The Effect of State, Merit-Based Scholarships on Academic Quality: An Analysis of the HOPE Scholarship Program

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ABSTRACT

In the past three decades, over a dozen United States states have enacted state merit-based scholarship programs for students enrolling in higher education. Students are eligible to receive this award based on academic credentials, and must utilize these awards within their home state. The purpose of this study was to address how these state merit based scholarship programs affect academic quality of higher education institutions, specifically in Georgia, in relation to select peer institutions. Perceived academic quality was measured by employing tests of statistical significance, specifically Welch's *T*-tests.

The differences between Georgia higher education institutions and their peer institutions were generally not statistically significant, although the vast majority of significant differences favored the peer institutions. The only area where the difference between the samples was positively correlated in the Georgia institutions' favor was the entering freshman acceptance rate. These findings have implications for the viability of Georgia's HOPE Scholarship at accomplishing its advertised goals.

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ACKNOLWEDGEMENTS AND DEDICATION

If you've heard me talk for longer than thirty seconds, you'd know that I have an affinity for colloquialism and I sound like the last person on the planet to complete a doctoral degree. That being said, I'd like to acknowledge the people who had to deal with me throughout the process. Dr. James Archibald put up with the most; constant phone calls, e-mails, and an in-person meeting were probably enough to test his patience. Luckily, his expertise and sense of humor took the edge off and facilitated the process as painlessly as possible. Dr. Jan Davis Barham has to deal with me in a supervisory capacity on a daily basis so you can imagine what that must be like. I can always count on her to stop me in the hall, as I try to sneak past her office, and demand a status update (which I'm usually unprepared to give). That being said…thanks Dr. Jan! Drs. James Peterson and Michael Black really kinda got blindsided when Dr. Wickersham had to remove herself from the committee, but have been excellent additions to committee, bringing a combined abundance of knowledge and insight into the process. I'd also like to thank Dr. Dan Smith of New York University. Dan-o was my first public administration instructor while he was a doctoral student at UGA and convinced me to check out Georgia's MPA program. Eight years later, here I stand. Dan also has pretty amusing Facebook status updates that help to keep things in perspective: serious scholars can be seriously funny. Finally, a big thanks to the Valdosta State University DPA program faculty and staff. I have honestly never experienced faculty members who were so invested in their students' success.

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work that you can both be proud of and that you know was the culmination of your teachings, insights, and love.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

State merit-based scholarship programs have increasingly grown in popularity over the last three decades and now comprise a large portion of higher education financial aid funding (Dynarski, 2004). State merit-based scholarship programs are contributors to higher education access for a large portion of the population and effective policies related to these programs are essential for their continued success. Georgia's Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) Scholarship program is one such initiative that has provided billions of dollars of aid to high performing state students since 1993 (Cornwell, Mustard, and Sridhar 2006; Long 2004). The HOPE program utilizes revenue from the Georgia state lottery to fund the expenses of the scholarship and justifies the use of these funds by claiming that the program aids in keeping the state's most capable students from attending college elsewhere, thus strengthening Georgia's future economic potential (Heller 2008; Ishitani 2011). This is a common theme amongst state merit-based financial aid programs, although the HOPE program has historically drawn the highest praise (McKinney 2009; National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs 1999).

The State of Georgia was the first state to institute a merit-based program offering tuition discounts based on academic credentials (Cornwell, Lee, and Mustard 2003; Orsuwan and Heck, 2009). Since HOPE's inception, a number of policy changes have been made to the program. From 2000 through 2010 students were required to achieve a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) in college-preparatory courses (generally defined as courses in math, science, social studies, English language and literature, and foreign language) in order to qualify for the scholarship (Rubenstein 2003). Previously, a 3.0 GPA in any combination of high school courses was sufficient to earn the scholarship (Cornwell, Mustard, and Sridhar 2006).

The hypothesis that the state's "best and brightest" scholars have remained in Georgia to pursue higher education is essentially confirmed by the inclusion of the 3.0 GPA threshold (Doyle 2006; Heller 2008). With more capable student bodies, the anticipated conclusion is that state universities grow in esteem, selectivity, and student output. Determining appropriate institutional academic quality measures, as well as appropriate methods for selecting peer institutions to compare against, is an important step in the process of determining the effects and benefits that HOPE has had on Georgia's colleges and universities.

With hundreds of millions of dollars in state-allocated lottery funds being allocated for the HOPE Scholarship annually, determining if such a relationship exists is responsible in the process of justifying the program, as well as similar programs in other states. While observations made in favor of or against a relationship between the HOPE

Scholarship's existence and improved university esteem and quality cannot conclusively be used to fully justify the program's claims, either result will lead to future research concerning program policies, requirements, student aptitude, and institutional growth.

Statement of the Problem

The problem is that holistic studies analyzing the relationship between the HOPE Scholarship and academic quality have not been conducted and research on the topic in necessary for determining future amendments to current policies.

Merit-based scholarships enjoy widespread support due to their ability to make higher education more accessible to a larger segment of the population and also for their mission to award high-performing students (Dynarski 2002). The HOPE Scholarship in particular is credited with keeping many of these high-performing students within the state of Georgia, where they are generally expected to take positions of authority, ultimately benefiting the state's success (Dynarksi 2004; Heller 2008).

