

Kennesaw State University's Peer & Aspirational Comparator Universities

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Metropolitan universities, such as Kennesaw State University, constitute a distinctive type of institution of higher education that has expanded significantly since the 1950s. Metropolitan universities are substantially different from traditional research universities. A decade ago, Ernest Lynton in his *Forward to Metropolitan Universities* (Johnson & Bell, 1995) defined metropolitan universities as follows:

A new breed of American universities, the metropolitan university is an institutional model committed to be responsive to the knowledge needs of its surrounding region, and dedicated to create active links between campus, community, and commerce...It offers undergraduate as well as graduate programs not only at traditional times and places, but also in ways which make higher education accessible to older students and working professionals...many of its students attend more than one institution as they move toward a baccalaureate degree, and most of them take more than four years to complete this process... A metropolitan university contains a number of professional schools which provide both preparatory and continuing education for practitioners. That task is quite different from the preparation of future scholars and researchers which is the focus of graduate and professional education in the traditional research universities...metropolitan universities engage in applied research and in professional outreach which address the complex issues of its surrounding communities (pp xi-xii).

Typically located in a major metropolitan area, metropolitan universities are different from traditional institutions of higher education in that they are deeply engaged in: a) educating and serving diverse and nontraditional-age as well as traditional-age undergraduates; b) focusing on professionally-oriented degree programs as well as programs in the arts and sciences; c) honoring applied as well as basic research interests; and d) collaborating extensively with practicing professionals and organizations in the communities they serve, locally as well as globally. Metropolitan universities typically have extensive evening and weekend as well as weekday program accessibility. Such characterizations describe Kennesaw State University very well.

Ideally, KSU's peer and aspirational comparators should be metropolitan universities that share these characteristics and orientations. It should also be noted that as KSU's campus housing facilities continue to expand, an increasing proportion of the undergraduate student body will become residential and traditional-age. Furthermore, as the population and demographic characteristics of the area in which the university is located continue to evolve, KSU will continue to grow in its diversity of minority and international students. As KSU continues to expand its master's and doctoral degree programs, it will evolve into a metropolitan university whose graduate programs are highly coexistent with its

undergraduate programs and whose doctoral program focus shifts from a limited array of professional degrees into a comprehensive array of doctoral offerings that are professions dominant. Like Greater Metropolitan Atlanta, KSU's exceptional enrollment growth is projected to continue well into the future. The choice of peer and aspirational comparators reflects these established trends for KSU's continuing development as a major metropolitan university.

Peer and Aspirational Comparator Selection Process

In Fall 2008, KSU's president formed a small task force of senior faculty and academic administrators, headed by the Provost, to identify KSU's aspirational and peer comparators. After brainstorming a list of potential comparator institutions located throughout the nation, the characteristics of those institutions were systematically analyzed using the detailed descriptions of the most recent 2004 Carnegie Classification Categories (www.carnegiefoundation.org) and detailed 2007 IPEDS information (www.nces.ed.gov) for each potential comparator. Those data were subsequently considered in deliberations of the task force in concert with a qualitative content analysis of the mission statement, strategic plan, and Web site for selected institutions. The task force reached consensus on the identification of 12 aspirational metropolitan university comparators from its national pool of over 60 potential candidates. The task force also identified a preliminary list of peer comparators using this same process. That peer comparator list was considered tentative until it could be confirmed with the statistically derived list being prepared independently by the Central Office staff of the University System of Georgia (UGA). In Spring 2013, the detailed descriptions were updated from the most recent 2008-2010 Carnegie Classification Categories as well as the detailed 2009 and 2011 IPEDS information for each of the comparators.

A standardized quantitative process for the identification of peer comparators at each of the 34 USG institutions was initiated by the Chief Academic Officer & Executive Vice Chancellor for the Board of Regents in August 2008. For KSU, IPEDS data for a standard set of predetermined institutional characteristics for all Master's/Large and Doctoral Research Universities in the nation were subjected to a principal components analysis and cluster analysis by the USG's Office of Research & Policy Analysis. From the 191 institutions included in that analysis, a cluster of 43 universities were identified as being most similar to KSU based upon that statistical analysis of selected indicators. KSU officials were subsequently invited in October 2008 to select 10 to 20 institutions from that cluster that were most similar to the mission and characteristics of the institution. Those became KSU's peer comparators.

