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America is a place of incredible diversity, a union of 50 unique states, each with its own history, culture and character. From establishing the first permanent colony of the United States in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607 to Alaska's accession in 1959 to statehood, each of these states has helped shape our collective identity. And through independence, the Civil War and civil rights, the only constant is change. The seeds of the revolution were sown in the sacred halls of Harvard University (founded in 1636), the College of William & Mary (est. 1693) and Yale College (est. 1701). They also sowed the seeds of the southern insurgency at rebellious universities such as the University of Transylvania (est. 1780), the University of South Carolina (est. 1801) and the University of Mississippi (est. 1848) as the nation veered into the Civil War. It was also in the midst of this terrible and bloody conflict that the United States passed the Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act (1862), appropriating public funds for state-sponsored university systems such as Cornell University (est. 1865), Purdue University (est. 1869) and Ohio State University (est. 1870). That same period I would see the proliferation of the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Schools such as Howard University (1867), Morehouse University (1867) and Florida A&M University (1887) would later play a prominent role in the Civil Rights movement. In times of war and peace, America's colleges and universities have been a belligerent to who we are as a nation and where we are going. The same is true today. If you really want to understand the United States, exploring the landscape of higher education is a good starting point. But you have to take it state by state. That can only mean one thing... travel! Climb aboard as we travel through these fifty states. Enjoy the stunning natural beauty. Marvel at the glittering metropolis. Tolerate the occasional stagnant stretch of endless nothingness. Most importantly, get a bird's eye view of the higher education options each state has to offer, both public and private. And don't let the order throw you out. These are alphabetical, rather than geographical. (Both because of that metaphor for road trip.) In real life, Alabama and Alaska are nowhere near each other. *All figures denoting the number of public and private colleges and universities in each state are extracted from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) and are in force as of June 2018. Unless otherwise noted, all figures refer to four-year-old institutions. Related Articles of Interest:The top 100 colleges and universities by the state 2018-2019The 50 Colleges in the United States The 50 best community colleges at the oldest university in the United States of Alabama: Northern Alabama University, founded in 1830. Alabama is home to 41 four-year colleges—19 public universities and 22 private nonprofit institutions—and can track your higher education the founding in 1818 of a learning seminar based in Tuscaloosa. This would become the University of Alabama in 1831. With more than 36,000 students enrolled as of 2014, UA is also the largest campus in the state. [Back to status list ...] Alaska's oldest university: Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines, now the University of Alaska Fairbanks, founded in 1917. As the most sparsely populated state in the union, Alaska is home to the fewest four-year colleges and universities in the United States (linked to Wyoming). The total sum of its four-year postsecondary public institutions reaches four, three of which fall under the umbrella of the University of Alaska. Alaska is also home to two private nonprofit schools. The last frontier can trace the history of its higher education system as early as 1922, when ancient Russian territory opened the doors of Alaska Agricultural College and the School of Mines. Located just six miles outside Fairbanks, the school would become the University of Alaska in 1925. Arizona's oldest university: the University of Arizona, founded in 1885. Arizona was the last of 48 contiguous states to join the United States, becoming part of the nation on Valentine's Day 1912. However, the University of Arizona, the state's first postsecondary educational institution, can trace its roots until 1885. Today, the four-year-old university is one of 14 public institutions in the state. Arizona is also home to 11 private nonprofit universities and is one of the most fertile private for-profit college scenes in the country, with no fewer than 77 of those institutions dotting its higher education landscape. The oldest university in Arkansas: Cane Hill College, now Ozarks University, founded in 1834. In 1872, Arkansas Industrial University housed its first class, which focused heavily on high school-level education. This Fayetteville school would ultimately become the University of Arkansas, with more than 25,000 enrolled, the largest of 11 public schools in the state. Arkansas is also home to 13 private nonprofit universities. The oldest university in California: Santa Clara University, founded in 1851. Like the state itself, California's educational offering buffet is spacious, varied and colorful. As the most populous state in the United States, as well as the most economically fertile, California