



## Institutional Characteristics Study Findings

The NCAA research staff has compiled the most recent data on the non-athletics characteristics of NCAA member schools. The first iteration of this study was compiled in 2015. This study updates those findings and offers a few new categories as well, including a breakdown of institutions by cost of attendance, and a more detailed look into various demographic distinctions.

The Institutional Characteristics Study is another important resource the NCAA offers to prospective student-athletes and their families to further define the “menu” of educational opportunities at NCAA institutions and the demographics they serve. These data not only indicate substantial variation in some characteristics within division but also reveal how institutions differ across Divisions I, II and III.

Statistical analyses in the new study revealed the following five characteristics as demonstrating the strongest relationships with school divisional status:

- **Enrollment size**
- **Carnegie Basic Classification**
- **Cost of attendance**
- **Whether the institution is a Historically Black College or University (HBCU)**
- **School location**

The following report offers a summary of those five characteristics, as well as an examination of additional findings.



### How the data were compiled

Data for this analysis are based on the 2015-16 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the Department of Education.

The IPEDS is a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the NCES and collects institutional information from all postsecondary education institutions that participate in the federal student aid program.

The information collected in IPEDS includes basic institutional characteristics (such as school affiliation, type of calendar system, etc.), enrollments, financial status, program completion, graduation rates and other variables.

To determine the institutional factors that most distinguish NCAA divisions, NCAA researchers employed what is called a “multinomial logistic regression,” which is a classification method that predicts the probabilities of possible outcomes among categories that can’t otherwise be ordered in a meaningful way.

In this case, the regression modeled a school’s division status (a categorical variable) as a function of the non-sport institutional characteristics.

The regression analyses examined the independent relationship between a specific institutional characteristic and a school’s division status once other institutional variables were controlled for.

In other words, if an institutional characteristic significantly correlates with the division variable in the multinomial model, there is evidence that the difference in this institutional variable is significant across divisions.

## Enrollment size

Examination of enrollment size is relatively intuitive. Historically (and perhaps even stereotypically), the labeling of NCAA divisions as I, II and III suggests an enrollment-size hierarchy, and our analysis supports that assumption.

When it comes to median undergraduate enrollment, Division I schools have about 9,000 undergraduates, whereas the medians for Divisions II and III schools are about 2,500 and 1,800, respectively. While about 44 percent of Division I schools enroll more than 10,000 undergraduate students, only about 7 percent of Division II schools and 2 percent of Division III schools are that large.

## Carnegie Basic Classification

Another basic distinction among the three divisions is how schools classify their educational programs. For example, when people talk about Division I, they often refer to the division as being composed primarily of “research universities.” Our study supports that claim.

The term “research university” is among labels used in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, which is the gold standard for classification purposes in education. It is defined as institutions that awarded at least 20 research doctoral degrees during a given year.

The other categories in the Carnegie classification system are:

- **Associate’s Colleges** – Institutions at which all degrees are at the associate’s level, or at which bachelor’s degrees account for fewer than 10 percent of all undergraduate degrees.
- **Master’s Colleges and Universities** – Institutions that awarded at least 50 master’s degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees during a given year.
- **Baccalaureate Colleges** – Institutions at which baccalaureate degrees represent at least 10 percent of all undergraduate degrees and at which fewer than 50 master’s degrees or 20 doctoral degrees were awarded during a given year.

Almost 63 percent of Division I schools in the updated study qualified as research universities, compared to just 11 and 8 percent, respectively, for Divisions II and III. That is up from 58 percent in the 2015 study. A majority of Division II schools – about 65 percent – are master’s colleges and universities, while the lion’s share of Division III schools – about 51 percent – are baccalaureate colleges. No NCAA members are in the associate’s colleges category.

## School Size (based on full-time undergraduate enrollment)

	DI	DII	DIII
Small (2,999 or fewer)	10%	59%	77%
Medium (3,000-9,999)	46%	34%	21%
Large (10,000 or more)	44%	7%	2%
Mean total undergraduate enrollment	11,798	3,798	2,602
Median total undergraduate enrollment	8,959	2,455	1,784



## Carnegie Basic Classification

	DI	DII	DIII
Research universities (at least 20 doctoral degrees)	63%	11%	8%
Master’s colleges and universities (at least 50 master’s and fewer than 20 doctoral)	32%	65%	40%
Baccalaureate colleges (at least 10% of all degrees baccalaureate; fewer than 50 master’s and 20 doctoral)	6%	24%	51%

## Cost of attendance

A new category in the 2017 Institutional Characteristics Study is the cost of attending a Division I, II or III institution.

