

RELEASING THE REIMAGINED CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATIONS

April 2025



Carnegie Foundation
for the Advancement of Teaching

ACE American
Council on
Education®

Our Timeline Leading Up to the 2025 Release

February 2022: 2021 Carnegie Classifications finalized; Carnegie Foundation and ACE announce a new partnership to reimagine the Carnegie Classifications

November 2023:
Announcement of a new approach to the Institutional Classification and Research Activity Designations

January 2025: Institutions received their data for review and appeal

April 2025: Full Carnegie Classifications, including Student Access and Earnings Classification, released

2022

2023

2024

2025

September 2022: Creation of Technical Review Panel and Institutional Roundtable to serve as primary advisers on redesign

May 2024: Release of framework for what will become the Student Access and Earnings Classification

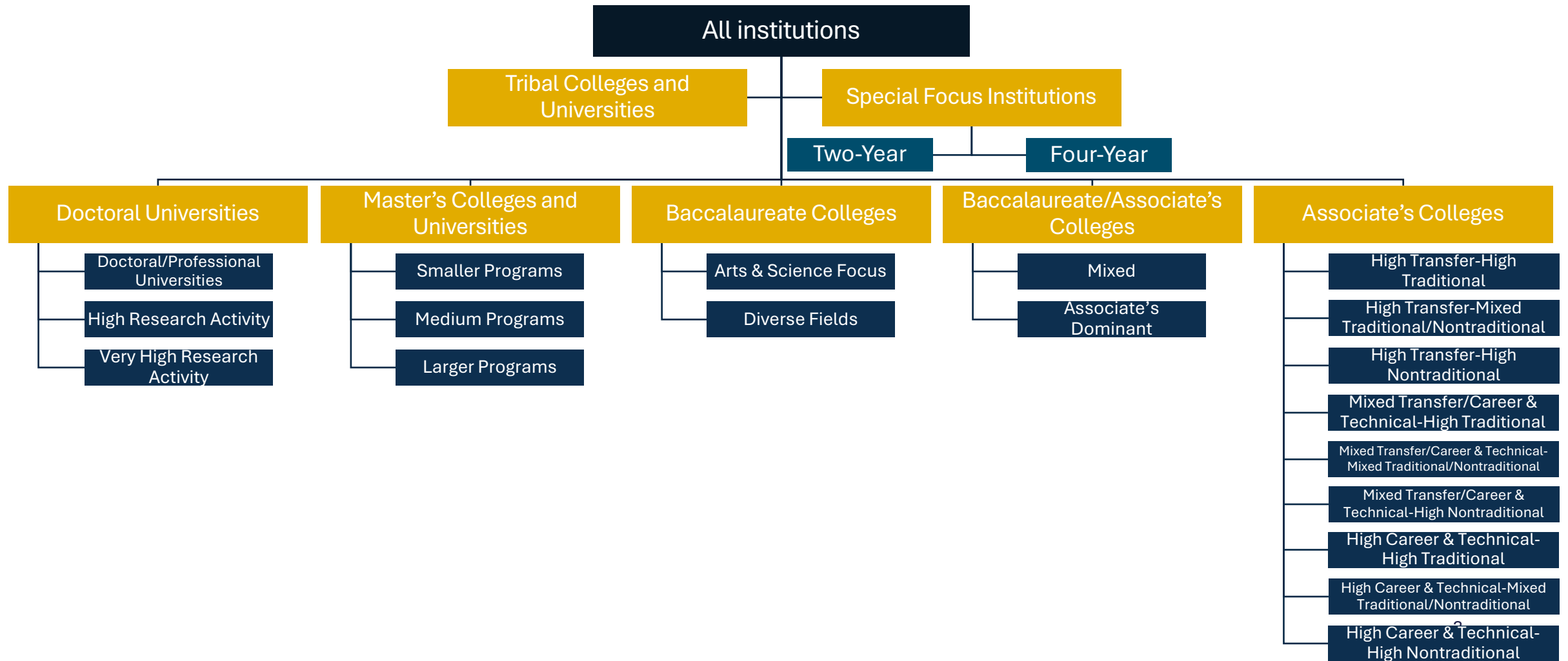
February 2025:
Research designations released

- Summer and beyond:**
- Learning from institutions through peer learning communities
 - Doing our own analysis
 - Presenting about the classifications
 - Talking with state leaders, grant-makers and policymakers

2022–2025: Carnegie Classifications team presents at dozens of conferences and large-scale meetings to reach more than 12,000 people and meets with more than 1,500 higher education leaders in 1:1 sessions

2021 Carnegie Basic Classification

Institutions are Primarily Defined by the Highest Degree Awarded



Carnegie Classifications Are Used Throughout Higher Education

State performance
funding and/or state
agency reporting and
benchmarking

Federal reporting and
legislation

Media organizations,
including US News
rankings and
Washington Monthly
rankings

Institutional planning,
strategic goalsetting,
and benchmarking

Faculty pay and
recruitment

Institutional research

Philanthropic grant-
making

Part of eligibility
criteria for other
organizations and
associations

Judicial arguments
and decisions,
including U.S. District
Courts and state
courts

2025 Carnegie Classifications

- All institutions will automatically be classified in these categories in 2025 based on the data they have reported and/or that has been federally collected.

