

Developing a Typology of Branch Campuses: Findings from the NABCA Campus and Center Administrator Survey

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Abstract

Relatively little is known about the presumably thousands of branch campuses and centers represented among U.S. higher education institutions. In an effort to fill this void, the research committee of the National Association of Branch Campus Administrators (NABCA) conducted a web-based survey targeting the leaders of branch campuses and off-campus centers. Findings from the NABCA Campus and Center Administrator Survey reveal both broad diversity and significant areas of commonality among the participating institutions. The preliminary typology of branches and centers emerging from this study will provide insights to administrators regarding common practices and organizational structures as they continue to extend access to students while working with limited resources.

branch campus (brānch kām'pəs) n. A location that is geographically apart from the main campus, offers a wide range of educational programs leading to academic degrees or certificates, and has its own budget, resident faculty, on-site administration, and a broad range of student support services.

off-campus center (ôf' kām'pəs sent'ər) n. A location that is geographically separate from the home or main campus, has on-site administration, offers a single or limited range of education programs leading toward academic degrees or certificates, houses fewer or no resident faculty, and has less budget autonomy and offers fewer student support services than a branch campus.

The members of the National Association of Branch Campus Administrators (NABCA) have much in common, but their places of work differ markedly. Some may work in rented space at locations as small as 5,000 square feet, serving fewer than 200 students. Others may be in very large college-owned facilities where headcount exceeds 2,500 students. Some sites are located in the same county as the main campus, while others are many hundreds of miles away.

Background of the Survey

In 2008, in an effort to more clearly understand and meet the diverse needs of its membership, the NABCA board authorized the formation of a research committee to,

among other things, conduct a survey with the goal of developing a membership profile. As the group worked through various iterations of a survey, the committee quickly realized that it would be necessary to delineate branch campuses and off-campus centers. This effort was more challenging than one might expect, as institutions across the country use many different terms to refer to these sites. Without a common language to discuss these locations, however, even such a seemingly simple exercise as counting them becomes impossible. The above definitions are stylized versions of those included in the survey instrument, a copy of which appears at the end of this article.

In July 2009, a link to the survey was posted on the NABCA website (www.nabca.net). Broad participation was encouraged beyond the existing NABCA membership, with announcements appearing in such publications as the *Community College Times*. The survey remained open for a year, until June 2010 (NABCA 2009).

The survey gathered data on 138 branch campuses and off-campus centers nationwide. Among these locations are forty-nine community college sites and eighty-nine sites of four-year or higher colleges and universities. The majority of the institutions represented in the survey operate both branches and centers. Only 22 percent indicated having branches but no centers, while 17.6 percent reported having centers but no branches. The responding institutions also tend to operate multiple branches and centers; in fact, 48.5 percent of the respondents indicated that their institution had three or more branch campuses, and 33.6 percent reported that their institution had three or more off-campus centers.

Thus, while the sample size of this survey presents a relatively thin slice of the more than 4,900 degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the United States, a great deal may be learned about the nature of branch campuses and off-campus centers from these findings.

Number of Sites

To the best of the authors' knowledge, no one knows how many branch campuses and off-campus centers are operated by colleges and universities in the United States. Obviously, the limited number of institutions responding to the NABCA survey, and the fact that those institutions had an inherent interest in branches and centers based on their affiliation with NABCA, raises questions about any attempt to extrapolate the findings to the more than 4,900 degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the United States. Still, there is reason to believe that there may be thousands of branches and centers serving students across the country.

Private institutions appear to be more likely to operate numerous branch campuses and off-campus centers than are public two- or four-year institutions. Nearly two-thirds of private institutions surveyed (63.7 percent) reported having three or more centers, and 68.2 percent of the private institutions had three or more branch campuses. By

contrast, among public four-year colleges and universities, just over half (51.5 percent) operated more than three branch campuses, and fewer than one quarter of the institutions (22.3 percent) operated three or more off-campus centers.

