



Oregon State University Peers for Planning and Benchmarking: 2015

Office of Institutional Research

Rationale

It is useful to determine a set of institutions that are similar to OSU on a wide range of pertinent characteristics. This allows us to evaluate our outcomes and metrics in the context of expected outcomes from comparable peers.

Of course, deciding which characteristics are pertinent or cut-points or statistical processes to use is not clear cut. Typically, one finds that including or excluding certain variables yields different peer groups. However, some institutions tend to show up on regular basis and ultimately we look for a consistent set that may provide a reasonably reliable comparison.

Strategic Planning Peers

Historically, OSU has selected its peers out of a group that met the following conditions corresponding to OSU's status: public, land grant universities with a Carnegie classification of research university/very high research. In addition, "no medical school" has often been included.

For Strategic Plan versions 1 and 2, the comparison institutions were referred to as "aspirational peers", although they were not "peers" in the true sense as they generally had much larger resources, enrollments and performance. It was their performance that we looked to for setting challenging targets.

For the 3rd Strategic Plan, we decided that it would be useful to develop a true set of peers for the internal evaluation and development process. Institutions that met the general criteria and were within a reasonable range of OSU values for most (but not necessarily all) of the following factors were included:

- * Undergraduate Student FTE
- * Graduate Student FTE
- * New Freshmen to New Transfer Ratio
- * Undergraduate to Graduate FTE Ratio
- * Applicants Fall 2011
- * Admit Rate Fall 2011
- * Percent of Instructional Faculty that are Full-time
- * Percent of Enrollment that is URM
- * Instruct-Acad Support-Student Services to E&G Expenditure Ratio
- * E&G Expenses per Student FTE

The process generated the following list of true peers (nicknamed "Orange Peers"):

ORANGE PEERS

Colorado State University
Oklahoma State University
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Washington State University

Metric Peers

Once the new Strategic Plan was developed, work began on creating a set of metrics that would directly and succinctly provide a general view of progress toward the new strategic priorities. There was still an interest in having a version of aspirational peers, although it was agreed that many of those peer outcomes represented challenging, long term targets for OSU, not levels that could be reached in the short run.

It was ultimately decided that it would be most useful to have two sets of peer institutions. Using the US News and World Report rankings and the QS World University rankings (which use different criteria and scoring techniques), we determined a set of public land grant institutions that were routinely in the top ten of land grant ranks in both of these rankings and had a general similarity to each other in their scores (Cornell and UC Berkeley were excluded because they are much higher levels).

Similarly, using the two ranking lists, we determined a set of land grant universities that typically placed just beyond OSU. These “next tier” institution outcomes would be useful for short term targets and to measure near term progress.

NEXT TIER PEERS

Colorado State University
Iowa State University
North Carolina State University-Raleigh
University of California-Riverside
University of Tennessee
Washington State University

TOP TEN LAND GRANTS

Ohio State University
Pennsylvania State University-College Park
Purdue University
University of California-Davis
University of Florida
University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign
University of Wisconsin-Madison