Institutional
Classification

Student Access
and Earnings
Classification

Research Activity
Designation
(if applicable)
*Released
February 2025*

Technical Review Panel Members

- **Sandy Baum**, Senior Fellow, Urban Institute
- **Anthony Carnevale**, Professor and Research Director, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
- **Wil Del Pilar**, Vice President of Higher Education Policy and Practice, Ed Trust
- **John Friedman**, Professor of Economics, Brown University; founding co-Director, Opportunity Insights
- **Linda García**, Executive Director, Center for Community College Student Engagement
- **Sylvia Hurtado**, Professor, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA
- **Michael Itzkowitz**, Senior Fellow, Third Way
- **Erin Lynch**, Associate Provost of Scholarship, Research, and Innovation, Winston-Salem State University
- **Anne-Marie Núñez**, Executive Director, Diana Natalicio Institute for Hispanic Student Success, University of Texas at El Paso
- **Hironao Okahana**, Assistant Vice President for Research, American Council on Education
- **Cecilia Orphan**, Associate Professor of Higher Education, University of Denver; Director of Partnerships, Alliance for Research on Regional Colleges
- **Deborah Santiago**, Chief Executive Officer, Excelencia in Education
- **David Troutman**, Deputy Commissioner of Academic Affairs and Innovation, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)
- **Desiree Zerquera**, Associate Professor for Higher Education and Student Affairs and Department Chair, University of San Francisco School of Education

Institutional Roundtable Members

- **Sylvia Burwell**, Former President, American University
- **Roslyn Clark Artis**, President, Benedict College
- **Sue Ellspermann**, President, Ivy Tech Community College
- **John DeGioia**, President Emeritus, Georgetown University
- **Joan Gabel**, President, University of Minnesota
- **Carrie Besnette Hauser**, Former President and CEO, Colorado Mountain College
- **Anne Kress**, President, Northern Virginia Community College
- **Paul LeBlanc**, Former President, Southern New Hampshire University
- **Candice McQueen**, President, Lipscomb University
- **Felix Matos Rodriguez**, Chancellor, City University of New York
- **Juan Munoz**, Chancellor, University of California - Merced
- **Thomas Parham**, President, California State University - Dominguez Hills
- **Bill Pink**, President, Ferris State University
- **Madeline Pumariega**, President, Miami Dade College
- **Philip Rogers**, Chancellor, East Carolina University
- **Tom Stritikus**, President, Occidental College
- **Kim Wilcox**, Chancellor, University of California - Riverside
- **David Wilson**, President, Morgan State University
- **Kevin Worthen**, Former President, Brigham Young University

2025 Carnegie Research Designations

Research 1: Very High Research Spending and Doctorate Production

187 Institutions

- Spent at least **\$50 million** in total R&D in a year, as reported to the NSF HERD Survey

AND

- Awarded at least **70 research/scholarship doctorates** in a year, as reported to IPEDS

Research 2: High Research Spending and Doctorate Production

139 Institutions

- Spent at least **\$5 million** in total R&D in a year, as reported to the NSF HERD Survey

AND

- Awarded at least **20 research/scholarship doctorates** in a year, as reported to IPEDS

Research Colleges and Universities

216 Institutions

- Spent at least **\$2.5 million** in total R&D in a year, as reported to the NSF HERD Survey
- *Does not include institutions designated R1 or R2*

For the 2025 classifications, institutions received the higher of either:

- Three-year average (2021, 2022, 2023)
- Most recent single year (2023)

Finalized Institutional Classification

General Definitions for the Dimensions

Academic Program Mix

The fields of study in which institutions award 50% or more of their degrees.

Three general categories:

- **Special focus:** 50%+ degrees awarded in a single academic area or field (11 subcategories)
- **Professions-focused:** 50%+ degrees awarded in fields that are considered pre-professional
- **Mixed:** Fewer than 50% of their degrees in any one area

Award Level Focus

The focus and mix of award levels at an institution; generally, where they award the most degrees.

- Associate
- Associate/Baccalaureate
- Baccalaureate
- Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's
- Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate
- Graduate-focused

Size

The size of an institution, as measured by its total 12-month headcount, including full- and part-time students, and including undergraduate and graduate students

The 2025 Institutional Classification Has 31 Classifications

- **Associate Colleges**
 - Mixed Associate Large
 - Mixed Associate Medium
 - Mixed Associate Small
 - Professions-focused Associate Large/Medium
 - Professions-focused Associate Small
- **Associate/Baccalaureate Colleges**
 - Mixed Associate/Baccalaureate
 - Professions-focused Associate/Baccalaureate
- **Baccalaureate Colleges**
 - Mixed Baccalaureate
 - Professions-focused Baccalaureate Medium
 - Professions-focused Baccalaureate Small
- **Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's Institutions**
 - Mixed Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's Large/Medium
 - Mixed Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's Small
 - Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's Large/Medium
 - Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's Small
- **Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Institutions**
 - Mixed Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Large
 - Mixed Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Medium
 - Mixed Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Small
 - Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Large
 - Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Medium
 - Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Small
- **Special Focus Institutions**
 - Special Focus: Applied and Career Studies
 - Special Focus: Arts and Sciences
 - Special Focus: Arts, Music, and Design
 - Special Focus: Business
 - Special Focus: Graduate Studies
 - Special Focus: Law
 - Special Focus: Medical Schools and Centers
 - Special Focus: Nursing
 - Special Focus: Other Health Professions
 - Special Focus: Technology, Engineering, and Sciences
 - Special Focus: Theological Studies

Some Categories Were Combined Given Small N Counts

- Special Focus: Applied and Career Studies: 323
 - Medium: 23
 - Small: 300
- Mixed Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's Large/Medium: 87
 - Large: 18
 - Medium: 69
- Special Focus: Business: 120
 - Associate: 23
 - Associate/Baccalaureate: 13
 - Baccalaureate: 28
 - Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's: 25
 - Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate: 10
 - Graduate-focused: 21