The support for merit-based scholarships is not universal, however, as criticisms about the actual positive effects and potential negative effects of the scholarships suggest possible problems with the awards (Bradbury, Charles and Campbell 2003; Dee and Jackson 1999). With the amount of money that states are spending to distribute these awards, clarity in regards to program benefits and negative externalities are necessary in determining future policy changes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify any possible linkages between the presence of the HOPE Scholarship and an increase in academic quality in Georgia institutions

since 2000. The year 2000 is significant because certain policy changes were adopted that increased the eligibility requirements for obtaining the scholarship.

A plethora of research addresses the effect of merit-based scholarships and the HOPE Scholarship specifically on aspects of student performance, but not in a holistic manner. Most studies only analyze one variable or only focus on a short time span. The possibly widespread effects that merit-based scholarships, specifically the HOPE Scholarship, can have on student and institutional academic quality require a more holistic analysis. Although a fully holistic analysis cannot be performed as part of this study, five additional variables will be examined. They include entering freshman SAT percentiles, freshman retention rate, six-year graduation rate, entering freshman GPA, and entering freshman acceptance rate.

Research Questions

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the following research questions were analyzed:

Research Question 1: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the entering freshman 25th SAT percentile and 75th SAT percentile for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and their selected peer institutions for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

Research Question 2: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the freshman retention rate for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and their selected peer institutions for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

Research Question 3: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the six-year graduation rate for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) their

selected peer institutions for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

Research Question 4: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the entering freshman GPAs for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and their selected peer institutions (see Appendix B) for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

Research Question 5: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the entering freshman acceptance rate for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and their selected peer institutions for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides an analysis of multiple factors that are perceived to affect merit-based scholarships over a significant amount of time. The study has added to the moderately extensive, but rather limited in scope research on merit-based scholarships, specifically the HOPE Scholarship, and makes comparisons between groups that had not previously been made to this study's extent.

The substantial amount of state resources dedicated to financing the HOPE Scholarship not only require strict program accountability, but also creates stakeholders out of all state residents directly affected by the program through taxes and indirectly affected by increased state university prestige. By better understanding HOPE's outcomes, policymakers and higher education officials can better determine what adjustments should be made. Financial aid scholars will benefit from additional research in their field and will be able to better understand the relationships between the HOPE Scholarship and pertinent performance measures that have not traditionally been analyzed in detail.

Limitations of the Study

A possible limitation with this analysis is the reality that other states, including many with institutions represented in the peer institutions list, have incorporated merit-based scholarship programs since the inception of HOPE and also since the 2000 HOPE policy changes (Levitz and Thurm 2012; Orsuwan and Heck, 2009; Zhang and Ness 2010). Additionally since the 2000 HOPE policy changes, with so many states represented and considering that each state's program possesses different policies, any definitive conclusions in the determination of the extent to which Georgia institutions have performed in relation to their peer institutions is difficult.

Another limitation is that data were not provided by all institutions for all years. Only a small number of the included higher education institutions provided data. This data were subject to be corrupted by human error when being inputted into archives and may be inaccurate at times.

Outside conditions such as economic highs and lows as well as political administrations that could impact the included academic quality measures were not controlled for. By not taking these possible influences into account, researchers should be prudent in interpreting the results.

Another limitation involves two variables in particular: the entering freshman GPA and entering freshman acceptance rate. In the first two of the study's included years, data could only be found for two of the Georgia institutions that were included in the analysis. As such, conditions were not met to perform Welch's *T*-tests on the institutions and significance rates were not provided for these variables during these years.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to assist readers with the terminology used in this document.

Merit-based scholarship: Scholarship programs are government-sponsored programs that generally allocate award funding based on secondary school student merit as opposed to the more traditional need-based award model (Dynarski 2004; Fitzpatrick and Jones 2012; Henry and Rubenstein 2001).

HOPE Scholarship program: The HOPE Scholarship Program (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally) is a merit-based higher education scholarship which began in 1993 that is funded by revenue from the Georgia Lottery (Georgia Student Finance Commission 2012). "The program pays [partially] for tuition, fees, and books at any public college or university in the state for any Georgia student who graduates from high school with a B or better grade point average (GPA)" (Rubenstein 2003, 1). In order to retain the scholarship, a 3.0 GPA must be maintained (Georgia Student Finance Commission 2012).

Peer Institution: A college or university that exhibits similar institutional characteristics which make it appropriate to use as a basis for comparison (Brinkman and Teeter 1987). These institutions, which are normally determined by university system governing bodies or by individual higher education institutions, are vital for establishing benchmarks and for gauging progress (Brinkman and Teeter 1987).

Carnegie Classifications: distinctions used in higher education research to group institutions that are roughly comparable to one another (The Carnegie Foundation 2012).

Carnegie Classifications: "Research University with Very High Research"

“Research University with High Research” “Doctoral/Research University” – Institutions labeled Doctorate-granting universities are placed in this category if they awarded at least 20 research doctorates in the year 2008-2009. Institutions were further classified in one of the three categories based on a measure of research activity with those engaging in “very high” research activity being placed in the first group, “high” research in the second group, and those determined not to be conducting “very high” or “high” levels of research being placed in the third group (The Carnegie Foundation 2012).

Carnegie Classifications: “Master’s Colleges and Universities with Larger Programs” “Master’s Colleges and Universities with Medium Programs” “Master’s Colleges and Universities with Smaller Programs” – Institutions labeled Master’s Colleges and Universities are placed in this category if they awarded at least 50 master’s degrees, but fewer than 20 research doctorates in 2008-2009. Institutions were further classified in one the three categories based on the number of total master’s degrees that they awarded. Institutions granting 200 or more master’s degrees were placed in the first group, between 100 and 199 were placed in the second group, and between 50 and 99 were placed in the third group (The Carnegie Foundation 2012).