is home to a formidable population of college and college students. With more than 200,000 students enrolled in the University of California's 10 campuses as of 2011, another 430,000 at California State Universities, and a remarkable 2.6 million studying at the state's 122 community colleges, California's public higher education system is the largest in the United States. With 53 four-year public institutions and 172 private nonprofit schools, California offers its residents more options than any other state in the nation. Colorado's oldest university: the University of Denver, founded in 1864. State 38, Colorado was a birthday present United States on his 100th birthday. The State of the Centennial joined the Union in 1876. However, his history of higher education dates back to his days as a territory. Founded in 1864, just miles from the bustling downtown area, the University of Denver is the oldest university in the Rocky Mountain region, and one of Colorado's 16 private nonprofit universities. Colorado is also home to 18 four-year publicly funded universities or universities, as well as a rapidly growing population of young and new residents. The oldest university in Connecticut: Yale University, founded in 1701. Connecticut's history of higher education begins at a site no less venerable than the New Haven campus, where Yale University became in 1701. Yale would become the first of the 18 private nonprofit universities in the state and helped establish a template for Connecticut's tradition of academic excellence. Another 11 four-year public universities serve Connecticut students. Connecticut state universities are the largest among them (and the second largest in the New England region), serving approximately 35,000 at four state universities (Central, East, South, and West). Oldest University of Delaware: The University of Delaware, founded in 1743. Delaware was one of 13 original colonies, and the first state to ratify the United States Constitution. Therefore, he can trace his university roots to the founding in 1743 of a small private school in New London, Pennsylvania. To the south in 1765 and earning her charter as Newark Academy in 1769, the University of Delaware was served by nearly 22,000 students today. It is also one of five public schools and four private universities in this less populous sixth state. Florida's oldest university, Florida State University, founded in 1851. With more than 600 miles of beach bordering the state of Florida, it's no wonder many college students think of the state as the top destination for spring break. But Florida is also a top college destination, enrolling nearly 620,000 full-time students between its 42 public and 87 private universities starting in 2013. In 1851, Florida State University became the first university in the Sunshine State, but it is the University of Florida at Gainesville, founded as a small seminary in 1853, which is the largest in the state. In fact, with more than 50,000 students, it is one of the five largest universities in the United States. Georgia's oldest university: the University of Georgia, founded in 1785. Georgia was the last formed of the original 13 colonies, but the first to start its own university. The University of in Athens, which obtained its state-sponsored charter in 1785, it remains the oldest public university in the United States. The venerable school calls itself the birthplace of the American higher education system. Considering how long Georgia has been taking out college graduates, it's not surprising that peach State is home to 30 universities and public colleges, as well as 38,38 private institutions. Hawaii's oldest university: the University of Hawaii in Manoa, founded in 1907. There are more in Hawaii than just fabulous beaches and an impressive variety of flora. It is also home to four four-year colleges and universities, which are distributed across the state's main islands. Hawaii claims six additional private nonprofit universities. And believe it or not, whether you want to study in Hawaii at \$7,731 per year, tuition for the typical four-year Hawaiian university was slightly lower in 2012 13 than the national average of \$8,070. Idaho's oldest university: Brigham Young University, founded in 1875. You could fit all over New England inside Idaho. Despite its size, however, this State of the Rocky Mountains is only the 39th most populous in the nation. Admitted as the 43rd state in 1890, Idaho's magnificent views and spacious open spaces host four four-year public universities and seven private nonprofit institutions. Despite its scarcity, Idaho can claim one of the fastest growing student populations in the nation. In fact, between 2008 and 2013, the state saw the largest percentage increase in college tuition in the United States with a solid growth rate of 31.5%. The oldest university in Illinois: Lebanon Seminary, now McKendree University, founded in 1828. Since his admission to the Union in 1818, Illinois has been a leader in higher education. Its 12 public institutions and 93 private nonprofit schools offer residents and visitors an impressive spectrum of four-year options. The first of these options would arise in 1828 with the establishment of McKendree Private University. It would be another 30 years before the founding of the state's first public institution, Illinois State Normal University. The school eventually