Multi-dimensional Institutional Classification: Florida A&M University

AWARD LEVEL FOCUS

Undergraduate/Graduate-
Doctorate

ACADEMIC PROGRAM MIX

Professions-focused

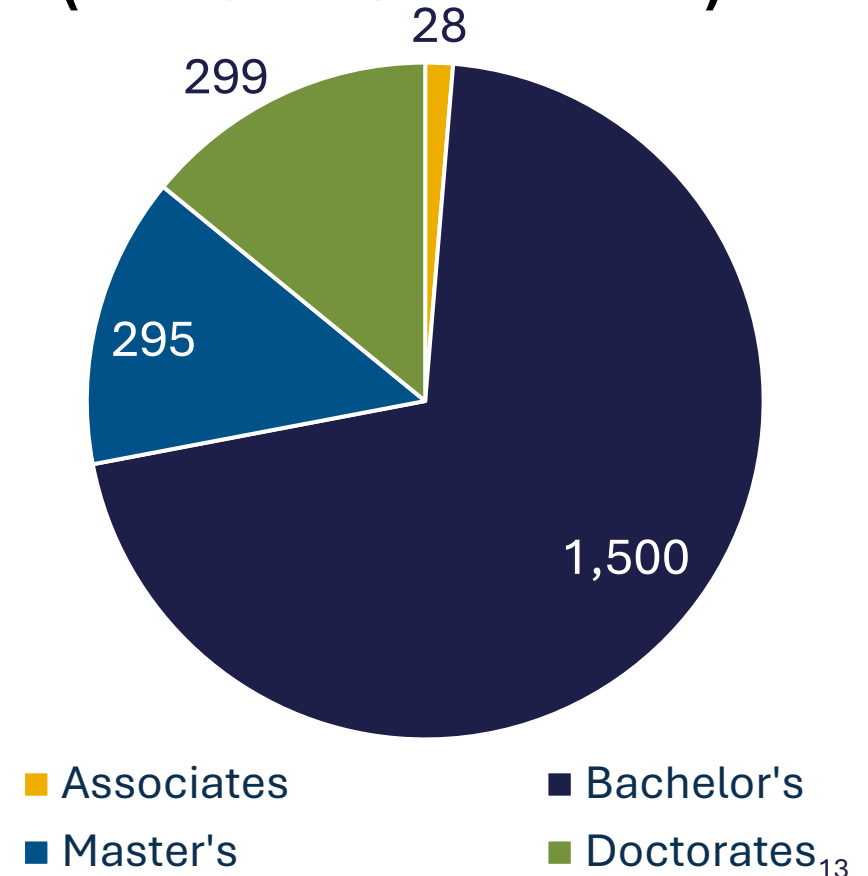
HIGHEST DEGREE AWARDED

Doctorate

SIZE

Medium

AWARD LEVEL PROFILE (# DEGREES AWARDED)



From the Institutional Classification Technical Manual

Award Level Focus

- **Graduate-focused institutions:**
 - At least 90% degrees are doctorates or master's degrees OR
 - More than 50% of degrees are doctorates or master's degrees if the institution awards fewer than 50 undergraduate degrees
- **Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate institutions:**
 - Awards at least 20 doctorates AND at least 25% of the total degrees awarded are graduate degrees OR
 - Awards 100 or more doctorate degrees
- **Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's institutions:**
 - Awards at least 50 master's and doctorate degrees AND at least 25% of the total degrees awarded are graduate degrees OR
 - Awards 200 or more master's and doctorate degrees
- **Associate/Baccalaureate colleges:**
 - Awards between 50-90% of degrees as associates AND awards between 1-50% of degrees as bachelor's+
- **Baccalaureate colleges:**
 - Of the remainder, 50%+ degrees are bachelor's
- **Associate colleges:**
 - Of the remainder, 50%+ degrees are associates

Highest Degree Awarded

- **Doctorate**
 - Award at least 20 doctorates (any type) OR
 - Award no other degrees than the doctorate OR
 - Award at least 50% of their degrees as graduate degrees and the majority of those are doctorates
- **Master's degree**
 - Award at least 50 master's degrees OR
 - Award no other degrees but master's degrees OR
 - Award at least 50% of their degrees as graduate degrees and the majority of those are master's degrees
- **Bachelor's degree**
 - If the institution did not meet the criteria above, award 1 or more bachelor's degrees
- **Associate degrees**
 - If the institution did not meet the criteria above, award 1 or more associate degrees

Examples: Academic Program Mix

Institution A

- In 2021, Institution A was classified as a Doctoral/Professional University
- They offer a range of courses, and 53% of their students graduate with degrees in pre-professional fields (e.g., education, business and marketing, health care)
- Their academic program mix is Professions-focused

Institution B

- In 2021, Institution B was classified as a Master's Large institution
- They offer a range of courses, and 75% of their students graduate with a business degree
- Their academic program mix is Special Focus: Business

Institution C

- In 2021, Institution C was classified as a Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences institution after applying for an exception for the last three update cycles because it awarded too many graduate degrees
- They offer a range of courses, and 67% of their degrees are awarded in the arts & sciences
- Because of the shift away from purely focusing on the highest degree, their award level focus is now baccalaureate, and they are classified as a Special Focus: Arts & Sciences institution

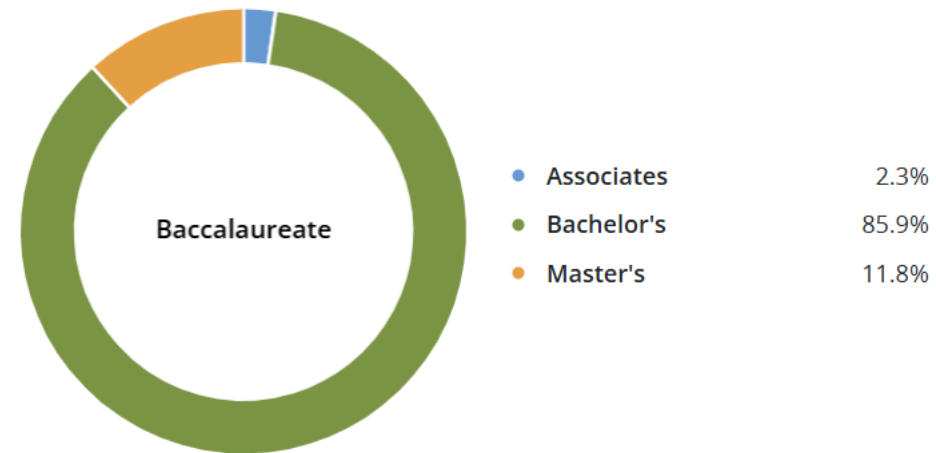
Examples: Award Level Focus and Highest Degree Awarded

Institution D

- In 2021, Institution D was classified as a Master's Medium institution
- From 2020-23, they awarded an average of 23 associate degrees, 847 bachelor's degrees, and 117 master's degrees (12% grad)
- Their award level focus is baccalaureate
 - We report that they award all of these degrees
 - The highest degree awarded is a master's degree

Award Level Focus

The primary award level(s) in which the institution awards degrees.