Carnegie Classifications: “Baccalaureate Colleges-Diverse Fields” “Baccalaureate Colleges-Arts & Sciences” – Institutions labeled Baccalaureate Colleges were included in these categories if bachelor's degrees accounted for at least 10 percent of all undergraduate degrees and they awarded fewer than 50 master's degrees during the 2008-2009 academic year. Among institutions where bachelor's degrees represented at least half of all undergraduate degrees, those with at least half of bachelor's degree majors in arts and sciences fields were included in the "Arts & Sciences" group, while the

remaining institutions were included in the "Diverse Fields" group (The Carnegie Foundation 2012).

Common Data Set: A summation of institutional information. Each set is a part of the Common Data Set Initiative which is defined as "a collaborative effort among data providers in the higher education community and publishers as represented by the College Board, Peterson's, and U.S. News & World Report. The combined goal of this collaboration is to improve the quality and accuracy of information provided to all involved in a student's transition into higher education, as well as to reduce the reporting burden on data providers" (The Common Data Set Initiative 2012, 3). Participating in the Common Data Sets information collection is voluntary, therefore, not all institutions provide requested data.

SAT 25th/75th Percentiles: The average first and third quartile scores on college admissions tests for accepted, first-year freshmen at an institution.

Freshman Retention Rate: The percentage of the first-time freshmen who entered an institution and returned to the institution in a consecutive year.

Six-year Graduation Rate: The percentage of first-year freshmen that graduated from the institution within six academic years.

Freshman Grade Point Average: The average high school GPA for accepted, first-year freshmen at the institution and is reported using data from the previous year's admissions cycle.

Freshman Acceptance Rate: The percentage of first-year freshman that are accepted to the institution over the course of the institution's academic year.

Organization of the Study

The following chapter provides a comprehensive review of previous scholarly works that have addressed the topic of merit-based scholarships, the HOPE scholarship itself, the selection of peer institutions, institutional analysis and the selection of performance measures, and the rise of institutional comparison in popular culture and the media. The works discussed in this section provide both the necessary background information for those who are unfamiliar with the topic, and the review also justifies the relevance of engaging in a study that includes these factors.

In Chapter 3, the research questions and methods for analyzing these questions are presented. The rationale for including selected institutions in the analysis, for utilizing certain performance measures is outlined. The null and alternative hypotheses for each variable convey the expected outcomes. Finally, the chapter concludes with the exact method used to analyze the relationships between the included institutions and performance measures.

Chapter 4 outlines the findings from the various analyses and provide a technical interpretation of those findings. Hard data is presented as well as the results from the administered statistical testing.

The final chapter includes a thorough review of the analyses and provides more information regarding the significance of the findings. This section discusses the immediate and long-term implications for the findings, while also suggesting how this project can evolve or influence future scholarly works on the topic.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The chapter present background information related to merit-based scholarships, the process of institutional improvement, and the selection of peer institutions. Scholarly works were referenced that include relevant information on these topics.

Higher Education Expenses

Higher education has become increasingly accessible to the American population with each generation (Callender 2003; Schofer and Meyer 2005). Numerous professions require attainment of higher education in order to qualify for positions, making college and university studies a necessity for those who wish to obtain gainful employment (Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl 2010). As more and more Americans are pursuing their educations, higher education institutions have been increasing their tuition, housing, and other associated costs at a pace that greatly exceeds the rate of inflation (Bluemnstyk 2008; Cobb 2009). A number of states, aware of the benefits that an educated population and a fully employed workforce can reap, have taken the initiative to develop scholarship programs to help offset rising costs (Levitz and Thurm 2012; Orsuwan and Heck, 2009; Zhang and Ness 2010). These programs are oftentimes exclusive to each respective state's population and are often offered to high-performing high school and college students (Orsuwan and Heck, 2009; Zhang and Ness 2010). Georgia's HOPE scholarship program is one of the more widely recognized as well as one of the first state merit-based scholarship programs of its kind (Cornwell, Lee, and Mustard 2003). State merit-based

scholarship programs are key contributors to higher education access for a large portion of the population and effective policies related to these programs are essential for their continued success.

History of Merit Aid

The 1980s witnessed the advent of a form of student aid commonly referred to as merit-based financial aid (Cornwell, Mustard, and Sridhar 2006; National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs 1999; Ness 2010). Previously, this form of aid was primarily administered by individual institutions in order to attract and retain high-performing students, but over the last twenty years a number of state governments have created merit-based scholarship programs (Dynarski 2004). State merit-based scholarship programs are government-sponsored programs that generally allocate award funding based on secondary school student merit, as opposed to the more traditional need-based award model (Dynarski 2004; Fitzpatrick and Jones 2012; Henry and Rubenstein 2001). These programs have been major contributors to the overall increase of state-awarded financial aid based solely on academic merit (Doyle 2006; Dynarski 2002).

The reasons associated with developing these programs vary from state to state, but three common themes are referenced most often: 1) to reward high academic performance, 2) to increase access to higher education, and 3) to limit attrition of the state's "best and brightest" scholars (Cornwell, Mustard, and Sridhar 2006; Doyle 2006; Dynarski 2002; Heller 2008). Academic performance, as it relates to merit-based scholarships, has been exhibited by students performing at a higher level in many states with such programs in place (Hernandez-Julian 2010). Previous initiatives took the

opposite approach by sanctioning underperforming school districts with threatened intervention by state officials if improvements were not made (Bosworth 2008). Georgia policymakers decided to avoid this model (which now closely resembles one of the No Child Left Behind policies) and to instead reward students with direct assistance (Henry and Rubenstein 2001).