With the exception of the basic Carnegie Classification for each institution, the standard set of indicators and values used in the USG's statistical analysis did not include the recently developed 2004 Carnegie Classification Categories that reflect distinct institutional differences in the undergraduate and graduate instruction program, the enrollment profile, and the size and setting of the institution. Those detailed Carnegie Categories were considered important by KSU officials in their qualitative selection of peer comparators. Furthermore, since KSU is a metropolitan university that recently added doctoral education to its mission, KSU officials were also sensitive to the

importance of peer comparators having a metropolitan location/mission, serving substantial numbers of nontraditional age undergraduates, and offering doctoral programs. Not all Master's/Large or Doctoral Research Universities have those characteristics, including many of those listed in KSU's statistical cluster of potential peer comparators.

The qualitative judgments of KSU officials for the selection of peer comparators from the statistically derived cluster were informed by a systematic analysis of the detailed Carnegie Classification Categories of each institution. In addition, the geographic location of the institution relative to metropolitan statistical areas and the percentage of undergraduates over 24 years of age (IPEDS data reflecting nontraditional-age population differences) were considered in selection decisions. Similarly, mission statements and strategic plans published on each institution's Web site were reviewed for consistency with KSU's educational priorities and values. The systematic qualitative and quantitative processes for the identification of KSU's peer comparators reached satisfactory convergence for 16 institutions in the cluster. It is worth noting that the majority of the institutions listed in the statistical cluster were notably deficient as potential peers for KSU based upon this qualitative analysis.

Distinguishing KSU's Peer Metropolitan Universities from Its Aspirational Metropolitan Universities

Common characteristics of KSU's peer and aspirational metropolitan universities include the following (typically, but not universally):

- Location in a major metropolitan area
- Large 4-year, primarily nonresidential*
- A high undergraduate focus*
- A professions plus arts & sciences focus for undergraduates*
- A substantial population of nontraditional-age undergraduates
- Selective undergraduate admissions*
- A higher undergraduate transfer-in population*
- Diversity in the student body consistent with KSU's evolving demographics
- Substantial graduate program coexistence with undergraduate programs*
- Doctoral degree granting with a professions dominant focus
- Institutional mission statements, strategic plans, and historical overviews that emphasize high quality learning-centered education, student success, global learning and appreciation for diversity, community engagement and collaborative partnerships, leadership and distinctiveness, responsiveness to state and national needs, and creative scholarship and research that is applications-oriented as well as knowledge-building.

*As defined in the detailed 2004 Carnegie Classifications

Typically, but not universally, the characteristics that distinguish KSU and its peer metropolitan university comparators from aspirational metropolitan university comparators are summarized below using Carnegie Classification terminology:

Distinguishing Feature	Peer Characteristics	Aspirational Characteristics
General Carnegie Classification	Master's/Large or Doctoral Research University	Research University (High research activity)
Breadth of graduate program offerings relative to undergraduate	Some graduate program coexistence – fewer than half of the undergraduate programs have graduate program counterparts	High graduate program coexistence – more than half of the undergraduate programs have graduate program counterparts
Doctoral program offerings and graduates	Offers some doctoral programs with a total of less than 50 graduates per year	Offers many doctoral programs with a total of much more than 50 graduates per year
Doctoral program focus	Professional focus dominates in education, business, technology, and/or nursing/health professions	Comprehensive doctoral array -- professions dominant, but no MD programs
Fall Headcount Enrollment	Comparable to KSU's	Larger than KSU's
Full-time Undergraduate	Medium, 60-79%	High, 80+%

KSU's Metropolitan University and Carnegie Category Characteristics

Like KSU, many of the selected metropolitan peer and aspirational university comparators are relatively young institutions. Those relatively young and fast growing institutions reflect the emergence of the metropolitans as Lynton's new breed of American universities. KSU's current characteristics as defined in Carnegie Classification (2008-2010) and IPEDS (2009 and 2011) terms are as follows:

Kennesaw State University (est. 1963)

Metropolitan (Atlanta Area), 22,389 students, 92% undergraduate—29% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, some graduate co-existence with two doctoral programs (education and business) and 8 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Master's/Large Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business and education and undergraduate nursing dominant.

KSU's Peer Metropolitan University Comparators

California State University – Sacramento (est. 1947)

Metropolitan, 28,016 students, 89% undergraduate – 25% over 24 years + FT4/I: Full-time four-year, inclusive + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + inclusive rather than selective admissions, high graduate coexistence with one doctoral program (education) and 26 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Master's/Large Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, education, and engineering dominant.

California State University, Fresno (est. 1911)

Metropolitan, 21,981 students, 87% undergraduate – 17% over 24 years + FT4/I: Full-time four-year, inclusive+ L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + high full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, some graduate coexistence with several doctoral programs (education, physical therapy, forensic sciences) and 36 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Master's/Large Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business and health professions and graduate education dominant.

