Chapter One:
Understanding the Range of Postsecondary Institutions and Key Quality Indicators

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Abstract

Postsecondary institutions in the United States are highly diverse, ranging from small, specialized trade schools to large, complex universities. The courses of study range from specialized certificates to professional and research degrees.

This chapter describes the various types of institutions and their offerings, highlighting quality indicators and unique management strategies.
Chapter
Authors

Chapter 1: Understanding the Range of Postsecondary Institutions and Key Quality Indicators

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Angela E. Henderson serves as Chief Data Architect at Trivium BI. Prior to joining Trivium BI, she held over 18 years of experience in IR across several postsecondary institutions, including Stetson University and Valdosta State University. Her areas of expertise and interest include data-driven analyses, data visualization, and development of tools to facilitate institutional research, assessment, and accreditation processes.

Dr. Henderson has served as a co-editor and author for New Directions of Institutional Research and Cultivating a Data Culture in Higher Education (2018).

She received an M.A. in English from Georgia Southern University, an M.L.I.S. from Valdosta State University, and Ph.D. in Education and Human Resource Studies, with a specialization in Higher Education Leadership from Colorado State University.
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Kristina ‘KP’ Powers is President of the Institute for Effectiveness in Higher Education. KP has served in leadership roles in colleges and universities for over 20 years, primarily in the areas of institution accreditation, institutional effectiveness, institutional research, financial planning, and strategy. Her research and practice focus on effective and efficient use of resources to advance higher education organizations.

Dr. Powers also serves as a national IPEDS trainer and has current appointments to the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC), the NC-SARA Data Advisory Committee, the Journal of Postsecondary Student Success editorial board, and the SUNY Brockport Dean’s Advisory Council. Throughout her higher education career, Dr. Powers has taught undergraduate and graduate students as well as delivers professional development presentations, workshops and trainings in all modalities (face-to-face, online, and hybrid) on accreditation, institutional effectiveness, institutional research and higher education organization and administration, IPEDS, financial planning, and strategy.

KP earned her doctorate from Florida State University in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies with a concentration in Higher Education Policy, a Master’s in Higher Education Administration from Florida State University, and a Bachelor of Science from the State University of New York, College at Brockport. Her books, Organization and Administration in Higher Education (third edition – 2022), Data Strategy in Colleges and Universities (2019), and Cultivating a Data Culture in Higher Education (2018) are published by Routledge. She has served as issue co-editor and author for New Directions of Institutional Research.
Chapter Outline

1. Introduction
2. Institutional Level
   a. Two-year
   b. Four-year
3. Institutional Type
   a. Public
   b. Private
   c. Overall Geographical Distribution of Institutions
4. Classification of Institutions
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   b. Master’s Colleges and Universities
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   h. Carnegie Overall
5. Key Institutional Quality Indicators
   a. College Entry Indicators
   b. Retention and Graduation Rates and Outcome Measures
   c. Unique Management Challenges
6. Conclusion
Key Chapter Takeaway

Public institutions
- 2-year institutions
- 4-year institutions

Private not-for-profit institutions
- 2-year institutions
- 4-year institutions

Private for-profit institutions
- 2-year institutions
- 4-year institutions
To understand the higher education landscape, you understand the types of institutions and quality indicators that key external stakeholders such as parents, prospective students, legislators, and media focus on when evaluating an institution.
Enrollment by Institution Type

Enrollment by Institution Type (in millions)

- Public enrollment
- Private not-for-profit enrollment
- Private for-profit enrollment

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Public Enrollment</th>
<th>Private Not-for-Profit</th>
<th>Private For-Profit</th>
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<td>2019</td>
<td>14.5</td>
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Carnegie Basic Classifications:

- Doctoral Universities
- Master's Colleges & Universities
- Baccalaureate Colleges
- Baccalaureate/Associate's
- Associate's Colleges
- Special Focus Institutions
- Tribal Colleges & Universities
Distribution by Institution Type and Carnegie Class

- Doctoral Universities: 211 (Public), 183 (Private not-for-profit), 9 (Private for-profit)
- Master's Colleges & Universities: 253 (Public), 39 (Private not-for-profit), 360 (Private for-profit)
- Baccalaureate Colleges: 9 (Public), 24 (Private not-for-profit), 382 (Private for-profit)
- Baccalaureate/Associate's: 37 (Public), 53 (Private not-for-profit), 130 (Private for-profit)
- Associate's Colleges: 20 (Public), 66 (Private not-for-profit), 844 (Private for-profit)
- Special Focus Institutions: 50 (Public), 412 (Private not-for-profit), 622 (Private for-profit)
- Tribal Colleges & Universities: 29 (Public), 5 (Private not-for-profit), 0 (Private for-profit)
- No Classification: 11 (Public), 51 (Private not-for-profit), 94 (Private for-profit)
Key Chapter Takeaway

Key Institutional Quality Indicators:

- College Entry Indicators
- Qualitative Indicators
- Retention and Graduation Rates and Outcome Measures
Unique Management Challenges

- Unionized vs. Non-Unionized Institutions
- Location
- Student Body Composition
- Housing and Students Living on Campus
Discussion Prompts

1. In terms of classification, which type of institution appeals to you most as an administrator, faculty member, staff member, undergraduate student, or graduate student? Does your choice vary based on the role you consider? Why?

2. Institutions are grouped by characteristics so as to better understand the sets of institutions. While the Carnegie Classification system provides a comprehensive set of categories, are there other grouping categories that might be beneficial?

3. Identify three opportunities and threats for each institutional sector: public, private not-for-profit, and private for-profit.
Discussion Prompts

4. In what ways do key quality indicators influence the institutional mission? What quality indicators does your institution use to measure progress?

5. What are two ways in which institution location might influence institutional operations?

6. Identify innovative opportunities for responding to financial challenges (e.g., pandemics, natural disasters) and improving student completion.

7. Find your institution’s standardized testing policy. How does the policy promote diversity? What changes should/could be made to the policy to further reduce biases against minority and low-income students?
8. What are the advantages and disadvantages for each institution type in setting tuition policies? Do advantages and disadvantages change depending on perspective (i.e., administrator, faculty, staff, or student)?

9. What are some potential challenges for moving from one classification type (e.g., Carnegie Classification, sector) to another?

10. What institutional types make the most financial and administrative sense for partnerships? Why? What potential challenges could arise from collaboration?
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