The positive economic growth experienced by much of the country during the 1990s led to increased state reserve funds that were ultimately used to finance these endeavors (Dynarski 2004). However when states have experienced negative economic conditions, student retention has suffered thereby decreasing student access to higher education (Paulsen and St. John 2002). Increased accessibility could have been accomplished by lowering tuition and associated fee rates for state higher education institutions, but the offering of a merit-based scholarship could be presented in a method that would be used as a political advantage. Merit-based scholarships would open the doors to higher education for deserving students and state politicians would be rewarded for their contributions (Henry, Rubenstein, and Bugler 2004).

Merit-Based Aid Justifications

The statistical increases in funding levels may be clearly defined, but a consensus regarding the exact reasoning behind the movement towards and adoption of these programs is not apparent. A major program goal for the state of Georgia was to minimize the exodus of the state's "best and brightest" to out of state institutions (Cornwell, Mustard, and Sridhar 2006; Dynarski 2002; Heller 2008; Zhang and Ness 2010). This goal was addressed quickly as the early years of HOPE witnessed a trend reversal with 17% of native Georgia students who, as recently as 1992, had left the state to attend

college in a bordering state (Dynarski 2004). By 1998, this number had dropped to 9% (Dynarski 2000). Heller and Marin cited reasoning for the creation of HOPE-like programs in other states as methods for developing highly qualified workers within the state and retaining them upon their graduation (2002).

In a 2003 study, Rubenstein argued that the programs created incentives for students to perform well enough to earn the scholarships/grants and to continue to perform at a high level upon reaching their chosen higher education institution. Another popular reason reported by McLendon, Heller, and Young; they stated that the rise of these programs in a number of states had caused others states to see the need to adopt similar programs in order to compete and keep pace with their neighbors (2005). Hickman's analysis of the State of Florida's "Bright Futures Scholarship Program" shows that a substantial number of graduates of Florida colleges and universities remain in the state within the first few years after they have graduated, concluding that the state recoups their investment in student education with a more educated workforce (2009). Doyle concluded that state policymakers responded to the needs of their individual states with programs and program adoption based on state priorities and initiatives (2006).

HOPE Scholarship History

The HOPE Scholarship program is a state merit-based scholarship program that falls into a definite niche: state lottery-based scholarship programs. More than half of all U.S. states that currently have a lottery in place earmark funds for public education (Brady and Pijanowski 2007). In Georgia's case, one of the key compelling components leading to the state passing their lottery system legislation was that a portion of the funds from the program were to be set aside to fund a scholarship program (Georgia Student

Finance Commission 2012). The dual benefit of added state revenue from the lottery, as well as the opportunity to provide educational support for Georgia's "best and brightest" high school students, was an attractive legislative decision (Cornwell, Mustard, and Sridhar 2006; Dynarski 2002; Heller 2008).

The HOPE Scholarship program was formally proposed shortly after the inauguration of Governor Zell Miller in 1991. Miller used the adoption of a state lottery program as one of his key campaign platforms, as he promised to earmark a portion of the proceeds for education funding, with HOPE being given the largest share of the allocation (Georgia Student Finance Commission 2012). In addition to scholarship funding, large amounts of lottery funds have been allocated for the construction of new schools, a pre-kindergarten program, and increased educational technology for K-12 schools (Georgia Student Finance Commission 2012). In November of 1992, Georgia's citizens voted in favor of the amendment establishing a state lottery program and in September of 1993, the first HOPE Scholarship was formally awarded.

HOPE Academic Standards and Policies

Prior to the 2011-2012 academic year, the HOPE scholarship program required high school students to graduate with at least a 3.0 GPA from a Georgia high school, and that they attend one of the state university system's public institutions (private colleges and universities recognize the scholarship program to various degrees) (Georgia Student Finance Commission 2012). As long as a 3.0 overall GPA was maintained, 100% of tuition costs and most applicable fees were covered by the program, including a nominal book stipend. HOPE eligibility status was, and continues to be "checked" at 30 semester hour intervals, and if students fall below the 3.0 threshold the scholarship is forfeited;

however, if the overall GPA rises back above 3.0 by the next 30 hour checkpoint, HOPE is re-awarded.

Initially, HOPE only covered the costs of two years of public college or university tuition, implemented a family annual income cap at $100,000, and was permanently lost if students failed to maintain the requisite college GPA (Georgia Student Finance Commission 2012). All of these stipulations were short-lived, and by 1995 HOPE was expanded to cover four years of public institutional education tuition costs (a stipend was implemented for select private institutions), the income cap was abolished, and students could regain the scholarship later in their college careers if they could attain a cumulative 3.0 GPA (Georgia Student Finance Commission 2012).

For the entering class of 2000, the calculation for the high school GPA was modified to only include courses that comprise the college-preparatory curriculum. Up to this point, all attempted courses were calculated into the HOPE-GPA criteria. This stipulation was implemented in an attempt to encourage students to perform well in college-preparatory curriculum and not to rely on non-college preparatory classes that were perceived to be less difficult to attain higher grades in (Georgia Student Finance Commission 2012).

In 2011 HOPE was forced to cut back on its allocations including the elimination of payments for books and mandatory student fees, while also scaling back on the amount allowed per student to 90% of tuition costs unless students met a much higher academic threshold (Georgia Student Finance Commission 2012). The program has been widely acknowledged as a key educational contributor to higher education in Georgia. Further, Georgia is being recognized as the top performing state in the National Association of

State Student Grant and Aid Programs' ranking of academic-based financial aid systems (National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs 1999).

