

Meredith College: The All-Girls' School



image via Garry Walton

Upon entering the gates of Meredith, you realize that this college is a unique and close knit community. This atmosphere, according to the mission statement, "educates and inspires students to live with integrity and provide leadership for the needs, opportunities and challenges of society." But is this view reflected in our reputation outside of the gates?

"What's your impression of Meredith College?" We asked this question to 75 different people around the Triangle who have no Meredith affiliation and recorded their immediate responses. This was the basis for an experiment that we thought was necessary for our campus.

Our demographic was a small sampling and by no means represents the entire Triangle. However, these 37 women and 38 men were found in a wide range of Meredith College on any given day. Although 43% of our responses were collected from people between the ages of 20 and 30, the rest of the people we asked ranged from 16 to 69 years of age.

We intended to compare the collected responses with the values that our website claims "serve as the foundation for our programs, our interactions with each other and our outreach

beyond the campus." Those values are as follows: integrity, intellectual freedom, academic excellence, responsible global citizenship, personal development, religious diversity and relevance.

The problem that we encountered when analyzing the data was that only one of the values were mentioned: academic excellence. It was referred to six times out of our 75 responses. We divided the responses into positive and negative based on the trends that we found. We determined that women and education were a positive reflection of Meredith, while lack of knowledge, stereotyping, and being referenced as an "all-girls' school" were negative traits. The trends and examples supporting each category are presented here:

Positive responses: 16%

Women: Meredith was established as a women's college in 1891. However, only 8% of data reflected some form of distinction from an all-girls' school.

— "It's a good school. Empowers women, but it's expensive." —Judy, 55, teaching at a preschool
— "Ladies' school. NC State is very

by Ashleigh Phillips and Emily Gamiel, co-editors, data collected by staff

tough and Meredith is very quiet." —Yon, 59, Cashier at Walmart

Education: As mentioned earlier, only six people, 8%, referenced the quality of a Meredith education, even though the college's first priority is to provide students with a challenging and rewarding educational experience.

— "Great group of women with a wonderful teaching program." —Rachel, 30, teacher visiting a Wake County library
— "Um, I've never visited before, but I've heard it's the best college to go to for teaching. The people I know that go there really like it." —Sarah, 16, student at YMCA

— "Good liberal arts school for women in Raleigh for a long time." —BT, 69, research tech at Crabtree Mall
— "Teaching college." —Joe, 41, I.T., Ridge Road Shopping Center

Negative responses: 69%

"All-Girls' school:" 1/3 of the responses referred to Meredith in this way. Of those 25 people, over half of them couldn't elaborate on those three words.

— "High security girls' camp where after 11 I have to give my license to the guard at the guard gate." —Jeff, 20, pre law student at UNC, on Franklin Street

— "I know it's an all girls' school, but that's about it." —Jessica, 23, Chili's server

— "All-girls' school. I don't know what they study." —Xani, 22, server, Subway
— "It's an all-girls' school. I went there for governor's school, and I remember the cute atmosphere." —Yasmeene, 21, NC State Student, server at Mitch's Tavern

Stereotypes: 21% of the responses included some form of stereotype that has come to be associated with

Meredith. These include feminists, lesbians, members of the upper class, and other positions that conform to the traditional roles of women, such as being a good housewife.

— "Don't you all wear those rings?" —Emily, 27, apartment leasing consultant

— "Prudish." —Stephen, 23, Technician writer, studying in Global Village

— "It's where snobby rich girls go to get their MRS degree." —Chris, 19, NCSU student, waiting in line at Chipotle

— "A bunch of gung-ho girl power females." —Brian, 24, teller at SunTrust Bank

— "Sheltered and inexperienced." —Matt, 35, bartender making sangria at Joel Lane's

— "Feminist girls that think they don't need a man in their life." —Branden, 24, forestry researcher, picking out movies in the \$5 bin at Wal-Mart

Clueless: 15% of the responses reflected little to no knowledge of Meredith, despite the fact that U.S. News & World Report ranked Meredith third among colleges in the South just this year.

— "Meredith's a pretty good school, isn't it?" —Mary, 34, associate director of a small association in Raleigh

— "Is that a high school?" —Raj, 27, RTP employee, hanging out in Busy Bee

— "Never heard of it." —Gabriel, 28, shopping at Crabtree Mall

— "From what I've heard it's a small college. But where is it?" —Jordan, 19, NC State student, studying on 5th floor Poe Hall

The other 15% of responses showed no particular trend or positive or negative affiliation. For more positive and negative responses and editor favorites, see page 6.

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