

Office of Budget and Planning

Business Practice: Selection of Peer Institutions

The office is frequently asked to prepare reports and statistics that compare U-M against “peer” institutions. Comparisons can include business practices, specific metrics, outcomes, or other measures. The Provost’s Office has requested consistency in the list of institutions included as peers in reporting.

This business practice establishes the selection method for peers based on the purpose of the comparison. There are two primary options for peer comparison groups:

- *Benchmarking Peers* – See Appendix A
- *AAU Peers* – See Appendix B

The “benchmarking peers” group is the default for all comparisons. However, there may be situations where a larger set of institutions is required for meaningful comparisons. For example, this can happen when comparing state appropriations across institutions. Using the benchmarking peer list in this situation would mean comparing only nine public institutions and the comparison of U-M to these nine might not provide the intended message. Additional examples for use of the “AAU peers” are listed later.

Benchmarking Peers

The benchmarking peer list is based on the list of top institutions identified during the development of the faculty recruitment, retention, and departure report for the Provost’s Office. Each summer, the deans are asked to report on senior faculty recruitment, retention, and departure activity for their unit, including which institutions hire our faculty (or attempt to) or are the source of faculty new to the University of Michigan. Compilation of this information produces a list of the “top” institutions for this faculty activity.

The baseline benchmarking peer list was established in 2014-15. Institutions that appear on this list can vary each year depending on the results of the faculty recruitment, retention, and departure report. In order to stabilize the list, the following rules apply for adding or removing an institution from the list:

- 1) The benchmarking peer list will be reviewed every three years
- 2) If a new institution appears as a top institution in the faculty recruitment, retention, and departure report for three consecutive years, then it will be added to the benchmarking peer list
- 3) If an existing institution has dropped off as a top institution in the faculty recruitment, retention, and departure report for three consecutive years, then it will be removed from the list.

- 4) In addition, there may be requests from leadership or specific Regents to add a benchmarking peer not identified through the faculty recruitment, retention, and departure report. These will be added as requested and left on the list until the next review cycle where confirmation will be requested from leadership.

Examples:

Institution	2014-15 Peer List Status	2015-16 Faculty List Status	2016-17 Faculty List Status	2017-18 Faculty List Status	2017-18 Peer List Action
U Wisconsin	On list	Off list	Off list	Off list	Remove
New York U	On list	Off list	On list	Off list	Stay
UC – SF	Not on List	On list	On list	On list	Add

Association of American Universities (AAU) Peers

U-M is a member of the AAU, an association of leading research universities. AAU focuses on issues that are important to research-intensive universities, such as funding for research, research policy issues, and graduate and undergraduate education.

The AAU peer list should be used when a larger set of institutions are required to adequately compare. Examples of these situations can include:

- *State appropriations comparisons*
- *Ad hoc requests to AAUDE listserv where responses could come from a limited number of institutions*
- *Salary or compensation studies where the “n” of the study is critical to the interpretation*
 - *Faculty salary by CIP*
 - *Faculty salary and fringe benefits by rank (as reported to AAUP)*
 - *Administrative salaries (Dean and high level executive officers)*
 - *Provost’s periodic gender salary equity studies*
 - *Graduate assistant stipends*
- *Other surveys where responses could come from a limited number of institutions*
 - *Undergraduate and doctoral time to degree and completions*
 - *Retention/graduation survey*

Other Situations

There are several individual and specific situations where using an alternative comparative group of institutions is necessary. These alternative comparison groups are listed below along with the situations necessitating their use.

- Michigan public universities
 - State of Michigan appropriations process
 - Tuition comparisons
 - Other state policy matters
- Universities in which U-M competes for undergraduate students

Identification of this group of institutions is completed when analyzing either admitted students that did not matriculate or when considering student responses to the SOFA survey, whichever is most recent.

 - Where Did They Go? reporting
 - SOFA survey administration
- Carnegie Classification Peers: Highest Research
 - State of Michigan Performance Measures
- Ad hoc comparisons

Certain situations require a unique group of institutions that is based on school or college or even a specific academic discipline. In these cases, the office will work with the requesting unit to determine the most appropriate comparison group specific to the study.

Impact of this business practice

The Almanac has used a slightly different list of peers than in the benchmarking peer list and labeled it as the university’s “Official Peers” list. In addition, there are cases in the Almanac where the Big 10 list is used for comparisons. All tables in the Almanac will be aligned with the peer benchmarking peer list.

