

Applying the methodology of the community college classification scheme to the public
Master's Colleges and Universities sector

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Abstract

This work brings forward the geographically-based classification scheme for the public Master's Colleges and Universities sector. Using the same methodology developed by Katsinas and Hardy (2005) to classify community colleges, this work classifies Master's Colleges and Universities. This work has four major findings and conclusions. First, a geographically-based classification system is possible for the 266 publicly-controlled Master's Colleges and Universities. The publicly-controlled Carnegie classified Master's Colleges and Universities can be classified as 61% rural-serving, 21% suburban-serving, and 17% urban-serving—a percentage breakdown that nearly matches the Associate's Colleges classifications. Second, significant differences exist across all three geographical types by enrollment size, bachelor's degrees awarded, and student race and ethnicity. Approximately 61% of 2,507,879 undergraduate students enrolled in public Master's institutions in academic year 2006-07 were White, with 13% Black, and 11% Hispanic—a finding that has tremendous policy implications. Third, significant differences exist across all three geographical areas with respect to student financial aid and student loan indebtedness. Student loans represent the single largest category of all financial aid awards across all three geographical types of public master's institutions. In total, nearly 45% of all students enrolled in a public master's institution require student loans to finance their educations. Fourth and finally, this classification scheme will allow for community college scholars to more accurately compare MCUs and ACs.

Introduction

President Barack Obama recently spoke to the need of dramatically expanding bachelor's degree attainment among U. S. adults (Obama, 2009a). In order to achieve this ambitious goal, the American Graduation Initiative (AGI) seeks to update community college facilities, increase graduation rates, and help increase revenue sources for community colleges (Obama, 2009b). It is rather well-established and accepted that Associate's Colleges are access-oriented institutions. While Associate's Colleges are the focus of the Obama administration's American Graduation Initiative plan, it is important to realize that Associate's Colleges are not the only sector of American higher education that are access-oriented institutions. Katsinas (2009) has recently argued that enrollment caps at large public flagship institutions are forcing minority and first-generation populations to seek access from other types of institutions. Simply put, to significantly expand access to higher education in the four year sector for the underserved low income, minority, and to increase the occurrence of first-generation students will require increased participation of America's publicly-controlled Master's Colleges and Universities.

Master's Colleges and Universities (MCUs) represent a classification of institutions that are classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) on the basis of master's degree production (CFAT, 2010). Institutions granting between 50-99 degrees are considered Smaller-Programs, while institutions granting 100-199 are Medium-Programs, and institutions granting 200 or more Master's degrees are Larger-Programs.

There are 658 MCUs operating within the United States and its territories. Of the 658 institutions, 266 are public, 348 are private-not-for-profit, and 44 are private for-profit. The research reported here focuses exclusively on the 266 publicly-controlled institutions. A geographically-based classification scheme, developed by Kinkead (2009), similar to the classification scheme for the Associate's sector (ACs), was recently developed for the 266 public MCUs. The focus of this research is to report on and showcase the classification scheme for MCUs, and to offer suggestions on how this newly created classification scheme can assist in future studies that examine transfer, student achievement, enrollments, and student financial aid at both MCUs and ACs.

Literature Review

In examining the existing literature on MCUs, very little has been written about this sector. Kinkead (2009) recently discovered that 250 of the 266, or 94% of the publicly-controlled MCUs are members of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). The seminal work discussing AASCU institutions, *The Colleges of the Forgotten Americans: A Profile of State Colleges and Regional Universities*, was completed in 1969 by E. Alden Dunham. In this work, Dunham observed that a significant portion of the student enrollment at AASCU-type institutions were transfer students from community colleges. Dunham asserts, "upper-division enrollments in large numbers of state colleges consist increasingly of junior college transfer students" (p. 94). In fact, many state colleges graduate almost as many transfer students as they do their own freshmen, a point re-affirmed by Ostar (1991) who noted the strong connection and similarities between AASCU institutions and community colleges by proclaiming that community colleges and AASCU institutions "share a similar philosophy, and

serve a similar clientele” (p. 23). If the two institutional types share similar student profiles, it seems entirely reasonable that the two institutional types share a similar classification scheme.

