.)

For similar reasons, we also screened with a selectivity yardstick (below a 20% admission rate at private schools, 50% at publics). And then from there, we took the 32 remaining schools and surveyed our hiring manager respondents about each one.

Many of the schools on our list are well known; Johns Hopkins and University of Michigan have long been considered Ivy caliber institutions, while

Vanderbilt, Rice and Emory are often referred to as Southern Ivies. Others like New York's Binghamton University are already respected in their geographic areas, but now are attracting wider notice.

None of this suggests that the Ivies have completely lost their luster. It just means that, through miscalculation and mismanagement, they've given up the centuries-old free pass conveyed by employers—even from their own alumni. Listen to [Jacqueline Reses](#), a member of [Forbes' Richest Self-Made Women](#) list and a loyal Penn alum, who's given \$5 million and sits on Wharton's Board of Advisors: "I wouldn't forego the opportunity to hire brilliant, tenacious, smart, wonderful kids, but I'd be more thoughtful in how I'd screen them." Long-time skeptics, meanwhile, feel a dose of vindication. "I don't give an edge to Ivy League schools. That's not to say I won't hire someone from them," says billionaire entrepreneur and Shark Tank star [Mark Cuban](#), who chose to attend Indiana University in the late 1970s because it offered the best bang-for-the-buck among undergraduate business schools. "It's just that I have never believed they make better employees."

This week, many students who got into very selective schools are choosing where to attend. In previous years, Ivy admission generally translated into matriculation. Now, some of these schools, with their universal Latin mottos, might consider a new one: *Caveat emptor*.

Data Research by [Rina Torchinsky](#)

THE PUBLIC IVIES

These 10 state universities, spread across the U.S., attract high-achievers and turn out hard-working, highly-regarded employees. (Military

academies were not included in our analysis. California universities were excluded because they don't consider test scores.)

THE NEW PRIVATE IVIES

These 10 private schools, located in nine states and Washington D.C., are attracting the smartest students and plaudits from employers. Our analysis excluded schools with fewer than 4,000 students, the eight old Ivies and four Ivy-plus schools—Stanford, MIT, Duke and Chicago.