

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 5, 2013

Contact: Melanie Forthun, Public Affairs
Peace Corps West Coast Region
206.239.6603 direct | mforthun@peacecorps.gov



**UW, WWU and Gonzaga Take No. 1 Spots
on Peace Corps 2013 Top Colleges Rankings**

First time all No. 1 schools in Peace Corps Top Colleges from same state

SEATTLE – Feb. 5, 2013 – University of Washington (UW), Western Washington University (WWU) and Gonzaga University rank No. 1 on the Peace Corps 2013 Top Colleges rankings making it the first time all the No. 1 schools in the three categories hail from the same state.

UW ranks No. 1 for large schools with 107 undergraduate alumni serving, WWU ranks No. 1 among medium schools with 73 undergraduate alumni serving and Gonzaga ranks No. 1 among small schools with 24 undergraduate alumni serving.

During the past decade the Peace Corps has been releasing the Top Colleges rankings in this three-tiered system, this is the first time WWU and Gonzaga have reached the No. 1 spot. UW has held the No. 1 spot five times, more than any other university.

“Every year, graduates of colleges and universities across the United States are making a difference in communities overseas through Peace Corps service,” said Peace Corps Acting Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet. “As a result of the top-notch education they receive, these graduates are well prepared for the challenge of international service. They become leaders in their host communities and carry the spirit of service and leadership back with them when they return home.”

Historically, UW, WWU and Gonzaga have produced 2,738 alumni, 885 alumni and 311 alumni, respectively, who have served overseas as Peace Corps volunteers since the agency was founded in 1961.

"Peace Corps announces Top Colleges annually to recognize the schools that contribute the most alumni who are making a difference overseas through volunteer service," said Peace Corps West Coast Regional Manager Janet Allen. "Having Washington state be the home to all three No. 1 schools is a coup of which I'm especially proud. We thank and congratulate University of Washington, Western Washington University and Gonzaga University for producing globally-minded leaders who turn idealism into action as Peace Corps Volunteers."

Five other universities in Washington also made the Peace Corps 2013 Top Colleges rankings, all in the small school category: Seattle University (No. 5, 19 alumni currently serving), University of Puget Sound (No. 8, 18 alumni), Evergreen State College (No. 8, 16 alumni), Whitman College (No. 8, 16 alumni), Pacific Lutheran University (No. 18, 15 alumni).

This is the first time Pacific Lutheran University has made the list and the first time Seattle University has broke into the top five.

Currently, more than 8,000 volunteers are working with communities in 76 host countries on projects related to agriculture, community economic development, education, environment, health and youth development.

During Peace Corps service, college graduates make a difference in communities overseas. Volunteers return home as global citizens with cross-cultural, leadership, language, teaching and community development skills that position them for advanced education and professional opportunities in today's global job market. Ninety percent of volunteer positions require a bachelor's degree. Americans with backgrounds in agriculture, environment, teaching English as a second language, and other technical or language skills related to Peace Corps assignment areas are encouraged to apply for service one year in advance of their target departure date. The next application deadline is February 28, 2013.

The Peace Corps ranks Top Colleges annually according to the size of the student body. Small schools have less than 5,000 undergraduates, medium-sized schools have between 5,000 and 15,000 undergraduates and large schools have more than 15,000 undergraduates. Rankings are calculated based on fiscal year 2012 data as of September 30, 2012 as self-reported by Peace Corps volunteers.

The following are the top five colleges and universities in each undergraduate category and the number of undergraduate alumni currently serving as Peace Corps volunteers:

<u>LARGE COLLEGES:</u>	<u>VOLUNTEER NUMBER:</u>
1. University of Washington	107
1. University of Florida	107
3. University of Wisconsin-Madison	103
4. University of Colorado Boulder	93
4. University of Michigan	93

<u>MEDIUM COLLEGES:</u>	<u>VOLUNTEER NUMBER:</u>
1. Western Washington University	73
2. American University	55
3. The George Washington University	53
4. Cornell University	40
5. The University of Vermont	37

SMALL COLLEGES:

VOLUNTEER NUMBER:

1. Gonzaga University	24
2. St. Olaf College	22
3. University of Mary Washington	21
4. Oberlin College & Conservatory	20
5. Seattle University	19

Click here for a full list of the Peace Corps 2013 Top Colleges.

About the Peace Corps: Since President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps by executive order on March 1, 1961, more than 210,000 Americans have served in 139 host countries. Today, 8,073 volunteers are working with local communities in 76 host countries in agriculture, community economic development, education, environment, health and youth in development. Peace Corps volunteers must be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years of age. Peace Corps service is a 27-month commitment and the agency's mission is to promote world peace and friendship and a better understanding between Americans and people of other countries. Visit www.peacecorps.gov for more information.

#