Not surprisingly, given the delimited nature of their service areas, community colleges are the least likely to have three or more branches, with only 36.9 percent indicating that was the case. Among the forty-four community colleges represented in the survey, just over a third (34.1 percent) had three or more centers.

The first recommendation for further study arising from the NABCA Campus and Administrator Survey would be an effort to more systematically address the question of how many branches and centers there are in the United States. Such a project would open the door for productive research that would benefit both the institutions and the communities and students they serve.

Ownership of Space

Overall, about half (49.6 percent) of the sites represented in the survey are owned by the home institution, with public institutions being more likely to own than private institutions. Among the forty-eight sites of two-year colleges responding to the survey, just over half (51 percent) of the branches or centers are in space owned by the institution. Public four-year institutions appear to be the most likely to own the facilities where their branches and centers are located. Of the sixty-six, four-year sites, 58 percent were owned by the institutions. Private colleges and universities were significantly less likely to own their off-campus locations, with only five of the twenty-two represented sites (22.7 percent) owned by the institution.

The size of enrollment appears to be the most significant factor in ownership. Among the smallest sites represented on the survey, those with headcounts below five hundred, 43.5 percent were in facilities owned by the institution. The likelihood of ownership increased consistently along with headcount, and the largest sites, those with more than 2,500 students were owned by the institution in 83.3 percent of the cases.

Distance from the main campus did not appear to be a factor in the decision to own or lease. Among sites located fifty miles or more from the main campus, 51.9 percent were owned.

Finally, it is worth noting an additional factor beyond the black-and-white nature of leasing versus owning. Many branches and centers are colocated with other colleges and universities. In fact, more than a third (39.9 percent) of the responding sites shares a facility with at least one other institution. Public four-year colleges and universities are the most likely to be colocated, with 50 percent of the sites indicating that they shared a facility. Community college sites were the least likely to be in a facility with other institutions, but even so, more than a quarter (29.2 percent) of the sites reported being colocated. Private colleges, and universities, at 31.85 percent, were somewhat

more likely to be colocated than community colleges. Enrollment appears to be a factor in the decision to colocate. The largest sites, those with headcounts above 2,500, are the least likely to be colocated. Conversely, 65.2 percent of the smallest sites, with headcounts of fewer than 200 students, are found in shared facilities.

Further exploration of the relative advantages of leasing, owning, or sharing space would be fruitful. Another area for future study would be an examination of how factors impacting ownership decisions at a site change over time (e.g., as enrollment grows).

Size of the Facility

Not surprisingly, the amount of space occupied by a branch or center is linked to enrollment, although there appears to be a significant amount of variability between sites. The survey revealed that about two-thirds (64.3 percent) of sites with a headcount below 200 occupied less than 15,000 assignable square feet. As the reported headcount increased, so did the size of the facility. The majority (59.1 percent) of sites with a headcount below 500 occupy less than 25,000 square feet. Similarly, most (60.8 percent) sites with a headcount below 1,000 are found in a location smaller than 35,000 square feet, and more than half (56 percent) of the locations with headcounts below 2,500 were housed in less than 50,000 square feet.

Obviously, these findings paint the space-to-headcount picture with a very broad brush. Additionally, the survey did not seek information about the function of the space, for example, library and office space versus classrooms and labs. However, the results do provide a sense of what is typical in terms of the amount of space that corresponds to particular enrollment levels. As with other areas discussed here, space allocation and planning for branches and centers would be a fruitful area for further study.

Distance from the Main Campus

Private colleges and universities are significantly more likely to have branches and centers located more than fifty miles from their main campus. Among the private institutions responding to the survey, 68.2 percent of the sites were fifty or more miles from the main campus. About half (48.5 percent) of the branches and centers of public four-year colleges and universities were more than fifty miles from the main campus.

Community college sites were notably different in this regard. In fact, nearly half (47.9 percent) of the responding community-college branches and centers were located less than twenty miles from the main campus, and 85.4 percent were within fifty miles.