Illinois State University (est. 1857)

Metropolitan (Bloomington/Normal is a small MSA), 21,310 students, 87% undergraduate – 6% over 24 years + FT4/MS/HTI: Full-time four-year, more selective, higher transfer-in + L4/R: Large four-year, primarily residential + primarily residential + high full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate coexistence with nearly a dozen doctoral programs (education dominant) and 43 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Doctoral Research University Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, education and health professions dominant.

Oakland University (est. 1957)

Metropolitan (Detroit area), 19,379 students, 82% undergraduate – 22% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, some graduate coexistence with over a dozen doctoral programs (health professions, engineering and education dominant) and 105 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Doctoral Research University Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate education and business, and undergraduate nursing and engineering dominant.

Western Kentucky University (est. 1906)

Metropolitan (Bowling Green is a small MSA), 21,036 students, 85% undergraduate – 21% over 24 years + FT4/S/HTI: Full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/R: Large four-year, primarily residential + primarily residential + high full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, some graduate coexistence with one doctoral program (education) and 5 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Master's/Large Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate programs in education and business dominant.

San Francisco State University (est. 1899)

Metropolitan, 29,541 students, 86% undergraduate – 21% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate coexistence with four doctoral programs (education and physical therapy) and 37 graduates in Fall 2011, Master's/Large Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, education, and health professions dominant.

Missouri State University (est. 1905)

Metropolitan (Springfield is a small MSA), 20,276 students, 85% undergraduate – 14% over 24 years + FT4/S/HTI: Full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/R: Large four-year, primarily residential + primarily nonresidential + high full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in (+ low minority population), some graduate coexistence with two doctoral programs (audiology and education) and 27 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Master's/Large Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, education, and health services dominant.

Middle Tennessee State University (est. 1911)

Metropolitan (Nashville area), 26,442 students, 89% undergraduate – 24% over 24 years + FT4/S/LTI: Full-time four-year, selective, lower transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + high full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, some graduate coexistence with a half-dozen doctoral programs (arts & sciences dominant – no education, business or nursing) and 20 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Master's/Large Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business and graduate education dominant.

Cleveland State University (est. 1964)

Metropolitan, 17,229 students, 67% undergraduate -- 38% over 24 years + MFT4/I: Medium full-time four-year, inclusive + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + inclusive rather than selective admissions, high graduate coexistence with a half-dozen doctoral programs (professions dominant-- education) and 267 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Doctoral Research University Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, education, engineering, and health professions dominant.

Towson University (est. 1860)

Metropolitan (Baltimore area), 21,464 students, 82% undergraduate – 12% over 24 years + FT4/S/HTI: Full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/R: Large four-year, primarily residential + primarily nonresidential + high full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, some graduate coexistence with several doctoral programs (professions dominant) and 13 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Master's/Large with undergraduate and graduate education, business and health professions dominant.

University of North Carolina at Charlotte (est. 1946)

Metropolitan, 25,277 students, 80% undergraduate – 20% over 24 years + FT4/S/HTI: Full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/R: Large four-year, primarily residential + primarily residential + high full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate coexistence with over a dozen doctoral programs (professions dominant --education, engineering, business) and 88 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Doctoral Research University Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business and education dominant.

Eastern Michigan University (est. 1849)

Metropolitan (Detroit area), 23,419 students, 80% undergraduate – 29% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate coexistence with a couple of doctoral programs (education and psychology), and 25 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Master's/Large Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate education and business dominant.

Portland State University (est. 1946)

Metropolitan, 28,584 students, 80% undergraduate – 42% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate coexistence with over a dozen doctoral programs (professions dominant-- education) and 56 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Doctoral Research University Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business and graduate education dominant.

University of North Florida (est. 1965)

Metropolitan (Jacksonville), 16,198 students, 89% undergraduate – 23% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, some graduate coexistence with three doctoral programs (education, nursing, & physical therapy) and 36 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Master's/Large Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, education, and health professions dominant.

California State University, Fullerton (est. 1957)

Metropolitan (L.A. area), 36,156 students, 85% undergraduate – 20% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate coexistence with one doctoral program (education) and 11 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Master's/Large Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, education, and graduate engineering dominant.

University of Texas at San Antonio (est. 1969)

Metropolitan, 30,968 students, 85% undergraduate – 20% over 24 years + FT4/S/HTI: Full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + high full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate coexistence with a dozen doctoral programs (business, engineering, education dominant) and 69 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Master's/Large Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business and graduate education dominant.

