

Methodology for Identifying UA's Peer Institutions  
Specifically for the IPEDS Peer Comparison Report  
(August 2010)

Purpose

To identify an *institutional* set of peer institutions similar to UA in terms of size, role and scope for the IPEDS Peer Comparison Report. This list may prove to be the starting point for developing an institutional peer list for the purpose of current and future strategic planning and decision-making through the following functions:

1. Providing benchmarks for assessing institutional effectiveness,
2. Identifying areas that may deserve further attention and improvement, and
3. Facilitating guidance for policy development and budget allocation.

Procedures

A hybrid approach was used combining threshold criteria, statistical analysis, and contextual judgment.

**Step 1: Using threshold criteria to identify an initial candidate pool of institutions**

Using the IPEDS Data Center tool we identified institutions that share common characteristics with UA in terms of the following size, role and scope variables.

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1) Control and sector:            | Public, 4-yr or above                                 |
| 2) Institutional category:        | Primarily baccalaureate or above                      |
| 3) Degree of urbanization:        | Large, midsize or small city; large or midsize suburb |
| 4) Carnegie basic classification: | Research high or very high                            |
| 5) Institutional size:            | 10,000 and above                                      |

Based on the threshold criteria, the data query identified an initial pool of 102 institutions that could potentially serve as UA peers. See attached table.

**Step 2: Using additional criteria to narrow down the candidate pool of institutions**

Given the large number of institutions we identified through the initial data exploration, our next step was to narrow down the candidate pool by applying a set of additional criteria that is more indicative of UA's mission. The two variables selected were:

- 1) Not a Historically black college
- 2) Does not award medical degrees (MD, DVM, etc.)

As a result of applying these additional criteria, we eliminated one (1) HBCU and (53) schools that award medical degrees. See attached table.

### **Step 3: Contextual judgment**

Based on previous peer institution lists utilized for market compression analyses and the recent study done by the Stillwater Group as part of the strategic plan development, we wanted to make sure that a few other institutions were included as part of the final analysis. Four institutions were added back from the original list and one institution (Cleveland State University<sup>^</sup>) was added to the list. (n = 103) See attached table.

- 1) Wright State
- 2) University of Toledo
- 3) Wayne State University
- 4) University of Louisville
- 5) Cleveland State University

<sup>^</sup> CSU was excluded from the initial screening criteria because their Carnegie basic classification is doctoral/research

### **Step 4: Hierarchical cluster analysis**

The fourth and final step involved using SPSS to run a hierarchical cluster analysis as a convenient statistical technique to further differentiate (and cluster/group) the 53 possible institutions (49 with valid data) by the following grouping variables.

#### **Grouping Variables**

- 1) Fall 2008 Full time equivalent enrollment (FTE)
- 2) Full time, first time degree/certificate seeking undergraduate (GRS cohort) as percent of all undergraduates
- 3) Percent of full time, first time undergraduates receiving Pell Grants
- 4) Endowment assets (year-end) per FTE enrollment (GASB)
- 5) Instruction expense per FTE (GASB)
- 6) Research expense per FTE (GASB)
- 7) Student service expense per FTE (GASB)
- 8) Instruction/research and public service FTE staff as a percent of total FTE staff
- 9) Carnegie classification of graduate program mix

Of the variables listed above, we tried to get a broad mix of enrollment-related, financial, and personnel variables. For example, the instruction/research and public service FTE staff as a percent of total FTE

staff can be viewed as an indicator of an institution's instructional and service capacity; while the percent of full-time, first time degree/certificate seeking undergrads as a percent of all undergrads highlight an institution's capacity of recruiting and retaining students.

The University of Akron fell into a cluster with 19 other institutions. Based on this multi-step approach we propose the following list of university peer institutions for the IPEDS Data Comparison Report:

#### UA Final List of Peer Institutions

- 1) Florida International University
- 2) George Mason University
- 3) Georgia State University
- 4) Kent State University
- 5) North Dakota State University
- 6) Northern Arizona State University
- 7) SUNY – Albany
- 8) SUNY – Binghamton
- 9) University of Texas – Arlington
- 10) University of Central Florida
- 11) University of Houston
- 12) University of Nebraska – Lincoln
- 13) UNC – Greensboro
- 14) University of North Texas
- 15) University of Rhode Island
- 16) University of Southern Mississippi
- 17) University of Toledo
- 18) University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
- 19) Western Michigan University