Branches and centers located more than fifty miles from the main campus tend to have smaller enrollments than those found closer to home. Overall, 44.1 percent of all branches and centers surveyed reported enrollments under 500 students; however, among sites located more than fifty miles from the main campus, 60.4 percent had headcounts below 500.

It also appears that there is a greater likelihood of a branch or center being colocated with other institutions as distance from the main campus increases. While 39.9 percent of all branches and centers represented in the survey were colocated, that figure increased to 50 percent among sites that were fifty or more miles from the main campus.

Leadership

The individuals serving as the top on-site administrators at the branches and centers represented on the survey have a wide variety of job titles, with the most commonly reported being dean (19.1 percent) and associate or assistant vice president (9.9 percent). However, more than half of the respondents (55.7 percent) marked other in answering this question. Similarly, these branch and center leaders report to a wide variety of positions back on the main campus. President and vice president were the most common answers, with 20.3 percent each, but again, other was the top scorer at 30.8 percent.

Among the individuals completing the survey, nearly half (47.3 percent) had earned doctorates. Respondents from the four-year public colleges and universities were the most likely to have doctorates, at 76.6 percent. Among those responding from private colleges and universities, 36.4 percent had doctorates, while that figure for community college site leaders was 19.1 percent.

Just over two-thirds of the site leaders (66.2 percent) had been in their positions for six or more years, a fact that would seem to indicate a high degree of job satisfaction. However, it is also possible that being away from the main campus impedes career advancement. The NABCA survey did not address that issue.

Faculty

The survey asked participants to indicate the percentage of sections taught by the institution's full-time faculty. For the analysis that follows, the authors chose a benchmark of 20 percent or less of sections being taught by a member of the full-time faculty. Three variables, size of enrollment, type of institution, and distance from the main campus were analyzed. The results indicate that the likelihood of a course being taught by a member of the institution's full-time faculty increases with enrollment at the location. At nearly two-thirds of the smallest sites, those with headcounts below 200, less than one in five of the course sections were taught by full-time faculty. At the other end of the enrollment spectrum, just two of the eighteen sites with more than 2,500 students reported that full-time faculty taught 20 percent or less of the sections.

In terms of the type of institution, the twenty-one branches and centers of private colleges and universities responding to the survey were the most heavily dependent on part-time faculty. At just over two-thirds of those sites (66.7 percent), full-time faculty taught 20 percent or less of the course sections. Community college branches and centers are also heavily dependent on part-time faculty. Among the 47 community

college locations responding to this question, just over half of the sites (51 percent) reported that part-time faculty taught 80 percent or more of the course sections. Among the sixty-five sites of four-year public institutions responding to this question, only eleven locations (16.9 percent) fell below the 20 percent benchmark.

Distance from the main campus is a more complicated indicator in terms of the likelihood of full-time faculty members teaching at a site. Obviously, as distance increases beyond a reasonable commuting time, it becomes less likely that full-time faculty would divide their time between the main campus and an off-campus site. However, many branches and centers have resident faculty, that is, individuals who teach their entire load at a site. There are many variables that could influence the extent to which full-time faculty members are present, regardless of distance from the main campus, including whether or not a site has specialized offerings. A site with a nursing program, for example, is likely to have a high number of resident faculty, regardless of other factors.

The factors at play in a faculty member's decision to teach away from the main campus would be a rich area for further study.

Student Services Personnel

The survey sought information regarding student support services personnel (employees working in areas such as admissions, registration, financial aid, student accounting, advising, student development, and health services). There is evidence of broad disparity in the levels of student support services staffing at branches and centers. At sites with credit headcounts ranging from 500 to 999, some institutions provide as many as fifteen full-time staff, while others had none. Most (72 percent) were staffed by between three and ten full-time student support services personnel.

