

Biz

Here's a punch in the gut to the "Southern part of Heaven:" Raleigh and Durham rank among the 75 best cities for college students, but Chapel Hill failed to make the list.

The American Institute for Economic Research has published its College Destination Index, which looks to evaluate a city's "broader learning environment."

The 2009-10 index ranked Raleigh as the fourth best midsize metro, while Durham was the sixth best small city.

AIER looked at 360 metro areas and subdivided them into four categories based on population size. The cities were then rated based on student concentration, student diversity, arts and leisure, cost of living, earnings potential, unemployment rate, entrepreneurial activity and brain gain or drain, among other factors.

It ranked the top 20 midsize metros, small cities and college towns and the top 15 major metros.

In the midsize metro category, Raleigh trailed San Jose, Calif.; Austin, Texas; and Hartford, Conn.

In the small cities category, Durham followed Boulder, Colo.; Bridgeport, Conn.; Ann Arbor, Mich.; Gainesville, Fla.; and Madison, Wis.

The college towns category was represented by Ithaca, N.Y.; State College, Pa.; Ames, Iowa; Champaign-Urbana, Ill.; and Iowa City, Iowa, in the top five.

