



**NC STATE**

THINK AND DO  
THE EXTRAORDINARY

# Administrative Leadership Meeting

Kevin Howell

Chancellor

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

# Upcoming ALMs

## Next Meeting

September 15

Research Update

Titmus

July 14, 2026 meeting canceled

## Following Dates

- November 10, 2026
- January 12, 2027
- March 9, 2027
- May 11, 2027



## Leadership Updates: Cabinet

- Jim Pfaendtner named executive vice chancellor and provost
- Lisa Zapata named interim vice chancellor and dean, Division of Academic and Student Affairs

# Leadership Updates: Deans

- Veena Misra appointed interim dean of the College of Engineering
- Sharon Joines appointed interim dean of the College of Design
- College of Natural Resources Dean Myron Floyd returning to Faculty





## Spring Commencement

- Our class of 2026 represented all 100 North Carolina counties, 45 states and 59 countries, and included 1,432 first-generation students, 133 veterans and 722 international students
- 3,657 graduated with honors, including over 1,000 for each distinction of summa, magna and cum laude



# Understanding University Rankings

NC State University Administrative Leadership Meeting – May 19, 2026  
McKinney Austin, Interim Senior Vice Provost for University Data and Analytics

# Introduction to University Data and Analytics (UDA) Unit

# What Is UDA?

University Data and Analytics (UDA) is NC State's institutional research office and the responsible unit for the university-level data and analytics function.

Unit established July 2025, growing out of Institutional Strategy and Analysis.



# Scope of UDA

UDA is a central administrative unit, and is administrative in nature—does not directly support faculty scholarly activities, instruction, or students.

UDA has cross-domain responsibility. Many other administrative units do data and analytics work within their own business areas, e.g. EMAS for student data, UHR for HR data, etc., but for UDA, data and analytics *is* our business area.

# UDA Mission

 Empowering leaders and decision makers with the accurate, timely, and actionable information

 Maximizing the value and availability of institutional data resources for the broader NC State community

 Providing NC State's stakeholders, partners, and external organizations with official university data

# Data and Analytics Strategy

Five Integrated Components Advance Data and Analytics at NC State's

*Data Governance Program*



*Data literacy training and outreach*

*Modern enterprise infrastructure*

*University Data Catalog*

*Dashboards, reports, and analytics*

# UDA's Work

UDA is composed of six small teams:

- **Institutional Reporting** - External Reporting, ad hoc data requests, UNC SO reporting and data marts



# UDA's Work

UDA is composed of six small teams:

- Institutional Reporting
- **Survey Research** - Design, administer, and analyze institutional surveys; Survey Reg; survey consultation



# UDA's Work

UDA is composed of six small teams:

- Institutional Reporting
- Survey Research
- **Research and Analysis** - Briefings, ad hoc research projects, policy analysis



# UDA's Work

UDA is composed of six small teams:

- Institutional Reporting
- Survey Research
- Research and Analysis
- **Business Intelligence** - Dashboards, platform governance/processes



# UDA's Work

UDA is composed of six small teams:

- Institutional Reporting
- Survey Research
- Research and Analysis
- Business Intelligence
- **Data Science** - Advanced analytics, predictive models, custom analytics tools



# UDA's Work

UDA is composed of six small teams:

- Institutional Reporting
- Survey Research
- Research and Analysis
- Business Intelligence
- Data Science
- **Data Governance** - DG program administration and coordination, policy development, data catalog, data literacy



# Understanding University Rankings

# Agenda

- Importance and limitations of rankings
- The rankings landscape
- Specific rankings
  - U.S. News Best Colleges
  - QS World University Rankings
  - Princeton Review Best Value Colleges
- Comparisons
- Considerations

# Importance of Rankings

# Importance of Rankings

Rankings shape how stakeholders perceive NC State

- Prospective and current students
- Prospective and current faculty and staff
- Funding agencies (including other countries)
- Public at large
- Other institutions and prospective partners

Can be a tool for measuring strategic success

# Limitations of Rankings

Employ a one-size-fits-all approach

Many rankings with different audiences, methodologies and results

No agreement in higher education about what to measure, how to rank

Perception feeds into reputation assessment

“New” rankings lag current data by 1-2 years

Limited by available measures

# The College Rankings Landscape

# The College Rankings Landscape

## Domestic Rankings

Best U.S. universities  
Best public U.S. universities

## International Rankings

Best universities in the world

## Academic Field / Program Rankings

Best engineering colleges  
Best veterinary medicine schools  
Interdisciplinary sciences

