

BOARD OF REGENTS

BRIEFING PAPER

Handbook Revision, Selection of Peer and Aspirational Institutions

BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

In January 2018, the Board of Regents approved peer and aspirational comparison institutions as part of its process of establishing the five strategic goals that are in place today (Access, Success, Closing the Achievement Gap, Workforce, and Research). While the institutions selected the institutional peers in 2018, there was no formal or regular process for doing so. As the Board and System begins the process of establishing a formal strategic plan to support the five strategic goals, the Chancellor recommends that the process for selecting peer and aspirational comparison institutions be formalized.

The recommended process would allow institutions discretion in terms of selecting peer and aspirational comparison institutions. Institutions regularly select peer institutions and submit them to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) that are then used in the IPEDS Data Feedback Report. If an institution does not select peers for IPEDS submission, the National Center for Education Statistics (which administers IPEDS) will select comparison institutions for the institution. The IPEDS Data Feedback Report is intended to provide institutions a context for examining the data they submitted to IPEDS. The purpose of the report is to provide institutional executives a useful resource and to help improve the quality and comparability of IPEDS data, hence the use of comparison institutions. In selecting comparison institutions for the purpose of submission to IPEDS, NSHE institutions may consult other reports for the sake of determining peers, such as the NSF Higher Education Research & Development (HERD) Survey for the universities or any other data set the institutions wishes to consult. Aspirational peers will be recommended by each institution in consultation with the Chancellor and institutions may consult any reports they consider appropriate in recommending aspirational peers. Finally, the Board will review and approve the comparison peer and aspirational institutions identified by the institutions through this process.

The Council of Presidents reviewed the proposal on May 12, 2021, and support the recommendation for formalizing the selection and frequency of peer and aspirational comparison institutions.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Amend Title 4, Chapter 14, by adding a new Section 4 requiring institutions to select comparison peer and aspirational comparison institutions at least every three years utilizing the annual IPEDS Data Feedback Report. See attached policy proposal.

IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

This policy proposal is brought forward at the recommendation of the Chancellor to formalize the process and frequency for selecting peer and aspirational institutions.

CHECK THE NSHE STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL THAT IS SUPPORTED BY THIS REQUEST:

- Access (Increase participation in post-secondary education)
- Success (Increase student success)
- Close the Achievement Gap (Close the achievement gap among underserved student populations)
- Workforce (Collaboratively address the challenges of the workforce and industry education needs of Nevada)
- Research (Co-develop solutions to the critical issues facing 21st century Nevada and raise the overall research profile)
- Not Applicable to NSHE Strategic Plan Goals

INDICATE HOW THE PROPOSAL SUPPORTS THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Given the wide range of postsecondary institutions in the United States, it is impracticable to compare any given college or university against all other institutions of higher education. As such, institutions and governing boards often rely upon the identification of smaller sets of institutions to provide a more focused and concise perspective for comparisons. These peer lists provide institutions with a group of institutions to be used for comparison and provides an objective point of review for institutional strategic planning and therefore implicitly supports the Board’s five strategic goals.

BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- The selection of peer and aspirational comparison institutions:
- Allows institutions to go beyond national benchmarking in utilizing directly comparable peers;
 - Provides context that helps explain why an institution may be over- or under-performing in the national landscape; and
 - Provides an objective point of review for strategic planning.

POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

None have been brought forward.

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

Maintain the status quo and not adopt a formal policy on the selection of peer and aspirational comparison institutions.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE:

The Chancellor’s Office recommends the proposal to formalize the process and frequency to be utilized in selecting peer and aspirational comparison institutions.

COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
- Amends Current Board Policy: *Title 4, Chapter 14, new Section 4*
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # _____ Section # _____
- Other: _____
- Fiscal Impact: Yes _____ No Explain: _____

POLICY PROPOSAL

Title 4, Chapter 14, *new* Section 4

Selection of Peer and Aspirational Institutions

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

Section 4. Selection of Peer and Aspirational Institutions

- 1. At least every three years, institutions will recommend a list of three comparison peer institutions and no more than three comparison aspirational institutions. Peer institutions will serve as the basis of comparison for outcomes in areas such as student retention rates, graduation rates, awards conferred, research productivity, and other relevant metrics, particularly those associated with the NSHE strategic plan. Aspirational institutions will represent the general characteristics of the desired future state, for the institution's strategic goals.*
- 2. The recommended list of comparison peer institutions must include public institutions only and come from the most recent annual IPEDS Data Feedback Report. Comparison peer institutions must be selected due to similarity with the NSHE institution, based on characteristics including but not limited to 12-month full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment, percent of undergraduate students receiving a Pell Grant, academic program mix, urban/rural location, and/or percent of faculty who are full-time. Aspirational institutions shall be recommended by the institution in consultation with the Chancellor and shall include public institutions only.*
- 3. The recommended list of comparison peer and aspirational institutions will be submitted to the Chancellor's Office for review and feedback. Following review by the Chancellor's Office, peer and aspirational institutions will be submitted to the Board for approval.*

RENUMBER SECTIONS 4 THROUGH 28 AS 5 THROUGH 29.