The Growth of Merit-based Aid Programs

The HOPE Scholarship has influenced a number of similar state merit-based scholarship programs that have been created by multiple state legislatures since the program's inception (Henry and Rubenstein 2001; McKinney 2009). While the focus of this work is primarily concerned with the Georgia institutions and their peers, it is important to note the advances have been made by other states that have also adopted state merit-based scholarship programs.

Florida created its Bright Futures program (1997) shortly after HOPE's first year of inception and Tennessee (2004) followed soon thereafter. These states are particularly significant because they are border states and possess institutions that native Georgia students have historically matriculated to (Dynarski 2004; Singell, Waddell, and Curs 2006). Reciprocally, many of their students were lost to Georgia institutions (Dynarski 2004). Steven Cohen, current member of the U.S. House of Representatives and former Tennessee state senator, said of HOPE, "I guess the guiding light was Georgia since we had pretty much seen successes in Georgia with its program and had modeled or campaigned for the referendum on Georgia's successes. We tried to model it (merit-based scholarship) after Georgia…" (Ness and Mistretta 2009, 502). This statement implies that the HOPE model is both respected and worth replicating, although Tennessee has experienced little positive change in both freshman retention and graduation as a result of their merit-based funding (Sanford and Hunter 2011). In addition, although the program involves tax credits as opposed to scholarships, the federal HOPE scholarship tax credit

derived its name from the Georgia HOPE scholarship, a direct homage to the program (Dynarski 2000; Francis 2001; U.S. Department of Education 2006).

Currently, 23 states have a financial aid program or policy where at least 10% of total aid granted is in the form of merit-aid (Levitz and Thurm 2012) (see Appendix C). The amount of aid that is allocated and the requirements for attaining the aid differ, sometimes vastly, from state to state (Zhang and Ness 2010). In addition to these 23 states, 13 states currently award at least 50% of their scholarship and grant aid based on preparatory school and/or college and university performance (Levitz and Thurm 2012) (see Appendix C). The growing number of states that not only have merit-based scholarship programs in place, but also allocate a large portion of their total aid awarded each year, may suggest that merit-based aid will become an increasingly important component to higher education financing (Heller 2006).

The adoption of merit-based scholarship programs amongst states also implies that policymakers are being influenced by the trends of other states. According to Cohen-Vogel, Ingle, Levine, and Spence, "state funding of merit-based college aid stimulates competition among the region's states for students, for positive standing on indicators of relative educational performance, and for positive standing on indicators of relative educational performance, and for better public policy in general. (2008, 355-56).

Criticisms of the HOPE Scholarship Program

In reality, students have not always performed as policy makers have predicted. Although SAT scores and high school GPAs (not as valid as SAT scores due to grade-inflation that may have ensued once HOPE was introduced) have both risen in Georgia during HOPE's lifespan, the program experienced and continues to maintain a fairly large

forfeiture rate (Diamond 2011; Rubenstein 2003). Close to 50% of students fail to meet the minimum scholarship requirements at some point during their college career (Diamond 2011). Another allegation is that tuition and associated fees have risen at higher rates than in previous years in states awarding merit-based scholarships (Long 2004). While this continued forfeiture is somewhat troubling, other possible implications are further causes for concern.

Grade Inflation

Grade inflation, a practice that appears to have been tracked back to the 1960s and is defined as an "upward shift in students' grade-point averages without a similar rise in achievement" is a concern for scholarships based off of student GPA (Kohn 2002, 1). Merit-based scholarship programs have faced accusations of grade inflation at both the high school level as students struggle to gain initial scholarship eligibility and at the college levels as they clamor for sufficient grades in order to retain their scholarships. A 2003 *USA Today* article reported that although 42% of students are now graduating college with the equivalent of "A" GPAs, a significant increase from students in the early 1990s, there has been little increase in student performance on college admissions tests (Schouten 2003). The same article reports that 40% of students lose HOPE Scholarship eligibility after their first 30 hour checkpoint (Schouten 2003).

The possibility that high schools have been assigning lighter course loads and grading more leniently in an attempt to ensure that more of their students are HOPE-eligible is an on-going concern (Bradbury, Charles, and Campbell 2003; Dee and Jackson 1999). Students who may not have earned the HOPE Scholarship under pre-HOPE grading conditions may have been able to take advantage of the perceived lax grading

and not only earn the scholarship, but also to gain admittance to institutions to which they might not normally have been granted admittance (Chen 2004).

Disproportionate Assistance

Another criticism that has arisen since HOPE's passage is that the program has succeeded in disproportionately aiding those who critics believed least needed funding assistance, students from middle to upper-class families (Downey 2011; Dynarski 2000). These students' families were projected to have little trouble paying in-state tuition for Georgia colleges and universities making HOPE more of a fringe benefit than an academic award/reward (Dynarski 2000). Because of this lack of financial urgency, students may not have felt as much pressure to perform, knowing that if they lost the scholarship their parents would more than likely have been able to subsidize their tuition.

Florida's Bright Futures Scholarship Program has been criticized as disproportionately aiding high income families more than low income families. According to Stranahan and Borg, high socioeconomic household were found to receive a net benefit of $2,200 from the program while low socioeconomic households were found to receive a net benefit of only $700 (2007). The authors came to this result by factoring the higher lottery taxes that low socioeconomic households pay combined with the fact that they are less likely to receive the scholarship (Stranahan and Borg 2007).

