

University vs. College

Universities -- In the United States the term UNIVERSITY is reserved for institutions that grant Master's and Doctoral degrees in addition to the Bachelors degree. Within a University, courses of study are organized into colleges and schools. The title university has no bearing on the entering freshman's education. Upper division schools that focus on Bachelors and Associate degrees are referred to as Colleges.

For institutions in the United States, the Carnegie Foundation classifies colleges and universities on the basis of the number of degrees granted at various levels. The classifications are: I (Doctoral), IIA (Masters), IIB (Baccalaureate), III (2-year institutions with academic ranks), IV (2-year institutions without academic ranks). Any school can use the title of "University", however, a reputable university is an institution with a I or IIA classification. To research the validity of an institution visit: <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications>. Also, your CAP advisor can provide you with guidance on how to evaluate college and university programs that best fit your needs.

Community Colleges -- The concept of a community college is primarily an American innovation that began in the early 1900's. Community colleges offer several benefits to students such as smaller class size, faculty dedicated to teaching and lower tuition. Within Florida, the mission of the community college is to provide students a quality, affordable education, close to home.

There are several different paths of educational opportunity provided by community colleges. There are different levels of study at community colleges.

Associate in Arts -- The AA degree is referred to as the transfer degree. College ready students complete their first 60 credits at a community college and then transfer to another college or university to finish their Bachelors degree. Within Florida there are several benefits from receiving an AA degree, 1) students are guaranteed admission to an upper division school and 2) Merit scholarships pay 100% at a community college.

Associate in Science -- The AS degree is referred to as a vocational or career focused degree. This degree is specifically designed to help meet specific workforce needs within the community. Some credits earned under an AS program transfer to upper division schools. See the attached chart for curriculum differences between the AA and AS programs.

College Prep -- For many students, the community college offers a second chance to obtain a college education. Students who have low GPA's, no or low SAT and ACT placement test scores are allowed to continue their education at a community college through a policy called the "open door" policy. Diagnostic tests are required and then students are placed into a series of courses which help them finish their preparation for college level classes and go on to obtain an AS or AA degree.