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MIT named tops in service to country

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August 24, 2005

MIT is the No. 1 university in the country, according to a new college guide that based its rankings on service.

“While other guides ask what colleges can do for students, we ask what colleges are doing for the country,” Washington Monthly said in unveiling its rankings, which will appear in the September issue, due out on Aug. 29.

The magazine used three central criteria in determining rank: “Universities should be engines of social mobility, they should produce the academic minds and scientific research that advance knowledge and drive economic growth, and they should inculcate and encourage an ethic of service.”

“It’s good to be recognized for our core mission of service to humanity through science and technology,” said Marilee Jones, MIT’s dean of admissions.

Harvard and Princeton universities, which tied for first this year in the well-known U.S. News & World Report rankings, fell to 16th and 44th place respectively in the Washington Monthly rankings. U.S. News ranked MIT seventh.

According to Washington Monthly, “MIT earned its No. 1 ranking not because of its ground-breaking research (although that didn’t hurt), but on the basis of its commitment to national service.”

“We’re thrilled with the ranking because it illustrates to the public what the MIT community knows from experience: Public service is a core value of MIT,” said Sally Susnowitz, assistant dean and director of the MIT Public Service Center.

Among the measurements that went into the rankings were: percentage of students enrolled in the Reserve Officer Training Corps, the percentage serving in the Peace Corps and the percentage receiving federal Pell Grants, which are typically awarded to students with family incomes under \$40,000.

“MIT students are doing phenomenal community service work around the world and throughout the U.S., and they are mentored and supported in this work by every branch of the MIT community, from faculty and administrator support for service learning, to the alumni donations that keep the Public Service Center running, to departmental initiatives in nearly every disciplinary area, to the staff in Student Financial Services who have transformed MIT’s work-study program into an exemplary system,” Susnowitz said.

“The MIT Public Service Center staff have a lot of collaborators in our work. At MIT, we’re not just talking about positive change in the world; we’re learning by doing it.”