## Special Interest

Best value  
Best schools for veterans  
Sustainability

# Methods Landscape: Measures

Admissions,  
cost, aid

Academic  
outcomes

Economic  
outcomes

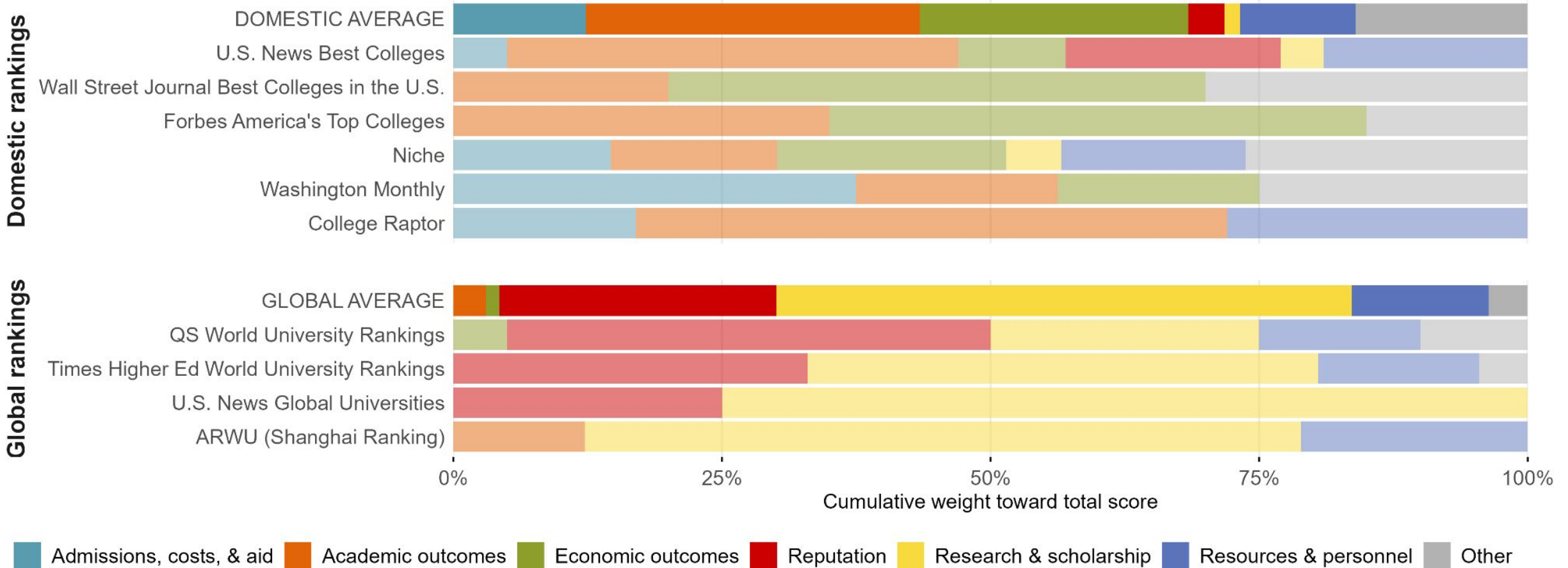
Reputation

Research and  
scholarship

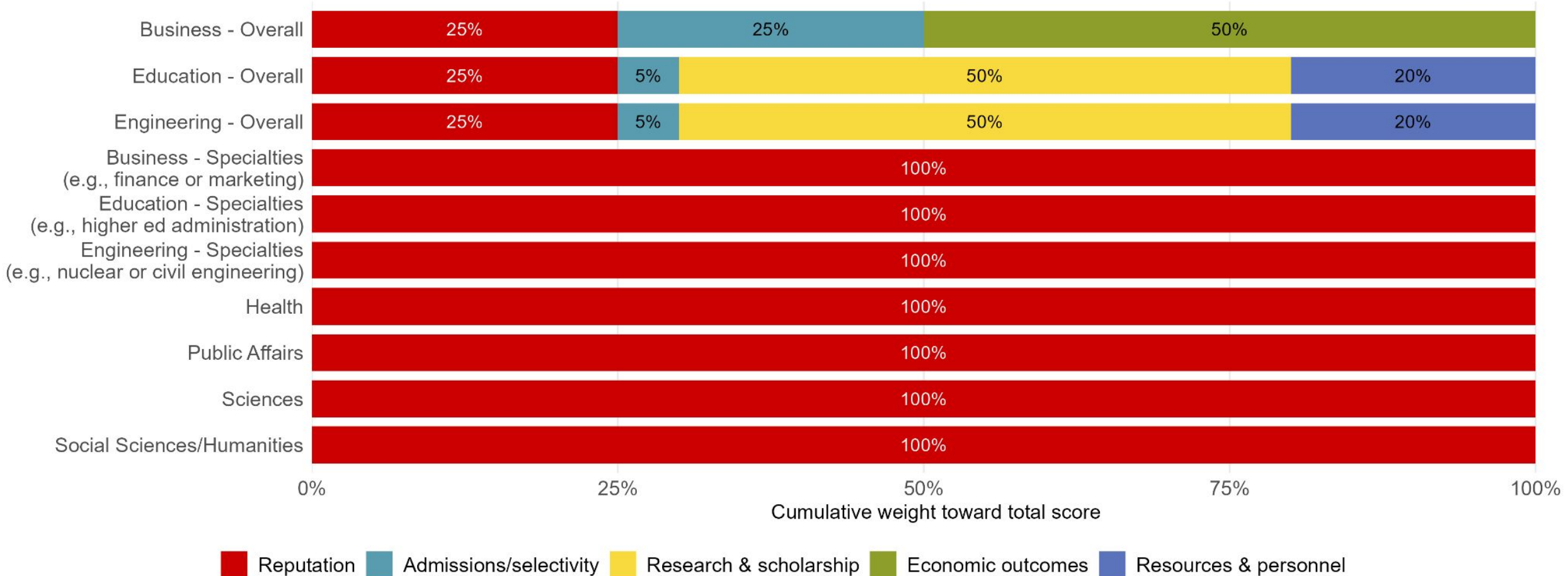
Resources and  
personnel

Other

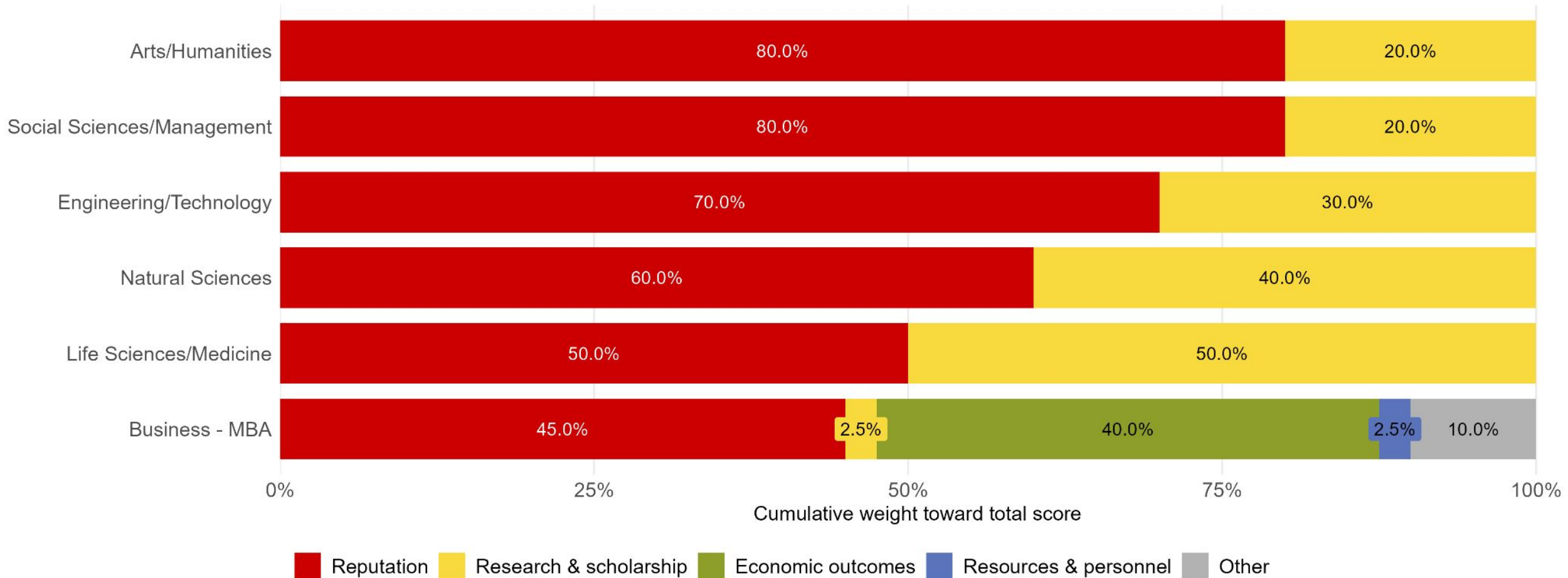
# Undergraduate Ranking Weights



# U.S. News Graduate Ranking Weights



# QS World University Rankings by Subject



# Data Collection Landscape

## Coordination with Institutions

Yes:  
Work with Institutional Research offices to collect and verify data

No:  
Publications procure data through public, third-party, and proprietary sources

## Data Sources

Institutional Data

Survey Data

Government Data

Third-Party Data

Proprietary Data

## Transparency and Access to Rankings Data

Yes: NC State has portal access to review metric-by-metric performance

No: Performance insight only available via public website, or behind paywall

# Many Rankings & Ratings



# Many Rankings & Ratings



# U.S. News: Best Colleges

# U.S. News & World Report (U.S. News) Best Colleges

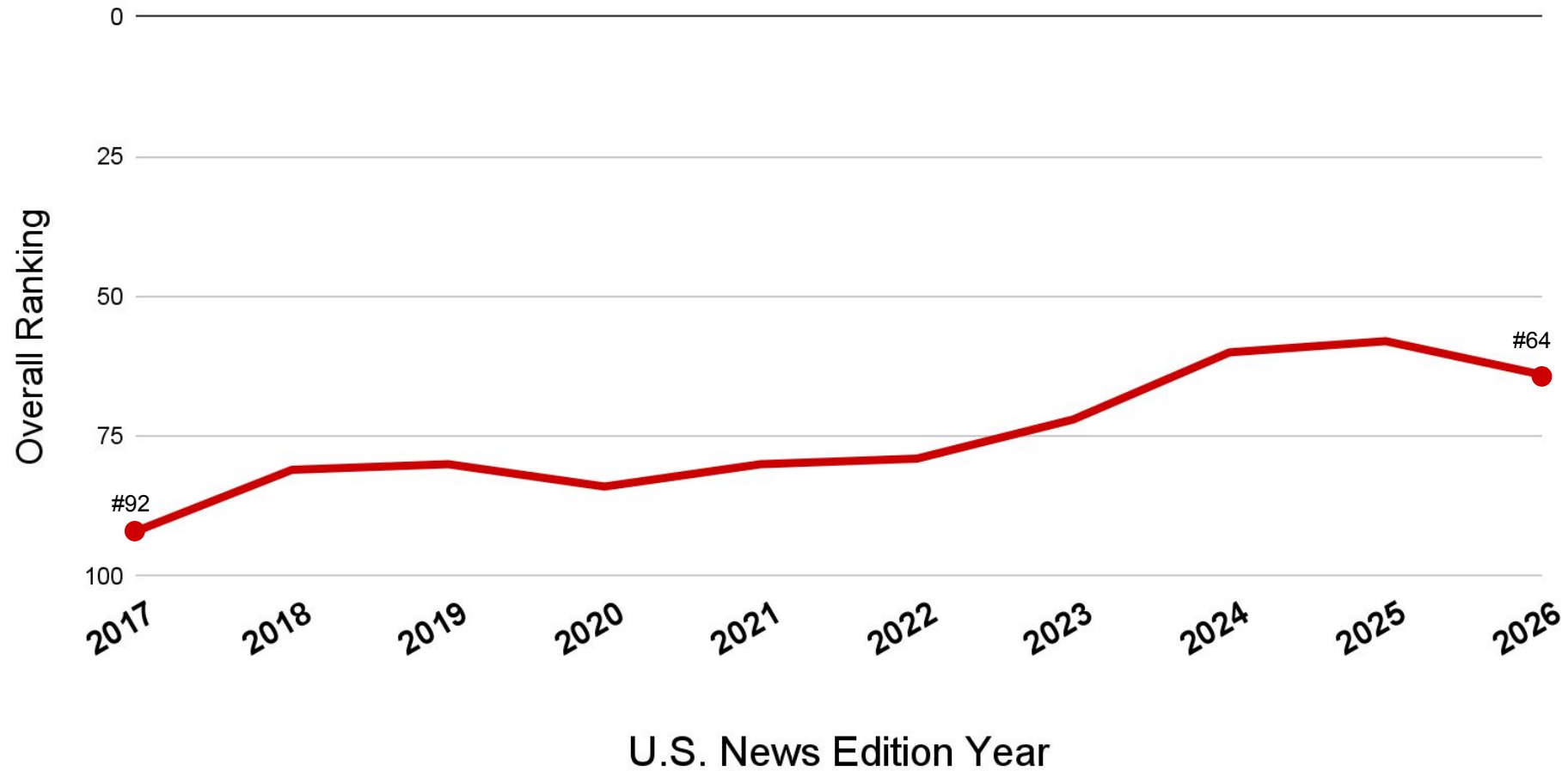
- **Population:** “National Universities” - U.S. universities that award bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees, with high faculty research.
- **Data Collection and Submission:** Summer
- **Release:** September
- **Dominant Metrics:** Academic outcomes / reputation



