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2-26-2007

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Recommended Citation

Comerford, Kathleen, "Peer and Aspirational Institutions" (2007). *Faculty Senate Index*. 185.
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Peer and Aspirational Institutions

Submitted by Kathleen Comerford

2/26/2007

Question:

Is the 2000 list of Georgia Southern's peer and aspirational institutions still in use? If so, it needs modification, as 4 institutions are listed as both peer and aspirational, and California is misspelled. More importantly, though, since our Carnegie classification is now changed, has either list?

Rationale:

This is of concern for any program in any college under program review, but is also of interest in general terms to the university as we change our focus on research and graduate programs; for example, if we aspire to the same or greater programs as these universities have, we will need similar or greater resources

Response:

The Peer and Aspirational List updated 1/15/2009.
The spelling of California has been corrected. Gm

April 24, 2007: The following response is primarily from Jayne Perkins-Brown, as edited by Dr. Bleicken. There is additional information on the attachment table. –Pat Humphrey, Senate Moderator.

Neither list (Peer/Aspirant Peer) has changed to date other than the updates in Fall 2005 (Mary Washington College became University of Mary Washington and Rutgers was deleted from our Aspirational List), which I believe were prompted by a request from the University System of Georgia to all institutions.

The Strategic Planning Council (SPC) has been charged by President Grube to review the Carnegie Reclassification process during FY07 and its potential impacts. One of the outcomes from SPC is that a survey will be conducted of campus constituents [students (UG/Grd)/faculty/staff, alumni, parents]; the survey is proposed to be launched in April 2007, after the Crane surveys launch. This is likely to be a first step of a review process and may provide influence on whether the peer/aspirational list needs to be revised. As is probably understood, the University is still attempting to understand the meaning of

other institutions' respective Carnegie classifications to determine which are our likely peers and aspirant peers. Issues regarding peer/aspirant peers and program review have always been a concern, and in many instances colleges and departments supplement the USG-approved University peer/aspirational institutions with other institutions within their respective disciplines--those that they consider peer/aspirants based on other criteria. It is important to recall that the Peer/Aspirant Peer lists were identified at the Institutional level, and not intended to accommodate ALL individual, academic programs; that would/will be difficult to accomplish at any time. But the University P/A should be incorporated in any review as the basis.

It is also important to remember that the current USG-approved University peer/aspiration process was an outcome of a report done at the University System level by the Pappas Group in 2000. As you review that report on the USG site, http://www.usg.edu/usg_stats/benchmark/, you find that it is not uncommon to find an institution with Peer and Aspirant Peer institutions overlapping; App B is the best example of the overlap for Georgia Tech. The methodology used to create/define/determine Peer/Aspirant institutions can follow many paths (as noted in the methodology section of that report), so this influences such decisions, i.e. define by size, mission, public/private, foundation size, research, academic programs. In 2005, Universities were asked to review these lists and provide any updates. This request was prior to Georgia Southern University's Carnegie reclassification.

Finally, attached is a spreadsheet from November 2005; this information has been confirmed to be certain there are no changes from the site since 2005. (Remember Carnegie reflects information as of the 2005 Reclassification as final, so some numbers may seem out of date; the data timeframe is referenced on their site.) The intent of this spreadsheet is to showcase the complexity embedded in the Carnegie review for 2005 decisions in comparison with our P/A institutions. This is likely to return the focus of the discussion on updating Peer/Aspiration institutions back to the manner in which the methodology will be defined.

As we continue our discussion on maintaining/updating/refining the P/A institutions, we have to review what methodology is most appropriate and at the same time be sure our discussions migrate in the same direction as the University System of Georgia on these same issues.

3/20/07 - While I do not have an answer as yet, I have been assured by Dr. Bleicken that Jayne Perkins-Brown is looking into the list. Any proposed changes will most likely need to be addressed by the Dean's Council.

Pat Humphrey, Faculty Senate Moderator

Minutes: 4/24/2007: In February, Kathleen Comerford filed an RFI about our list of peer and aspirational institutions. "As I reported last month, Jayne Perkins Brown was working on a response to that, which has been provided to me by Dr. Bleicken and was posted today. Basically, the answer is that the list of peer and aspirational institutions has not changed. The Strategic Planning Council has apparently been charged to examine the Carnegie Reclassification during FY 07 and think about things like peer and aspirational institutions, and it turns out that there [are] ... policies and procedures from the Board of Regents in terms of identifying peer and aspirational institutions. So our peer and aspirational institutions have not changed since November 2005." Humphrey announced that a table with some of their characteristics is an attachment to the posted response.

Clara Krug (CLASS) had a question about Kathleen Comerford's request about the peer and aspirational institutions. Given the fact that we have changed in our Carnegie status, why has it now been 16 months with no change in the peer and aspirational status?

Bruce Grube (President) reminded senators that it's been less than a year since the Carnegie folks actually designated us as a Doctoral Research Institution. The University System of Georgia, of course, has not moved us there at all. There will come a point in time when we will come to a consensus that the timing is right to make that request of them. In the meantime, the Board of Regents provides us with a list that we're to choose from in terms of our peer group, and we try to select institutions that we think are high quality.

The second list, the aspirational list, actually is Georgia Southern's choosing. We decided to "put that one out there" because we weren't entirely content with the list of institutions that had been provided for us as a peer group. From the Board point of view, it's the peer group that they're looking at for their purposes. But for our own internal purpose of planning and thinking about what we may want to become, and whom we wish to compare ourselves against, that aspirational list is very useful. He thinks that the SPC is doing work on that now.

Attachment: [Review of Carnegie Reclassification as of November 2005 updates](#)

<http://president.georgiasouthern.edu/peer-institutions/>