Highest Degree Awarded



Master's

Examples: Award Level Focus and Highest Degree Awarded

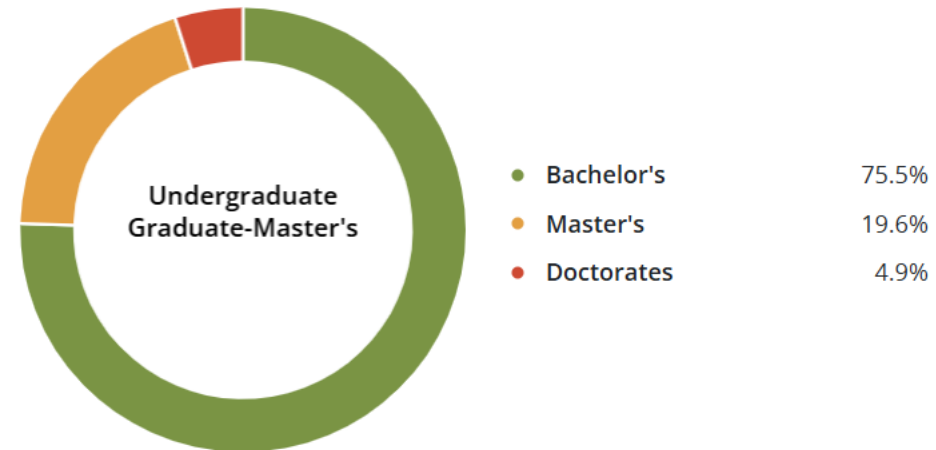
Institution E

- In 2021, Institution E was classified as a Doctoral University
- From 2020-23, they awarded an average of 1,022 bachelor's degrees, 265 master's degrees, and 66 doctorates (24% grad)
- Their award level focus is undergraduate/graduate-master's
 - We report that they award all of these degrees
 - The highest degree awarded is a doctorate

Award Level Focus



The primary award level(s) in which the institution awards degrees.



Highest Degree Awarded



Doctorate

Examples: Award Level Focus and Highest Degree Awarded

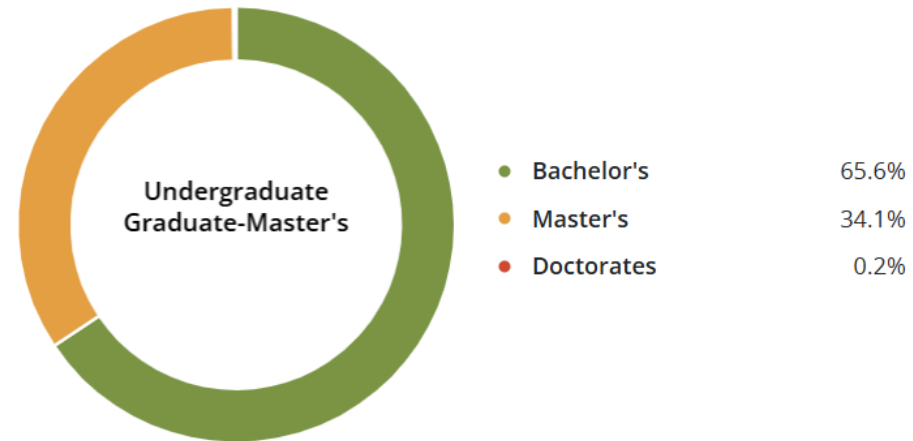
Institution F

- In 2021, Institution F was classified as a Master's Large institution that offers doctorate degrees
- From 2020-23, they awarded an average of 698 bachelor's degrees, 363 master's degrees, and 2 doctorates (34% grad)
- Their award level focus is undergraduate/graduate-master's
 - We report that they award all of these degrees
 - The highest degree awarded is a master's

Award Level Focus



The primary award level(s) in which the institution awards degrees.



Highest Degree Awarded



Master's

Finalized Student Access and Earnings Classification

Student Access and Earnings Classification Approach

1. Create groupings of meaningfully **similar** institutions [Institutional Classification]
2. Assess the extent to which schools offer broad **access** to learners and evaluate the **earnings outcomes** of past students
 - Account for the **location** of students
3. Present the results in a **visual way** that emphasizes the complex and multidimensional nature of access and earnings outcomes

Data Used in the Student Access and Earnings Classification

Are institutions providing access to a student population that reflects the demographics of the locations they serve?

ACCESS MEASURE

- Pell grant enrollment relative to the location students are from
- Underrepresented racial/ethnic composition of the student body relative to the location students are from

Primary sources: IPEDS, U.S. Census

After students leave an institution, how much are they making compared to peers in their job market?

EARNINGS OUTCOMES

- Median post-attendance earnings data for all federally aided students, eight years after entry
 - Contextualized for location
 - Contextualized for the race/ethnicity of those students
 - Compare actual earnings to those in their area with a high school degree or higher