# U.S. News: Metrics and Weights

Category	Metrics	Weight (total=100%)
Reputation	Peer assessment	20%
Academic outcomes	Graduation rates	16%
Academic outcomes	Graduation rate performance	10%
Academic outcomes	Pell graduation performance	5.5%
Academic outcomes	Pell graduation rates	5.5%
Academic outcomes	First-year retention rates	5%
Resources & personnel	Financial resources per student	8%
Resources & personnel	Faculty salaries	6%
Resources & personnel	Student-faculty ratio	3%
Resources & personnel	Full-time faculty	2%
Economic outcomes	Borrower debt	5%
Economic outcomes	College grads earning more than a high school grad	5%
Admissions, costs, & aid	Standardized tests	5%
Research & scholarship	Citations per publication	1.25%
Research & scholarship	Field-Weighted Citation Impact	1.25%
Research & scholarship	Publications cited in top 5% of journals	1%
Research & scholarship	Publications cited in top 25% of journals	0.5%

# U.S. News: NC State Overall Rank Trends



# NC State & Official Peers: U.S. News 2026

2026 U.S. News Best Colleges: National Universities		
Institution	Doctoral universities	Public doctoral universities
Georgia Institute of Technology	32	9
University of California - Davis	32	9
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	36	12
University of Maryland - College Park	42	16
Rutgers University - New Brunswick	42	16
University of Georgia	46	19
Purdue University	46	19
Virginia Polytechnic Institute	51	21
Texas A&M University	51	21
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities	59	26
<b>NC State University</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>29</b>
Michigan State University	64	29
University of Arizona	127	63

# U.S. News & World Report Best Graduate Schools

- **21 programs/colleges ranked in top 100 nationwide**
  - 3 in top 10
  - 7 in top 30
  - 11 in top 50

#4 in Veterinary Medicine  
#5 in Biological / Agricultural Engineering  
#7 in Nuclear Engineering



**QS:**  
**World University Rankings**

# QS (Quacquarelli Symonds)

## World University Rankings

- **Population:** Top 1,500 universities in the world with in-person, on-campus instruction, that award undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.
- **Data Collection and Submission:** Fall - Spring
- **Release:** Every June
- **Dominant metric:** Reputation

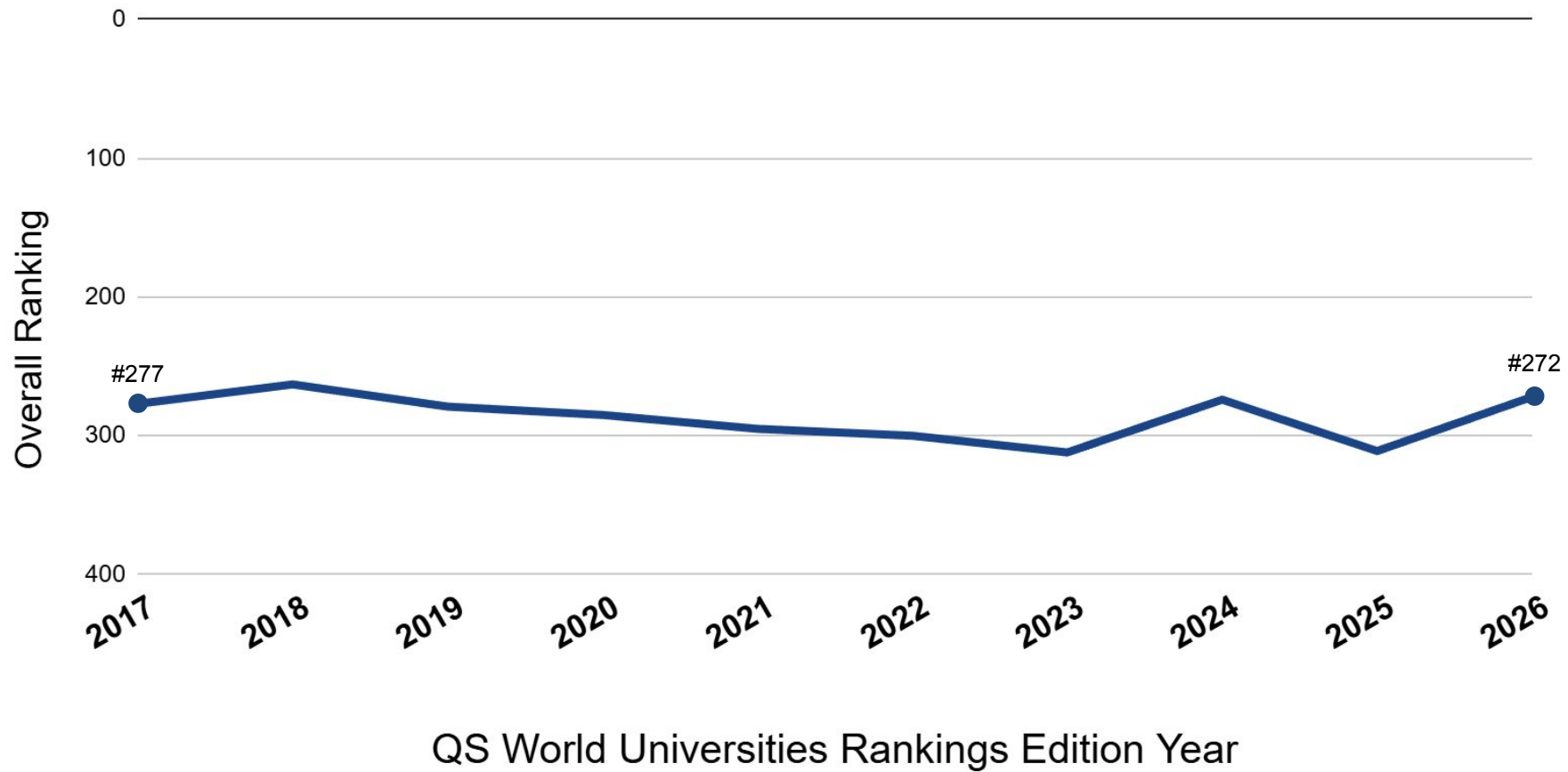


**WORLD**  
**UNIVERSITY**  
**RANKINGS**

# QS: Metrics and Weights

Category	Metrics	Weight (Total = 100%)
Reputation	Academic Reputation	30%
Reputation	Employer Reputation	15%
Research & scholarship	Citations per Faculty	20%
Research & scholarship	International Research Network	5%
Resources & personnel	Faculty Student Ratio	10%
Resources & personnel	International Faculty Ratio	5%
Other	International Student Ratio	5%
Other	Sustainability	5%
Economic outcomes	Employment Outcomes	5%

# QS: NC State Overall Rank Trends



# NC State & Official Peers: QS 2026

2026 QS World University Rankings			
Institution	All ranked universities	U.S. doctoral universities	U.S. public doctoral universities
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	70	22	6
Purdue University	88	26	9
University of California - Davis	114	28	11
Georgia Institute of Technology	123	30	12
Texas A&M University	144	32	14
Michigan State University	161	34	15
University of Maryland - College Park	207	40	19
University of Minnesota (System)	210	41	20
<b>NC State University</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>23</b>
University of Arizona	287	51	26
Rutgers University - New Brunswick	328	58	30
Virginia Polytechnic Institute	358	62	32
University of Georgia	525	72	41

# QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) World University Rankings by Subject

- **22 programs/colleges ranked in top 300 worldwide**
  - 2 in top 25
  - 5 in top 150
  - 11 in top 200

