

BIG TIME RESEARCH & BIG TIME SPORTS

Comparing Commercialization in Public Institutions

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

This research was conducted using data from the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics NCAA Division I Athletics & Academic Spending Database.

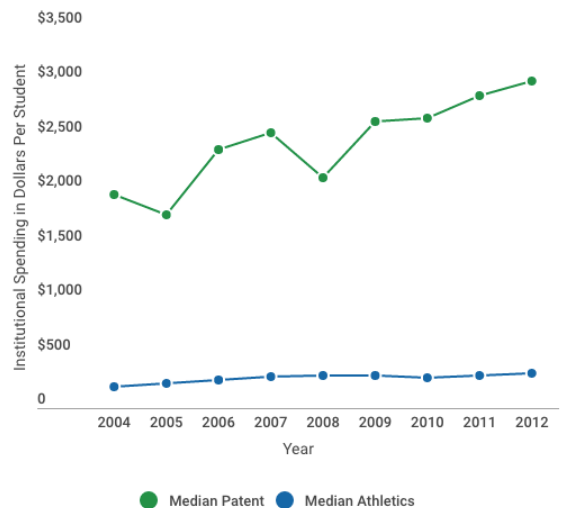
Public institutions with Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) athletic programs invest more institutional funds for patent investment and protection per student than the institutional subsidy per student for intercollegiate athletics.

- Median investment in patent activity was \$1,964 per student in 2004 and grew to \$3,009 per student in 2012, an increase of 53%.
- Median investment in athletics activity (subsidy) was \$199 per student in 2004 and grew to \$325 per student in 2012, an increase of 63%.

The gap between patent and athletics subsidy per student is greater among FBS Automatic Qualifying (AQ) conferences than non-AQ conferences.

- Median investment in patent activity among AQ conferences was \$3,214 per student in 2004 and grew to \$4,392 per student in 2012, an increase of 36%. Athletics subsidy was \$130 per student in 2004 and \$152 per student in 2012, an increase of 16%. **Click here to explore the AQ patent and athletics data.**
- Median investment in patent activity among non-AQ conferences was \$918 per student in 2004 and grew to \$1,353 per student in 2012, an increase of 47%. Athletics subsidy was \$410 per student in 2004 and \$773 per student in 2012, an increase of 89%. **Click here to explore the non-AQ patent and athletics data.**

FBS MEDIAN INSTITUTIONAL SUBSIDY PER STUDENT



[Click here for an interactive chart](#)

IMPLICATIONS OF BIG TIME RESEARCH & BIG TIME SPORTS

Patent subsidy is greater than athletics subsidy. Institutions contribute much more institutional subsidy to patents per student among institutions with Carnegie Research University-Very High classification and an FBS football program.

Athletics are the canary in the coalmine. Institutions should examine and compare the direct contribution to athletics and patent activity relative to the overall institutional budget to understand if commercial interests are aligning with institutional mission.

Big-time sports spending remain a concern. Although per student subsidy in athletics is less than the per athlete subsidy figures, both revenues and expenses in athletics outpace spending in many other aspects of higher education.

Conference alignment matters beyond the gridiron. Will institutions that aspire to join today's Power 5 or Group of 5 conferences elevate commercial subsidy in athletics only or will they take on other characteristics of commercialization as they pursue new FBS affiliations?

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