These data are from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for the 2015-16 school year. Cost of attendance includes published tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, transportation, and personal expenses.

The NCAA study applied out-of-state tuition for public institutions in order to obtain figures that are relatively comparable to those at private schools.

The median cost of attendance is lower for Division II institutions (about \$35,000) than for their Division I and III counterparts (\$40,000 and \$46,000, respectively).

Cost of Attendance (using out-of-state tuition)			
	DI	DII	DIII
Median	\$40,427	\$34,981	\$46,054
Minimum	\$0	\$5,898	\$2,393
Maximum	\$69,912	\$64,804	\$70,100

## HBCUs

Another distinction in the study that demonstrates a strong relationship with school divisional status is whether a school is classified as a Historically Black College or University (HBCU). HBCUs are defined in the Higher Education Act of 1965 as schools that were established before 1964 principally to serve the black community. Division II has the greatest proportion of HBCUs, with a little more than 9 percent of its membership fitting the HBCU distinction. About 7 percent of Division I schools are HBCUs, while there currently are none in Division III.

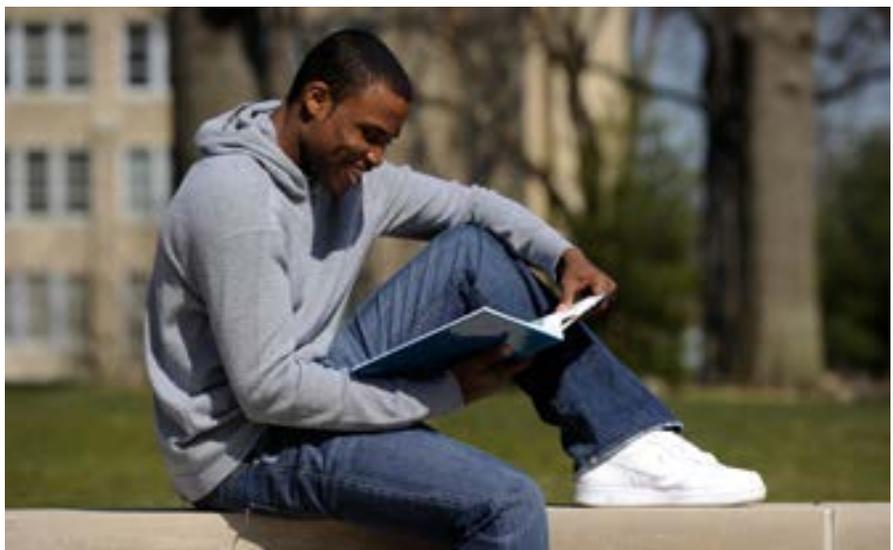
HBCU			
	DI	DII	DIII
Yes	7%	9%	0%

## School location

NCAA schools are naturally defined by their locale as well. Based on a school's physical address, the locale variable identifies the geographic status of a school on an urban continuum ranging from "large city" to "rural-remote." The study combines the IPEDS school locale code into four large urban continuum categories: (1) city (territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city); (2) suburb (territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area); (3) town (territory inside an urban cluster); and (4) rural (census-defined rural territory).

Almost 67 percent of Division I schools are located in an urbanized area, significantly higher than the other two divisions (about 40 percent in Division II and 38 percent in Division III). The enrollment sizes in Division I almost by nature mean they need to be located in more urbanized areas. Divisions II and III schools are relatively balanced among urban, suburban and town locales.

Location			
	DI	DII	DIII
City (territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city)	66%	40%	38%
Suburb (territory outside principal city/inside urbanized area)	19%	25%	32%
Town (territory inside an urban cluster)	13%	30%	24%
Rural (census-defined rural territory)	2%	5%	6%



## ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Several other institutional characteristics were found to be related to divisional membership:

### Undergraduate instruction

**classification.** Based on the proportion of bachelor's degree majors in the arts and sciences and in professional fields, NCAA schools are classified into three groups:

1. Those whose programs are concentrated in the arts and sciences;
2. Those that balance art and science with professions; and
3. Those that focus primarily on professions.