#13 in Veterinary Science  
#25 in Agriculture and Forestry

# Princeton Review: Best Value Colleges

# Princeton Review

## Best Value Colleges

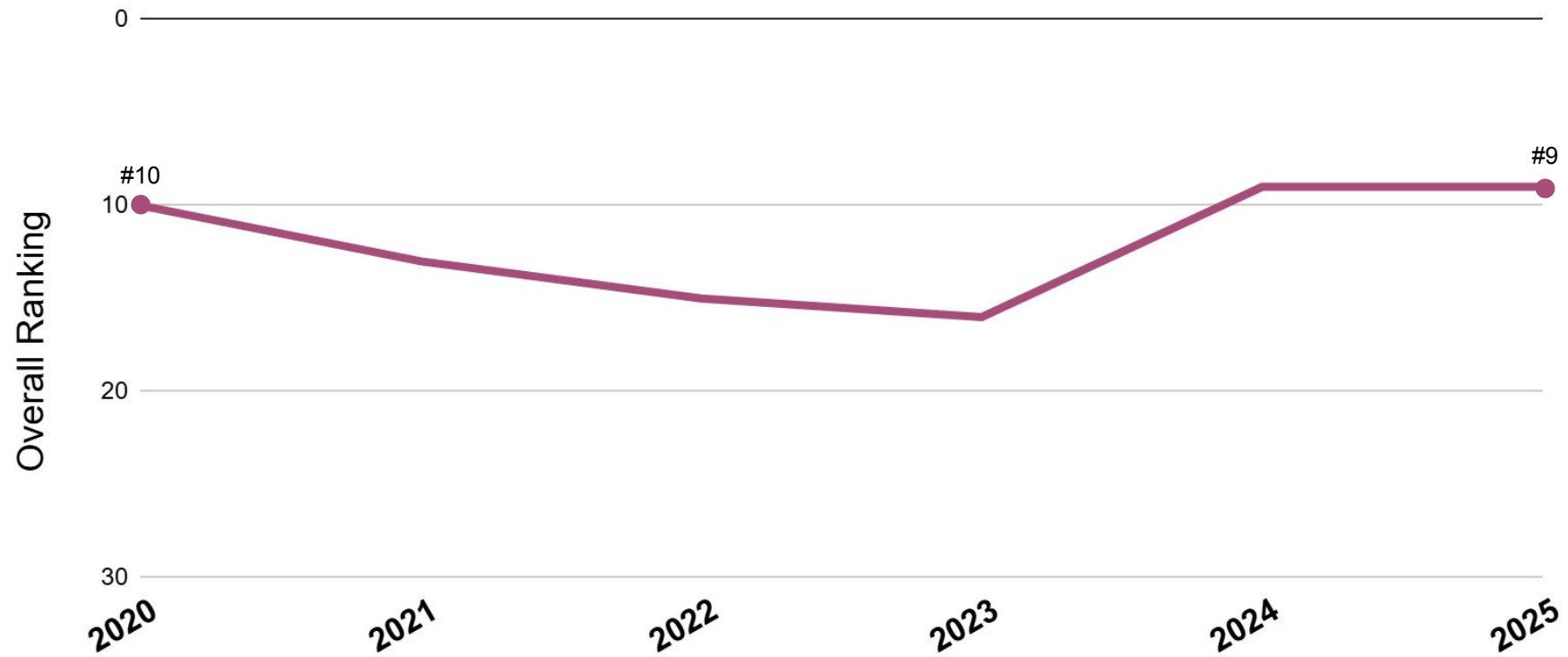
- **Population:** Bachelor's degree-granting institutions in the U.S.
- **Data Collection and Submission:** Spring
- **Release:** June
- **Dominant metric:** Salary / cost / selectivity



# Princeton Review Best Value: Metrics

Category	Metrics
Economic outcomes	Early & mid-career salary
Resources & personnel	Student satisfaction with teaching
Admissions, costs, & aid	Test scores
Admissions, costs, & aid	GPA
Admissions, costs, & aid	Other selectivity metrics
Admissions, costs, & aid	Need-based financial aid
Admissions, costs, & aid	Student satisfaction with financial aid
Admissions, costs, & aid	Average net price
Other	Career social impact

# Princeton Review: NC State Public Rank Trends



Princeton Review Best Value Colleges (Public Schools) Edition Year

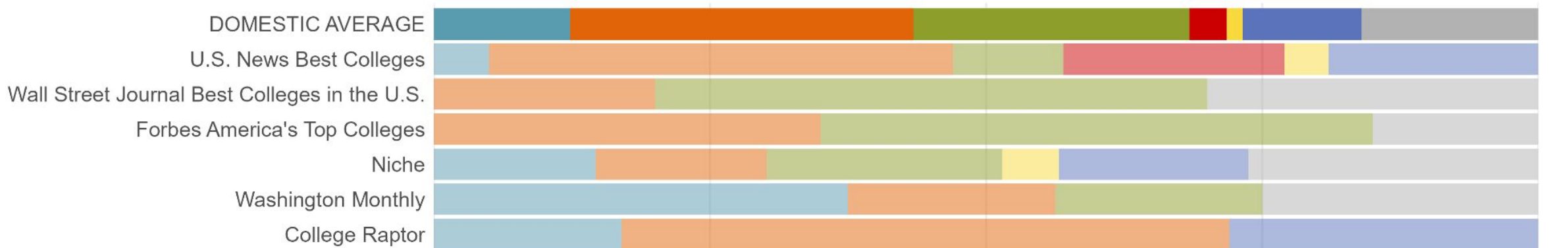
# NC State & Official Peers: Princeton Review 2025

2025 Princeton Review Best Value Colleges: Public		
Institution	All Public Colleges	Public doctoral universities
Georgia Institute of Technology	1	1
<b>NC State University</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	10	10
University of Georgia	12	12
Texas A&M University	18	18
Purdue University	20	19
University of California - Davis	25	23
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities	32	29
Virginia Polytechnic Institute	39	36
Michigan State University	-	-
Rutgers University - New Brunswick	-	-
University of Maryland - College Park	-	-
University of Arizona	-	-

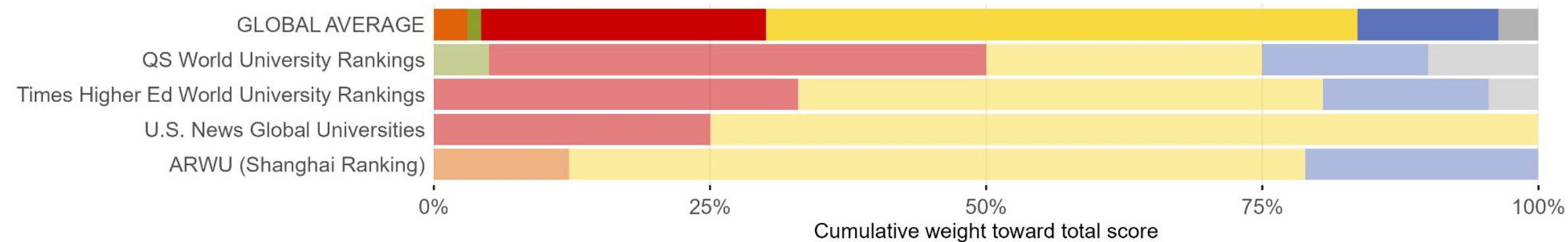
# Comparisons

# Methods Landscape

Domestic rankings



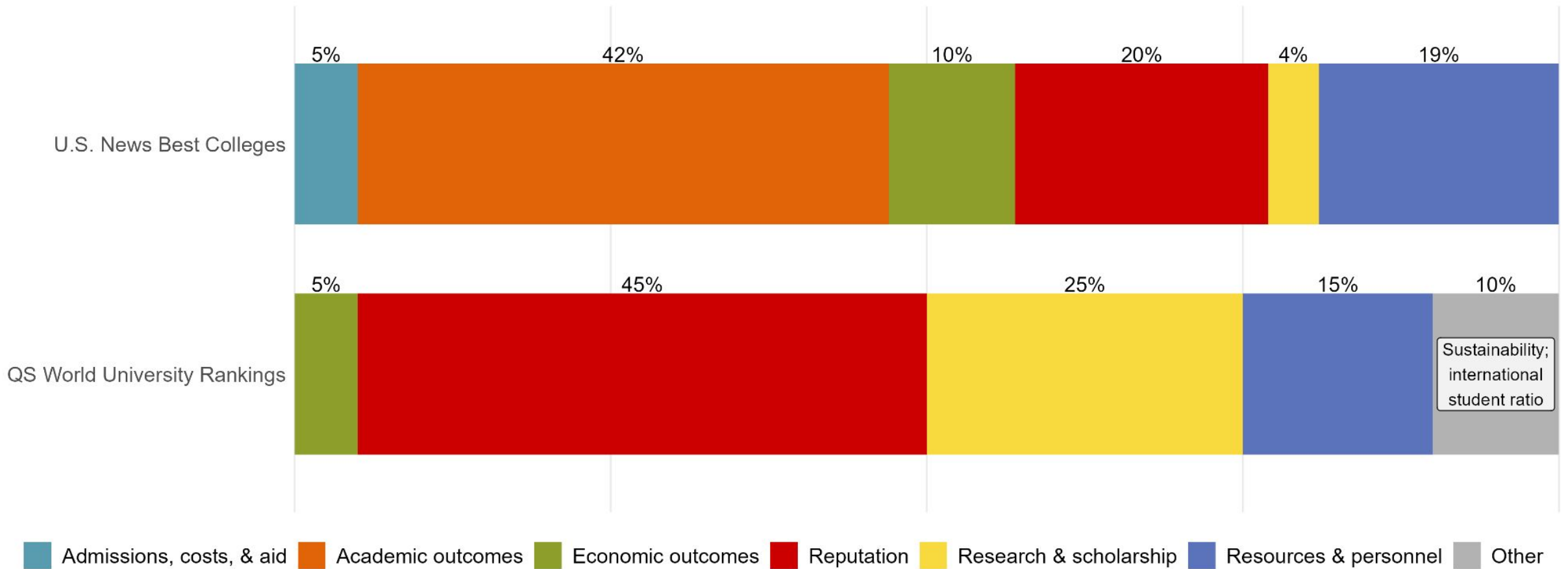
Global rankings



0% 25% 50% 75% 100%  
Cumulative weight toward total score

Admissions, costs, & aid Academic outcomes Economic outcomes Reputation Research & scholarship Resources & personnel Other