KSU's Aspirational Metropolitan University Comparators

George Mason University (est. 1957)

Metropolitan (Washington, DC area), 33,320 students, 62% undergraduate--24% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/R: Large four-year, primarily residential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate program coexistence with nearly two dozen doctoral programs (professions dominant – biomedical, education, engineering, nursing, psychology) and 362 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Research University (High research activity) Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, education, engineering, and health professions dominant.

Indiana University-Purdue University – Indianapolis (est. 1969)

Metropolitan, 30,530 students, 73% undergraduate--34% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium-full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, some graduate program coexistence with a dozen doctoral programs (professions dominant -- health professions, biomedical, and human services) and 755 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Research University (High research activity) Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, health professions and education dominant.

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee (est. 1885)

Metropolitan, 29,350 students, 83% undergraduate--21% over 24 years + FT4/S/HTI: Full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + high full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate program coexistence with nearly two dozen doctoral programs (professions dominant -- business, education, engineering, health professions) and 145 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Research University (High research activity) Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, education and health professions dominant.

University of Texas – Arlington (est. 1895)

Metropolitan (Dallas/Fort Worth area), 33,439 students, 76% undergraduate--36% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate program coexistence with over two dozen doctoral programs, (professions dominant – engineering, business, human services) and 117 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Research University (High research activity) Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, engineering, health professions and graduate education and human services dominant.

Kent State University – Main Campus (est. 1910)

Metropolitan (Akron/Cleveland area), 27,855 students, 80% undergraduate--16% over 24 years + FT4/S/HTI: Full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/R: Large four-year, primarily residential + primarily residential + high full-time+ selective admissions + lower transfer-in, high graduate program coexistence with over three dozen doctoral programs (professions dominant – education, psychology heavy) and 140 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Research University (High research activity) Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business and education dominant.

University of North Carolina – Greensboro (est. 1891)

Metropolitan Greensboro is a midsize city, 18,627 students, 80% undergraduate--19% over 24 years + FT4/S/HTI: Full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/R: Large four-year, primarily residential + primarily residential + high full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate program coexistence with nearly two dozen doctoral programs (professions dominant --education and psychology) and 130 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Research University (High research activity) Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, education and health professions dominant.

University of California – Riverside (est. 1954)

20,900 students, 89% undergraduate--5% over 24 years + FT4/S/LTI: Full-time four-year, selective, lower transfer-in + L4/R: Large four-year, primarily residential + primarily residential + high full-time + selective admissions + lower transfer-in, high graduate program coexistence with over three dozen doctoral programs (professions dominant – biomedical, engineering, sciences) and 235 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Research University (Very High research activity) Carnegie Classification with undergraduate business and undergraduate and graduate sciences program graduates dominant.

University of Missouri – St. Louis (est. 1963)

Metropolitan, 16,809 students, 78% undergraduate--30% over 24 years + MFT4/I: Medium full-time four-year, inclusive + M4/NR: Medium four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate program coexistence with a dozen doctoral programs (professions dominant-- education and sciences) and 94 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Research University (High research activity) Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business and education dominant.

Florida Atlantic University – Boca Raton (est. 1961)

Metropolitan (Southeast Florida), 29,246 students, 84% undergraduate – 30% over 24 years + MFT4/I: Medium full-time four-year, inclusive + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + higher part-time, high graduate program coexistence with over a dozen doctoral programs (professions dominant – education) and 88 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Research University (High research activity) Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business and graduate education dominant.

University of North Texas (est. 1890)

Metropolitan (Dallas area), 37,818 students, 79% undergraduate—23% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + lower transfer-in, high graduate coexistence with nearly five dozen doctoral programs (professions- dominant--education, business, psychology, music) and 227 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Research University (High research activity) Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business and graduate education dominant.

University of Memphis (est. 1912)

Metropolitan, 22,725 students, 79% undergraduate—30% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + lower transfer-in, high graduate coexistence with nearly two dozen doctoral programs (professions dominant-- education, business, health professions, psychology) and 256 doctoral graduates Fall 2011, Research University (High research activity) Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, education, health professions and psychology dominant.

University of Central Florida (est. 1963)

Metropolitan, 58,465 students, 85% undergraduate—20% over 24 years + MFT4/S/HTI: Medium full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in + L4/NR: Large four-year, primarily nonresidential + primarily nonresidential + medium full-time + selective admissions + higher transfer-in, high graduate coexistence with nearly two dozen doctoral programs (professions-dominant-- engineering, education, computer science, business) and 285 doctoral graduates in Fall 2011, Research University (High research activity) Carnegie Classification with undergraduate and graduate business, education, engineering and health professions dominant.