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## **BC surges, BU slumps in reputation survey**

Boston Business Journal - by [Lisa van der Pool](#) Journal staff

Boston University's image among the state's business leaders plummeted this year, while crosstown rival **Boston College** saw its prestige rise to the highest level, according to a recent reputation survey.

BU dropped to 20th place from sixth place and BC rose to No. 1 from fourth place the previous year. The results were part of the fifth annual Massachusetts Corporate Reputation Survey sponsored by public relations firm Morrissey & Co. in Boston. The poll was conducted by Opinion Dynamics Corp. in Cambridge.

BU's rankings drop was not attributed to any one event, but negative press reports during the year on the institution's Level-4 BioSafety Lab, under construction in Boston's South End, may have been a factor. In a recent demonstration, protesters walked the streets of Boston posing as zombies infected with deadly pathogens, according to BU's student newspaper The Daily Free Press.

"The glitches they had with the (biolab), may have put a small nick in the university's reputation," said Peter Morrissey, president and CEO of Morrissey & Co., who also teaches three classes on public relations at BU's College of Communication.

BU's spokesman Colin Riley said it was an honor to be part of the rankings and did not offer a reason for the university's dip. Riley noted that student applications this year will be in excess of 35,000 (competing for 4,200 spots), proving that the school's reputation among students and parents is strong.

"It's good to be in good company. Reputation is something that generally sneaks up on people. BU's reputation is getting stronger every year -- these types of rankings not withstanding," said Riley.

BC was ranked as the most respected institution among the state's business leaders. Atlanta-based **United Parcel Service Inc.**, which has over 5,500 workers in Massachusetts, came in second, up from 17th the prior year.

In addition to BC and UPS, the study's top 10 was populated by four universities (Harvard University, the University of Massachusetts, Tufts University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology); two hospitals (Children's Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital); a beverage and food retailer (Dunkin' Donuts); and a health insurer (Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts).

The reputation rankings were based on surveys presented to 200 C-level executives. Participants were asked to rate 74 Massachusetts-based institutions on their overall

reputation, products and services, place to work, social responsibility, ethics and corporate governance and financial stability. The month-long survey period commenced Dec. 3.

Institutions with a score of 60 or higher are considered to have a "superior reputation;" a score between 50 and 60 is "very good;" between 40 and 50 is "good;" and below 40 signifies that the company or institution has "not established a significant reputation," according to Morrissey.

BC registered a score of 69.6, while BU came in at 54.3. A BC spokesman chalked up the university's top finish to its community involvement and generous employee benefits, which include free tuition for employees. For example, the college recently used its deep pockets and strong educational resources to prevent the financially strapped St. Columbkille School in Brighton from closing.

"I think people see BC's investment in the community and feel strongly about the institution as a result," said BC spokesman Jack Dunn.

In previous years, BC and BU had hovered just under the No. 1, usually ranking somewhere in the top 10.

Meanwhile, UPS supplanted Dunkin' Donuts as No. 2 on this year's list. The company attributed its reputation gains to a mix of charity work, awards for safety and, perhaps most importantly, the impeccable appearance and good service delivered by the men and women in brown.

Those workers are required to wear freshly pressed uniforms and shined shoes at all times, according to UPS's Michael Killilea, a human resources manager in Norwood. "They are our key ambassadors of service and quite honestly we're asking more and more of our drivers to become problem solvers," she said.

The top rated technology and biotechnology firms include Raytheon Co. (NYSE: RTN) (35th), EMC Corp. (NYSE: EMC) (39th), Boston Scientific Corp. (NYSE: BSX) (41st), Genzyme Corp. (Nasdaq: GENZ) (47th) and Iron Mountain (NYSE: IRM) (48th).

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