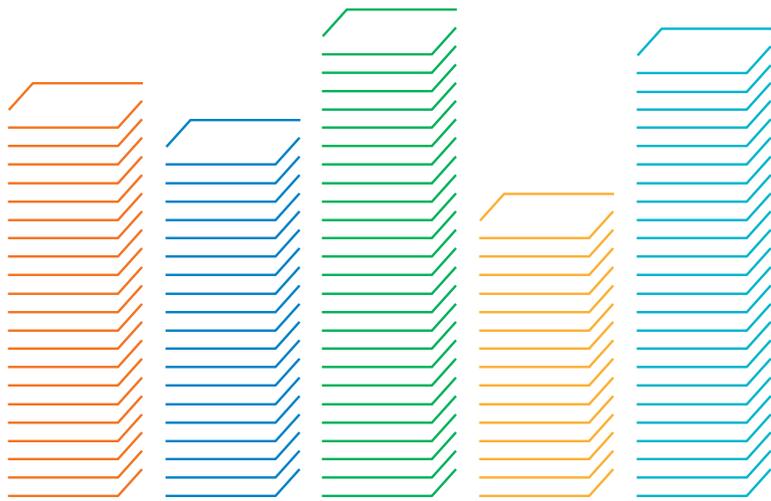


# The Atlanta Region: National Leader in Higher Education

*Key facts from a statistical profile of higher education  
in America's metropolitan areas*



ARCHE

ATLANTA REGIONAL COUNCIL  
*for* HIGHER EDUCATION

By any measure,  
Atlanta ranks as a  
higher education leader.



Among America's 50 largest metro areas,  
Atlanta ranks:

### **7th in college students enrolled**

176,171 full-time-equivalent students

### **3rd in African American students**

47,548 full-time-equivalent students

### **7th in degrees awarded**

35,802 bachelor's degrees and higher

### **In the top 10 for degrees**

awarded across 14 academic fields studied

### **5th in university research**

\$1.01 billion in higher ed research expenditures



# College enrollment in Atlanta is growing faster than in any top U.S. higher ed center.

Of the top eight higher education centers in 1989 – major metros with 100,000+ college students – **Atlanta showed the highest percentage increase in students enrolled (62%) by 2005.**

## Top Higher Ed Centers: College Enrollment Growth 1989-2005

	Metropolitan Area	% Change 89-05
1	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA (MSA)	62%
2	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA (MSA)	41%
3	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale, CA (MD)	34%
4	New York-White Plains-Wayne, NY-NJ (MD)	33%
5	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV (MD)	31%
6	Philadelphia, PA (MD)	26%
7	Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL (MD)	24%
8	Boston-Quincy, MA (MD) & Cambridge-Newton-Framingham, MA (MD)	11%

*Notes: Full-time-equivalent students, Fall 1989 to Fall 2005. Includes Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) and Metropolitan Divisions (MD).*

In number of students enrolled, Atlanta's increase was the third largest among all 50 metro areas studied.

This growth was fueled in part by a remarkable **118% increase in African American students**. In fact, Atlanta's increase in the *number* of African Americans attending college was **#1** in the nation.

# Colleges and universities are outpacing Atlanta's growth.

While rankings matter, what matters most is the vital role higher education plays in local metro areas. In this regard, Atlanta-area colleges and universities are helping make growth in the region possible.

1989-2005

**Atlanta-area population** \_\_\_\_\_ **+55%**

**Atlanta-area college enrollment** \_\_\_\_\_ **+62%**

**Atlanta-area college degrees awarded** \_\_\_\_\_ **+75%**

*Notes: Full-time-equivalent students, Fall 1989 to Fall 2005. Bachelor's degrees and higher, academic years 1988-89 to 2004-05.*

Higher ed's growth yields talented graduates to teach in public schools, keep people healthy, create businesses, lead congregations in prayer, serve in elected office, expand the arts, promote economic prosperity, and help make Georgia a better place for all citizens.



