

2015 Carnegie Classification of more than 4,660 universities and colleges released

2 February 2016

The 2015 edition of the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education is now available. Produced by an Indiana University research center, it is the most comprehensive review of institutional diversity at more than 4,660 colleges and universities in the United States.

Information about individual institutions and searchable data showing how they compare to their peers are available on a new website, carnegieclassifications.iu.edu. The full release of this information follows a month of public review.

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education developed the Carnegie Classification of colleges and universities in 1970 to support its program of research and policy analysis. First published in 1973, it subsequently has been updated in 1976, 1987, 1994, 2000, 2005 and 2010.

In 2014, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching transferred responsibility for the project to IU Bloomington's Center for Postsecondary Research in the IU School of Education.

A team led by Victor H.M. Borden, professor of [higher education](#) and student affairs at the IU School of Education and the director of the project for the Center for Postsecondary Research, produced the updated classifications with input from an advisory group that included Martha Kanter, former U.S. undersecretary for education.

"Although intended for research and policy purposes, the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education has become an integral part of the fabric of higher education, as it is used by a variety of organizations for shaping accountability and opportunity," Borden said.

For example, the Association of Research Libraries uses the classifications to determine member eligibility, and many governmental grant programs

are aimed at one or another of these classifications.

Paul LeMahieu, senior vice president for programs at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and its representative to the Carnegie Classification advisory board, said the quality of this release of new classifications affirms the "mutually beneficial" decision to move the project to IU.

"It is apparent, as the Center for Postsecondary Research issues its first release of the classifications, that it was a very good selection with which to entrust this role," LeMahieu said. "They have preserved what is essential in the system and the best of what more than 40 years of development has produced while innovating and testing improvements that will enhance the conceptual underpinnings and general utility of the system."

Key points include:

- Several institutions moved in and out of the doctoral granting categories from 2010 to 2015. Of the 108 institutions considered among the highest-level research category in 2010, 100 (over 90 percent) remained in that category, commonly known as "R1." Fifteen institutions moved from level 2 to level 1, while eight moved from level 1 to level 2.
- A significant change was made to the "basic" classification. Specifically, the 2015 update includes new associate's colleges categories, based on program mix and student mix, with "special-focus" two-year colleges placed in separate categories, parallel to how four-year special-focus institutions are designated.
- The two largest basic classification aggregate categories—doctoral universities and associate's colleges—each enroll nearly one-third of all students attending degree-granting institutions. However, in terms of

number of institutions, associate's colleges account for just one-quarter of institutions and doctoral universities, less than one in 14 (7 percent).

- Special-focus schools—two-year and four-year programs combined—account for about a third of all institutions but just 5 percent of all enrollments. Examples of such schools include those that offer programs only in health fields or art and design.
- Although the classification includes roughly the same number of institutions as in 2010, more than 400 institutions are new to the list; that is, more than 400 institutions were replaced from 2010 to 2015. The dropped institutions include several notable consolidations, such as mergers of public institutions in Georgia and the change in reporting structure of institutions such as Ivy Tech Community College in Indiana, which went from reporting as 14 regional institutions to a single statewide institution.
- The 2015 classification employs the most recent available data from the source federal agencies —the National Center for Education Statistics and National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics—and a nonprofit agency, The College Board. These data represent the time period of 2013-14.
- While many universities may tout "movement" within these classifications, they are not considered quantitative rankings but rather reflect important qualitative differences for research and policy-making purposes.

gathering and using data for decision-making and institutional improvement. It also houses the National Survey of Student Engagement and has been involved in an ongoing partnership with the National Student Clearinghouse.

Provided by Indiana University

In addition to support from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Lumina Foundation awarded \$500,000 to the Center for Postsecondary Research to update the Carnegie Classification so that it eventually includes other credentials than just the numbers of degrees.

The Center for Postsecondary Research is a research center of the IU School of Education. It promotes student success and institutional effectiveness through research and service to postsecondary institutions and related agencies. Center personnel assist institutions and agencies in

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