Primary sources: College Scorecard/IRS, U.S. Census

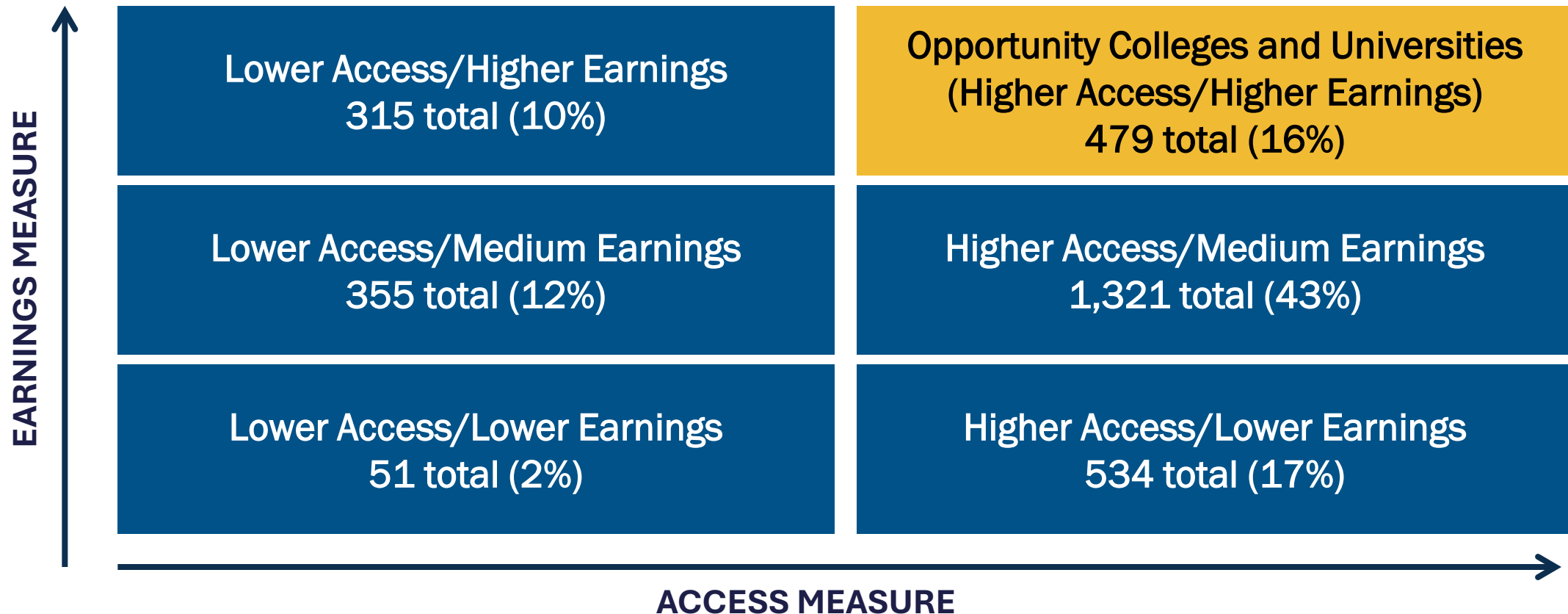
How the Classification Works

- For each measure, the classification creates ratios to contextualize the raw value
- A value of 1 means the institution's data **matches** what we would expect
- A value greater than 1 means the institution's data is **higher than the comparison value**; less than 1 is **less than the comparison value**
- For example, an earnings ratio of 1.5 means that an institution's median student earnings data is 50% above the earnings of their peer comparison group

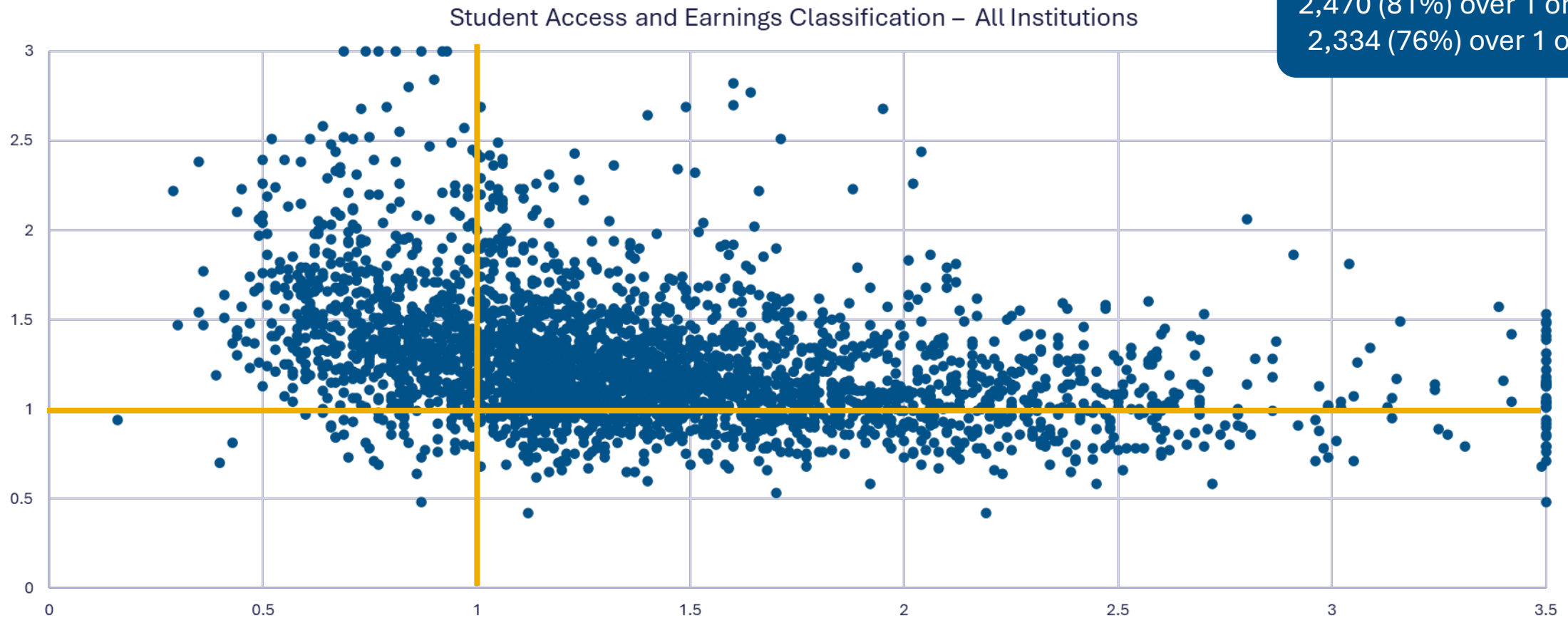
- Based on their two ratios, institutions fall into one of the following categories:
 - **Opportunity Colleges and Universities (Higher Access, Higher Earnings)**
 - **Higher Access, Medium Earnings**
 - **Higher Access, Lower Earnings**
 - **Lower Access, Higher Earnings**
 - **Lower Access, Medium Earnings**
 - **Lower Access, Lower Earnings**