More recently, Pat Callan, President of the National Public Policy Center in Higher Education noted at the 2009 meeting the Association for the Study of Higher Education's Council on Public Policy in Higher Education, the Master's Colleges and Universities (MCUs) are the most understudied sector of higher education. With the relative little research about master's level institutions and the ever-increasing significance of community colleges, it seems entirely appropriate to explore the similarities between the two institutional types.

Justification for the Classification Scheme

In a rather path-breaking study, Kinkead (2009) showed that it is possible to classify the nation's publicly-controlled Master's Colleges and Universities. In that study, Kinkead notes:

.....consider the enrollment profiles of CSU—Long Beach and Western Carolina University (WCU) located in Cullowhee, NC. Under the existing Carnegie classification language, both of these institutions are classified as Master's—Large institutions. While CSU—Long Beach had 32,921 undergraduate students in the 2006-07 academic year, WCU had 8,046. Of the 32,921 undergraduate students at CSU—Long Beach, 32% were White, 6% Black, 26% Hispanic, and 23% Asian. In contrast, of the 8,046 undergraduate students at WCU, 85% were White, 5% Black, 1% Hispanic, and 1% Asian. Under the existing Carnegie classification system, these two institutions *are* grouped in the same classification subclass. It seems rather clear from these data that the geographically-based classification system proposed in this study reduces error in making comparisons among Master's institutions (pg. 108).

From this quote, we can see the tremendous impact that a geographically-based classification system can have on the study of Master's Colleges and Universities. The classification scheme can help reduce error, and aid in the advocacy for this understudied sector of American higher education.

Methods

To create a more sophisticated classification system for the Master's Colleges and Universities sector, Kinkead (2009) used population data collected from the 2000 United States Decennial Census. The Census shows population data for any defined area. Working from a similar methodology put forth by Hardy (2005) in his dissertation and the subsequent work from Katsinas, Hardy, and Lacey (2005), population data were accessed for each city in which the institutions under investigation reported their physical address. An institution reporting a physical address within the confines of a PMSA or MSA, with the city's name included in the title of the PMSA or MSA, and with a total population of 500,000 people or more was coded as “urban-serving”. An institution with a physical address located in a city within the parameters of a PMSA or MSA but not included in the name of the PMSA or MSA, but yet has a total population of 500,000 people or more, was coded as “suburban-serving”. Lastly, an institution with a physical address outside of any PMSA or MSA, or located within the parameters of a PMSA or MSA with fewer than 500,000 people was coded as “rural-serving”.

Data

Once each publicly controlled Master's institution was assigned to a subclass, and IPEDS data were collected showing enrollments, bachelor's degree completions, financial aid, student race and ethnicity, and student loans. The attached tables show this data. Tables 1-5 (attached) show the data in 9 categories. These 9 categories include Master's Colleges and Universities—Larger Programs by rural, suburban, urban; Medium Programs by rural, suburban, urban; and Smaller Programs by rural, suburban, and urban.

As shown below in Table 6, combining the two categories makes both the suburban-serving and urban-serving sector consistent, and provides a more populous subclass for the institutions belonging to these categories. It is important to note, that one “special use” institution is included in Table 1. This institution has no undergraduates and is in operation for advanced military studies. Due to this fact, the “special use” category was removed from all subsequent data tables. Since Master's institutions are frequently compared to Associate's institutions, it seems exceedingly reasonable that both the Associate's sector and Master's sector have 7 subclasses each. Finally, Table 7 shows data for both the Associate's sector and the MCU sector. In short, Table 7 is an example of the kind of comparative research made possible by the newly created MCU classification scheme discussed in this research.