**UA Peer Selection Methodology (Initial Institution Listing from IPEDS Data Center)**

	<b>Initial Criteria List (102 institutions, not including UA); 103 after CSU was added</b>	<b>HBCU/Med Degrees Removed</b>	<b>Contextual Judgment - Added Back to List</b>	<b>Final List for Cluster Analysis</b>	<b>Peer Results</b>
	<b>University of Akron Main Campus</b>				
1	Arizona State University			1	
2	Auburn University Main Campus	1			
103	Cleveland State University ^		1	1	
3	Colorado State University	1			
4	Florida Atlantic University			1	
5	Florida International University			1	1
6	Florida State University	1			
7	George Mason University			1	1
8	Georgia Institute of Technology-Main Campus			1	
9	Georgia State University			1	1
10	Indiana University-Bloomington			1	
11	Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis	1			
12	Iowa State University	1			
13	Kent State University Kent Campus			1	1
14	Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College	1			
15	New Mexico State University-Main Campus			1	
16	North Carolina A & T State University	1			
17	North Carolina State University at Raleigh	1			
18	North Dakota State University-Main Campus			1	1
19	Northern Arizona University			1	1
20	Ohio State University-Main Campus	1			
21	Old Dominion University			1	
22	Oregon State University	1			
23	Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus			ND*	
24	Purdue University-Main Campus	1			
25	Rutgers University-New Brunswick			1	
26	Rutgers University-Newark			1	
27	San Diego State University			1	
28	Stony Brook University	1			
29	SUNY at Albany			1	1
30	SUNY at Binghamton			1	1
31	Temple University	1			
32	Texas Tech University			1	
33	The University of Alabama			1	
34	The University of Tennessee	1			
35	The University of Texas at Arlington			1	1
36	The University of Texas at Austin			1	
37	The University of Texas at Dallas			1	
38	The University of Texas at El Paso			1	
39	University at Buffalo	1			

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40	University of Alabama at Birmingham	1			
41	University of Arizona	1			
42	University of California-Berkeley			1	
43	University of California-Irvine	1			
44	University of California-Los Angeles	1			
45	University of California-Riverside			1	
46	University of California-San Diego	1			
47	University of California-Santa Barbara			1	
48	University of California-Santa Cruz			1	
49	University of Central Florida			1	1
50	University of Cincinnati-Main Campus	1			
51	University of Colorado at Boulder			ND*	
52	University of Colorado Denver	1			
53	University of Delaware			ND*	
54	University of Florida	1			
55	University of Georgia	1			
56	University of Hawaii at Manoa	1			
57	University of Houston			1	1
58	University of Illinois at Chicago	1			
59	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	1			
60	University of Iowa	1			
61	University of Kansas	1			
62	University of Kentucky	1			
63	University of Louisiana at Lafayette			1	
64	University of Louisville	1	1	1	
65	University of Maryland-Baltimore County			1	
66	University of Maryland-College Park	1			
67	University of Memphis			1	
68	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	1			
69	University of Minnesota-Twin Cities	1			
70	University of Missouri-Columbia	1			
71	University of Missouri-Kansas City	1			
72	University of Missouri-St Louis			1	
73	University of Nebraska-Lincoln			1	1
74	University of Nevada-Las Vegas	1			
75	University of Nevada-Reno	1			
76	University of New Mexico-Main Campus	1			
77	University of New Orleans			1	
78	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	1			
79	University of North Carolina at Greensboro			1	1
80	University of North Dakota	1			

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81	University of North Texas			1	1
82	University of Oregon			1	
83	University of Pittsburgh-Pittsburgh Campus	1			
84	University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras Campus			ND*	
85	University of Rhode Island			1	1
86	University of South Carolina-Columbia	1			
87	University of South Florida	1			
88	University of Southern Mississippi			1	1
89	University of Toledo	1	1	1	1
90	University of Utah	1			
91	University of Vermont	1			
92	University of Washington-Seattle Campus	1			
93	University of Wisconsin-Madison	1			
94	University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee			1	1
95	Utah State University			1	
96	Virginia Commonwealth University	1			
97	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	1			
98	Wayne State University	1	1	1	
99	West Virginia University	1			
100	Western Michigan University			1	1
101	Wichita State University			1	
102	Wright State University-Main Campus	1	1	1	
		54	5	49	19

^ CSU was excluded from the initial screening criteria because their Carnegie basic classification is doctoral/research but added in during the contextual judgement step

\* Not included because not enough data were available for the cluster analysis