

# 2015 NABCA Research Committee Survey Results

During the fall of 2015, the NABCA research committee undertook the task of surveying branch campuses throughout the United States in an effort to build upon the research that had been previously conducted, and to gain new insights into the current state of branch campuses and the challenges they face. The survey was administered in November and December of 2015 to over 1,000 branch campus administrators, and it yielded 125 responses, 120 of which were valid.

The survey covered a wide array of topics related to branch campuses, including: primary student population, enrollment, physical distance from the main campus, enrollment, programs offered, staffing, funding, new program development, and more.

Following is a summary of the key descriptive findings from the survey:

- 83% of respondents indicated that their location is referred to as either a “branch” or a “center.” Additional identifiers include: satellite, region, and site.
- The institutional classification of respondents consisted of: 47% four-year public; 26% four-year private, non-profit; 25% two-year public; 2% other.
- 76% of respondents primarily serve non-traditional students (25 years and older, part-time, professional) at their branch location.
- Regarding distance of the branch campus to the main campus, the majority of respondents (58%) were within 20-99 miles (39% were 20-49 miles; 19% were 50-99 miles).
- When asked about enrollment trends in the last three years, 28% indicated a gradual and consistent increase; 26% indicated no increase or decrease; and 21% expressed a gradual and consistent decrease.
- 60% of respondents projected a gradual and consistent increase in enrollment over the next three years at their campus.
- 54% expected enrollment growth to come from a combination of new and existing programs.
- 78% indicated that administrators at the main campus had the final say in which programs are offered at their branch campus.

- Regarding undergraduate full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment at their campus, 50% indicated that they had an FTE in the range of 250-999; 31% were the range of 1-249; and 18% were in the range of 1,000-4,999.
- 47% of respondents had a graduate FTE in the range of 1-249; 12% were in the range of 250-999.

In addition to these descriptive statistics, the following inferential statistics were gleaned from the survey data:

- Campuses with a larger undergraduate student population (over 1,000 FTE) were significantly more likely to have full-time faculty, student services, financial aid, writing center, career services, alumni services and disability services ( $p < .01$ ) than were campuses with a smaller undergraduate population.
- Institutions located more than 50 miles away from the main campus were more likely to have full-time faculty ( $p < .10$ ), full-time disability services ( $p < .05$ ), and full-time admissions services ( $p < .05$ ).
- Four-year institutions are significantly more likely ( $p < .05$ ) to have full-time administration at their branch campus.
- Four-year institutions are also significantly more likely ( $p < .10$ ) to use text blasts as a form of communication with their student population.

The 2015-16 NABCA survey offered a plethora of useful and insightful information that can be used for future research about branch campuses. This on-going project has been an important step in establishing a baseline of key branch campus information that can be expanded upon with future research. In addition, the survey has provided campus leaders and stakeholders with a greater understanding of the various challenges faced by branch campus administrators in regard to important issues such as enrollment, funding, program development, and staffing, to name a few. This research project has been an important step in helping higher education leaders gain greater insight into the unique opportunities that exist for branch campuses, and it is the goal of the NABCA research committee that this research will be the beginning of many more research studies that will provide relevant information and scholarly insights to practitioners in the field of branch campus administration.

Submitted by: Jeremy Couch and Dennis Huffman, Research Committee