# Methods (Metrics and Weights)



# NC State Trends (U.S. public universities)

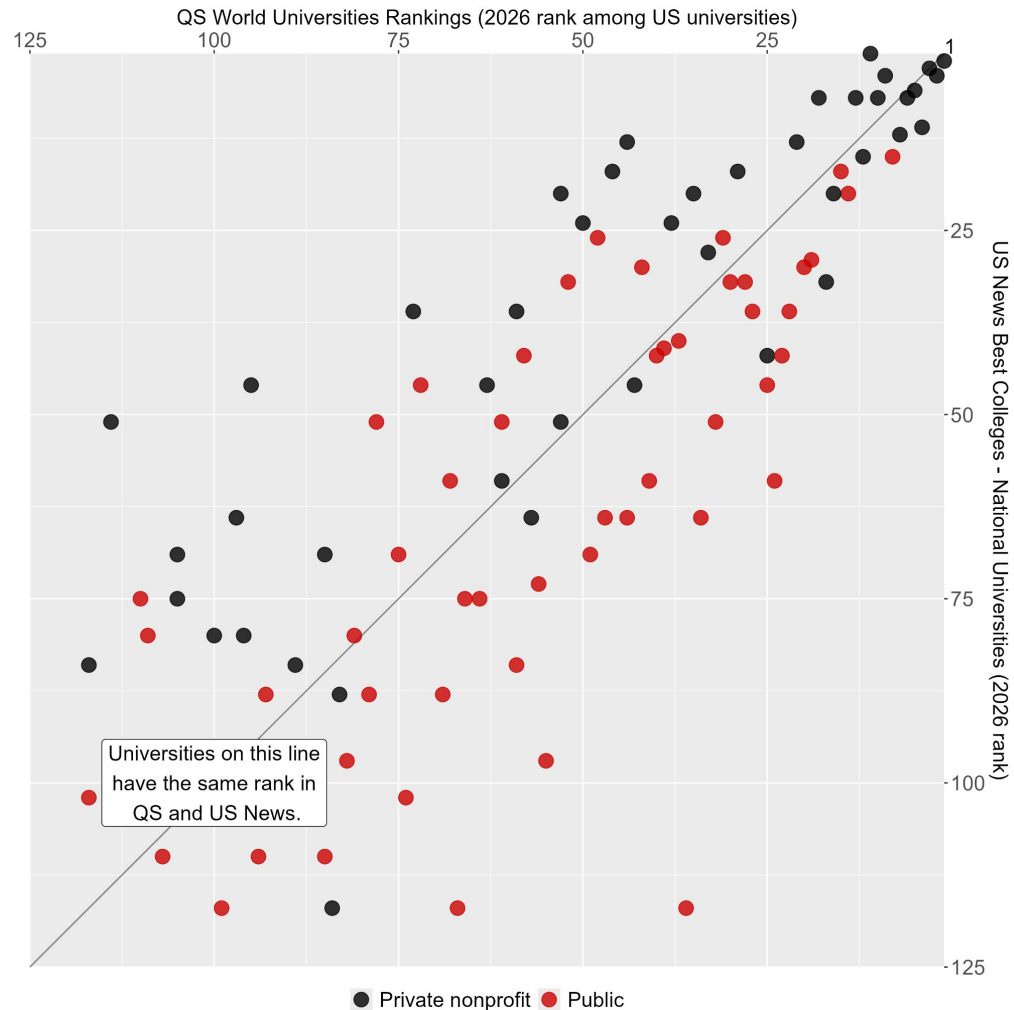
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>U.S. News Best Colleges</b>	#32	#32	#29	#28	#26	#29
<b>QS World University Rankings</b>	#30	#30	#28	#27	#27	#23

# Official Peers: U.S. Public Doctoral Ranks, 2026

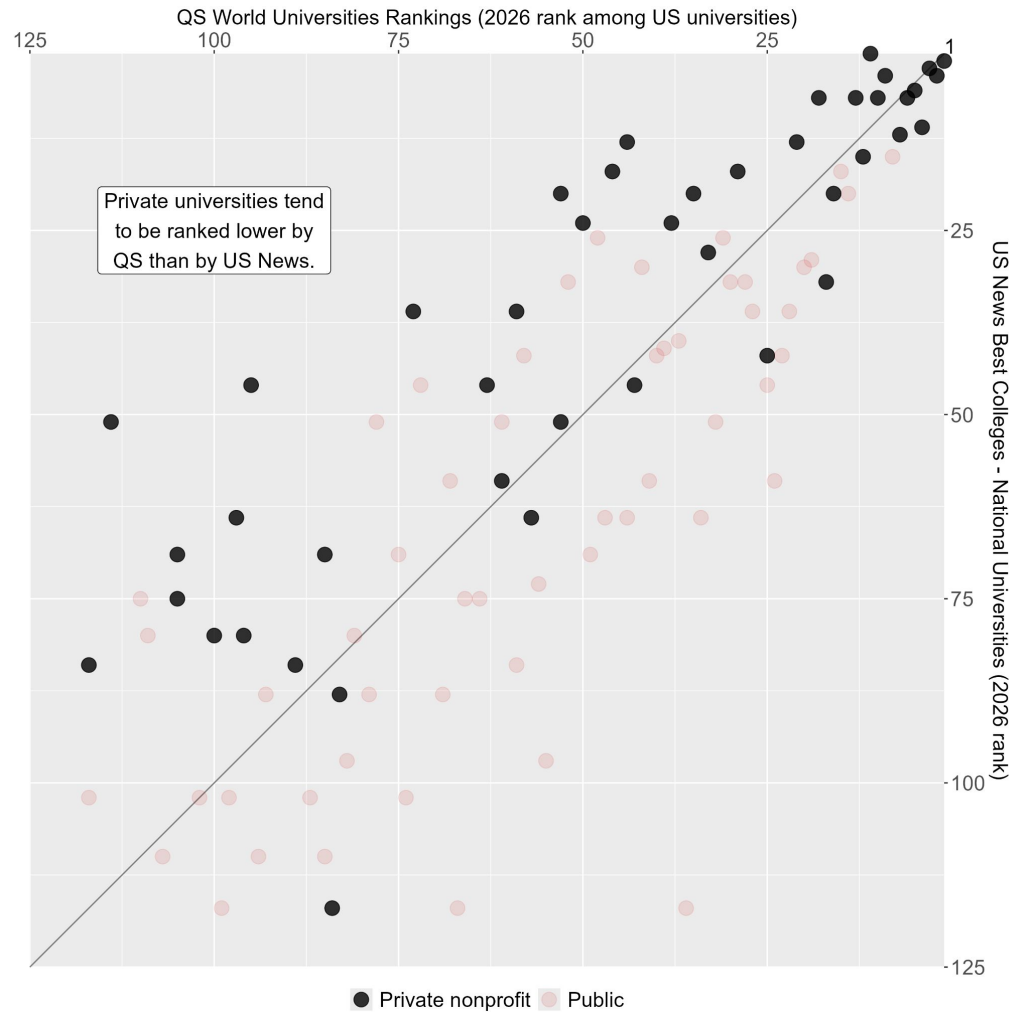
U.S. News	
Institution	Rank
Georgia Tech	9
UC Davis	9
Illinois	12
Maryland	16
Rutgers	16
Georgia	19
Purdue	19
Virginia Tech	21
Texas A&M	21
Minnesota	26
<b>NC State</b>	<b>29</b>
Michigan State	29
Arizona	63

QS	
Institution	Rank
Illinois	6
Purdue	9
UC Davis	11
Georgia Tech	12
Texas A&M	14
Michigan State	15
Maryland	19
Minnesota	20
<b>NC State</b>	<b>23</b>
Arizona	26
Rutgers	30
Virginia Tech	32
Georgia	41