Community colleges appear to have significantly fewer full-time student support services personnel at their branches and centers than do the four-year public and private institutions. At community college sites of fewer than 1,000 students, 63 percent of the locations had three or fewer full-time student services personnel. By contrast, only 32.3 percent of the public (and 31.8 percent of the private) four-year institutions with enrollments below 1,000 had three or fewer full-time student services personnel.

Further study would be needed to tease out possible explanations for this wide variance in staffing levels. Some sites may make services available online, for example, and distance from the main campus could also be a factor, especially in terms of personnel who may be full-time employees based on the main campus and commuting to an off-campus site for a number of hours each week. Still, this snapshot of student support services at branches and centers seems to point at the need for benchmarking so that numbers of staff providing essential services increase along with enrollment.

Emergent Models

It seems quite clear that institutions vary widely in the size and scope of their centers and branches. They are large and small, close by and far away, full of resident faculty and relying totally on adjuncts, and offering few student services or providing a full array. Still, some models are beginning to emerge.

Model A: Two-Year Public Centers

Forty eight of the respondents were from two-year public institutions. The typical two-year public center is smaller in enrollment—fewer than 1,000 credit students—though the institution headcount could range from 2,000–15,000. It is close enough to the main campus to commute round trip in one day, generally under thirty miles. Its space could be owned or leased by the institution. It provides no-frills essential student support services but with only a handful of staff—two or three.

The full time faculty members of the institution do teach at the site, but only one in five courses; the typical center is definitely adjunct dependent. On site leadership is provided by an administrator who serves only one location and whose highest degree is a master's. He or she has been there more than six years and reports to the institution's president or a vice president.

Prince George's Community College at University Town Center (UTC)

Prince George's County is in the Baltimore/Washington urban corridor, and the community college has a credit headcount of around 14,000 students. UTC is somewhat larger than the typical Model A center, with nearly 1,700 students. The college opened UTC to extend its reach and increase access to a previously underserved part of the county. In any given semester, the center hosts 150 credit classes. UTC prides itself in serving student needs through small classes offered 6 days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. It is a short walk from a significant public transportation hub, including a Metrorail station.

The highest on-site administrator is the program director, Dr. Dennis Huffman. He has been at the College for ten years and reports to the equivalent of an associate vice president within the academic affairs division. Students receive on site support in terms of admission, advising, placement testing, registration and financial aid but there is no bookstore or library on site and cashiering services are limited. The three full-time student services staff members are cross-trained, as is a number of the other employees at the center.

Model B: Four-Year Private Centers

Twenty-three of the survey respondents were from private institutions. The typical branch of a private four-year institution is of moderate size, and has a headcount of fewer than 1,000 credit students. The institution overall has a headcount of under

10,000 students and it has more than four branches or centers. A majority of the institution's students take at least one course on a branch or center.

The branch campus is more than fifty miles or a fifty-minute commute from the main campus. It is not co-located with another institution. It occupies fewer than 35,000 square feet and is leased.

Full-time faculty teaches only 20 percent of the branch's class sections. Student services are important and handfuls (3–5) of staff deliver them. Leadership is provided by an administrator with a master's degree who serves multiple locations and reports to someone other than the president or provost. He or she has been in the role for more than six years.

Manhattan Center at Adelphi University

The Manhattan Center of Adelphi University typifies the private university branch. Only twenty-eight miles from the main campus but a fifty-minute train ride on a good day, it is a bit closer than the typical model. But one delay or traffic accident can double the commute time. Students can reach the location, on the edge of Soho and Tribeca, via the #1 subway train from Penn Station or the bus that stops right at the campus. The 700 students are mature adults, most with jobs and families, who would not be at Adelphi if this location were not available to them.

Adelphi enrolls about 8,000 students institution-wide, about two-thirds being undergraduate. At the Manhattan Center the most popular program right now is Nursing, RN to BSN. Social Work is next with more master's demand than undergraduate. And third is the Master of Education. Classes are held seven days a week, five evenings and both weekend days. On weekdays, the classrooms are contracted to an outside group that teaches English to speakers of other languages. The institution does not own the space, it leases.

