

Schools to Boycott *U.S. News & World Report* Survey

By Shaileja Mammen

Katherine Haley Will, president of Gettysburg College and head of the Annapolis Group, is leading a charge against *U.S. News & World Report's* college rankings, which, according to Haley Will, are “misleading and not a true measure of a school’s unique strength.”

Of the 125 schools in the Annapolis Group, 46 have agreed to boycott next year’s *U.S. News* peer survey and refrain from using the college rankings in promotional materials.

The part of the survey that requires college administrators to rate other institutions on a scale of one to five is the cause of the protest. This peer rating is worth 25% of the overall ranking of each college, while the portion including quantitative data about selectivity, enrollment, and graduation rates accounts for the other 75%.

The Annapolis Group plans to develop and publish on the Internet its own comparative college rankings next year. The Top 20 colleges do not support this move and are disappointed by the charge against *U.S. News*.

U.S. News's rankings reach an audience of 11 million, and prospective students and parents refer to them religiously. In a super-competitive college market, this is a matter of concern to smaller liberal arts colleges.

Dean of Admissions at Bryn Mawr Jenny Richard welcomes the idea of an alternative system that considers other information such as how well students perform after they graduate.

Lloyd Thacker, who represents the Education Conservancy, a college-admission reform group, shares the Annapolis Group’s concerns. He stated that “ranksters have created a crisis by undermining educational values and have distorted the way education is perceived and pursued among students, families, and even among colleges.”

Some colleges that do not want to voice their opposition are “perfectly aware that the American public wants to have some objective measure of quality,” stated Brian Mitchell, president of Bucknell University.

The protestors hope that if a sizeable number of colleges abstain from the peer survey, *U.S. News* may reduce the survey’s weight and include other relevant information in its college rankings.