



RESEARCH NOTES

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JMUnique

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) was asked to investigate a new institutional peer group based upon two primary variables: percentage of full-time degree seeking undergraduates and six-year graduation rate. Two secondary variables were also used to narrow the field of possible peers: Carnegie Classifications of Masters I or Doctoral/Research Intensive, and total fall enrollment greater than 10,000. OIR was also asked to examine the “Best Universities - Masters” institutions ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* in the top five of each region to see how these institutions fared for inclusion in a new peer group.

Given this initial criteria, JMU’s unique character quickly became evident. Using data submitted to IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System) for the 2003-04 reporting year, JMU had 88% full-time undergraduate enrollment and an 80% graduation rate. Only a handful of institutions (Masters I or Doctoral/Research Intensive) with more than 10,000 students had a higher percentage of full-time undergraduates or had higher graduation rates than JMU. Only fourteen institutions had more than 70% enrolled as full-time undergraduates and a six-year graduation rate greater than 50%. Only one school, Miami University - Oxford (Ohio), was like JMU -- high on both measures. Chart 1, below, is a scatter plot of these two measures for the 94 institutions that met the Carnegie Classification criteria and had enrollment greater than 10,000. Note that JMU and Miami University - Oxford stand as outliers in the upper right hand corner of the chart.

The top schools ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* (2004 Edition) as the best Masters universities in their regions were also examined. Again, JMU stood out as very different from the majority. A total of 22 Masters Universities were ranked in the top five positions in each of the four U.S. News regions (tied scores included). Of these 22 schools, only three were public institutions (JMU, The College of New Jersey and Cal Poly - San Luis Obispo). Of these 22 schools, only three had enrollment greater than 10,000 students (JMU, Villanova and Cal Poly - San Luis Obispo). While full-time undergraduates at Cal Poly - San Luis Obispo represented almost 90% of their enrollment, the graduation rate was only 65%.

Miami University - Oxford and JMU are unique by the two primary criteria investigated here. However, with respect to finances the institutions diverge. The fall 2003 faculty salary average (as reported to the American Association of University Professors) was \$58,030 for JMU and \$65,300 for Miami University. JMU reported 72.4% full-time faculty to *U.S. News & World Report* (2004 Edition) while Miami University reported 92.8%. Finally, JMU expended \$5,837 for instruction and academic support per full-time equivalent student in FY2003 while Miami University’s figure was \$8,645 (Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System).

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