Full time faculty teach some classes; most classes are taught by adjuncts. Student services are delivered by three coordinators who cover all seven days. They are skilled at the most essential services—financial aid, registration, and admissions. Although students may sometimes miss having a cafeteria or attending some of the social and intellectual events found on the main campus, most are focused on getting through their coursework and not on the traditional college life experience.

Director of the Manhattan Center, June Trizzino, has been there nine years and brought to the job a strong background in financial aid and student services. She is creative and resourceful as a branch campus administrator must be when there are few support services available. This administrator must also be skilled at selecting the right employees. When there are very few staff members on a campus, each one must be cross-trained to deliver multiple services and willing to search for the answers to questions if they don't know the answers already.

Model C: Four-Year Public Branches

Nearly half of the respondents in the NABCA Administrator's survey led branches of four-year public institutions. A Model C campus is a part of a larger institution with more than 15,000 credit students. The institution is a main campus with two or three branches. Facilities are owned by the university and often are co-located with another institution. This branch provides a range of student support services and has five or more full-time employees as well as additional part-time staff.

At least half of the class sections are taught by the full-time faculty members of the institution. Leadership is provided by an administrator who serves only one campus. He or she is credentialed with an earned doctorate. He or she has been there more than six years.

This group falls naturally into two categories: urban and nonurban. The typical Model C nonurban has a credit enrollment of fewer than 1,000 students and is more than fifty miles from the main campus. The Model C urban version has 1,000–2,500 students and is fewer than fifty miles from the main campus, but a significant distance in terms of travel time.

Irvine Campus of California State University at Fullerton

This is a Model C urban branch campus. The parent institution is very large—37,000 students – and while the main campus is only nineteen miles away, it is an hour's commute. Orange County is an area of very congested traffic and students who travel from the border of San Diego County to Fullerton would add a second hour to that commute. The Irvine campus opened in 1989, moved in 2002, and moves again in January 2011. Dean Susan Cooper was part of the team that selected the new site, in the midst of some very high profile businesses, and it is anticipated that this will strengthen the relationships with community partners. Also important to the students coming from work to class is having enough and convenient parking.

Even after the recent funding challenges and reductions in capacity at all California State University campuses, headcount at Irvine is 2,700 students. Students can complete upper division bachelor's work or a master's at this location. Select lower division courses are offered by the university and more are offered on-site by a partner community college. The most popular undergraduate program is Business with five major options, followed by Communication, then Education and teacher credentialing. The master programs are offered as cohorts and include a fully employed MBA, master's in taxation, all tracks of the master's in education, and a new master's in social work.

Student support services include advisement, financial aide, admissions, cashiering, students with disabilities, tutoring, bookstore, café, library, and a fitness center. The highest priority services still to be added are counseling, career development, and student health services. There are no resident faculty at the site but 60–65 percent of

all sections are taught by full-time university faculty. The dean reports to the vice president of academic affairs and participates fully in university academic management along with the deans of the colleges.

The faculty and staff have just been through a year of furloughs by the end of 2010—2 days a month of unpaid leave or an 11 percent loss of salary. Students experienced the resulting reduction in classes and access to services. Like many campuses, campus growth potential is significant but funding is not available at this time. Even though some potential students are turned away, it is clear that the branch provides increased access to higher education. Thousands of students in the county could not realistically work, drive to the main campus, park, and make it to a class on time.

Model D: Large Enrollment Branches

Nineteen of the respondents met the definition of large enrollment branches with 2,500 or more credit students. The parent institution is a public one, either four or two year and it has a main campus with three or more branches. The total institutional enrollment is over 25,000. Most of the branches are within an easily one-day, round-trip commute from the mothership. One in four of the institution's students take a class on the branch.

It operates in more than 50,000 square feet and the space is owned by the institution. At least one third of the course sections on the campus are taught by full-time faculty; more than a hundred adjuncts teach on the branch each term. Students get a wide range of support services through the efforts of more than fifteen full-time employees and a similar number of part-timers.