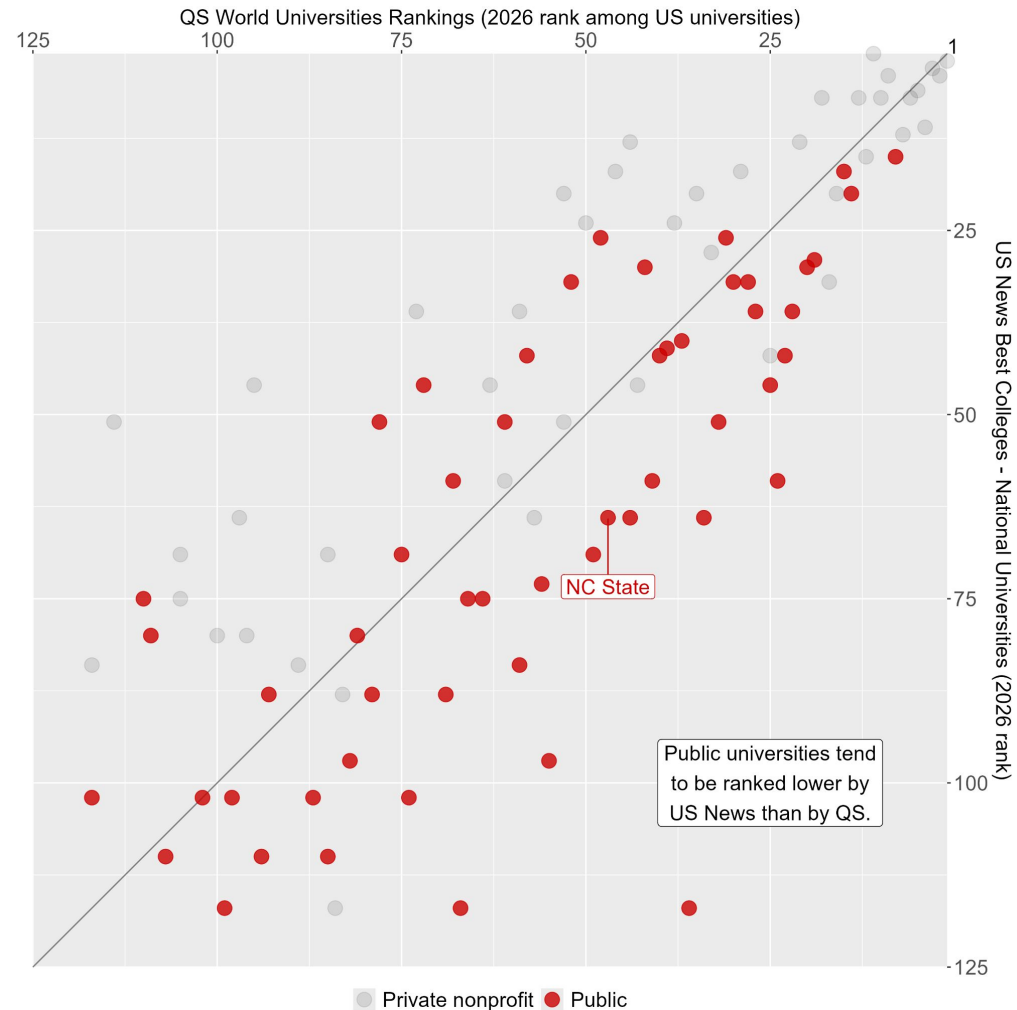
# Comparing U.S. News & QS rankings



# Comparing U.S. News & QS rankings



# Comparing U.S. News & QS rankings



# Considerations

# Rank Is Relative to Others

Year-over-year changes to rankings reflect changes in absolute performance and relative performance

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Year-over-year changes to rankings reflect changes in absolute performance and relative performance

- **Absolute:** Did NC State improve on a given metric?

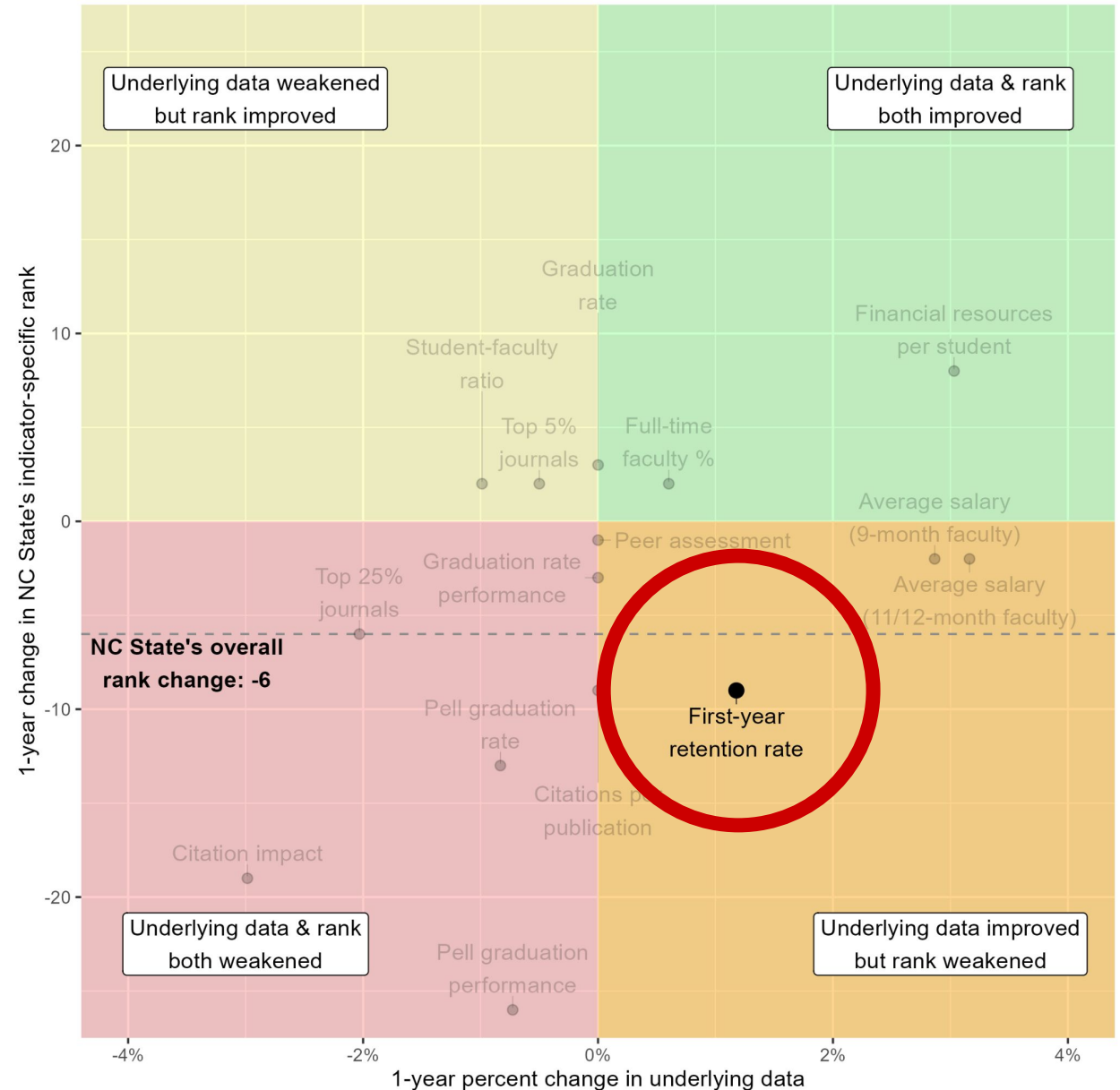
# Rank Is Relative to Others

Year-over-year changes to rankings reflect changes in absolute performance and relative performance

- **Absolute:** Did NC State improve on a given metric?
- **Relative:** Was the change at NC State better or worse than the change at other universities?