Major Findings and Conclusions

1. A geographically-based classification system is possible for the 266 publicly-controlled Master's Colleges and Universities. The publicly-controlled Carnegie classified Master's Colleges and Universities can be classified as 61% rural-serving, 21% suburban-serving, and 17% urban-serving—a percentage breakdown that nearly matches the Associate's Colleges classifications.
2. Significant differences exist across all three geographical types by enrollment size, bachelor's degrees awarded, and student race and ethnicity. Approximately 61% of 2,507,879 undergraduate students enrolled in public Master's institutions in academic year 2006-07 were White, with 13% Black, and 11% Hispanic—a finding that has tremendous policy implications.
3. Significant differences exist across all three geographical areas with respect to student financial aid and student loan indebtedness. Student loans represent the single largest category of all financial aid awards across all three geographical types of public master's institutions. In total, nearly 45% of all students enrolled in a public master's institution require student loans to finance their educations.
4. Publicly-controlled Carnegie classified Master's Colleges and Universities are serving as access-oriented institutions by serving and graduating many underrepresented student populations (see Table 3).

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Table 1

**Number of Institutions and Enrollments at Publicly-Controlled Master's Colleges and Universities
by Geographical Reclassification: 2006-07, Expressed in Numbers, Percentages, and Average Enrollments**

	Institutions		Enrollments		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Average
Rural Small	26	10%	127,691	5%	4,911
Rural Medium	46	17%	277,729	11%	6,038
Rural Large	91	34%	873,757	35%	9,602
Rural Total	163	61%	1,279,177	51%	7,848
Suburban Small	3	1%	24,415	1%	8,138
Suburban Medium	12	5%	62,632	2%	5,219
Suburban Large	41	15%	546,118	22%	13,320
Suburban Total	56	21%	633,165	25%	11,307
Urban Small	2	1%	17,537	1%	8,769
Urban Medium	11	4%	103,209	4%	9,383
Urban Large	33	12%	474,791	19%	14,388
Urban Total	46	17%	595,537	24%	12,946
R, S, & U Total	265	100%	2,507,879	100%	9,464
Special Use	1	0%	0	0%	N/A
Total	266	100%	2,507,879	100%	9,428

Data Source: NCES/IPEDS

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Enrollments are for undergraduates only

Table 2

Total Undergraduate Annual Unduplicated Headcount Enrollments at Public Master's Colleges and Universities by Race/Ethnicity and Geographical Reclassification: 2006-07, Expressed in Numbers and Percentages

	Total Undergraduate Enrollment		White		Black		Hispanic		Asian/Pacific Islander		American Indian Alaskan Native		Race Unknown		Non-Resident Alien	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Rural Small	127,691	5	82,891	5	27,382	8	4,013	2	2,054	1	2,502	9	6,474	4	2,375	4
Rural Medium	277,729	11	178,494	12	32,913	10	34,068	13	8,427	6	5,191	20	13,043	9	5,593	9
Rural Large	873,757	35	647,048	42	87,710	26	49,600	19	22,274	16	11,980	45	40,365	27	14,780	25
Rural Total	1,279,177	51	908,433	59	148,005	44	87,681	33	32,755	24	19,673	75	59,882	40	22,748	38
Suburban Small	24,415	1	15,642	1	2,501	1	1,543	1	778	1	136	1	2,637	2	1,178	2
Suburban Medium	62,632	2	41,680	3	8,554	3	4,715	2	2,707	2	299	1	3,402	2	1,275	2
Suburban Large	546,118	22	319,477	21	69,569	21	59,936	23	40,740	30	3,146	12	37,684	25	15,566	26
Suburban Total	633,165	25	376,799	25	80,624	24	66,194	25	44,225	32	3,581	14	43,723	29	18,019	30
Urban Small	17,537	1	4,173	0	9,976	3	1,287	0	402	0	37	0	1,651	1	11	0
Urban Medium	103,209	4	56,470	4	23,016	7	3,849	1	2,973	2	673	3	14,665	10	1,563	3
Urban Large	474,791	19	190,589	12	71,840	22	105,791	40	57,153	42	2,437	9	29,626	20	17,355	29
Urban Total	595,537	24	251,232	16	104,832	31	110,927	42	60,528	44	3,147	12	45,942	31	18,929	32
Total	2,507,879	100	1,536,464	100	333,461	100	264,802	100	137,508	100	26,401	100	149,547	100	59,696	100
Rural Small	100%		65%		21%		3%		2%		2%		5%		2%	
Rural Medium	100%		65%		12%		12%		2%		2%		5%		2%	
Rural Large	100%		75%		10%		4%		3%		1%		5%		2%	
Rural Total	100%		72%		12%		6%		2%		2%		5%		2%	
Suburban Small	100%		64%		10%		6%		3%		1%		11%		5%	
Suburban Medium	100%		67%		14%		8%		4%		0%		5%		2%	
Suburban Large	100%		58%		13%		11%		7%		1%		7%		3%	
Suburban Total	100%		60%		13%		10%		7%		1%		7%		3%	
Urban Small	100%		24%		57%		7%		2%		0%		9%		0%	
Urban Medium	100%		55%		22%		4%		3%		1%		14%		2%	
Urban Large	100%		40%		15%		22%		12%		1%		6%		4%	
Urban Total	100%		42%		18%		19%		10%		1%		8%		3%	
Total	100%		62%		13%		11%		5%		1%		6%		2%	

