

Murray State University receives #1 “Best Value School” designation as part of *U.S. News and World Report* rankings

Murray State University received the #1 “Best Value School” designation in the South region by *U.S. News and World Report* as part of the publication’s annual rankings by the reputable national college guide.

Ranked #9 regionally last year in the best value category, Murray State’s top spot in the South region was secured as a record \$136 million in scholarships and financial aid was awarded to students based on the University’s most recent data. Murray State currently has its largest enrollment since 2016.

“While Murray State University has been recognized nationally for many years by *U.S. News and World Report*, to be recognized as the #1 best value in our region is a very significant accolade that truly reflects the quality and value of a Murray State education,” Murray State President Dr. Bob Jackson said. “Led by our dedicated faculty and staff, students receive a world-class experience that prepares them for success following graduation. We offer nearly 150 academic programs and 180 campus organizations to support our students throughout their college journey and into the career of their choosing. This is an exciting time to be a Racer!”

As part of the recent *U.S. News and World Report* rankings, Murray State was recognized as one of the top universities in the country in multiple categories, marking the institution’s 34th consecutive year of top-tier rankings by the national college guide.

Recognized as one of America’s best college values, Murray State has been recognized nationally for both quality and value by the following publications:

- U.S. News and World Report
 - “2025 Top-Tier University” for 30+ consecutive years
 - **#1 Best Value School in the South region**
- Washington Monthly
 - “2024-25 Best Bang for the Buck”
- Wall Street Journal
 - “2025 Best Colleges in the United States”
- Niche
 - “2025 Best Colleges in Kentucky”
- Colleges of Distinction
 - a “2024-25 Best College”



Dr. Bob Jackson announces his retirement



After many years of loyal and dedicated service and 43 years of association with his Alma Mater, Dr. Bob Jackson has announced his retirement as president of Murray State University effective June 30, 2025. He will continue his employment as President Emeritus and assist with a future transition and as a special advisor to the Board of Regents through a future date.

Jackson has served as president since August 7, 2018, and has held other administrative roles including president of the Murray State University Foundation, Inc. Both President Jackson and his wife, Karen, are alumni of the University.

Under Jackson’s leadership, Murray State University has experienced significant growth and success in its mission to advance higher education in our region, state and nation. The University developed a renewed focus on recruitment and retention of students, advanced new academic programs, enjoyed athletic successes and changes, enhanced the look and design of campus with a new School

of Nursing and Health Professions building under construction, a Veterinary Sciences building, a Learning Commons and new Residential Hall funded and in design, along with the recent acquisition of Station 74 at Murray State University.

In addition, Jackson has focused on campus improvements, deferred maintenance and preservation of our historic buildings such as major renovations to Lovett Auditorium, Wrather Hall, Curris Center, the bronze statues of Racer One and Dr. John W. Carr on campus and the development of Woods Park, among others.

Jackson has focused much of his professional career in higher education and as a State Senator in ensuring adequate funding and access and affordability in higher education. In addition, a School of Veterinary Medicine continues to be planned at Murray State. The University is also working toward a Medical School campus in partnership with the University of Louisville.

“Serving as President of my Alma Mater has been a lifetime honor and the capstone to my professional career,” said Jackson. “I am deeply grateful for this opportunity. But, everything and everyone has a season, and Karen and I are looking forward to spending more time with family and friends, traveling and enjoying our next chapter of life.”

During his tenure, Jackson guided the University through the pandemic, has overseen many significant changes including new academic buildings, celebrated the Centennial of Murray State University and co-authored our centennial history, *The Finest Place We Know*. He oversaw the launch of a \$100 million centennial capital campaign with over \$96.5 million raised today.

Murray State University's economic impact is highlighted in recent report

Murray State University's economic impact on the Commonwealth and the west Kentucky region is highlighted in a recent report.

Based on a 2017 comprehensive study led by Professor Emeritus Dr. Gil Mathis and updated for inflation by Professor Simone Silva, Murray State University generates more than \$633 million in economic output activity for the Commonwealth.

Report findings also include the following:

- \$265 million: annual total revenue generated by University employee, student and visitor spending
- \$23 million: annual state and local tax revenue generated by activity associated with Murray State University
- \$1.18 billion: estimated increase in earning capacity generated by nearly 42,000 Racer alumni who reside in Kentucky
- 6,025: total direct and indirect jobs created as a result of Murray State University's business operations

The 2024 state biennium budget includes funding and support for Murray State University, including a record amount of capital projects funding. Approximately \$250 million in capital project and asset preservation funding has been provided to Murray State University over the past two state budgets.

Based on a 2024 Economic Impact Report led by Murray State Professor of Economics Dr. Simone Silva, University construction projects will generate more than \$348 million in economic output activity from 2024-30.

Report findings specific to the University's construction projects also include the following:

- \$192 million: total contribution from Murray State University Construction Projects to the state's GDP (2024-30)
- \$43 million: total estimated tax revenue from Murray State University Construction Projects (2024-30)



- 2,457: total direct and indirect jobs supported by Murray State University Construction Projects (2024-30)

Capital projects and enhancements to Murray State's campus include:

- New School of Nursing and Health Professions Building - \$45.5 million
- New Veterinary Sciences Building - \$60 million
- New Living/Learning Commons Building - \$38 million
- Construction, renovation and operations for the Cyber Education and Research Center - \$10 million
- Asset Preservation/Deferred Maintenance for campus buildings - \$46.6 million



Murray State Athletics receives largest gift in school history from Dill Family

With the public's support of the current investments into much-needed facility enhancements and the overall student-athlete experience at an all-time high, Murray State Athletics received the largest gift in school history from the Dill Family.

The record-shattering investment made by the family, which also stands as the lead gift in the University's *Be Bold: Forever Blue and Gold* Centennial Campaign, marks a record sixth seven-figure gift given to Racer Athletics this calendar year. In addition, Murray State has just completed back-to-back record years in raising private support signifying the unprecedented generosity of alumni and friends in advancing the University.

A significant amount of funding having already been poured into renovations and enhancements around the athletics footprint, this gift will have a major impact on future facility projects as a part of the department's continued prioritization of recruiting and revenue opportunities.

"David and Ashley Dill and the entire Dill Family have deep roots at the University," Murray State University President Dr. Bob Jackson said. "David is the national chair of the \$100 million *Be Bold: Forever Blue and Gold* Centennial Campaign launched publicly in 2022 and is a 2015 Distinguished Alumnus and Trustee of the MSU Foundation. This gift is transformational to the University and will advance the initiatives outlined in our campaign plans and take Racer Athletics to a new level. We are deeply grateful for this historic gift and greatly appreciate their longstanding commitment, friendship and support."

"My family and I have called this community home ever since my father moved to Murray in 1978 and joined the Racer basketball coaching staff, and my mother began her nearly 20-year career teaching kindergarten at Murray Elementary School," David Dill said. "My brother and I attended Murray State as both students and athletes, and we met our spouses on campus. We have grown deep roots here over the past four decades, so it is incredibly meaningful for our family to give back to our community and show our gratitude for the many wonderful opportunities and memories we have had through the years because of Murray State University."