left its name the Normal, which historically meant a teacher's university. But it maintains a precious tradition, staging annually what is now the longest-running collegial circus at the oldest university in the United States in Indiana: Vincennes University, founded in 1801. Entering the United States in 1816, Indiana would become the first state to order the establishment of a public school system and a public university in its founding constitution. This resolution would give way to the establishment in 1820 of the Indiana Seminary in Bloomington. This was the seedling of Indiana University, the largest university in the state and, with more than 570,000 live graduates worldwide, owner of the third largest alumni base in the United States. Today, it is part of a university landscape that includes 23 public colleges and universities and 40 private non-profit universities. Iowa's oldest university: Loras founded in 1839. Iowa has long enjoyed a tradition of excellence and progressiveness in its postsecondary sector. The only state in the U.S. bordered both east and west by rivers—the Mississippi and Missouri respectively—Iowa is home to three universities and 34 private non-profit schools. The first and oldest of Iowa's postsecondary institutions is Loras College, a private school that began in 1839 as St. Raphael's Seminary. Today, Iowa students are a model of success, with a 69.4% six-year graduation rate that not only exceeds the national average of 56%, but ranks as the second best graduation rate for four-year public schools across the country. The oldest university in Kansas: Baker University, founded in 1858. The settlers began to house Kansas in 1854, just as tensions over slavery were reaching a crescendo. As a result, the territory became a key battlefield, with both northern abolitionists and pro-slavery settlers from the south rushing to populate the future state. The state's university history began in the midst of this heated confrontation with Baker University's founding in 1858. Today, Kansas has eight four-year public institutions, 26 private nonprofit schools, and the University of Kansas Jayhawks, one of the most historic men's basketball programs in NCAA history. The oldest university in Kentucky: the University of Transylvania, founded in 1780. The 15th state to join the Union, the Kentucky Commonwealth is best known for three things: bourbon, bluegrass music and college basketball. If that sounds good to you, then this could be a good fate for your postsecondary education. Of course, this isn't all Kentucky has to offer. The state is also home to eight four-year public universities and 28 private nonprofit schools. With more than 30,000 students, the University of Kentucky at Lexington is both the state's largest school and home to the Wildcats, proud record-breaking owners for most NCAA men's basketball tournament appearances at age 58. Louisiana's oldest university, Centenary College of Louisiana, founded in 1825. In 1812, Louisiana became the 18th state to join the United States. However, his first public university did not become until more than a decade later. In 1825, the College of Louisiana received his letter to open in Jackson. After 20 years in operation, the school lost state funding and merged with Centenary College. Now a private institution located just outside Shreveport, the Centenary College of Louisiana is in fact the oldest liberal arts college west of the Mississippi River and one of 15 private nonprofit schools in the state. Louisiana is also home to 19 public universities. With more than 28,000 enrolled, Baton Rouge-based Louisiana State University is the state's largest public school and the alma mater of the great Shagquille NBA. The oldest university in Maine: Bowdoin College, founded in 1794. Maine became a state in 1820, but his history of higher education begins during his time as a section of Massachusetts. In 1794, Bowdoin College was founded in the small coastal town of Brunswick. Today, Bowdoin is one of 11 private nonprofit universities in the state, many of them tracking their colonial era. By contrast, Maine would actually be a state for 45 years before establishing its first public school, the future University of Maine, in 1865. Today, the Orono-based school is the largest of Maine's eight four-year-old public institutions. Maryland's oldest university: St. John's College, founded in 1696. Maryland was one of 13 original colonies and the seventh to ratify the United States Constitution. But his tradition of higher education dates back to the early days of the American settlement with the founding in 1696 of King William High School in Annapolis. It is this institution that would eventually become St. John's College, one of the nation's most reputable private liberal arts schools. Today, St. John's is one of 20 private nonprofit universities in the state. Maryland also specializes in huge public campuses. The largest four-year school among its 14 public institutions, the University of Maryland, is home to about 69,000 on multiple campuses. Oldest University of Massachusetts: Harvard University, founded in 1636. One of the original 13 colonies and the sixth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, Massachusetts has long been at the forefront of America's educational evolution. In fact, Massachusetts is home to what is often considered the best school in the United States. But