2025 Student Access and Earnings Classification

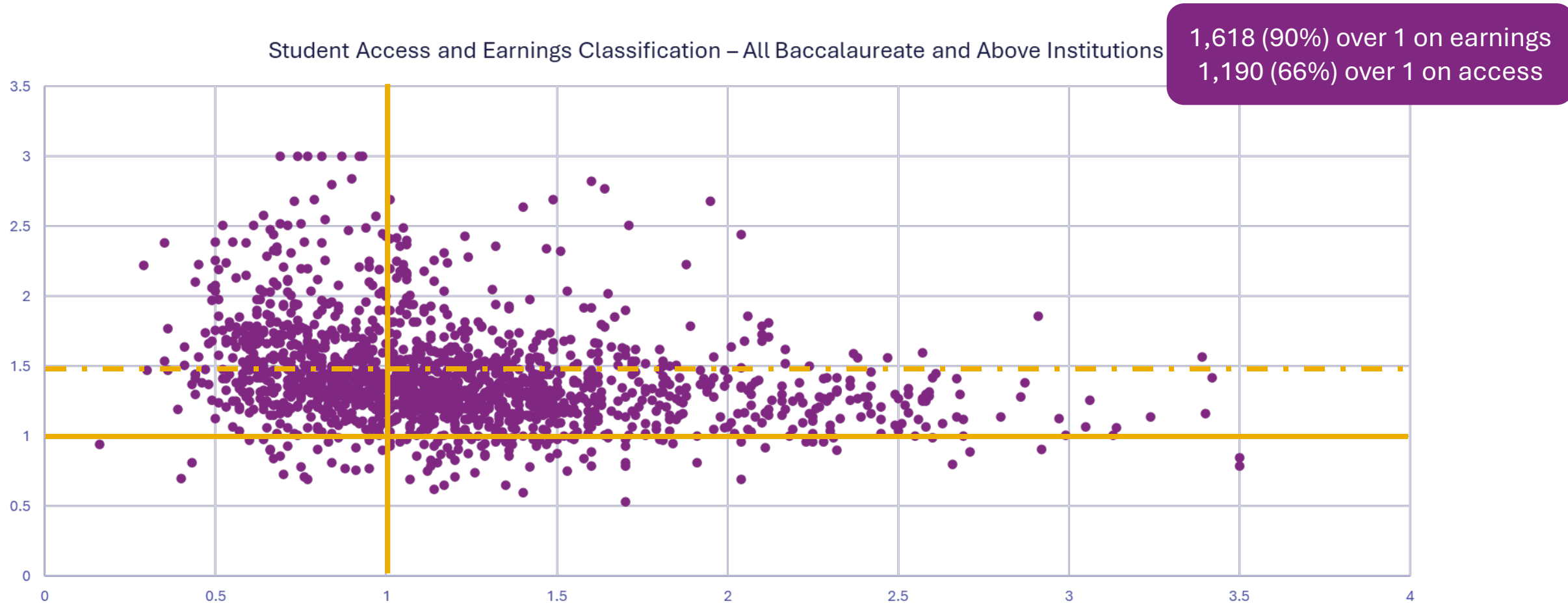
All Classified Institutions (3,055)