Leadership is provided by an administrator who serves only this campus. He or she has been there more than six years and has earned a doctorate. He or she reports to the institution's president.

Davie Campus of Florida Atlantic University

Florida Atlantic University (FAU) is a public research institution of 27,000 credit students. The Davie campus headcount is just over 5,000. It is located in urban Broward County with 1.7 million residents, just outside of Fort Lauderdale. As the upper division half of a two-by-two campus, Davie is co-located with an even larger branch of Broward College. In addition to bachelor programs, it has a robust graduate program in Education. Only twenty-eight miles from the main campus in Boca Raton, the Davie campus serves a diverse and somewhat less affluent county than the main campus. It enrolls many students for whom full time residential study is not an option. The student ethnic make up is majority minority with large African American, West Indian, and Hispanic populations. The average student age is twenty nine, 58 percent are part time, and 69 percent are female. Davie is one of six FAU branches and the largest after the main campus.

There are more than seventy full-time resident faculty on the campus and they teach more than half of the course offerings. The campus hosted 412 class sections in the fall of 2010, 54 percent after 4:00 p.m. Saturday offerings are as plentiful as weekday.

The campus delivers full student services and has more than thirty on-site staff covering admissions, registration, financial aid, students with disabilities, testing and evaluation, counseling, health services, career development, multicultural affairs, student activities, and a student wellness center.

Leadership is provided by Dr. Joyanne Stephens, vice president and associate provost, who reports to the president and, atypically from others in Model D, covers all the branch campuses. The campus increases access by providing options for students who need a nontraditional schedule or something closer to home. The academic course work is as challenging as it is on the main campus, but the smaller campus prides itself in offering an almost family-like support system to adult students who are often the first in their family to attempt a university experience.

Conclusion

The size of this study is limited. It is likely that with 300 respondents, some of what is now seen as typical would change. Still, this is the first attempt to look at a nationwide cross section of branch campuses and centers and to search for patterns in their structure and organization. There are strands of similarity and difference that begin to help formulate a typology. The Model A and B campuses typically come from institutions of under 10,000 students. They are most dependent upon adjunct or part-time faculty and have very few student support staff. Using the NABCA definition as a starting point, they are called centers in this proposed framework. Model C and D campuses offer more services, have more students, have more sections taught by full-time faculty, and fit better the definition of branch. Model B institutions have many more locations, are more likely to lease space, and they are farther away. Model C uses more traditional faculty and has a traditional academic as its head.

All the models can be and are found in urban areas as the examples show. It is not hard to see how the urban center or branch increases access. And, in most cases, the limited services provided and significant use of part-time faculty makes them cost effective. The chart that follows compares some of the key points of the models.

	Model A	Model B	Model C		Model D
			Urban	Nonurban	
Type Most Typical	2-year public	4-year private	4-year public		2- or 4-year public, large enrollment
Institution Headcount	<10,000	<10,000	>10,000		>25,000
# Branches/ Centers	1–2	4+	2–3		3+
Branch/Center Headcount	<1,000	<1,000	1,000–2,500	<1,000	>2,500
Distance from Main Campus	<30 miles	>100+ miles or 60 minutes	<50 miles	>50 miles	<50 miles
FT Faculty Teach	20%	20%	50%		33%
Student Services Staff	2–3	3–5	5+		15+
Leadership Credentials	Master’s	Master’s	Doctorate		Doctorate
Leadership Tenure	6+	6+	6+		6+

Implications for Future Research

This study leads to many more questions than it answered. Centers and branch campuses have been largely ignored in research while they simultaneously have grown in number and, in many institutions, in importance. It is time to expand this study by reaching out to larger and larger cross sections of the branch campus community. In addition, there is a need to look more closely at several of the categories barely touched in this survey—what student services are delivered and how, preparation of leaders and administrators to run branch campuses and centers, best management practices in developing and maintaining smaller or shared facilities, program development at branches and centers, and relationships between branch structure and student success, just to name a few. The National Association of Branch Campus Administrators is to be applauded for its beginning efforts to identify and promote a research agenda in this field.

