Clemson ranks as best value of South Carolina colleges

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Clemson University topped the list of colleges and universities in South Carolina that provide the best value to its students, according to a new study conducted by SmartAsset, an online financial data and technology company.

Clemson ranked 36th nationally for best value. The University of Michigan ranked 1st nationally.

The top 10 colleges in South Carolina, in order, are: Clemson, Wofford College, University of South Carolina, College of Charleston, South Carolina State University, Furman University, Charleston Southern University, Bob Jones University, Coastal Carolina University and Winthrop University.

South Carolina ranked among the lowest six states for best value of the 48 contiguous states. SmartAsset didn't do a state-by-state ranking but did provide South Carolina's statistics versus the rest of the United States, said Steve Sabato, spokesman for SmartAsset.

South Carolina:

Average Scholarships and Grants: $10,655

Average Starting Salary: $39,500

Tuition: $15,287

Living Costs: $13,335

Student Retention Rate: 67 percent

United States:

Average Scholarships and Grants: $9,686

Average Starting Salary: $43,242

Tuition: $16,190

Living Costs: $13,499

Student Retention Rate: 71 percent

SmartAsset looked at each school's average scholarships and grants, starting salary upon graduation, tuition (using in-state costs where applicable), living costs (including room and board, books, supplies, transportation and other personal expenses) and student retention rate.

Each of the factors was weighted equally, then ranked in an index where the top school was assigned a score of 100.

SmartAsset used the 2013 National Center for Educational Statistics, 2014 Payscale and 2013 College InSight to form its analysis.

View the full interactive map of best value colleges across the country here.