

Liberty University Now 8th Largest in America

Liberty University is now the nation's eighth-largest, four-year university and the largest private four-year, non-profit university in the United States, according to recently released data from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.

Liberty rose from 25th to eighth in one year, fueled by growth in both its residential and online programs.

"The dramatic increase in our size signifies that students are interested in an education that is not only academically excellent, but also based in values, integrity and character.

The vision for Liberty University when it was founded in 1971 was to become a world-class Christian university with NCAA Division 1 athletics, academic excellence and all the programs for students that are found at any major university," says Liberty University President Jerry Falwell Jr.

"Brigham Young and Notre Dame were identified early on as universities that Liberty aspired to emulate for evangelical Christians. It is thrilling and humbling to see Liberty University fulfilling the original vision in so many areas, including the goals for enrollment, so early in the school's history."

To meet the increased demand for both their residential and online programs Liberty recently sold 120 million in bonds to fund a substantial increase in the school's physical plant.

Liberty is also expanding their online offerings, including launching first of their kind bi-lingual programs for the growing population of Hispanic students.

Liberty, with 64,610 students, is the largest four-year

college in Virginia, surpassing George Mason University (39,977 students), Virginia Commonwealth University (36,553 students), Virginia Tech (33,080 students) and University of Virginia (31,157 students).

Liberty's growth has been fueled in large part by its online program, which grew from 36,740 students in 2009 to 51,478 students in 2010. Liberty University Online has 54,278 students enrolled in its online program in Spring 2011.

Liberty's resident enrollment at the end of February 2011 was 12,805.

President Jerry Falwell Jr. says he would like to see Liberty's resident enrollment grow to 20,000 in the next decade.