**Comparison Group Task Force**

**Goals and Methodology**

The Comparison Group Task Force was created at the request of the President’s Cabinet in Fall 2015. The members, appointed by the VPAA, were: Scott Bailey (faculty), Jean Constable (staff), Debbie Cottrell (Cabinet), Andrew Nelson (Cabinet), Martha Rinn (faculty), and Kyle Wych (staff).

The goals of the Task Force were:

* To address the sense of the current comparison list being outdated
* To create a new list that the campus community would have confidence to use for a variety of benchmarking purposes
* To use data and an agreed-upon methodology to determine the list, with flexibility to make necessary adjustments as the list emerged
* To create one list that incorporates both peer and aspirant components
* To resolve this work well ahead of TLU’s next reaffirmation process.

We used the following methodology in this process:

* We began with a list of 186 institutions generated by IPEDs based on key characteristics that were similar to TLU (such as private non-profit, similar enrollment, Pell grant participation, and Carnegie classification)
* We agreed upon 18 IPEDS variable characteristics to be considered in our evaluations (such as percentage of Hispanic students, percentage of entering students receiving Pell grants, 6-year graduation rate, endowment market value, and total cost of attendance) [full list of 18 variables are included below]
* We ranked the 186 schools using those variables and then standardized the scores (i.e., did “z transformations”). (TLU was #60 on the list of 186.)
* We used a +/-2 standard deviation from TLU and arrived at a list of 30 possible comparison institutions (15 above and 15 below TLU).
* We experimented with weighting the variables in several different ways and re-ranked the list of 186 several times based on that. Ultimately, we did not use weighting in our determinations.
* We also added 5 additional (non-IPEDS) factors into our consideration (athletics, community size, ELCA, externally accredited programs, FT enrollment between 1000-2000). We will also do an examination of teaching loads and make that information available as another comparison point.
* All of this work produced a list of 70 schools, from which we used a +/-2 standard deviation from TLU’s score to arrive at a list of 40 schools.
* We removed 10 schools from that list due to significant enrollment differences, lack of accredited programs, regional accreditation problems, and/or offering of PhD programs.
* We added 4 schools to the list to address regional aspirant issues, an additional comparable ELCA institution, and public service strength.
* The result is a list of 34 institutions, provided on the following pages in both alpha order and by z score ranking.
* This information has been shared with Cabinet, with areas represented by VPs (at their discretion), and with faculty members.

Summary Notations:

* The list includes 23 states. Of these, Iowa is represented by 4 schools, Texas is represented by 3 schools, and Pennsylvania is represented by 3 schools. All other states on the list have 1 or 2 institutions represented.
* Regionally, the list has 4 northern, 6 southern, 8 midwestern, and 4 western states represented.
* The list includes 2 ELCA institutions (Augustana [SD] and Luther).

18 IPEDS variable characteristics referenced above:

* Total price for in-state students living on campus
* Percent admitted
* Percent of total enrollment that are white
* Percent of total enrollment that are Hispanic/Latino
* Percent of total enrollment that are Black or African American
* Full-time enrollment
* Graduate rate (bachelor degree within 6 years total)
* Percent of full-time first-time undergraduates receiving any financial aid
* Percent of full-time first-time undergraduates receiving Pell grants
* Percent of full-time first-time undergraduates receiving institutional grant aid
* Endowment assets (year end) per FTE enrollment
* Average salary equated to 9 months of full-time instructional staff—professors
* Average salary equated to 9 months of full-time instructional staff—associate professors
* Average salary equated to 9 months of full-time instructional staff—assistant professors
* Student-to-faculty ratio
* Cohort 2012 full-time retention rate
* SAT or ACT on SAT Scale Composite 75th percentile
* Range of SAT/ACT converted to SAT Scale scores

**Proposed Comparison Group 2016**

**(alpha order)**

**Albright College (PA)\***

**Asbury University (KY)\***

**Augustana College (SD)\***

**Austin College (TX)\***

**Benedictine College (KS)**

**Bethel College (IN)\***

**Bloomfield College (NJ)\***

**Buena Vista University (IA)\***

**Claflin University (SC)\***

**Claremont McKenna College (CA)\***

**Concordia University (NE)\***

**Covenant College (GA)\***

**Dordt College (IA)\***

**Evangel University (MO)**

**Geneva College (PA)\***

**Hiram College (OH)\***

**Houghton College (NY)**

**Huntington University (IN)\***

**Illinois College (IL)\***

**John Brown University (AR)\***

**Lasell College (MA)\***

**Loras College (IA)\***

**Luther College (IA)\***

**Meredith College (NC)**

**Nebraska Wesleyan University (NE)\***

**Oklahoma Baptist University (OK)**

**Pacific Union College (CA)**

**Saint Martin’s University (WA)\***

**Schreiner University (TX)\***

**Southwestern University (TX)\***

**Spring Hill College (AL)**

**The College of Idaho (ID)**

**Trinity Christian College (IL)\***

**Westminster College (PA)\***

**\*Classified as Carnegie II-B institution (same as TLU)**

**Proposed Comparison Group 2016**

**(by rating score, high to low)**

**Luther College (IA)\***

**Southwestern University (TX)\***

**Austin College (TX)\***

**Claremont McKenna College (CA)\***

**Trinity Christian College (IL)\***

**Albright College (PA)\***

**Westminster College (PA)\***

**John Brown University (AR)\***

**Covenant College (GA)\***

**Benedictine College (KS)**

**Lasell College (MA)\***

**Pacific Union College (CA)**

**Dordt College (IA)\***

**Augustana College (SD)\***

**[Texas Lutheran University (TX)\*]**

**Concordia University-Nebraska (NE)\***

**Geneva College (PA)\***

**Oklahoma Baptist University (OK)**

**The College of Idaho (ID)**

**Bloomfield College (NJ)\***

**Buena Vista University (IA)\***

**Meredith College (NC)**

**Nebraska Wesleyan University (NE)\***

**Loras College (IA)\***

**Bethel College-Indiana (IN)\***

**Saint Martin's University (WA)\***

**Spring Hill College (AL)**

**Houghton College (NY)**

**Asbury University (KY)\***

**Schreiner University (TX)\***

**Huntington University (IN)\***

**Evangel University (MO)**

**Hiram College (OH)\***

**Claflin University (SC)\***

**Illinois College (IL)\***

**\*Classified as Carnegie II-B institution**