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## U.S. News ranks PSC online bachelor's degree program among nation's best

For the second consecutive year, Pensacola State College's online Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program has been listed among the best in Florida and nation by U.S. News and World Report.

In the "Best Online Bachelor's Programs 2020 Edition" listing, Pensacola State's online BSN program was ranked third among Florida College System institutions. Pensacola State also tied for 9<sup>th</sup> with Florida Atlantic University among Florida colleges and universities and was ranked 73<sup>rd</sup> in the United States.

"I was so excited that we ranked in 2019 but I am even more pleased that we improved over last year," said Pensacola State President Ed Meadows. In 2019, the college's online BSN program was ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in Florida and 114<sup>th</sup> in the nation. PSC scored 73 out of a possible 100 points.

"I am very pleased that we ranked where we did considering we are evaluated against traditional universities and other Florida colleges," he added.

To calculate the rankings, U.S. News and World Report assessed schools based on four categories: engagement (35 percent), services and technologies (25 percent), faculty credentials and training (20 percent), and expert opinion (20 percent). Pensacola State received 77 points out of a possible 100.

"A survey also was sent to high-ranking academic administrators for their feedback," Meadows explained. "Some of the data elements used for rankings were exam (in-class) policies, ADA friendliness, graduation rates, class sizes, retention rates, student indebtedness, smartphone accessibility, 24/7 tech support, and terminal degree faculty."

Buffi Bailey, coordinator of the BSN program, was proud of the college's ranking.

“Our online BSN program is so successful because we understand our purpose and that is meeting the student where they are – both on their professional and academic journey,” Bailey said.

“Almost all of my students are full-time working nurses, so the convenience of an online platform meets their needs.”

She also acknowledges the caliber of students enrolled in the BSN program.

“The types of student that enroll in our online BSN program are working nursing and most of that student-population reports that they work full-time. For the bedside nurse this means going to college and working three to four 12-hour shifts per week with added time on each side for reports. We have students who work 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and complete their school work at night.”

Choosing Pensacola State was an easy decision for Teresa Teel, a current student enrolled in the BSN program.

“The program is flexible with my schedule, leading to a great school-life balance. I also am able to work full-time as an RN while completing my degree because the courses are offered online,” she said. “The educational material and the courses have taught me much about health care that I never knew existed. This new information and the way it has been provided leaves me confident in furthering my education.”

Teel also mentioned the program’s affordable tuition.

“The program has allowed me to pay out-of-pocket rather than accumulating student loans,” Teel said, adding she highly recommends the BSN program to any nurse who wants to further their education.

Bailey noted though small, the college’s BSN program strives to provide service to students at the lowest cost in the region.

Using data gathered from the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. News and World Report reported that 2019 Pensacola State graduates incurred no student loan debts. However that data represented the median of graduates owing debts – not the median of all graduates.

“The Florida College System along with Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program determined that Median Annual/Annualized Earnings of Pensacola State College BSN graduates employed full-time within the fourth quarter after graduation is \$72,868,” said Michael Johnston, executive director of Institutional Research at the college.

Johnston also reported that 72 percent of the college's BSN program students are fully-employed within the fourth quarter after graduation.

Bailey agreed, noting some students earn their BSN for immediate pay raises.

"...While others are seeking BSN degrees to retain or apply for leadership positions. Still we have other graduates who move on to seek master's degrees for careers as nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetists or educators," she added.

Rachel Morris, a full-time nurse, wife and mother of four, said the online BSN program is allowing her to finish a longtime goal.

"The BSN program at Pensacola State provides the nontraditional student – like me – the opportunity to achieve a goal in an economical and convenient way, while providing top-notch instruction," she said. "After being out of the classroom for many years, this program has given me the opportunity to finish what I started 19 years ago."

Launched in 2011, the college's BSN program was designed to accommodate students who already work in the health care field. And since its inception, the program has garnered several other accolades.

In its 2019 Best Online RN to BSN Programs rankings, Pensacola State was listed at No. 4 in the state by RegisteredNursing.org, a nursing advocacy organization. In 2015, the BSN program also was ranked third in the nation by Affordable Colleges Online for offering academic rigor, student support and affordability for online learning.

The Pensacola State BSN program also was the first in the region to earn accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. The commissions are two of only three national accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

For this year's U.S. News and World Report ranking, the college submitted data on online courses participation, the ability of students to interact with instructors and other students, technological support, and faculty and academic credentials. Also, U.S. News and World Report collected data from August to October and identified 353 schools – 20 percent of all schools surveyed – that have online bachelor's degree programs as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

In its 2020 listings, the college also was ranked in several other categories by U.S. News and World Report. Pensacola State tied for No. 9 in Best Colleges for Veterans and No. 26 in the Regional Colleges South categories. It also ranked No. 20 in the Top Performers on Social Mobility category.

Published annually, the U.S. News and World Report listing ranks more than 1,400 private and public colleges and universities and is a guide to help parents and students select schools.

The complete “Best Colleges 2020 Edition” report was released today, Jan. 14, and is available at [www.usnews.com/bestcolleges](http://www.usnews.com/bestcolleges). For more information, contact Sheila Nichols, PSC’s director of marketing at 850-484-1428 or [snichols@pensacolastate.edu](mailto:snichols@pensacolastate.edu).