

Minutes FAP Meeting #5 AY2016-17
September 22nd, 2016; 11 a.m. – Noon
Conference Room-Financial Services; Boynton Hall

In Attendance: Tanja Dominko (Secretary), Tahar El-Korchi (Chair), Fabienne Miller, George Pins, Jeffrey Solomon - Executive Vice President/CFO, Kristopher Sullivan - Assistant Vice President Academic Affairs, Alison Donta-Venman - Director of Institutional Research (Invited guest)

Absent: George Pins

1. The meeting was called to order at 11:10 am
2. Approval of the Agenda
The agenda was approved as distributed
3. Approval of Minutes from Meeting #4, September 15th, 2016
The minutes were approved as distributed
4. Review guidelines for benchmarking that are used for various comparisons between WPI and peer institutions (Guest: Alison Donta-Venman, Director of Institutional Research)

Chair El-Korchi welcomed Ms. Donta-Venman to FAP and asked her to share with the Committee in her role as the new Director of Institutional Research, the type of information and data that she gathers for the university and how that information is being used for benchmarking purposes.

To assess its performance and align its efforts with strategic institutional priorities, WPI has been using benchmarking – comparison with peer institutions –in different situations and by different divisions for the comparison of different performance indicators.

Ms. Donta-Venman presented a handout which contained a list of twenty schools and a list of 7 situations where they are used for benchmarking purposes (for example, Leadership Retreat Peer comparison, IPEDS Data Feedback Report, Used by Athletics etc.) She also showed the frequency at which each benchmark university appears within comparison sets. For example, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Rochester Institute of Technology appear on a benchmarking list in all 7 situations across the university.

Depending on a particular institutional performance indicator of interest, the same performance indicator from a particular cohort of institutions is chosen and our comparative “placement” within the cohort identified. Ms. Donta-Venman reported that member institutions of a cohort may change when we benchmark our performance across different performance indicators.

Ms. Donta-Venman explained that the institutions we compare ourselves to vary by department because needs of those departments are different (e.g., HR may be interested in different metrics than the Trustees) but there is significant overlap between the institutions selected. The indicators are obtained from IPEDS and currently available for the years up to and including 2014. The 2015 data will be added in October.

Ms. Donta-Venman shared the most recent comparison data used by the Provost (academic

affairs), in which our peer group included select AITU schools: MIT, RIT, Carnegie Mellon, RPI, Stevens Institute of Technology and Clarkson University. Similarly, in the latest presentation to the Board of Trustees (May 2016) WPI comparisons included institutions that are represented in AITU (Association of Independent Technological Universities). Prof. Dominko mentioned that members of AITU used for WPI benchmarking differ significantly in their basic characteristics (<http://www.theaitu.org/>). For example:

- Enrollment (between 920 undergraduate students at Harvey Mudd College to 14,000 undergraduate and graduate students at RIT),
- Carnegie classification (four R1 institutions: CalTech, MIT, Carnegie, and Case Western), and
- Degrees offered: mostly undergraduate (Harvey Mudd College)

Prof. Dominko pointed out that according to her research, the most recent Carnegie update on classification of higher education institutions (WPI is classified as a R2 National University); WPI's only true peer institution is RPI, matching 8 criteria:

[Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute](#) Troy, New York

- Undergraduate Instructional Program = "Professions plus arts & sciences, high graduate coexistence"
- Graduate Instructional Program = "Research Doctoral"
- Enrollment Profile = "High undergraduate"
- Undergraduate Profile = "Four-year, full-time, more selective, lower transfer-in"
- Size and Setting = "Four-year, medium, highly residential"
- Basic = "Doctoral Universities"
- Level = "4-year or above"
- Control = "Private not-for-profit"

<http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/lookup/lookup.php>

Less stringent comparisons (matching 6 or 4 criteria) identifies [Lehigh University and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute](#); and [Dartmouth College, Florida Institute of Technology, Marquette University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Stevens Institute of Technology, Texas Christian University, University of Dayton, Wake Forest University, Lehigh University](#), respectively.

Ms. Donta-Venman and Mr. Solomon stressed that it is important to include a larger landscape that includes schools with lower performance indicators as well as "aspirational peers" (MIT, CalTech, Carnegie) when drawing comparisons. Mr. Solomon and Ms. Donta-Venman noted the schools being used in the upcoming Budget & Finance Committee benchmarking report to include two non AITU institutions, Drexel and Tufts, and to separately display MIT and Cal Tech as a median given their significant differences to WPI.

Prof. Dominko observed that while comparing WPI to aspirational peers in one category, for example research expenditures/Faculty, one needs to then consider availability of research resources, number of faculty, and compensation comparison also with the same institutions. It is unreasonable, for example, to expect research productivity of WPI Faculty members at levels of aspirational peers if we don't offer comparable research resources and compensation. Chair El-Korchi agreed that the discussion for benchmarking with aspirational schools must also include resource allocation for the specific performance indicator. Mr. Solomon informed the committee that Sibson Consulting developed compensation benchmarking for WPI in the past (executive compensation and faculty salaries). He believes compensation benchmarking for Faculty may be

updated this year. Chair El-Korchi informed the Committee that the Michelle Jones-Johnson; Vice President, Talent Development and Chief Diversity Officer; will attend FAP next week and inform the committee about the compensation benchmark study.

The committee agreed to continue the discussion on selection of institutions for benchmarking in order to develop an informative and inclusive list of peers that could be used for comparisons across several performance indicators.

5. FBC health insurance recommendation (Fabienne Miller)

Prof. Miller reported that FBC reviewed two proposals for health insurance: Harvard Pilgrim Health Care (current provider) and Tufts. The plans proposed by both carriers are identical and both proposals are based on past usage data. Information was presented by Christina Pollinger, from Marsh McLennan, WPI's insurance broker and Eric Chojnowski.

FBC discussed:

1. The costs of the plans. Both proposals include premium increases. The average premium increase for Harvard Pilgrim is 7% vs. 4% for Tufts. Switching to Tufts, instead of staying with Harvard Pilgrim, saves employees about \$80,000 and WPI \$203,000 per year.
2. Disruption reports identifying the number of physicians who are out-of-network. Of the 3,472 providers used by WPI employees, 187 of the physicians were out-of-network with Harvard Pilgrim. 51 of those 3,472 physicians are not part of Tufts' network.
3. Trend of increases for Harvard Pilgrim and Tufts for the past 3 years. Tufts increases have been lower than or equal to Harvard Pilgrim's increases.

Key figures are summarized below:

	Harvard Pilgrim	Tufts
Average premium increase for employees	7%	4%
Range of premium increases depending on the plan	5 to 14%	2 to 11%
Physicians out of network based on prior usage	187 (7 of which are primary care physicians)	51 (2 of which are primary care physicians)

FBC concluded that switching to Tufts would provide significant savings with minimal disruption and recommended switching to Tufts.

The committee approved the FBC recommendation unanimously.

6. Adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Tanja Dominko
Secretary