The arts and sciences category is not the same as “liberal arts.” The majors in arts and sciences include the basic fields of science and scholarship, such as chemistry, economics, history, literature, math, philosophy and political science. By contrast, programs in professional fields are designed to educate students for jobs in a particular field – in business, education, engineering, nursing and public administration, among others.

Division II has the highest percentage of schools (about 52 percent) at which more than 60 percent of bachelor's degrees are in professional fields, while Division III has the highest percentage of schools (about 37 percent) focusing on art and science majors. Division I has the highest percentage of schools (about 49 percent) offering a balance between the arts/sciences and professions.

**Undergraduate campus residential status.** Schools are classified into three categories based on the proportion of undergraduate students residing on campus. Schools in Divisions I and II are similar in this charac-



### Undergraduate Instruction Classification

	DI	DII	DIII
Majority art and science (more than 60% of majors in art and science)	17%	10%	37%
Balanced art and science and professions (41-59% majors in either art and science or professional field)	49%	38%	29%
Majority professions (more than 60% of majors in professional field)	35%	52%	34%

### Undergraduate Residential Status

	DI	DII	DIII
Less than 25% of undergraduates live on campus	27%	24%	9%
Between 25% and 49% of undergraduates live on campus	43%	46%	25%
50% or more of undergraduates live on campus	30%	30%	67%

### Full-time Enrollment Status

	DI	DII	DIII
At least 80% of undergraduates are full-time students	84%	74%	87%

### Total Enrollment Classification: Carnegie Classification 2015

	DI	DII	DIII
Fewer than 10% graduate enrollment	23%	50%	63%
10-24% graduate enrollment	55%	35%	22%
25-49% graduate enrollment	21%	13%	12%
Over 50% graduate enrollment	3%	2%	3%

teristic, while Division III schools tend to have more students living on campus.

**Undergraduate and graduate enrollment.** An overwhelming majority of students in all divisions are enrolled full time (though the percentage in Division II is lower than in Divisions I and III), and there tends to be a higher graduate population in Division I.

NCAA divisions also differ in their **proportion of public and private schools.** A majority of Division I schools (about 67 percent) are public institutions, while most Division III schools (about 80 percent) are private. Division II is about 48 percent public and 52 percent private.

The overwhelming private majority in Division III is a factor in policy decisions, especially when it comes to resource expectations (such as athletics facilities, for example, since private schools are funded differently than public institutions).

In addition to the HBCU distinction, the 2017 study also includes whether a member institution is a **Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).** As was the case in the HBCU category, these are more prevalent in Division II, as about 13 percent of Division II schools identify as an HSI, while the percentages in Divisions I and III are 8 and 5, respectively.

Another demographic is the percentage of the **white student population** at Divisions I, II and III institutions. The undergraduate enrollment at the majority of schools in all three divisions is more than 50 percent white, though that percentage is lower in Division II (about 66 percent) than in Division I (71 percent) and Division III (84 percent).

The study also examined other characteristics:

- **School history (age).** Division II schools tend to be “younger” than schools in Divisions I and III, as the median age of Division II schools is 117 years old, versus 131 in Division I and 136 in Division III.
- **Admission rate.** On average, Division II schools have the highest median admission rate (72 percent, versus 67 and 68 percent in Divisions I and III, respectively).

Public/Private			
	DI	DII	DIII
Public	67%	48%	20%
Private	33%	52%	80%

HSI (whether a member institution is a Hispanic Serving Institution)			
	DI	DII	DIII
Yes	8%	13%	5%

Primarily White Institution (whether a member institution's undergraduate enrollment consists of 50% or more white population)			
	DI	DII	DIII
50% or fewer white undergraduate	29%	35%	16%
50%+ white undergraduate population	71%	65%	84%
Average % white enrollment	57%	55%	65%
Median	64%	62%	64%

School Age (years since established, as of 2017)			
	DI	DII	DIII
49 or fewer	2%	4%	2%
50-99	23%	29%	20%
100-199	69%	67%	74%
200 or more	7%	0.3%	5%
Median institution age	131	117	136

Admission			
	DI	DII	DIII
Open-admission schools	2%	7%	1%
Rate of admission <sup>^</sup>	67%	72%	68%
Student-athletes who are first generation college students*	14%	20%	15%

<sup>^</sup> Rate of admission is defined as the number of students accepted by the school divided by the number of applicants.

\*From the NCAA's GOALS-2016 study.