it happens that Harvard University in Cambridge is also the first and oldest continuously functioning higher education institution in the nation. Formed in 1635 as a school for unitary clerics, Harvard would eventually become the secular academic power we know today, and one of 78 private nonprofit schools across the state. Massachusetts is also home to 15 four-year public schools. Michigan's oldest university, the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, founded in 1817. Since its creation in the United States in 1837, state 26 has been a leader in industrialization and manufacturing. But his history as a leader in higher education goes even further. Not only did Michigan's oldest university open its doors 20 years before the territory became a state, but the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor would also set the mold for the state's 21 public colleges and universities. Michigan's considerable array of postsecondary options also includes 64 private nonprofit colleges or universities. Oldest University of Minnesota: University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, founded in 1851. Minnesota joined the United States in 1858, but the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities actually predating the establishment of the state for seven years. Today, its two campuses home to 65,000 students. Minnesota is one of the best-educated and most literate states in the United States, thanks in part to its 12 four-year public schools, including a state university and a college system that ranks as the 14th largest enrollment base in the United States. Minnesota is also home to 36 private nonprofit universities. Mississippi's oldest university: Mississippi College founded in 1826. According to a 2011 Gallup survey, Mississippi is the most religious state in the United States. It is therefore appropriate that the first and oldest of its schools was founded by the Baptist Church in 1826. In fact, Mississippi College, still operational, is the second oldest Baptist college in the nation. Today, Mississippi College is one of nine private nonprofit universities in the state. The oldest of the state's public institutions is the University of Mississippi, or Ole Miss as it is affectionately called. Although state number xx joined the Union in 1817, it would be 31 years before Mississippi opened its first public university, and another 73 years before Ole Miss had any company in that category. Today, there are nine four-year public universities in Mississippi. Missouri's oldest university: St. Louis University, founded in 1818. The Show-Me State seems enormously proud to have any number of the biggest things in the world, whether it's the world's largest string ball (Branson), the highest chess piece in the world (St. Louis), or the world's longest walnut (Brunswick). Well, when it comes to higher education, Missouri is no different. With a combination of 13 public institutions and 60 private nonprofit schools, Missouri offers a variety of options for aspiring college students. This can help explain why enrollment in Missouri's various schools rose impressively 18.8% between 2008 and 2013 (a period during which most states saw declines). Montana's oldest university: Rocky Mountain College, founded in 1878. Montana is both the fourth largest state in the U.S. and the third least densely populated. Its scarcity is underscored by its relatively small university student population. In 2013, the entire state reported a tuition fee of approximately 40,000 students, a number that is actually dwarfed by enrollment in some of the largest universities in the country. Still, Montana has the highest enrollment rate among its neighboring states, a fact due to the excellent tradition within the few universities there, including seven public institutions and five private nonprofit schools. Nebraska's oldest university: Peru State College, founded in 1867. Nebraska joined the Union in 1867 as its 37th state. Founded in 1869, the University of Nebraska is both the oldest and largest of seven four-year public universities or universities in the state. There are 17 other private nonprofit universities in Nebraska. Although the state of Nebraska falls exactly in line with the national average rate of 56% six-year graduation, the state is an exceptionally high artist when it comes to work. Nevada's oldest university: the University of Nevada-Reno, founded in 1874. State 36 in joining the Union, Nevada, is sometimes referred to as the Battleborne State. In fact, his accession in 1864 made him the second of two states (after West Virginia) to enter the United States just as the nation joined the Civil War. Civil. the state was largely arid desert at the time, silver and gold discoveries brought rapid migration and, in 1874, the establishment of Nevada State University in Elko. Known as the University of Nevada-Reno, it is now one of six public universities in the state. There are only four four-year private nonprofit universities in Nevada: national university, Roseman University of Health Sciences, Sierra Nevada College and Woung University of Oriental Medicine. The oldest university in New Hampshire: Dartmouth College, founded in 1769. New Hampshire higher education began in the colonial era, with Dartmouth's establishment in 1769 as a school for Native Americans. In addition to being the oldest school in New Hampshire, it is