

WHY TOP 20?

Compared to the United States as a whole, states containing top-twenty universities are:

- more urban (84% of population is in metropolitan areas vs. 80%), and states with more than one top university are even more urban (92.5%). (SC data not available)
- have slower rates of population growth (7.3% from 1990-1999 vs. 9.8%), and states with more than one top university grew even more slowly (5.3%). This pattern holds true for the 1980s as well. SC's population grew by 14.0% during the 1990s and 13.1% in the 1980s.
- have higher median household incomes (\$45,509 vs. \$41,994 in 1999), and states with more than one top university have even higher median household incomes (\$46,995). SC's median household income was \$37,082 in 1999.
- have higher per capita personal incomes (\$32,846 vs. 29,760 in 2001), and states with more than one top university have even higher per capita incomes (\$35,163). SC's per capita personal income was \$24,886 in 2001.
- have a higher proportion of college graduates among their populations (26.2% vs. 24.4% in 2000), and states with more than one top university have an even higher incidence of college graduates (28.3%). This holds despite the fact that there is almost no difference between these states and the rest of the country in terms of the proportion of the population with at least a high-school education (about 80% in both cases). In SC college graduates constituted 20.4% of the population in 2000, while high-school graduates were 76% of the population.
- have lower rates of teen pregnancy (10.4% vs. 11.8%) and out-of-wedlock births (32.4% vs. 33.2%) in 2000. In SC those rates are 15.3% and 39.8%, respectively.
- have lower crime rates (3.8% vs. 4.1% in 2000), and states with more than one top university have even lower crime rates (3.5%) despite being more urban. SC's crime rate in the year 2000 was 5.2%.
- have a greater proportion of their labor force in services (32.7% vs. 29.2% in 2000), and states with more than one top university have an even greater proportion of their labor force in services (36.6%). In SC, 26.1% of the labor force was in the service sector in 2000.
- have a greater proportion of their labor force in the high-tech sector (54.9% vs. 51% in 2000), and states with more than one top university have a far greater proportion of their labor force in the high-tech sector (65.5%). By contrast, only 27% of SC's labor force was employed in the high-tech sector in that year.

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These data reveal a pattern that is consistent with studies of the long-run determinants of income and growth. It is well known that cities are a mainspring of growth. Clemson's Curtis Simon has found that those cities that have grown the fastest over a long span of U.S. history are those with the highest initial levels of education. Clemson's Robert Tamura, Scott Baier, and their graduate students have found that differences in their levels of educational attainment are the principal causes of differences in per capita incomes across the states of the United States.