Addendum

Alternative Typology of Branch Campuses Based Upon Mission
Phyllis Bepko

The 2010 National Association of Branch Campus Administrators’ survey results included 128 individuals, many of whom represented multiple branches at their home institutions. For NABCA purposes, the findings were divided into kindred groups by institution type or enrollment size—private institutions, two-year public, four-year public, and large enrollment.

After sifting through the data it became clear that there were many two-year institutions that shared more characteristics with four-year schools than with other two-year schools and some public institutions that looked more like their private school counterparts. To understand this better, Dr. Phyllis Bebko interviewed representative heads of campuses in each category and found similarities across size and public/private status. She compared the campuses of her own institution and also looked at others in her state's university system. A pattern of similarity based upon perceived campus mission has begun to emerge.

The result was an alternative typology, based upon campus mission more than any other characteristic. While this grouping has not been tested through comprehensive research, it has been confirmed anecdotally across state lines and institution types. It is shown here in contrast to the typology based upon the NABCA survey results and is divided into six types.

Proposed Campus Types by Mission

Rarely spoken but widely known is the label of Cash Cow Campus. Seen more often in the private institutions, this campus is generally smaller in enrollment (under 1000 FTE [full-time equivalent]) and is often identified as a center. Its faculty members are almost exclusively hired as adjuncts and its staff size is small. The limited staff members are cross-trained to provide those services essential to completing enrollment—admissions, registration, and financial aid. Often offering only evening and weekend options, the facilities may be utilized for other purposes or by other institutions during the day. Programs are generally limited to a few high-demand offerings and are often available only as cohorts. An example would be a campus in a densely populated urban area, accessible through public transportation, in space used by a high school or other group weekdays and offering higher education programming at night and on weekends.

Perhaps the most common mission in the public institution sphere is that of Increasing Access Campus. Still a smaller enrollment campus (under 1000 FTE), and fitting the description of center, this campus may look similar to the Cash Cow—emphasis on evening and weekend programs and reliance on adjuncts. It focuses on high-demand programs and works to keep the costs down. But, even though it adds expense, the Increasing Access Campus is likely to offer limited weekday programs and to balance its use of adjuncts with traveling full-time faculty from the institution. While the small-support staff still concentrates on essential enrollment services, this campus is likely to offer a few more services identified as important to student success such as tutoring, counseling, and career development. This campus extends the institution's reach, often within an assigned catchment or service area.

The next common mission-based campus is one designed to Grow the Brand Campus. Typical enrollment is between 1000 and 2000 FTE. It focuses more on the traditional weekday schedule though it offers limited evening classes. There are two-main distinctions of Growing the Brand Campus—it offers specialty or showcase programs

of the institution and it can often be expensive to operate. It might be the result of transplanting a program to a location where the natural resources are easily accessible (i.e., Marine Biology or Ocean Engineering on the shore) or where the related industry is flourishing (Engineering in a high-tech business corridor or Hospitality in a tourist mecca). It may offer students programs not available on the main campus. It may utilize very specialized academic facilities. It requires resident full-time faculty and on-site academic leadership, and will offer essential enrollment services plus a few more that are important to student success.

Most branch-campus administrators aspire to grow their campus into a full service or Mini Main Campus. This is a higher enrollment campus, at least 2,000 FTE and often significantly larger. Serving both traditional and nontraditional students, it certainly does increase access and grow the brand. But, it provides a higher level of essential, important, and even enhancing support services. Beyond enrollment-related and academic success-related support, the Mini Main provides some student activities, student government, and health and wellness activities. It provides a wide array of programs, has enough resident faculty to build a sense of community, and is likely to have discipline-specific, campus-based academic leadership. Students may complete their whole college career at a Mini Main Campus and experience most of the same campus life found on the institution's main campus.