# In degrees awarded, Atlanta's growth is #2 among leading higher ed centers.

Of the eight leading higher education centers in 1989 – metro areas that awarded 15,000+ degrees at the bachelor's level and higher – **Atlanta saw the second-fastest percentage increase in graduates (75%) by 2005.**

## Top Higher Ed Centers: College Degree Growth 1989-2005

Metropolitan Area	% Change 89-05
1 San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA (MSA)	97%
2 Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA (MSA)	75%
3 New York-White Plains-Wayne, NY-NJ (MD)	67%
4 Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV (MD)	61%
5 Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL (MD)	56%
6 Philadelphia, PA (MD)	52%
7 Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale, CA (MD)	50%
8 Boston-Quincy, MA (MD) & Cambridge-Newton-Framingham, MA (MD)	36%

*Notes: Bachelor's degrees and higher, academic years 1988-89 to 2004-05. Includes Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) and Metropolitan Divisions (MD).*

In number of degrees awarded, Atlanta's increase was the fifth greatest among all 50 metro areas studied.

The rise in Atlanta-area higher ed degrees exceeded the percentage increase of the 50 largest metro areas combined in nearly every field, including the arts, theology, math, physical sciences, communications and health professions.

# Atlanta's boom in college grads fuels industries key to the region's growth.

In fields that support the growth of business in Atlanta, local colleges and universities give the region a competitive edge over other metro areas.

## Atlanta Among 50 Largest Metro Areas in the U.S. 1989-2005

Degree Field	Increase in # of Degrees	Change in Rank
<b>Engineering / related technologies</b>	<b>#1</b>	<b>6th to 3rd</b>
<b>Biological / biomedical sciences</b>	<b>#2</b>	<b>13th to 7th</b>
<b>Computer / information sciences</b>	<b>#3</b>	<b>8th to 5th</b>
<b>Foreign languages</b>	<b>#4</b>	<b>10th to 7th</b>
<b>Business / management / marketing</b>	<b>#6</b>	<b>7th to 7th</b>

*Notes: Bachelor's degrees and higher, academic years 1988-89 to 2004-05.*



# Atlanta ranks 5th in the U.S. in higher ed research spending.

Only five U.S. metro areas reported higher education research spending of \$1 billion or more in FY 2005. Atlanta was one of them.

## Top Metro Areas: Higher Ed Research Expenditures FY 2005

1	Boston-Quincy, MA (MD) and Cambridge-Newton-Framingham, MA (MD)	\$2.02 billion
2	New York-White Plains-Wayne, NY-NJ (MD)	\$1.42 billion
3	Baltimore-Towson, MD (MSA)	\$1.13 billion
4	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale, CA (MD)	\$1.09 billion
5	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA (MSA)	\$1.01 billion

*Note: Includes Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) and Metropolitan Divisions (MD).*

Among these top five, **Atlanta ranks 3rd in the percentage of total higher education spending devoted to research**, coming in at 17% (exceeded only by Baltimore and Boston).

Overall, Atlanta higher ed is an economic powerhouse – equal to a \$6 billion industry in direct spending (FY 2005).



## About the study

Atlanta's prominence in higher education is evident in key findings from a study conducted by the Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education (ARCHE) using U.S. Department of Education data.

The study's findings, published in spring 2008, provide a comprehensive analysis of higher education in America's 50 most populous metropolitan areas, showing both current rankings and changes from 1989 to 2005. (Inconsistent reporting by some higher education sectors makes trend analysis prior to 1989 difficult. 2005 was the latest information available when the project began.)

For a copy of the report *Higher Education in America's Metropolitan Areas*, contact ARCHE at [arche@atlantahighered.org](mailto:arche@atlantahighered.org) or 404.651.2668. Or visit the Information Center at [www.atlantahighered.org/infocenter](http://www.atlantahighered.org/infocenter) to view or download the report and other studies conducted by ARCHE.



For more information on ARCHE and its members, visit [www.atlantahighered.org](http://www.atlantahighered.org).

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## About ARCHE

The Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education brings together 19 Atlanta-area public and private colleges and universities. Founded in 1938, ARCHE builds awareness of the size, scope, impact and value of higher education and helps its members share strengths through cooperative programs. ARCHE also works closely with corporate and non-profit community partners and regional affiliated libraries.

### **ARCHE Members**

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