News



A drone photo shows the campus of The Catholic University of America in Washington May 31, 2024. The university is now recognized as an elite R1 research designation, joining six other Catholic institutions holding that status, which is granted by the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education. (OSV News/courtesy Catholic University of America)

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The Catholic University of America in Washington has now been granted an elite R1 research designation, joining six other Catholic institutions holding that status, the university announced Feb. 13.

The designation, granted by the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education, means a university must meet rigorous criteria, such as spending at least $50 million on research and grants and having at least 70 research doctorates on average awarded in a single year to achieve R1.

The university's current research initiatives span a number of fields, such as suicide prevention, a partnership with NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, vaccine delivery, robotic assistance technology for stroke survivors, and containment of nuclear waste.

CUA President Peter Kilpatrick said in a statement that "being named an R1 institution affirms what we have long known: that academic rigor and a commitment to Catholic identity are mutually supportive."

"Since our founding, we have seen the pursuit of truth through research as a sacred duty. Today, this approach continues to drive our private and public partnerships, and our groundbreaking work in physics, social sciences, the humanities, and theology," Kilpatrick said.

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Prior to 2025, only 146 of nearly 4,000 universities nationwide held R1 status, which Carnegie currently defines as "very high spending and doctorate production."

Timothy F.C. Knowles, president of the Carnegie Foundation, said in a statement about all of the group's 2025 designations, "These updates to the Carnegie Classifications are the first step to bring a decades-old system into the 21st century. We are expanding our recognition of the range of ways colleges and universities engage in research and development."

"And we are taking the guesswork out of what it takes to be recognized as an R1 institution. Over time, this will be good for the sector, for scholarship, for policymakers and for students," Knowles said.

The other Catholic universities with R1 status are Georgetown University, Boston College, St. Louis University, Loyola Chicago, the University of Notre Dame and the University of Dayton, Ohio.

CUA also joins other D.C. institutions — Georgetown, Howard University, American University and George Washington University — in R1 status.

"Our commitment to academic excellence and our Catholic identity set us apart in the research landscape. We are proud to be one of a small number of Catholic institutions to have achieved R1 status," said H. Joseph Yost, the Catholic University's senior vice provost of research.