Data Source:
NCES/IPEDS

Table 3

Bachelor's Degrees Awarded at Public Master's Colleges and Universities for First and Second Major by Race/Ethnicity and Geographical Reclassification: 2006-07, Expressed in Numbers and Percentages

	Degrees Awarded		White		Black		Hispanic		Asian/ Pacific Islander		American Indian Alaskan Native		Race Unknown		Non- Resident Alien	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Rural Small	16,536	5	11,541	5	2,962	8	477	1	232	1	202	7	743	4	379	4
Rural Medium	37,224	10	27,172	11	3,262	9	3,028	9	911	3	592	19	1,500	8	759	8
Rural Large	131,179	35	103,395	43	9,202	26	6,342	14	3,554	17	1,366	44	5,240	26	2,080	22
Rural Total	184,939	50	142,108	59	15,426	43	9,847	25	4,697	21	2,160	70	7,483	38	3,218	34
Suburban Small	3,838	1	2,547	1	278	1	173	1	161	1	18	1	225	1	436	5
Suburban Medium	9,909	3	7,242	3	914	3	590	2	433	2	54	2	463	2	213	2
Suburban Large	83,147	23	51,632	21	8,512	24	8,344	24	6,415	31	413	13	5,117	26	2,714	28
Suburban Total	96,894	26	61,421	25	9,704	27	9,107	27	7,009	34	485	16	5,805	29	3,363	35
Urban Small	719	0	279	0	320	1	74	0	21	0	3	0	21	0	1	0
Urban Medium	10,872	3	6,586	3	2,351	7	314	1	357	2	63	2	960	5	241	3
Urban Large	72,235	20	31,767	13	8,120	23	14,967	44	8,719	42	386	12	5,531	28	2,745	29
Urban Total	83,826	23	38,632	16	10,791	30	15,355	45	9,097	44	452	15	6,512	33	2,987	31
Total	365,659	100	242,161	100	35,921	100	34,309	100	20,803	100	3,097	100	19,800	100	9,568	100
Rural Small	100%		70%		18%		3%		1%		1%		4%		2%	
Rural Medium	100%		73%		9%		8%		2%		2%		4%		2%	
Rural Large	100%		80%		7%		4%		3%		1%		4%		2%	
Rural Total	100%		78%		8%		5%		2%		1%		4%		2%	
Suburban Small	100%		66%		7%		5%		4%		0%		6%		11%	
Suburban Medium	100%		73%		9%		6%		4%		1%		5%		2%	
Suburban Large	100%		62%		10%		10%		8%		0%		6%		3%	
Suburban Total	100%		63%		10%		9%		7%		1%		6%		3%	
Urban Small	100%		39%		45%		10%		3%		0%		3%		0%	
Urban Medium	100%		61%		22%		3%		3%		1%		9%		2%	
Urban Large	100%		44%		11%		21%		12%		1%		8%		4%	
Urban Total	100%		46%		13%		18%		11%		1%		8%		4%	
Total	100%		67%		10%		9%		6%		1%		5%		3%	