The peer tuition comparison past practice has included a much larger list of institutions. The focus of the collection of peer tuition rates over the summer as they are approved will be on the benchmarking peers and Michigan public universities. However, as time permits, comparison data can be collected on the other institutions to record the data for historical purposes.

Document Action

Created: October 27, 2016

Revised: June 27, 2017 to add University of Virginia at the request of a Regent

Revised August 11, 2022 to update Benchmarking Peers list

Appendix A: Benchmarking Peers

Institution Name	Short Name	Public/Private	Undergraduate (Y/N)	Medical (Y/N)	Hospital (Y/N)
Columbia University in the City of New York	Columbia	Private	Y	Y	Y
Cornell University	Cornell	Private	Y	Y	Y
Duke University	Duke	Private	Y	Y	Y
Emory University	Emory	Private	Y	Y	Y
Harvard University	Harvard	Private	Y	Y	Y
Johns Hopkins University	Johns Hopkins	Private	Y	Y	Y
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	MIT	Private	Y	N	N
Northwestern University	Northwestern	Private	Y	Y	Y
Ohio State University-Main Campus	Ohio State	Public	Y	Y	Y
Princeton University	Princeton	Private	Y	N	N
Stanford University	Stanford	Private	Y	Y	Y
University of California-Berkeley	UC-Berkeley	Public	Y	N	N
University of California-Los Angeles	UCLA	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of California-San Francisco	UC-San Francisco	Public	N	Y	Y
University of Chicago	Chicago	Private	Y	Y	Y
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	U Illinois	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	U-M	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	U North Carolina	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Pennsylvania	U Penn	Private	Y	Y	Y
University of Southern California	U Southern Cal	Private	Y	Y	Y
University of Texas at Austin	U Texas	Public	Y	Y	N
University of Virginia-Main Campus	U Virginia	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Washington-Seattle Campus	U Washington	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Wisconsin-Madison	U Wisconsin	Public	Y	Y	Y
Yale University	Yale	Private	Y	Y	Y

Appendix B: AAU Peers

Institution Name	Short Name	Public/Private	Undergraduate (Y/N)	Medical (Y/N)	Hospital (Y/N)
Boston University	Boston U	Private	Y	Y	Y
Brandeis University	Brandeis	Private	Y	N	N
Brown University	Brown	Private	Y	Y	Y
California Institute of Technology	Cal Tech	Private	Y	N	N
Carnegie Mellon University	Carnegie Mellon	Private	Y	N	N
Case Western Reserve University	Case Western	Private	Y	Y	Y
Dartmouth College	Dartmouth	Private	Y	Y	Y
Georgia Institute of Technology-Main Campus	Georgia Tech	Public	Y	N	N
Indiana University-Bloomington	Indiana U	Public	Y	Y	N
Iowa State University	Iowa State	Public	Y	N	N
Michigan State University	Mich State	Public	Y	Y	Y
New York University	NYU	Private	Y	Y	Y
Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus	Penn State	Public	Y	Y	N
Purdue University-Main Campus	Purdue	Public	Y	N	N
Rice University	Rice	Private	Y	N	N
Rutgers University-New Brunswick	Rutgers	Public	Y	Y	Y
Stony Brook University – The State University of New York	SUNY-Stony Brook	Public	Y	Y	Y
Texas A & M University-College Station	Texas A&M	Public	Y	Y	Y
Tufts University	Tufts	Private	Y	Y	Y
Tulane University of Louisiana	Tulane	Private	Y	Y	Y
University at Buffalo – The State University of New York	SUNY-Buffalo	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Arizona	U Arizona	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of California, Santa Cruz	UC-Santa Cruz	Public	Y	N	N
University of California-Davis	UC-Davis	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of California-Irvine	UC-Irvine	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of California-San Diego	UC-San Diego	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of California-Santa Barbara	UC-Santa Barbara	Public	Y	N	N
University of Colorado Boulder	U Colorado	Public	Y	Y	N
University of Florida	U Florida	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Iowa	U Iowa	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Kansas	U Kansas	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Maryland-College Park	U Maryland	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	U-M	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities	U Minnesota	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Missouri-Columbia	U Missouri	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Oregon	U Oregon	Public	Y	N	N
University of Pittsburgh-Pittsburgh Campus	Pitt	Public	Y	Y	Y
University of Rochester	U Rochester	Private	Y	Y	Y
University of Utah	U Utah	Public	Y	Y	Y
Vanderbilt University	Vanderbilt	Private	Y	Y	Y
Washington University in St Louis	Washington U	Private	Y	Y	Y