Full Distribution of All Institutions

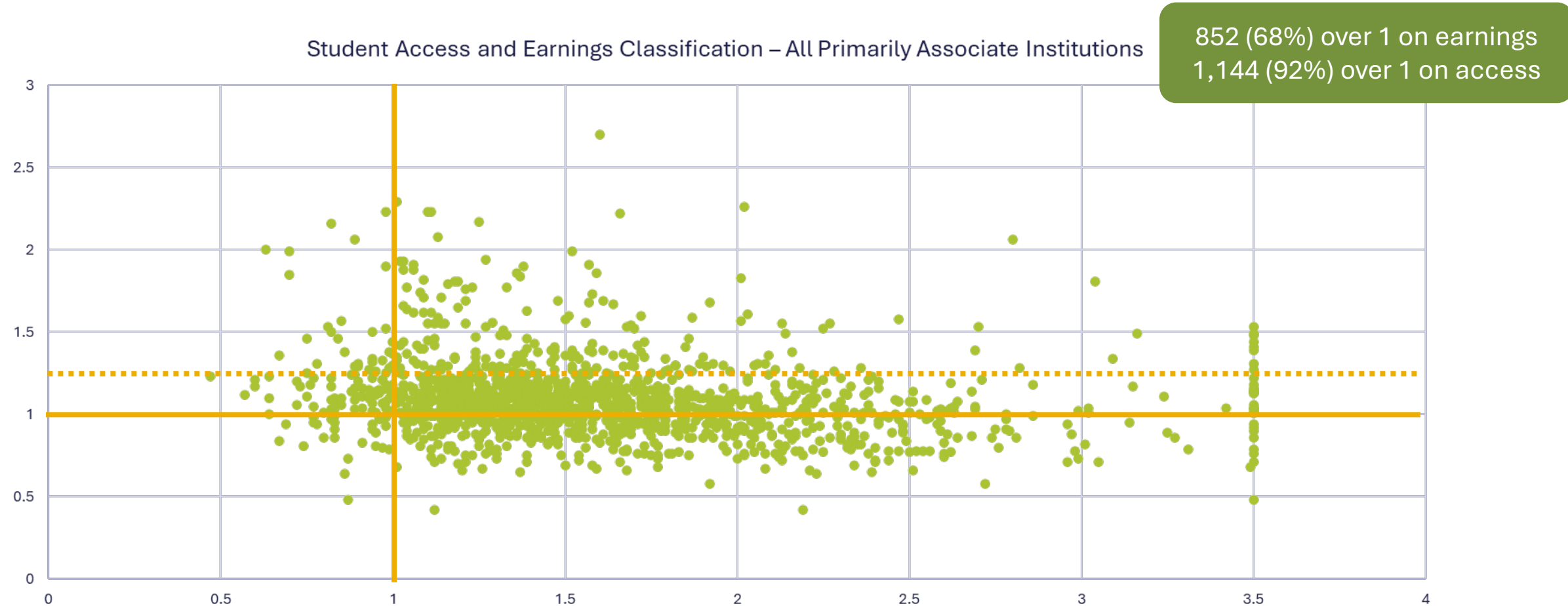


Full Distribution of All Baccalaureate+ Institutions

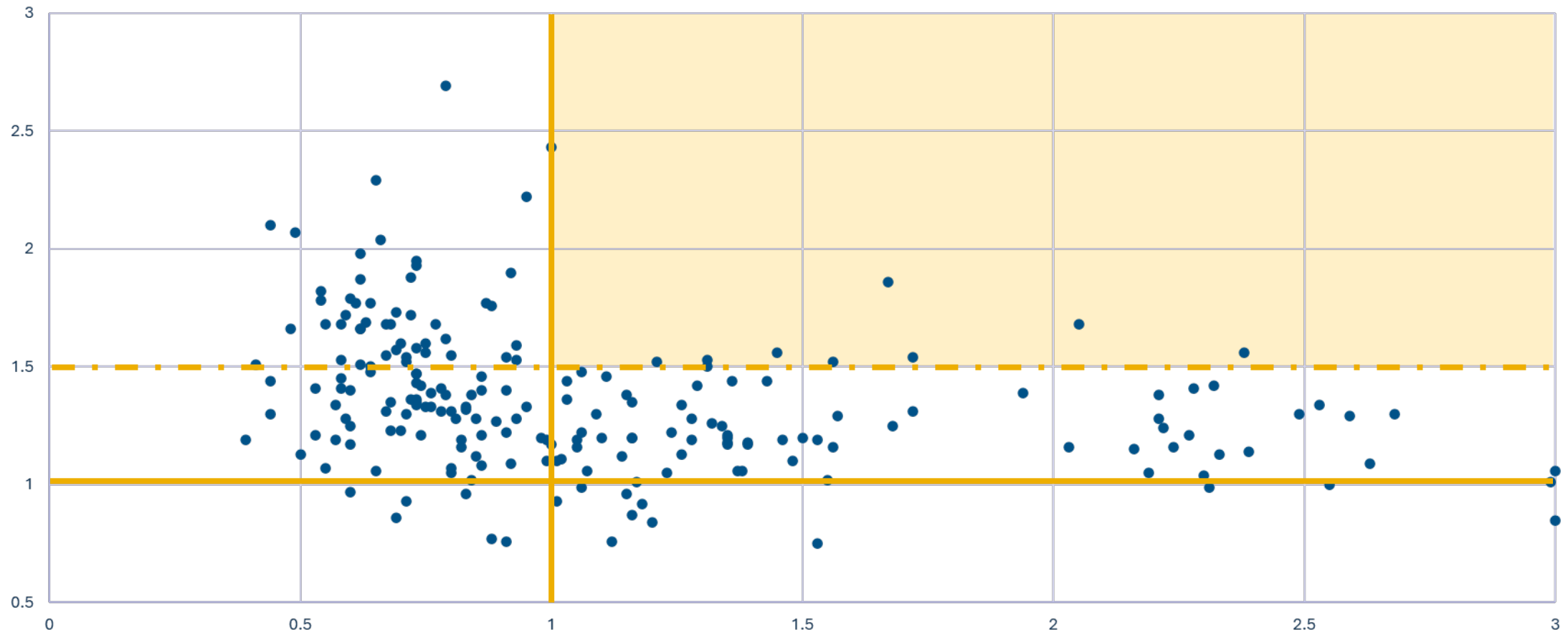


On the Y axis, values greater than 3 have been capped at 3 and on the X axis, values greater than 3.5 have been capped at 3.5

Full Distribution of All Primarily Associate Colleges



Distribution for Special Focus: Arts & Sciences Institutions



On the X axis, values greater than 3 have been capped at 3

Pell Calculation

Data Used

- The number of degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students who received Pell grants
 - Source: 2022-23 provisional data collected from IPEDS
- The number of 2022-23 degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students
 - Source: 2022-23 provisional data collected from IPEDS
- The percentage of families with children earning 200% or less of HHS Poverty Guidelines by state and Core-based Statistical Area (CBSA)
 - Source: Custom tabulations from the U.S. Census Bureau based on 2018-2022 American Community Survey
- The enrollment of first-time undergraduate students by state of residency
 - Source: Fall 2020, Fall 2021, and Fall 2022 data collected from IPEDS

Pell Calculation

- Step 1:
- Determine the percent of degree or certificate-seeking undergraduate students in 2022-23 that received Pell Grants:
- $8,463/23,078 = 36.7\%$

Pell Calculation

- Step 2:
- Determine geographic distribution of domestic first-time domestic/non-international students in Fall 2020, Fall 2021, Fall 2022:

	1st Most Common State	2nd Most Common State	3rd Most Common State	U.S. - 50 State Total	U.S. - Outlying Areas	
Fall 2020	3,674	87	95	4,152	0	
Fall 2021	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Fall 2022	3,129	229	201	4,091	0	

Pell Calculation

- Step 2:
- Determine geographic distribution of domestic first-time domestic/non-international students in Fall 2020, Fall 2021, Fall 2022

	1st Most Common State	2nd Most Common State	3rd Most Common State	U.S. - 50 State Total	U.S. - Outlying Areas	U.S. Total
Fall 2020	3,674	87	95	4,152	0	4,152
Fall 2021	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fall 2022	3,129	229	201	4,091	0	4,091
Subtotals	6,803	316	296	8,243	0	8,243
Percents	82.5%	3.8%	3.6%			

Pell Calculation

- Step 3:
- Determine percents of families with children in each of the geographies identified in Step 2 making 200% or less of HHS Federal Poverty Guidelines:
 - State 1: 35.5%
 - State 2: 30.6%
 - State 3: 23.7%
 - United States: 31.1%

Pell Calculation

- Step 4
- Create enrollment-weighted average of the predicted Pell enrollment percentage:

State 1			State 2			State 3			Rest of U.S.		
% from State	% FPL 200	Weight	% from State	% FPL 200	Weight	% from State	% FPL 200	Weight	% Other U.S.	% FPL 200	Weight
82.5%	35.3%	0.29	3.8%	30.6%	0.01	3.6%	23.7%	0.01	10.0%	31.1%	0.03

Pell Calculation

Step 4

Create enrollment-weighted average of the predicted Pell enrollment percentage:

State 1			State 2			State 3			Rest of U.S.		
% from State	% FPL 200	Weight	% from State	% FPL 200	Weight	% from State	% FPL 200	Weight	% Other U.S.	% FPL 200	Weight
82.5%	35.3%	0.29	3.8%	30.6%	0.01	3.6%	23.7%	0.01	10.0%	31.1%	0.03

$$.29 + .01 + .01 + .03 = 34.3\%$$

Pell Calculation

- Step 5
- Divide observed enrollment of Pell Grant recipients by enrollment-weighted average of predicted enrollment of Pell students:
- $36.7\% / 34.3\% = 1.07$

Under-represented Minority Calculation

Data Used

- The number of degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students by race/ethnicity
 - Source: 2022-23 provisional data collected from IPEDS
- The percentage of the population 25 years and over with a high school diploma or higher by race/ethnicity and by state and Core-based Statistical Area (CBSA)
 - Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, Table S1501
- The enrollment of first-time undergraduate students by state of residency
 - Source: Fall 2020, Fall 2021, and Fall 2022 data collected from IPEDS

Under-represented Minority Calculation

- Step 1:
- Determine percentage of under-represented minority degree or certificate-seeking undergraduate students in 2022-23. Exclude unknown and resident alien:

	2022-23 Enrollment
American Indian / Alaska Native	31
Asian	1,045
Black	5,238
Hispanic	8,011
Native Hawaiian	31
White	10,742
Two or More	1,070
Unknown	305
Resident Alien	773

$$14,381 / 26,168 = 55.0\%$$

Under-represented Minority Calculation

- Step 2:
- Determine geographic distribution of domestic first-time domestic/non-international students in Fall 2020, Fall 2021, Fall 2022

	1st Most Common State	2nd Most Common State	3rd Most Common State	U.S. - 50 State Total	U.S. - Outlying Areas	U.S. Total
Fall 2020	3,674	87	95	4,152	0	4,152
Fall 2021	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fall 2022	3,129	229	201	4,091	0	4,091
Subtotals	6,803	316	296	8,243	0	8,243
Percents	82.5%	3.8%	3.6%			

Under-represented Minority Calculation

- Step 3:
- Determine percents of adults with a high school diploma or higher who are from under-represented minority groups in the geographies identified in Step 2:
 - State 1: 45.1%
 - State 2: 37.7%
 - State 3: 37.0%
 - United States: 33.0%

Under-represented Minority Calculation

- Step 4
- Create the enrollment-weighted average of the predicted URM enrollment percent

State 1			State 2			State 3			Rest of U.S.		
% from State	% URM	Weight	% from State	% URM	Weight	% from State	% URM	Weight	% Other U.S.	% URM	Weight
82.5%	45.1%	0.37	3.8%	37.7%	0.01	3.6%	37.0%	0.01	10.0%	33.0%	0.03

$$.37 + .01 + .01 + .03 = 43.3\%$$

Under-represented Minority Calculation

- Step 5
- Divide the observed enrollment of underrepresented minority undergraduates by the enrollment-weighted geographic average of the predicted enrollment of underrepresented minority students:
- $55.0\% / 43.3\% = 1.27$

Access Measure

- Step 1
- Average the Pell Calculation and the Under-represented Minority Calculation to produce the Access Measure:
- $(1.07 + 1.27)/2 = 1.17$

Earnings Measure

Data

- The 8-year post-entry median earnings
 - Source: College Scorecard, January 16, 2025 Release, Variable MD_EARN_WNE_P8
- The median earnings for the population aged 22-40 years old with a high school diploma or higher by race/ethnicity and by state and CBSA
 - Source: Custom tabulations from the U.S. Census Bureau based on 2018-2022 American Community Survey
- The number of undergraduate students by race/ethnicity
 - Source: 2011-12 and 2012-13 data collected from IPEDS
- The enrollment of first-time undergraduate students by state of residency
 - Source: Fall 2011 and Fall 2012 data collected from IPEDS

Earnings Measure

- Step 2
- Determine the undergraduate enrollment figures by race/ethnicity for the AY2011-12 and AY2012-13 pooled cohort

	AY 2011-12	AY 2012-13	Pooled 2011-12 and 2012-13 Cohort	Percent in Pooled Cohort
American Indian	53	45	98	0.2%
Asian	1,053	1,092	2,145	4.4%
Black	4,467	4,520	8,987	18.4%
Hispanic	5,616	5,978	11,594	23.7%
Native Hawaiian	26	33	59	0.1%
White	12,365	12,148	24,513	50.1%
Two or More	465	634	1,099	2.2%
Unknown	179	294	473	1.0%
Resident Alien	347	361	708	
Total Undergraduates	24,571	25,105	49,676	
Total Less Resident Alien	24,224	24,744	48,968	

Earnings Measure

- Step 3
- Determine the states of origin for first-time undergraduates in the Fall 2011 and Fall 2012 Pooled Cohort:
 - State 1: 92.5%
 - State 2: 1.5%
 - State 3: 1.4%
 - United States: 4.7%

Earnings Measure

- Step 4 and 5
- Create the enrollment-weighted comparison earnings for State 1, State 2, State 3, and remainder United States:

Race/Ethnicity	State 1		
	Percent	Median Earnings	Weight
American Indian	0.2%	\$22,643	45.3
Asian	4.4%	\$33,233	1455.7
Black	18.4%	\$27,582	5062.1
Hispanic	23.7%	\$30,159	7140.7
Native Hawaiian	0.1%	\$24,740	29.8
White	50.1%	\$35,696	17869.1
Two or More Races	2.2%	\$30,638	687.6
Some other Race	1.0%	\$28,751	277.7
Weight Sum			32568.1

Earnings Measure

- Step 6
- Multiply the state percentages from Step 2 with the weighted sums from Steps 4 and 5 and sum the result to produce the overall comparison income value:
- $(.925 * \$32568.1) + (.015 * \$42020.2) + (.014 * \$39,846.2) +$
- $(.047 * \$35869.7) = \$32,999.52$

Earnings Measure

- Step 7
- Divide the 8-year post-entry College Scorecard median earnings value with the earnings comparison value from Step 6:
- $(\$51,826 / \$32,999.52) = 1.57$



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