From an institutional standpoint, improved retention and graduation rates would appear to suggest that HOPE is enabling students to remain in school and to complete their coursework at a quicker pace than previous generations. With so many students losing the HOPE Scholarship at some point during their college careers, concerns about the true effect that it has had on academic quality and whether the program's standards

are at appropriate levels have continued to arise (Henry, Rubenstein, and Bugler 2004). Finally, the possibility that admissions standards within Georgia institutions have risen suggests that many state students may no longer be able to gain admittance to their first-choice institutions (Diamond 2011; Diamond 2012).

Institutional Evolution and Benchmarking – Purpose

Institutional evolution is necessary for all higher education institutions as they redefine their mission and values and also as they reassess their audience and stakeholders (Bender 2002; Jackson and Lund 2000). In order to effectively evolve, an appropriate infrastructure must be in place to accommodate new policies and priorities (Bender 2002). In addition, information regarding the current state of the institution, as well as specific institutional goals, must be obtained or formulated (Bender 2002). Universities are apt to acknowledge quality management systems and the processes used to determine and improve upon academic quality measures because these devices assist overall institutional quality as well as organizational effectiveness (Shin, Toutkoushian, and Teichler 2011).

Higher education institutions have always desired to make favorable impressions on their stakeholders (Shin, Toutkoushian, and Teichler 2011). These clients take the form of students as well as businesses where graduates seek employment and by portraying a degree of excellence, a positive impression can be maintained (Shin, Toutkoushian, and Teichler 2011). In recent times, institutional leaders are increasingly concerned with setting and improving upon benchmarks due to state policymakers evaluating college presidents, provosts, regents, and board members based off of their respective institutions' performance measures (Head 2011). This is evident in the fact

that in 1991, a comprehensive set of measures was announced to improve the quality of higher education (Garcia-Aracil and Palomares-Montero 2010; Garlick and Pryor 2004). One of the provisions of these measures was that additional funding would be given to those institutions that demonstrated proficiency in certain areas of academic quality (Garcia-Aracil and Palomares-Montero 2010; Garlick and Pryor 2004).

In addition, focus is slowly shifting from merely studying quantitative data as a tool for comparison, towards using benchmarking as an ongoing diagnostic management tool focused on learning, collaboration and leadership to achieve continuous improvement over time (Garlick and Pryor 2004; Kettunen 2010). The incentive to provide a quality academic experience to students, combined with the pressure to perform well that often results in promotions, dismissals, and funding is paramount in institutions' decisions to engage in benchmarking and quality improvement (Henard and Mitterle 2009).

Accreditation

Maintaining continuous institutional accreditation is another major concern for colleges and universities and encompasses the establishment and maintenance of institutional academic quality growth (Eaton 2010). Accreditation is, "the primary means of assuring and improving academic quality in U.S. higher education…while accommodating many changes in higher education and society, accreditation's fundamental values and practices have remained essentially intact" (Eaton 2012, 8) and "is a form of self-regulation" (Eaton 2012, 8) that ensures that institutions are delivering on the claims of the product that they are providing (Stensaker and Harvey 2006).

The accreditation process and, specifically, accrediting bodies that are tasked with reviewing the credentials of institutions and deciding whether they meet certain set standards, are related to institutional evolution and benchmarking because the accreditation and re-accreditation process are often heavily focused on intrinsic and extrinsic factors related to institutional quality (Garcia-Aracil and Palomares-Montero 2010; Stensaker and Harvey 2006; Volkwein 2010). Generally, the accreditation process occurs in three stages. First, a self-study is prepared by the institution in response to evaluation criteria established by the accrediting body. Next, a team of peer evaluators for other institutions visit the institution, make observations, and develop a report. Finally, based off of the first two stages, the accrediting bodies decide whether or not to grant or renew the accreditation (Volkwein 2010). Collectively this process, as well as accreditation as a whole, can be akin to quality control/assurance. "Quality control assures that higher education is in line with minimum quality requirements in terms of inputs, process and outcomes" (Sanyal and Martin 2007, 6) which complements that statement that "the identification of weaknesses through the identification process allows the system to adopt corrective measure to improve quality. The competitive spirit resulting from accreditation also helps improve quality" (Sanyal and Martin 2007, 6).

Between the suggestions that are compiled by the accrediting bodies, as well as those made by the outside institutions, benchmarks are suggested as well as the amount of institutional progress that the college or university has made since its last re-accreditation process. Oftentimes, these accreditation-related benchmarks will focus on and compare data related to the learning process such as student retention, graduation, and selectivity (Kuh and Ewell 2010; Shah, Nair, and Wilson 2011). But, they also

include more abstract suggestions related to student enrichment, student outcomes, and student satisfaction or through updating the student experience by adding additional academic support center and learning centers (Lau 2003). Ultimately, accrediting bodies are important for ensuring that higher education institutions are meeting standards that the general public might not generally be aware of.

Quality Control and Quality Assurance

Quality control, not to be confused with academic quality or quality assurance, is a fundamental component to accreditation. Quality control differs from academic quality in that it is concerned with higher education institutions meeting the minimum quality requirements for input processes and outcomes (Sanyal and Martin 2007). Because academic quality control is only concerned with setting the baseline standards of what is expected from colleges and universities, it is generally not associated with academic quality (Filippakou and Tapper 2008; Sanyal and Martin 2007). Accrediting bodies establish and reference these baseline standards when determining whether institutions are faithfully meeting established performance criteria (Sanyal and Martin 2007).

