Peer Determination Project – Spring 2008

Final Report

A. Definition

The peer group is a set of institutions that are similar to Cedar Crest College with respect to 18 quantitative variables selected and endorsed by the campus community. These variables are categorized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Academics/Residence</th>
<th>Admissions/Financial Aid</th>
<th>Financial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total full-time equivalent enrollment</td>
<td>8. Percent of graduates with arts or sciences as first major</td>
<td>12. 25th percentile SAT score of incoming traditional freshmen</td>
<td>15. Published tuition and fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Graduate full-time equivalent enrollment</td>
<td>9. Student-faculty ratio</td>
<td>13. 75th percentile SAT score of incoming traditional freshmen</td>
<td>16. Educational and general expenditures per student (FTE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Full-time undergraduate enrollment</td>
<td>10. Percent of faculty who are full time</td>
<td>14. Percent of students with Pell grants</td>
<td>17. Tuition dependency</td>
</tr>
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<td>4. Percent of undergraduate enrollment that is full-time</td>
<td>11. Percent of students residing on campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>18. Endowment per student (FTE)</td>
</tr>
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<td>5. Full-time, first-time degree seeking undergraduates</td>
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<td>6. Percent of students who are transfers</td>
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<td>7. Percent of students 25 and older</td>
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</table>
B. Methodology

1. A comprehensive list of 245 candidate institutions was generated, including suggestions from campus sources as well as national lists; public institutions were filtered out.

2. A list of 18 selection variables was constructed and endorsed by faculty and staff.

3. The values of all variables were determined for each of the candidate institutions, using government databases (primarily National Center for Educational Statistics’ most recently available IPEDS data).

4. Using statistical methods, a “distance” was obtained for each institution; this distance value measures each school’s similarity/dissimilarity to Cedar Crest.

5. The 20 schools that are the smallest “distance” from Cedar Crest comprise the Peer Group. The diagram below illustrates the methodology used. CCC becomes the center point; using a composite statistic of the 18 variables, each school is located at a calculated distance from the center (Cedar Crest).

This methodology used a hybrid approach that combined statistical scoring and qualitative review, applying analytical methods informed, at multiple points, by the judgment of senior staff and faculty. Furthermore, the process had a “value-added” quality, as the campus discussions led us to further examine our values, identity and aspirations.
C. Process

All campus constituencies were informed of the project in January. There were multiple ways for students, faculty, staff and trustees to become involved and input was sought at various stages throughout the process, in the following ways:

- President Wilson announced the project to the entire community via an all-campus electronic memorandum.
- Full presentations were made to the senior staff and the faculty.
- Information sessions were held to obtain comments and suggestions from students, staff and faculty.
- Regular emails from Institutional Research invited input to the process.
- An internet blog was constructed and updated frequently. This contained all materials pertinent to the project and provided a forum for conversation and questions through interactive technology.
- An informative article was published on the front page of the Crestiad.

Thus there was full and frequent communication throughout the semester with a variety of ways for staff, faculty and students to learn about the project and offer input and suggestions.

D. Results

Our peer group consists of the following colleges/universities. Colleges that are members of the Women’s College Coalition are indicated by a (w) code.

1. **American International College**, Springfield, MA  
   www.aic.edu
2. **Bay Path College**, Longmeadow, MA  (w)  
   www.baypath.edu
3. **Brenau University**, Gainesville, GA  (w)  
   www.brenau.edu
4. **Caldwell College**, Caldwell, NJ  
   www.caldwell.edu
5. **Carlow University**, Pittsburgh, PA  (w)  
   www.carlow.edu
6. **College of Mount Saint Vincent**, Bronx, NY
   www.mountsaintvincent.edu

7. **College of Notre Dame of Maryland**, Baltimore, MD
   www.ndm.edu

8. **College of Saint Elizabeth**, Morristown, NJ (w)
   www.cse.edu

9. **Columbia College**, Columbia, SC (w)
   www.columbiacollegesc.edu

10. **Delaware Valley College**, Doylestown, PA
    www.delval.edu

11. **Dominican College of Blauvelt**, Orangeburg, NY
    www.dc.edu

12. **Gwynedd Mercy College**, Gwynedd Valley, PA
    www.gmc.edu

13. **Jacksonville University**, Jacksonville, FL
    www.ju.edu

14. **La Roche College**, Pittsburgh, PA
    www.laroche.edu

15. **Mary Baldwin College**, Staunton, VA (w)
    www.mbc.edu

16. **Queens University of Charlotte**, Charlotte, NC
    www.queens.edu

17. **Rosemont College**, Rosemont, PA (w)
    www.rosemont.edu

18. **Saint Joseph College**, West Hartford, CT
    www.sjc.edu

19. **Seton Hill University**, Greensburg, PA
    www.setonhill.edu

20. **Ursuline College**, Pepper Pike, OH (w)
    www.ursuline.edu