one of nine colonial colleges still active, the existing schools founded before the Revolution. Dartmouth is also one of 12 private nonprofit schools in the granite state. New Hampshire is home to six other public institutions. This number is more than adequate for one of the nation's least populous states. In fact, in 2013, the entire state of New Hampshire was home to only 38,834 students. The oldest university in New Jersey: Princeton University, founded in 1746. New Jersey is home to one of the country's most historic higher education systems, as the only state with not one but two of the nation's nine original Colonial Colleges. Princeton University was established in 1746, only the fourth university in the U.S. to obtain his charter. Two decades later, Queen's College opened in New Brunswick, becoming the eighth university to do so, and also eventually becoming Rutgers University. Princeton and Rutgers also share the important distinction of facing off, in 1869, in the first intercollegial football game in history. Today, New Jersey is home to 13 four-year public schools and 33 private nonprofit schools. The oldest university in New Mexico: Las Cruces College, now New Mexico State University, founded in 1888. New Mexico was admitted to the Union in 1912, becoming the 47th star on the U.S. flag. Don't let the name fool you. The territory was nicknamed by Spanish explorers in 1563 for its remarkable Mexican (or Aztec) influence, some 260 years before Mexico took its name for the same reason. Therefore, New Mexico could be more accurately called Mexico Viejo. In his view, his higher education system is also considerably older than the state itself, with the school now known as New Mexico State University opening in 1888. In total, New Mexico is home to nine four-year-old public institutions and only three private non-profit schools With some of the highest rates of Native American and Hispanic residents as a percentage of the total population, New Mexico and its universities are among the most culturally diverse in the United States. The oldest university in New York: King's College, now Columbia University, founded in 1754. New York is the fourth most populous state in the U.S., home to the largest urban urban center nation. Similarly, The State of New York has the distinction of spending the largest sum of dollars of taxes per public school student in the nation. These figures add to one of the largest and most varied higher education systems in the United States. With 45 public schools, 180 private nonprofit institutions, and more than 578,000 New York students starting in 2013, its residents make up the fourth largest total enrollment among U.S. states. North Carolina's oldest university: Salem College, founded in 1772. North Carolina was one of 13 original colonies and became the 12th state to ratify the United States Constitution in 1789. Even before the birth of the United States, North Carolina was the site of a burgeoning private university sector. Some of its smaller private institutions, Salem College and Louisburg College, among them, date back to the latter part of the 18th century. Today, North Carolina is home to 50 private nonprofit schools and 16 four-year public schools. The first, the University of North Carolina, opened in 1795. Today this original Chapel Hill campus is the flagship institution in a UNC system spanning 17 public universities. The oldest university in North Dakota: the University of North Dakota, founded in 1883. Although North Dakota is the fourth least populous and the fourth least densely populated in the United States, in recent years employment and population growth has accelerated, as well as general trends in low unemployment and increasing prosperity. Although North Dakota would not become the 39th state until 1889, 1883 would actually be a historic year for education in the Midwest territory. It was at this time that the state established its first public and private universities, the first of nine and five respectively. North Dakota's private education sector began when Jamestown University opened under Presbyterian patronage. The University of North Dakota is the state's flagship public school, and at \$3,500 a year, a frank offering. Ohio oldest university: Ohio University, founded in 1804. The state of Ohio was admitted to the Union in 1803, becoming the 17th state, and, quickly after, home to the first public university in the so-called Northwest Territory. In 1804, Ohio University in Athens became the first of 36 public institutions in the state. With more than 400,000 students state-round, starting in 2013, Ohio also offers 75 private nonprofit schools and, at the time of writing, an above-average number of 126 for-profit colleges as well. Oklahoma's oldest university: The University of Oklahoma founded in 1890. By the time Oklahoma became the 46th state in 1907, its tradition of public higher education had already been well established. The University of Central Oklahoma and the University of Oklahoma-Norman had been in operation for 17 years. Today, the University of Oklahoma System is the largest of the state's 18 four-year public institutions. Oklahoma is 15 other private non-profit universities. The state of Oklahoma ranks as one of the most affordable places to pursue public education as well. During the 2012-13 academic year, students in the state of Oklahoma paid an average tuition