Quality assurance is another aspect of the process. Quality assurance is broken into internal and external assurance areas. The internal quality assurance process involves university officials ensuring that their respective institutions have policies and practices in place that will allow them to meet their set objectives and standards (Sanyal and Martin 2007). External control involves the accrediting body's assessment of individual institutions' operations to determine whether they are meeting the same standards examined during the internal quality assurance process (Sanyal and Martin 2007). Between the internal practices of higher education institutions' quality control

personnel and the external workings of accrediting bodies, institutional accreditation, quality control, and quality assurance ensure that minimum standards are being met, although findings should be further analyzed and not taken at face value (Harvey and Williams 2010).

Institutional Academic Quality

Academic quality is an oft-debated topic and takes on different meanings depending on its context. As discussed in the previous section, outsiders, as well as those directly associated with respective institutions, look for different areas where improvement can be made (Volkwein 2010). However, academic quality differs from the process conducted by accrediting bodies or from quality control or quality assurance. Academic quality is concerned with universities striving to provide the best services to the educational community by being concerned with continuously improving their quality of services (Yarmohammadian, Mozaffary, and Esfahani 2011).

The academic quality areas vary from visible, oftentimes quantitative criteria that are regularly reported in media outlets and to governing bodies, to areas where student, faculty, or staff input is required or qualitative observation (Garcia-Aracil and Palomares-Montero 2010). In addition to these distinctions, differing definitions of academic quality exist between institutional academic quality and the academic quality of the student body and faculty members. Certain data are relevant to multiple areas of academic quality (the entering freshman classes average cumulative grade point average reflects on both the quality of the institution as well as the quality of the students; the number of faculty citations in scholarly journals will reflect on the institution as well as the faculty).

In the process of measuring academic quality, it is important to realize that different entities will possess different definitions of which measures truly represent academic quality, as well as the sheer number of possible measures that could be included. For example, Yarmohammadian, Mozaffary, and Esfahani determined institutional academic quality in a 2011 piece by measuring the level to which various higher education institutions were "helping students learn" "accomplishing objectives" and "building collaborative relationships" (2011, 2918). In contrast, the yearly *U.S. News and World Report* institutional rankings rate institutional esteem using a formula that oftentimes weighs heavily on entrance exam scores, high school class rank, and alumni donations (Bastedo and Bowman 2010). Because of these differences, numerous aspects of academic quality will inevitably be ignored during most institutional analyses, assessment projects, comparison projects, and institutional rankings compilations. Also, measures that rely on qualitative observation and survey data will be subjected to various biases that the harder statistical data does not normally fall subject to (Kuh and Ewell 2010). Ultimately, the concept of academic quality is vast and ever-changing and adhering to one specific standard measure of it is not prudent (Sanyal and Martin 2007).

Institutional Evolution and Benchmarking – Process

The process of selecting benchmarks and planning an improvement project can often be complicated due to conflicting interests as well as motivational issues. This process calls for an appropriate structure that allows for collaborative decision making supported by a suitable course of action that is based on associated data analyses (Agasisti and Johnes 2009). Throughout the evolutionary process, resistance is often experienced by individuals who either do not believe that change is necessary or who are

unwilling to participate in the process (Bender 2002; Levy and Ronco 2012). When these situations arise, benchmarking can be utilized to alleviate the process.

The activity of comparing an institution to other institutions, specifically those with better perceived reputations, can create enthusiasm for change and vitalize the evolutionary process (Bender 2002; Hazelkorn 2007). However, the importance of choosing the correct benchmark variables and institutions is of utmost importance for a number of reasons. Selecting areas that are not in need of improvement will not only waste time and resources, but will lower the morale of associated workers who will wonder why their area is being scrutinized (Bender 2002). Selecting the appropriate schools for comparison as peer institutions is vital for both setting bases of comparison and for establishing realistic benchmarks (Anderes 1999; Hazelkorn 2007). Ultimately, analyzing the best practices of peer and aspirational institutions and developing new policies on campus is an effective tactic to improving the quality of a host of institutional processes and policies (Bender 2002; Hazelkorn 2007). Establishing benchmarks by incorporating individual institutional goals with observations related to other institutions' progress is a vital component in the process of improving overall academic quality.

Peer Institution Identification Process

State university systems, state boards of regents, and individual universities often develop strategies for identifying other universities that resemble them in a number of different categories (Brinkman and Teeter 1987). These processes are important because identifying peer institutions and using these institutions as bases of comparison are vital for establishing benchmarks and for gauging progress (Brinkman and Teeter 1987). Without appropriate comparator institutions, progress is tracked less efficiently.

In 2004, Ohio University's Office of Institutional Research developed a list based on nine broad categories to identify a small group of institutional peers (2004). The study's methods were multi-pronged. Empirical data were incorporated in order to extract measureable and reliable benchmarks. Upon recognizing these benchmarks, they were used to identify the peer institutions. The peer institutions were later referenced in various university assessment and planning initiatives (Ohio University Office of Institutional Research 2004). The nine broad categories, which were then broken down into 48 sub-categories, included the following measures: peer review, freshman admission selectivity, retention and graduation rates, student experience, institutional finances, faculty salary, institutional characteristics, student race/ethnicity, and tuition and financial aid statistics (Ohio University 2004).

The University of Akron developed a strategy for identifying peer institutions in 2010, asserting that an institutional peer list would: provide benchmarks for assessing institutional effectiveness, identify areas that might deserve further attention and improvement, and facilitate guidance for policy development and budget allocation (2010). Like the Ohio University project, Akron's formula included a combination of statistical factors while also incorporating an interpretation of the university's mission into the process. The inclusion of the mission statement served to narrow down the list of institutions (Historically Black Colleges and Universities and colleges and universities that award medical degree were excluded) that matched the initial statistical profile, ultimately providing a better grouping of comparable institutions (University of Akron 2010).