Data Source: NCES/IPEDS; Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Table 4

**Student Financial Aid for First-Time, Full-Time Degree/Certificate Seeking Undergraduates at Public Master's Colleges and Universities
by Geographical Reclassification: 2006-07-- Expressed in Numbers and Percentages**

	Number of Students in Fall Cohort		Received Any Financial Aid		Received Federal Grant Aid		Received State/Local Aid		Received Institutional Aid		Incurred Student Loan Debt	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Rural Small	18,214	5	15,479	6	6,917	7	6,739	5	6,745	7	10,481	7
Rural Medium	41,088	12	33,538	13	13,347	13	14,608	11	15,205	16	20,190	13
Rural Large	130,263	39	98,453	38	35,450	33	46,201	35	35,883	38	64,080	42
Rural Total	189,565	56	147,470	58	55,714	52	67,548	52	57,833	61	94,751	63
Suburban Small	1,196	0	877	0	342	0	386	0	265	0	644	0
Suburban Medium	9,900	3	7,147	3	2,695	3	2,686	2	1,881	2	5,340	4
Suburban Large	64,827	19	49,032	19	18,367	18	30,001	23	17,093	18	26,586	18
Suburban Total	75,923	23	57,056	23	21,404	21	33,073	26	19,239	20	32,570	22
Urban Small	1,493	0	952	0	596	1	547	0	187	0	584	0
Urban Medium	9,134	3	7,172	3	3,286	3	3,158	2	2,427	3	4,565	3
Urban Large	56,570	17	40,713	16	22,257	22	24,027	19	15,084	16	18,520	12
Urban Total	67,197	20	48,837	19	26,139	25	27,732	22	17,698	19	23,669	16
Total	332,685	100	253,363	100	103,257	100	128,353	100	94,770	100	150,990	100
Rural Small	100%		85%		38%		37%		37%		58%	
Rural Medium	100%		82%		32%		36%		37%		50%	
Rural Large	100%		76%		27%		35%		28%		50%	
Rural Total	100%		78%		29%		36%		31%		51%	
Suburban Small	100%		73%		29%		32%		22%		54%	
Suburban Medium	100%		72%		27%		27%		19%		54%	
Suburban Large	100%		76%		28%		46%		26%		41%	
Suburban Total	100%		75%		28%		44%		25%		43%	
Urban Small	100%		64%		40%		37%		13%		39%	
Urban Medium	100%		79%		36%		35%		27%		50%	
Urban Large	100%		72%		39%		42%		27%		33%	
Urban Total	100%		73%		39%		41%		26%		35%	
Total	100%		76%		31%		39%		29%		46%	

Data Source: NCES/IPEDS; Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Table 5

**Student Financial Aid for First-Time, Full-Time Degree/Certificate Seeking Undergraduates at Public Master's Colleges and Universities
by Geographical Reclassification: 2006-07, Average Award Amounts Expressed in Dollars**

	Average Amount of Federal Grant Aid Awarded	Average Amount of State/Local Aid Awarded	Average Amount of Institutional Aid Awarded	Average Amount of Student Loan Debt Incurred
	No.	No.	No.	No.
Rural Small	\$3,189	\$2,286	\$2,401	\$4,414
Rural Medium	\$3,271	\$2,416	\$2,584	\$3,770
Rural Large	\$3,207	\$2,393	\$2,472	\$3,994
Rural Total	\$3,222	\$2,365	\$2,486	\$4,059
Suburban Small	\$3,330	\$3,911	\$3,597	\$4,474
Suburban Medium	\$3,365	\$2,871	\$3,046	\$3,962
Suburban Large	\$3,204	\$2,667	\$3,064	\$3,856
Suburban Total	\$3,300	\$3,150	\$3,236	\$4,097
Urban Small	\$3,521	\$3,147	\$2,469	\$4,099
Urban Medium	\$3,109	\$2,595	\$3,302	\$4,175
Urban Large	\$3,457	\$2,754	\$3,357	\$3,360
Urban Total	\$3,362	\$2,832	\$3,043	\$3,878
Total	\$3,295	\$2,782	\$2,922	\$4,011