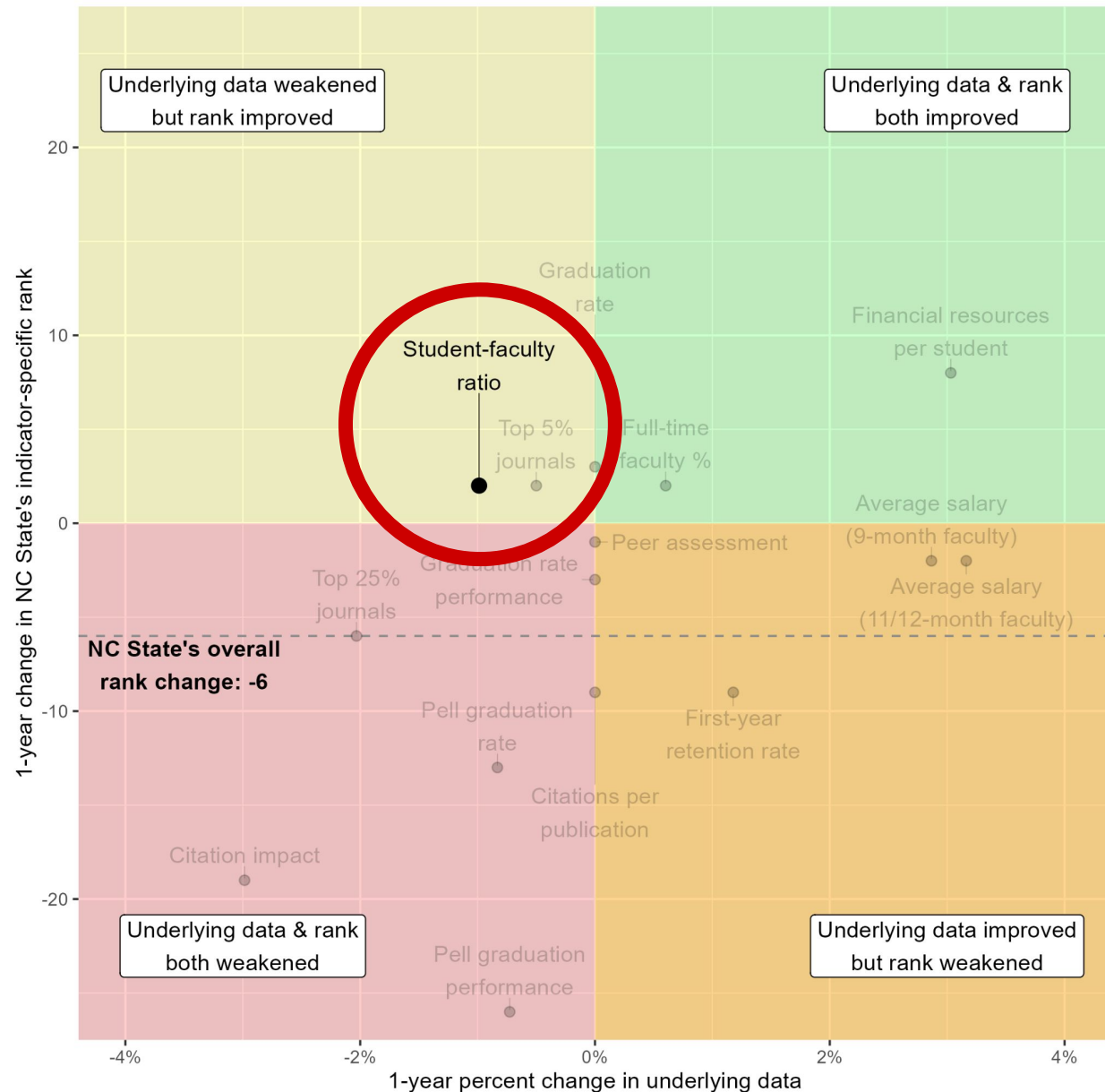
# Analysis for NC State

*2026 U.S. News Best Colleges Results: 1-Year Change in Absolute Performance v. Relative Performance*



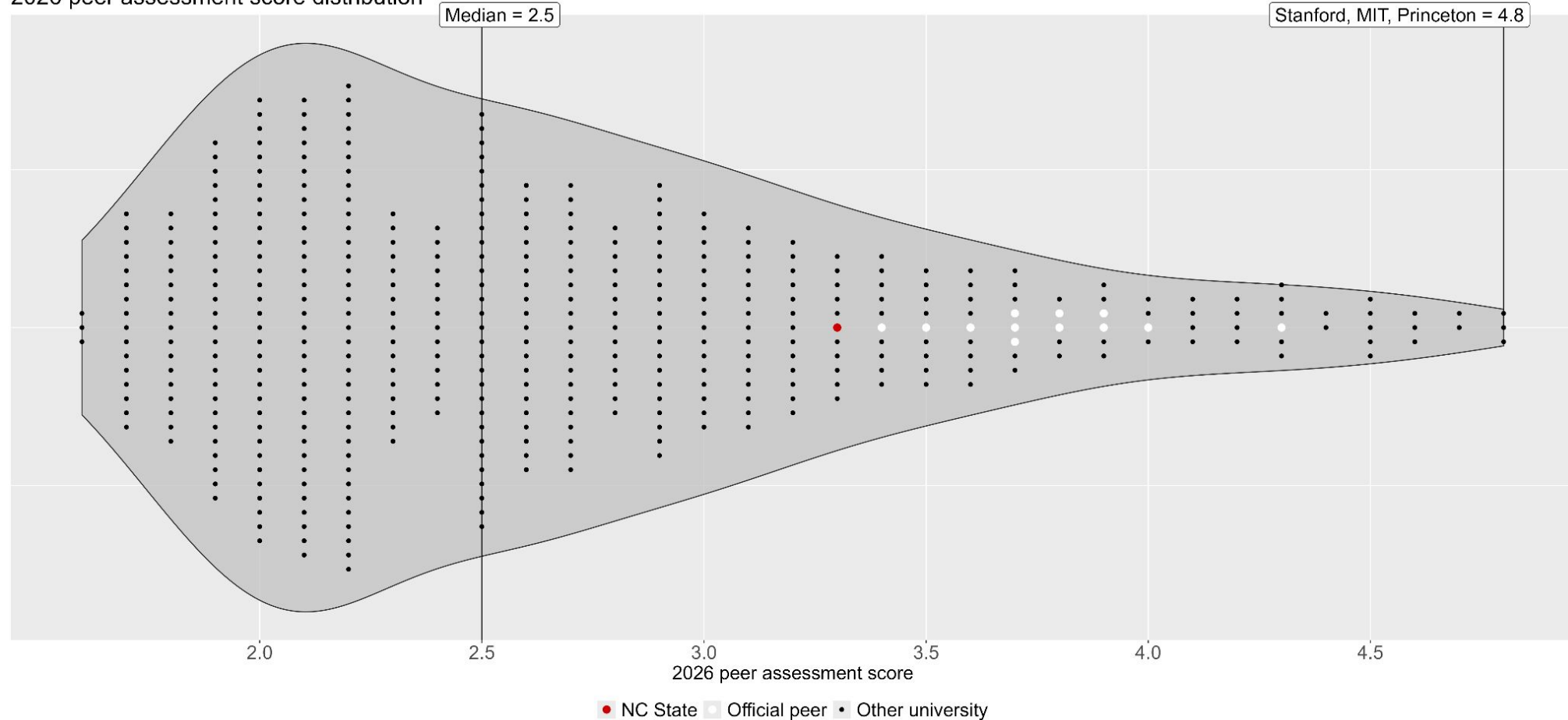
# Analysis for NC State

*2026 U.S. News Best Colleges Results: 1-Year Change in Absolute Performance v. Relative Performance*