of \$5,882, the eighth lowest rate in the United States during that time span. Oregon's oldest university: Willamette University, founded in 1842. Oregon became U.S. territory in 1843 and, 16 years later, in state 33, but its university system actually began before Oregon was officially recognized as its own territory. Willamette University opened in 1842, becoming the first of 25 private nonprofit universities state-round. Oregon is also home to nine four-year public universities. With nearly 25,000 enrollees, Portland State University is the largest among them. Overall, Oregon's university population has experienced growth in recent years, especially in relation to a national trend of declining tuition. Between 2008 and 2013, full-time enrolment at various Oregon universities increased by 27.7%. Pennsylvania's oldest university: the University of Pennsylvania, founded in 1740. Pennsylvania's commonwealth was one of 13 original colonies, ratifying the Constitution of the United States in 1787. Pennsylvania became the second state to join the Union, at which point its first university was already well established. Founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1740, the University of Pennsylvania is one of nine Colonial Colleges in the United States and one of 112 private nonprofit institutions in the state. Pennsylvania's 45 four-year public schools are also a critical part of the state's huge higher education network. With 45,000 enrolled on its main campus, and approximately 94,000 collectively enrolled when satellite campuses are included, Penn State is one of the largest university communities in the United States Rhode Island, Brown University, founded in 1764. By the time Rhode Island became a state in 1790, its oldest university has already been in operation for more than a quarter of a century. Brown University was established in 1764 as The College in the English colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. Wisely shortened to Brown after a generous endowment of 1804 by a benefactor of that surname, he is one of nine original remaining Colonial Colleges, the seventh oldest institution of higher education in the United States, and one of 10 private nonprofit schools in Rhode Island. The modest-sized state also has a modest-sized public school system, with a total of only two public universities. The most South Carolina: College of Charleston, founded in 1770. As one of the original 13 colonies and a leading force in the development of Southern culture and identity, South Carolina was also at the forefront of higher education as it evolved south of the Mason-Dixon line. Its first institution of higher education would be counted among those considered Colonial Colleges if it were not for the caused by the War of Independence. Although the College of Charleston was founded in 1770, his letter would not arrive until after the war in 1785. Today, South Carolina is the site of 13 four-year public institutions and 22 nonprofit schools. South Dakota's oldest university: Augustana College, founded in 1860. South Dakota joined the Union in 1889 along with its neighbor directly to the north. As the nation's fifth least populous and fifth least densely populated state, South Dakota was home to only 33,000 students in 2013. However, these students enjoy a variety of higher education options that are extensive relative to the size of the state's population, with seven public universities and seven private nonprofit schools. Also noteworthy, South Dakota can boast a successful community college sector in the nation, and arguably the most successful. The graduation rate of 52.9% graduation from its South Dakota two-year audience dramatically exceeds the national average of 20.4% and is by far the best mark in the nation. Tennessee's oldest university, Tusculum College, founded in 1794. Tennessee began its existence as a region of North Carolina before becoming a part of the Southwest Territory and, in 1796, state 16. By then, the state's first university had already been operational for two years. Tusculum College was established in 1794 as a private liberal arts school under the direction of the Presbyterian Church. Today, Tennessee's 47 private nonprofit schools outperch the state's 10 public universities. The oldest university in Texas: Southwestern University, founded in 1840. Texas is the second largest state in the United States by land mass and the second most populous as well. Although Texas would not open the doors of its first postsecondary institution until 1860, the letter from the University of the Southwest would be issued before Texas became the 28th state in 1845. The eventual southwestern University establishment gave Texas its first university and its first private liberal arts institution. Today, Texas is home to no fewer than 69 private nonprofit schools, 45 public universities, and 254 private for-profit universities. This equates to the second-highest population of full-time students in the nation, with nearly 1.5 million enrolled! Utah's oldest university: the University of Utah, founded in 1850. Utah became the 45th state to join the Union in 1896, but its higher education system was already well established at the time. His first postsecondary institution would actually come into existence nearly half a century before the territory gained statehood. The University of Utah opened its doors Deseret University