Data Source: NCES/IPEDS, Student Financial Aid Survey; 2006-07

Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Table 6

Number of Institutions and Undergraduate Enrollments at Publicly-Controlled Master's Colleges and Universities by Modified Geographical Classification: 2006-07, Expressed in Numbers, Percentages, and Average Enrollments

	Institutions		Enrollments		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Average
Rural Small	26	10%	127,691	5%	4,911
Rural Medium	46	17%	277,729	11%	6,038
Rural Large	91	34%	873,757	35%	9,602
Rural Total	163	61%	1,279,177	51%	7,848
Suburban Smaller	15	6%	87,047	3%	5,803
Suburban Larger	41	15%	546,118	22%	13,320
Suburban Total	56	21%	633,165	25%	11,307
Urban Smaller	13	5%	120,746	5%	9,288
Urban Larger	33	12%	474,791	19%	14,388
Urban Total	46	17%	595,537	24%	12,946
R, S, & U Total	265	100%	2,507,879	100%	9,464
Special Use	1	0%	0	0%	N/A
Total	266	100%	2,507,879	100%	9,428

Data Source: NCES/IPEDS

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Table 7*Enrollment Growth in Public Associate's Colleges and Master's Colleges and Universities, 2000-01 and 2006-07*

2005 Carnegie Basic Classification	Institutions		Annual Undupl. Headcount				Change from 2001-2007		
			2000-01		2006-07		Number	% growth	% of all growth
	Number	%	Enroll	Avg. enroll	Enroll	Avg. enroll			
Rural Small	136	14%	140,706	1,035	198,485	1,459	57,779	41%	3%
Rural Medium	305	31%	890,587	2,920	1,431,953	4,695	541,366	61%	23%
Rural Large	143	15%	1,361,224	9,519	1,784,176	12,477	422,952	31%	18%
Total Rural	584	60%	2,392,517	4,097	3,414,614	5,847	1,022,097	43%	44%
Suburban Single Campus	110	11%	1,032,566	9,387	1,350,457	12,277	317,891	31%	14%
Suburban Multi-Campus	100	10%	1,333,976	13,340	1,692,873	16,929	358,897	27%	16%
Total Suburban	210	22%	2,366,542	11,269	3,043,330	14,492	676,788	29%	29%
Urban Single Campus	32	3%	203,254	6,352	427,926	13,373	224,672	111%	10%
Urban Multi-Campus	147	15%	2,396,597	16,303	2,779,414	18,908	382,817	16%	17%
Total Urban	179	18%	2,599,851	14,524	3,207,340	17,918	607,489	23%	26%
Total	973	100%	7,358,910	7,563	9,665,284	9,933	2,306,374	31%	100%
Public MCUs *									
Rural Small	26	10%	98,731	3,797	127,691	4,911	28,960	29%	4%
Rural Medium	46	17%	208,844	4,540	277,729	6,038	68,885	33%	10%
Rural Large	91	34%	576,986	6,341	873,757	9,602	296,771	51%	43%
Rural Total	163	61%	884,561	5,427	1,279,177	7,848	394,616	45%	57%
Suburban Smaller	15	6%	74,445	4,963	87,047	5,803	12,602	17%	2%
Suburban Larger	41	15%	386,395	9,424	546,118	13,320	159,723	41%	23%
Suburban Total	56	21%	460,840	8,229	633,165	11,307	172,325	37%	25%
Urban Smaller	13	5%	103,294	7,946	120,746	9,288	17,452	17%	3%
Urban Larger	33	12%	368,585	11,169	474,791	14,388	106,206	29%	15%
Urban Total	46	17%	471,879	10,258	595,537	12,946	123,658	26%	18%
R, S, & U Total	265	100%	1,817,280	6,858	2,507,879	9,464	690,599	38%	100%