Classification Description
Basic Classification

The Basic Classification is an update of the traditional classification framework developed by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in 1970 to support its research program, and later published in 1973 for use by other researchers. Although this classification has undergone many changes over the years, the current release involves some significant changes from previous editions.

Overarching Changes

Order of presentation. We now present major groupings in order of aggregate enrollment.

Single-year data. Previous editions of the Carnegie Classification used a combination of single-year data and multiple-year averages. While using data from several years can smooth out year-to-year fluctuations, it can also diminish the classification's sensitivity to changes. Because the classifications are inherently retrospective, time-specific snapshots, accuracy and timeliness are enhanced by using the most current data available.

Exceptions. Although previous editions of the Carnegie Classification identified specific empirical criteria for assigning colleges and universities to categories, some institutions were classified instead on the basis of their history, traditions, and identity. This practice undermined the classification's transparency and replicability, and it led to concerns that the rules were different for certain institutions. With this revision of the classification, we substantially curtailed this practice, because our new classification tools can be used to identify distinct subtypes. We also increased the level of master's degree production separating the Baccalaureate and Master's groups, recognizing the growth of graduate education at primarily undergraduate colleges. In December 2006, we extended the option of reclassification from the Master's to Baccalaureate groups to selected institutions based on their profiles.

The Carnegie Classification system now includes new classification schemes and a web-based tool for aggregating and combining them—to identify points of intersection between classifications, and to create new, customized classifications. This provides a way to explicitly identify special groupings within categories of the Basic classification, identifying contextual factors that were previously not available for examination. We believe this is an appropriate way to overcome the limitations of any single classification.

There remain some circumstances in which we have considered requests for special handling: cases where the 2003-04 degree data reflect a verifiable departure from usual patterns; cases where the institutional data combine information from distinct units with different missions and that serve different undergraduate populations (e.g., a degree-completion program serving working adults who attend part time and an undergraduate college serving mostly full-time students); and cases where inclusion among special-focus institutions may not represent the diversity of an institution's programs.

Category-specific Changes

<u>Associate's Colleges.</u> For the first time in the Carnegie Classification's history, two-year colleges have been split into subcategories. The categories are based on the work of Stephen Katsinas, Vincent Lacey, and David Hardy at The University of Alabama. The new Undergraduate Profile and Size & Setting classifications also differentiate two-year colleges, so researchers now have several ways to take the diversity of two-year colleges into account.

<u>Doctorate-granting Universities.</u> With this edition, doctorate-granting institutions are once again differentiated based on an explicit measure of research activity. We now use a multi-measure index rather than the single measure of federal funding used in previous editions. This approach incorporates several improvements: it is not limited to funding; the funding measures used are not limited to federal funding; and the analysis considers both aggregate and per-capita measures of research activity. Using the new methodology, we have identified three categories of doctorate-granting institutions. Because of these changes, the new categories are not comparable to those previously used (Research I & II and Doctoral I & II; and Doctoral/Research—Extensive and Intensive).

We also simplified the degree-production criterion for inclusion among doctorate-granting institutions. Previous editions defined this group as institutions awarding at least 20 doctoral degrees per year or at least 10 such degrees per year spanning at least three fields. For this edition we dropped the latter criterion. Institutions with lower levels of doctoral degree production can be identified using the Graduate Instructional Program classification.

<u>Master's Colleges and Universities.</u> We now split master's institutions into three categories based on the volume of master's degree production. We have also increased the level of master's degree production separating Baccalaureate and Master's institutions.

<u>Baccalaureate Colleges.</u> Although the criteria for subcategories are unchanged from the 2000 edition, we have discontinued the use of the "Liberal Arts" terminology in favor of a term that more transparently describes the classification criteria. (Both "liberal arts college" and "liberal arts education" signify more than undergraduates' major field concentration.) We also refined the mapping of major fields to arts & sciences or professions (for more information, refer to Undergraduate Instructional Program Technical Details). Note that the Undergraduate Instructional Program classification offers finer differentiation of the distribution of undergraduate majors, while also identifying institutions where arts & sciences and professional fields are represented among majors in roughly equal proportions. Because we increased the threshold level of master's degree production separating Baccalaureate and Master's institutions, some institutions that previously would have been classified among Master's Colleges and Universities II are now included among Baccalaureate Colleges.

<u>Special Focus Institutions</u> (previously called Specialized Institutions). In addition to the name change, we have refined our methodology for identifying special-focus institutions, generally requiring higher levels of single-field or related-field concentration for designation as a special-focus institution. We are also using more sources of information to identify these institutions (see Technical Details for more information).

We also made some category changes: "Schools of engineering and technology" has been split into two categories, and the "Teacher's colleges" category was eliminated due to the small number of eligible institutions (now listed among "Other special-focus institutions"). Finally, service academies are no longer automatically included among special-focus institutions; they are classified according to the same criteria as other institutions.