Facts and Rankings

Carolina: a national leader in research

Carolina’s research enterprise has doubled in the last decade, reaching nearly $600 million in extramural support in FY 2014. It directly supports more than 10,000 positions statewide. In a 2013 report titled The Top American Research Universities, Carolina was ranked one of the top 9 public universities. The report, produced by the Center for Measuring University Performance, assessed areas such as research, private support, faculty strength, and advanced training. Among international universities, Carolina was ranked 46th in the world by the London-based Times Higher Education magazine in 2014-2015.

Based on the most recent available data, Carolina ranks:

- 1st (in an 9-way tie) among the nation’s public research universities (Top American Research Universities, 2013)
- 8th in federal R&D expenditures (NSF, 2013)
- 9th in overall R&D expenditures (NSF, 2013)
- 7th among all universities in HHS expenditures, including NIH (NSF, 2012)
- 46th among the world’s top 400 universities (Times Higher Ed., 2014-15)
- 23rd among U.S. universities and 40th in world ranking (University Ranking by Academic Performance, 2014-15)

FY 2014 Research Funding Amounts Finalized

UNC-Chapel Hill research funding for fiscal year 2014 totaled $702,729,006. That number includes $3,540,541 in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Federal government funding accounted for 71.85 percent ($556.6 million) of the 2014 total. The remainder came from sources such as educational and research institutions (7.01 percent), business and industry (5.94 percent), foundations (5.93 percent), North Carolina state government (3.87 percent), and nonprofits (5.22 percent). Of the federal funding, 75 percent was from the National Institutes of Health. (Source: Office of Research Information Systems. Updated: 5/2015.)

More detailed information is here.

Eighth in federal R&D expenditures

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ranked eighth among leading private and public research universities for the level of federal funding ($623.24 million) devoted to research and development in all fields during fiscal 2013. (Source: National Science Foundation. More information here. Updated: 5/2015.)

UNC Research is Interdisciplinary and Collaborative

Faculty members collaborate across disciplines, departments, and schools when they conduct research at Carolina. In fiscal year 2014, UNC received over 1,400 multi-investigator research grants and contracts; the award amount for these totaled $484 million. Cross-department collaborations produced almost 900 research grants and contracts in 2014, and the total award amount was $379 million. Cross-school collaborations produced more than 450 research grants and contracts in 2014, and the total award amount was $249 million. (Source: Office of Research Information Systems. Updated: 1/2015.)

Faculty and students are supported by research

According to an NSF report compiled directly from UNC-Chapel Hill data for fiscal year 2013, research grants and contracts directly supported more than 10,000 faculty, students, and staff entirely or in part.

Research means support and jobs for North Carolina

Carolina research directly funds more than 5,050 full-time jobs and annually creates at least 15,000 jobs throughout North Carolina. Research dollars from UNC-Chapel Hill pay the salaries of employees in almost every North Carolina county.
Research Centers and Institutes

Research centers and institutes contribute to Carolina’s intellectual climate. They also boost the state’s economy by attracting external funding and by helping North Carolina communities and businesses compete for economic development opportunities. In 2013, centers and institutes reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Research had combined state support of $20,521,089 and brought in $159,793,412 in external grants and contracts—approximately $7.08 of research funding for each $1 of state support. The Impact of Carolina’s research centers and institutes extends across the state and beyond—including thousands of active research and service projects and 1400 jobs in North Carolina alone.

Top-Ranked Public Research Library in the Southeast

The Association of Research Libraries and the Chronicle of Higher Education rated Carolina’s library system nineteenth among all universities in the U.S. and first in the Southeast among public institutions. The survey ranked research university libraries by number of volumes in the library, number of volumes added, number of current serials, total expenditures, and permanent staff. (Source: 2013 Almanac of Higher Education. Updated 4/2014)

One of the “Top American Research Universities”

In The Top American Research Universities 2013 Annual Report, Carolina ranked first in a nine-way tie among public universities nationwide. The rankings are based on a number of measures such as research funding, private support, faculty awards, faculty membership in National Academies, and doctoral and postdoctoral advanced training. This publication is produced by The Center for Measuring University Performance, Arizona State University. (Source: The Center for Measuring University Performance. Updated 5/2015.)

Fifth among Public Universities


A Leader in Entrepreneurship

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ranks eleventh overall among university graduate entrepreneurship programs, according to Entrepreneur Magazine and the Princeton Review. (Source: Entrepreneur Magazine. Updated 5/2015.) Carolina ranks 9th in undergraduate entrepreneurship programs nationally, according to U.S. News & World Report. Our culture of innovation was accelerated by the Carolina Entrepreneurial Initiative (CEI), a five-year initiative funded in part by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation to develop and launch entrepreneurship programs for faculty and students. Many CEI projects continue to thrive, including new entrepreneurship certificates and minors, business accelerators, and entrepreneurial support for university spin-offs. The Innovate@Carolina Campaign is implementing the next generation of cross-campus entrepreneurship initiatives, ranging from scholarships and endowed professorships to seed funding for the most promising innovations at Carolina. Other efforts include http://tracs.unc.edu/carolina-kickstart (a program to help Carolina faculty commercialize their technology), the Center for Entrepreneurial Studies at Kenan-Flagler Business School, and the Blackstone Entrepreneurs Network.

A Leader in Biotechnology

Carolina fared well in a comprehensive survey of university biotechnology transfer and commercialization conducted by the Milken Institute, a publicly-supported economic think tank in Santa Monica, California. The survey ranked educational institutions worldwide on their biotech publications, biotech patents, and tech transfer. Carolina ranked 28th, 41st, and 25th, respectively, and was among the top four institutions in the South in all categories. The Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area was ranked 20th by the Institute among biotechnology clusters.

One of the Best Places to be a Postdoc

The Scientist ranked UNC 18th in the nation in their list titled "Best Places to Work Postdoc 2013." (Source: The Scientist Updated: 4/2014)