in 1850. Its current name would be granted in 1892 and remains today as the flagship public university in the state. With 28,000 enrolled, Salt Lake City School is the largest of the state's seven public institutions. The title of Utah's largest school, however, is going to Young University. With 34,000 enrolled, BYU is also the nation's third largest private university and one of 11 private institutions in Utah. Vermont's oldest university: Castleton State College, founded in 1787. Vermont is a true original among the states. In fact, not only was Vermont the first state added to the Union after the unification of the original 13 colonies, but it is also the only state east of Texas that once constituted its own independent republic. It was during this period of independence, which coincided with the War of Independence, that Vermont established its first postsecondary learning institution with the founding in 1787 of Castleton State College. This was the first of five public schools in Vermont, which is also well recognized for the excellence of its 17 private nonprofit universities. As the nation's second least populous state, Vermont is home to a series of intimate postsecondary educational experiences. This can help account for the six-year graduation rate of 62.9% of its students, which far exceeds the national average of 56%. The oldest university in Virginia: College of William & Mary, founded in 1693. The Virginia Colony was founded by the London Company in 1607 and was the first permanent British settlement in the New World. As such, Virginia has played a formative role in all aspects of this nation's development. Our tradition of higher education is certainly no exception. With the founding of the 1693 College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia forged only the second university created in the colonies and the first established in the South. Today, William & Mary is among the 16 public universities or colleges in the state. Virginia is home to 42 other private nonprofit colleges. Virginia students are notable for their exceptional six-year graduation rate which, by 68.4%, far exceeds the national average of 56% and ranks as the fourth best in the nation. Washington's oldest university: the University of Washington, founded in 1861. Washington became part of the United States through the Oregon Treaty in 1846. During the 43 years that passed before his grant of statehood in 1889, Washington perfected an educational tradition now distinguished by stellar results. There is an argument that the territory's first postsecondary institution was Whitman College, founded in the friendly city of Walla Walla. The private university was started as a seminar by a territorial legislative charter in 1859. Today, it is one of 25 private nonprofit schools in the state. The first school in the state, however, was the University of Washington, founded in 1861 in Seattle and now one of the oldest universities in on the west coast. It is also one of 38 public institutions in a state where private schools are surpassed in number almost two to one. The oldest university in West Virginia: Bethany College, founded in 1840. The history of West Virginia is unique among American states. It is the only one in the Union have been carved into an existing state against the will of the state. Despite Virginia's objections, West Virginia reached statehood in 1863, at the height of the Civil War, and seized the North on the issue of slavery. Perhaps this wise secession of the Confederacy can be attributed to its strong basis in education. West Virginia's university history actually predecs to statehood for more than 20 years. Bethany College opened in 1840, the first of 11 private nonprofit schools in the state. West Virginia also sanctions 13 public colleges or universities, the largest among them, the University of West Virginia, which serves approximately 30,000 students on three mini-campuses. Wisconsin's oldest university: Carroll University, founded in 1846. The Wisconsin Territory became the 30th state in 1848, but its first private university was already two years old. Carroll College in Waukesha was founded in 1846 and is now one of 35 private nonprofit liberal arts schools in the state. Wisconsin's postsecondary public sector began just as it achieved statehood, with the founding in 1848 of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the first of 17 four-year public schools in the state. Combining its Madison and Milwaukee campuses, the University of Wisconsin is now home to more than 70,000 students. The oldest university in Wyoming: the University of Wyoming, founded in 1886. In addition to being the final entry on our coast-to-coast tour of higher education in the United States, Wyoming is the least populated and least densely populated state in the nation. In fact, the entire population of the state could fit within the University of Central Florida. It makes sense, then, that Wyoming would register one of the lowest college tuition populations in the nation as well. As of 2013, the state was home to a large total of 25,669 full-time students at eight public universities in the state, and only one of them, the University of Wyoming, is a four-year school. The state also has a private for-profit school, the wyotech-Laramie vocational center. last updated: Jul 27, 2018 2018

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