The University System Campus is one that seeks separate accreditation and has an independent budget. It would have all the services of the Mini Main but may or may not meet the high enrollment criteria. Resident faculty, academic leadership, a variety of support services, and often residential life are all a part of the mix.

The Multi-University Center is most often found on the campus of a two-year lower division institution. It will host several upper division and/or graduate institutions sharing the same classrooms, and limited support facilities such as an open computer lab or workstations for part-time faculty. Each institution has a very small enrollment and focuses on only a handful of high demand program offerings, mostly scheduled evenings and weekends. This model is run by a lead institution but requires a consortium-like agreement among all the institutions and rarely permits overlap in programs.

Why would we seek to type campus by their mission? As institutions face the challenge of very limited resources, it is important to know why a branch exists and to plan for growth of that branch based upon its reason for being. Outcome measures and the most appropriate and effective administrative structure will vary widely based upon the goal. A Cash Cow center may be run by a campus administrator providing minimal support services, but a Mini Main requires campus-based leadership on the academic, facility, and support services side. A small center aimed at Increasing Access could focus on meeting needs of working adults not able to take advantage of offerings on the main campus. This might lend itself to adapted degree programs specifically designed for the nontraditional student and not found on the main campus. Understanding the mission impacts the decisions at every turn.

The chart that follows here is an attempt to highlight key characteristics by type. No campus is the perfect example of mission type.

Comparison of Branch Campus Mission-Based Types

	Cash Cow	Increasing Access	Growing the Brand	Full Service Mini Main	University System	Multi-University Center
By NABCA Definition	Center	Center	Branch	Branch	Branch	Center
Typical FTE	300–1000	300–1000	1000–2000	2000+	1000–2000+	100-500/inst.
Schedule	Evening, Weekend	Evening, Weekend, Limited weekday	Weekdays Limited evening	Weekday, Evening	Weekday, Limited evening	Evening, Weekend
Students	Non-traditional	Non-traditional	Traditional	Traditional and Non-traditional	Traditional	Upper Portion 2+2 non-traditional
Programs	Few High demand, Low cost	Many High demand, Moderate cost	Few Specialties, Some high cost	Broad array Moderate demand, Some high cost	Broad array Moderate demand, Some high cost	Few No overlap between institutions
Faculty	All Adjunct	50/50 Adj/FT Traveling	Most FT Resident & Traveling	Most FT Many Resident, Some Adjunct	Most FT Most Resident, Some Adjunct	Most Adjunct or FT Traveling
Support Services*	Essential only Online or by phone	Essential Limited face to face, Important online or phone	Essential Limited face to face, Important online or phone	Essential & Important Most face to face Some Enhancing	Essential, Important & Enhancing Most face to face	Essential Online or by Phone
Student Life Student Gov't., Sports teams, Residential Life	None	Little	Try to include at Main	Broad scope May be residential	Broad scope May be residential	None

Operations	Rent space, contract custodial and security, Limited hours of access to building	Rent or own space, contract custodial and security, Limited hours of access to building	Own space, may co-locate, hire or contract services	Own space, hire most services, 24/7 access to building	Own space, hire most services, 24/7 access to building	Share space costs, No oversight of services, Limited access to building
Other Comments	Often rent out classrooms during weekdays	Often defensive location, Usually within a service area	Features institution's best		Separate accreditation	Most often added to lower division institution

**Key to Support Services Terms*

Essential Services

- Admissions
- Financial Aide
- Academic Advising
- Registration and Cashiering
- Library

Important Services

- Tutoring
- Counseling
- Career Development/Placement
- Students with Disabilities

Enhancing Services

- Student Activities
- Clubs
- Wellness Facilities

References

National Association of Branch Campus Administrators Campus and Center Administrator Survey. 2009. "Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis." Florida Atlantic University. Website last accessed June 9 but no longer available as of June 2010.

Author Information

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