# Peer Reputation (U.S. News)

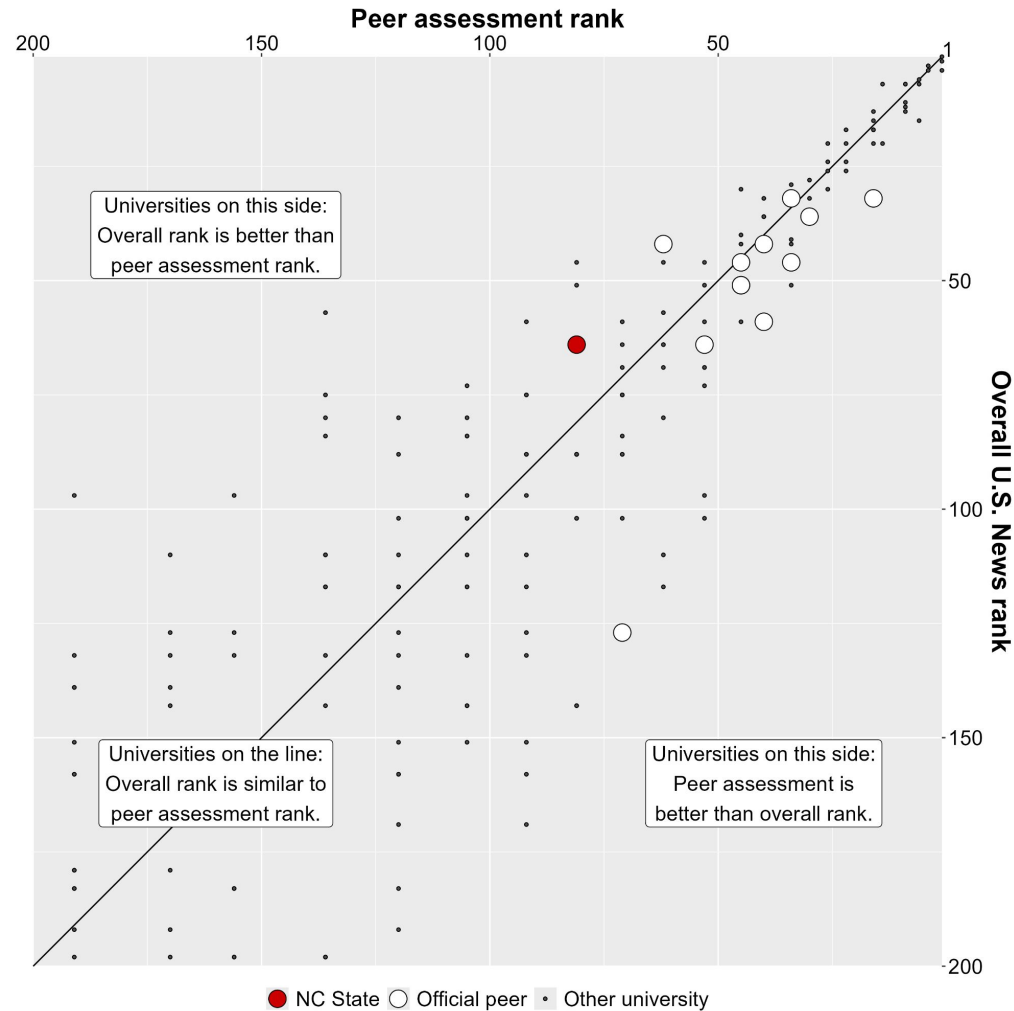
2026 peer assessment score distribution



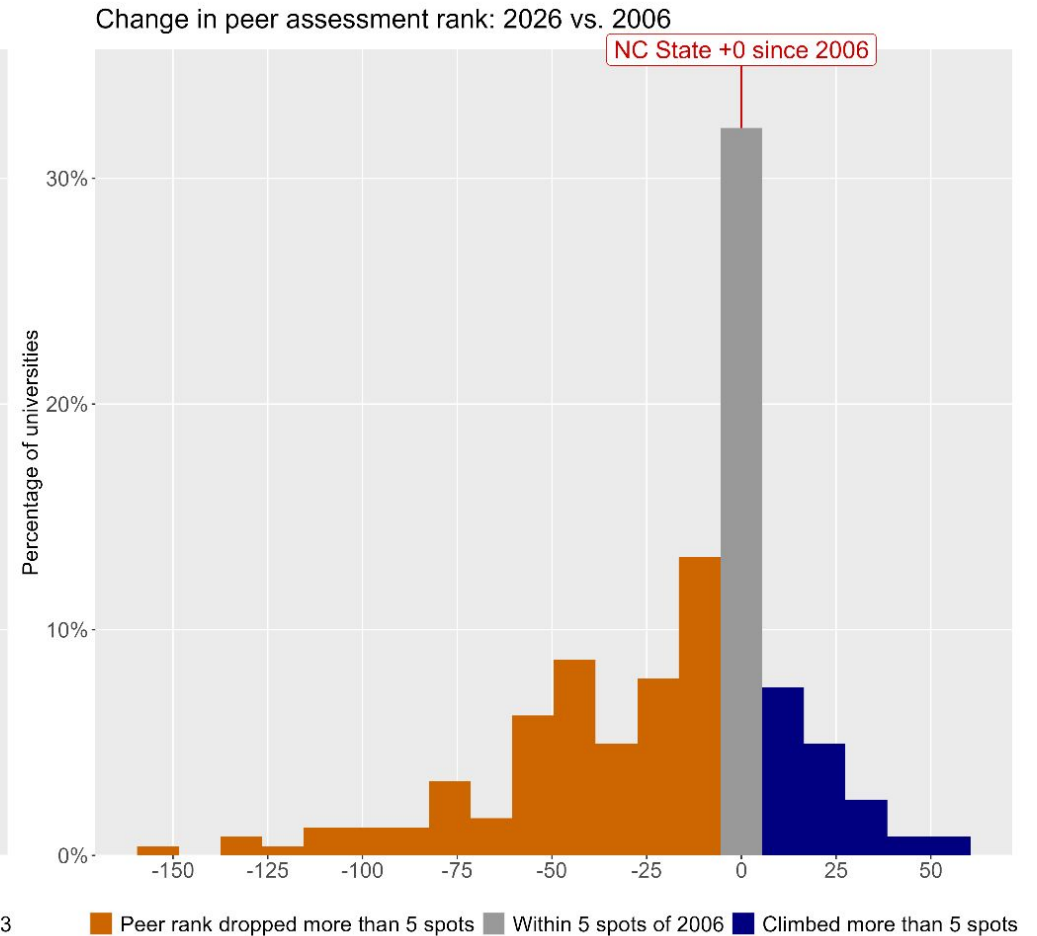
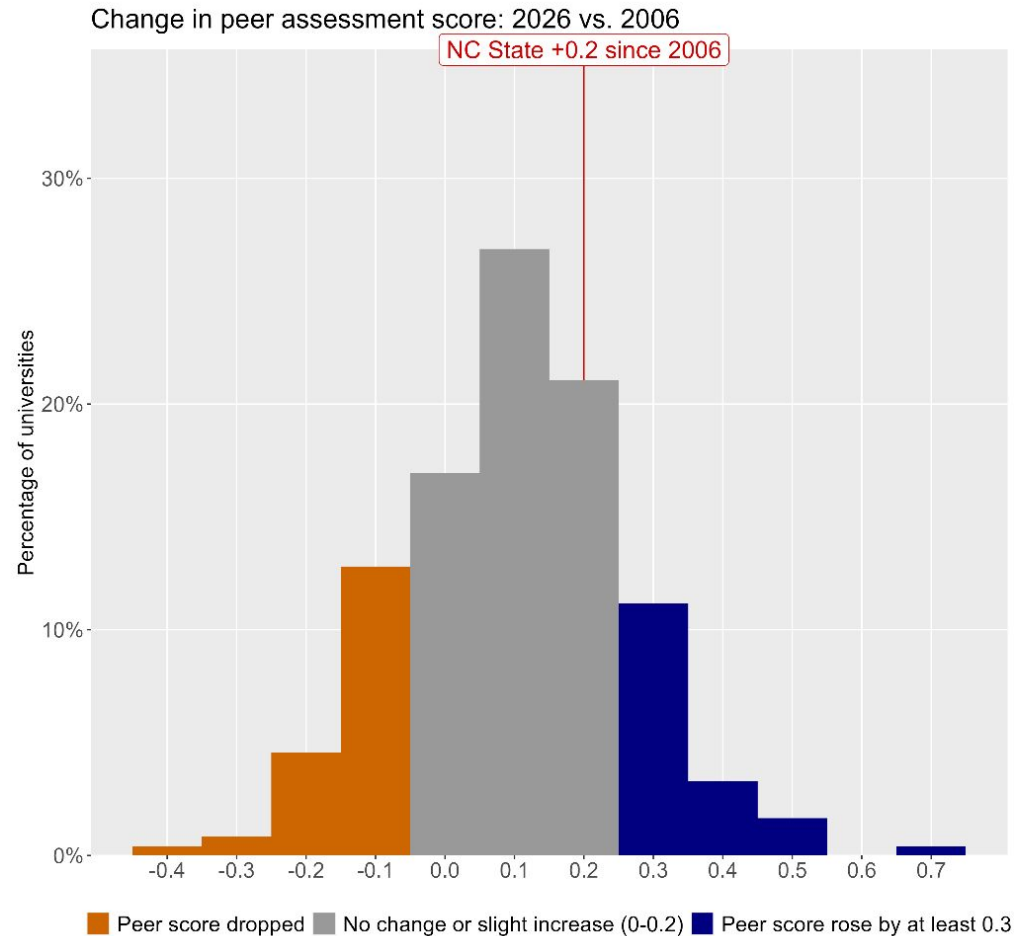
# Peer Reputation: U.S. News

Institution	Peer Assessment (20%)	U.S. News Rank (Overall)
1 Georgia Institute of Technology	4.3	32
2 University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	4.0	36
3 Purdue University - Main Campus	3.9	46
3 University of California - Davis	3.9	32
5 University of Maryland - College Park	3.8	42
5 University of Minnesota - Twin Cities	3.8	59
7 Texas A&M University	3.7	51
7 University of Georgia	3.7	46
7 Virginia Polytechnic Institute	3.7	51
10 Michigan State University	3.6	64
11 Rutgers University - New Brunswick	3.5	42
12 University of Arizona	3.4	127
<b>13 NC State University</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>64</b>

# U.S. News Reputation vs. Overall Rank



# Change in Peer Reputation (U.S. News)



# Trends: International Competition

- Interest in global rankings
  - Worldwide: QS ahead of searches for U.S. News rankings
  - Within U.S.: QS ahead of searches for WSJ
- Recent headlines: U.S. universities have slipped in measures of research output
- Public universities including NC State tend to perform better on QS methodology than US News

# Trends: Rankings & College Search

- Reporting has suggested declining student interest toward rankings overall and US News in particular
- When do students consult rankings? Which populations are more likely to consult rankings?
- Rank “neighborhood” more salient than precise rank value

# Rankings Strategy

- General Improvement: Focus on substantive goals and rankings will generally improve over time, e.g. grad rate
- Directed Effort: Direct ranking improvement specific to publication/outlet, e.g. QS employer/academic contacts
- Reputation: Getting the word out on NC State and the great things we are doing

A photograph of a university campus. In the foreground, there are several tall stalks of bluebells with vibrant blue, bell-shaped flowers. The background features a large, multi-story brick building with many windows, partially obscured by several large, leafy green trees. The sky is overcast and grey. The text "University Data and Analytics" and "uda.ncsu.edu" is overlaid in white, bold font across the center of the image.

# University Data and Analytics

[uda.ncsu.edu](http://uda.ncsu.edu)