University of Miami Selected to Join Association of American Universities

Recognized for its groundbreaking research and graduate education, the University of Miami is one of six leading research universities invited to join the association.

Research taking place at the University of Miami's 12 schools and colleges identifies and seeks solutions for the world’s greatest challenges.

The University of Miami has been chosen as one of the newest members of the esteemed Association of American Universities (AAU), a distinguished national organization of leading research universities founded in 1900.

The invitation to join the prestigious organization — considered the gold standard in American higher education — comes as the University’s research and sponsored program expenditures totaled more than $413 million in fiscal year 2022, demonstrating a critical focus to address the world’s most complex issues.

“There are special moments in the life of a university that not only reward our hard work but, more importantly, reaffirm our strategic vision and time-honored mission,” said University President Julio Frenk. “Today is a great day for
all of us who love and support the University of Miami and who have invested our efforts and hearts in its continuous quest for excellence.”

The University of Miami received the membership invitation along with Arizona State University; the George Washington University; the University of California, Riverside; the University of Notre Dame; and the University of South Florida. The addition of these six leading research universities brings AAU’s membership total to 71 institutions – 69 American and two Canadian universities. The member institutions transform lives through education, research, and innovation.

“We are very proud to have these six distinguished universities from across the United States join AAU,” said AAU President Barbara R. Snyder. “We look forward to working with all of these universities to continue advancing higher education and laying the scientific foundation that helps keep our economy strong and our nation healthy and safe.”

Research Excellence

Now formally recognized among the top tier of universities in North America, the research taking place at the University of Miami demonstrates the depth and breadth of the institution’s 12 schools and colleges working to boldly identify and seek solutions for the world’s greatest challenges.

At the Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine and UHealth, where research priorities include cancer, neuroscience, immunology, stem cell biology, and genetics, scientists received an unprecedented $175 million in federal grant funding for the 2022 research cycle. Cancer research has grown exponentially to earn National Cancer Institute designation for Sylvester
Comprehensive Cancer Center. The Miller School is home to the No. 2 ranked NIH-funded program in genetics, which includes research to tackle Alzheimer’s and other devastating illnesses that affect millions of people. Additionally, research in COVID-19, HIV, and Zika have placed the Miller School at the forefront of discovery in infectious diseases.

At the Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric, and Earth Science, longstanding research in marine science, marine biology, climate and weather prediction and modeling, and ecosystem science and policy have paved the way for further areas of focus, where governmental partners look to the University’s research for answers to keeping millions of people and their property out of harm’s way. As part of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency’s national Reefense research program, the Rosenstiel School – the top recipient of funding with the $7.5 million federal grant – will lead the development of innovative hybrid biological and engineered reef structures designed to accelerate the protection of vulnerable coastal regions in Florida and the Caribbean. The total sponsored research annual expenditure at the Rosenstiel School has increased from $41.7 million in 2016 to $70 million in 2023, with an average annual research expenditure per faculty member of $1.03 million.

The University continues to leverage gains in research to attract stellar scholars across disciplines. For instance, the School of Nursing and Health Studies ranks 25th among nursing schools in NIH funding. The Department of Psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences is currently among the top six at private universities, and top 20 of all universities in NIH funding. Research in the humanities, arts, and social sciences ranks among the top 10 percent of all research
universities. And since 2015, the University has increased its engineering research expenditures by 180 percent to $9 million today, growing its College of Engineering Ph.D. students’ population by 20 percent.

In 2022, the University launched the Climate Resilience Academy – an interdisciplinary unit that supports the University’s 12 schools and colleges in collaborative, problem-driven research and education to train the next generation of researchers, as well as deliver actions to combat climate change impacts and other environmental stressors, in partnership with industry, government, and other stakeholders.

Sixteen researchers affiliated with the University claim membership to the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, whose mission is to provide independent, trustworthy advice and facilitate solutions to complex challenges by mobilizing expertise, practice, and knowledge in science, engineering, and medicine.

And across the institution, the University of Miami Laboratory for Integrative Knowledge (U-LINK) connects faculty members from a range of disciplines in a shared goal to solve large societal challenges. Forging relationships with local institutions, government agencies, and community partner organizations, U-LINK research teams last year examined how local communities can preserve and support residents equitably, despite impacts of climate change.

“The AAU offers an invaluable network across higher education and beyond,” Frenk said. “We may have our own individual institutional mandates, but whether we are looking at innovation and discovery, the dissemination of knowledge and
promotion of understanding, the celebration of our diverse and unique experiences, the guiding and implementation of evidence-based public policies and best practices — each of these worthy endeavors share the prime directive to promote, protect, and preserve our people and our planet.”

Continued Excellence

“I’m excited to invite these six diverse institutions to AAU,” said Carol L. Folt, AAU board chair and president of the University of Southern California. “AAU members are distinguished by the quality of their education and research. It is a testament to our higher education system that we have this many leading research universities in every corner of our country. Congratulations to the faculty, staff, and students for this recognition of their hard work and their leadership in research and education. We look forward to our joint efforts to continue to transform lives through higher education.”

Membership in AAU is by invitation only and is based on an extensive set of quantitative indicators that assess the breadth and quality of a university’s research and education. AAU invitations do not occur annually; this year’s invitations come after one institution was invited in 2021.

Frenk recognized that the University is one of only two private and a handful of public institutional members established in the 20th century to receive this distinction.

“As we approach our centennial in 2025, we do so with this defining moment firmly realized,” he said.