One of the earliest reports on the topic stressed the need to go out of state (selecting other state institutions was and continues to be a common practice for many universities when selecting peer institutions) in order to incorporate institutions that accurately reflect the distinct characteristics of each college or university comprising a university system (Rawson, Hoyt, and Teeter 1983). Rather than choosing comparator institutions based on statistical variables, the force tasked to identify peer institutions for the state's (Kansas) higher education institutions referred to distinct criteria throughout the decision-making process. Rawson, Hoyt, and Teeter further explain the process, stating that "comparison institutions should be drawn from states whose ability to support public education, whose higher education pattern, and whose populations were relatively similar (to the Kansas institutions)," (1983, 301). Rawson, Hoyt, and Teeter concluded that comparator institutions should share similar institutional program responsibilities, enrollments should be comparable, and institutional "missions" should be similar (1983). This process, conducted in the mid-1970s, contains less concrete comparison variables as well as less overall comparison variables than the process utilized by the Ohio institutions. The implication is that as time goes by, colleges and universities are assigning higher priority to testing themselves with other institutions and desire to create as accurate comparison basis as possible. Although both of these undertakings involved similar statistical data, all of the universities included in these examples ultimately came to their respective conclusions by incorporating variables that they deemed to be most in line with their own respective priorities.

Higher education institutions serving select populations make up a distinct class of college or university that is often difficult to be compared against. As such, these

institutions are often left out of comparison analyses. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) make up a significant portion of American higher education institutions and three of the public, University System of Georgia institutions are HBCUs. The institutions are unique in the fact that they were created to redress the historic exclusion of black students that was typically experienced at predominantly white universities (Bennet and Xie 2003). Throughout their collective histories and in the present, HBCUs acknowledge possible inequalities for blacks in elementary and secondary education which "allows HBCUs to provide college opportunities to some blacks who otherwise might not attend college due to their academic weaknesses in areas typically considered for college admission" (Bennet and Xie 2003, 569). Retention and graduation efforts also differ at HBCUs as they "also promote their graduation, with graduation rates higher than those for black students at pre-dominantly white colleges" (Bennet and Xie, 569). These different criteria encompass HBCU's unique missions that are very different than many other American colleges and universities.

Commonly Accepted Performance Measures

Universal benchmarks for comparing institutions would in theory make the comparison process much easier (Klubeck 2011). By establishing appropriate performance measures that can accurately detail the academic quality of an institution, college and universities are able to more accurately assess themselves and their peers while consumers are better able to compare institutions (Bender 2002; Levy and Ronco 2012). When peer institutions are assessing their progress to one another, they utilize commonly accepted performance measures to assess specific institutional characteristics (Klubeck 2011).

A 1980 article by Terenzini, Hartmark, Lorang, and Shirley stated that a universally accepted method for measuring peer institutions has yet to be developed and is not likely to ever be adopted by institutions widespread when reporting institutional performance. The authors claimed that the major reason for this is that each institution possesses different institutional goals (Terenzini, Hartmark, Lorang, and Shirley 1980). At the community college level, defining peer institutions has appeared to take a more stream-lined approach. The League for Innovation in the Community College has developed a conclusive set of benchmarks related to institutional effectiveness and academic quality amongst other criteria (Juhnke 2006). Institutions were designated into different areas based on the number of students, the campus environment (rural, suburban, urban), academic calendar organization, and whether the faculty and administration were unionized (Juhnke 2006).

As a complement to the process of using hard, statistical data to compare institutions, the concept of peer review has become an increasingly referenced component when determining the academic quality of colleges and universities (Barnard-Brak, Saxon, and Johnson 2011). Although such rankings are not normally formally incorporated into institutions' processes of determining peer institutions, peer review statistics have been found to possess great influence on attracting students to the particular institutions, while also aiding in the process of securing professional and educational placement for graduates (Bastedo and Bowman 2010; Standifird 2005). Because each institution of higher education that chooses to select peer institutions for comparison purposes uses different criteria to select its peers, a conclusive look at the selection process is difficult. However, the factors used to compare institutions are

similar among institutions so the results of the comparisons are believed to be reliable.

Performance Measure Distortion

The standardized factors typically included by higher education institutions during the comparison process provide a basic indication about the variable in question; however, some of the data have become increasingly influenced by the media and other outlets. Numerous periodicals publish "best college" rankings on a regular basis and base their conclusions on a variety of institutional factors (Bastedo and Bowman 2010; Pike 2004). Aware of the popularity of these rankings and the amount of influence they possess on the college decision-making process, colleges and universities have altered their priorities and operating practices in many cases in response to these publications' rankings (Farrell and van der Werf 2007; Hazelkorn 2007). Soliciting low-value donations from alumni to increase the "percentage of alumni giving" statistic and encouraging applications from prospective students that will never be accepted are examples of practices utilized in order to positively manipulate statistical data reported to these publications (Farrell and van der Werf 2007).

While emulating high-performing institutions because they are regarded with high esteem and are ranked accordingly in popular media is somewhat troubling, the high standard that is set has led many to believe that consumers are able to get better value out of their university experience as a result (Griffith and Rask 2007; Pike 2004). Because of the extreme pressure that is often placed on university administrators to ensure an ever-rising ascent in published rankings, greater efforts are made to maximize the growth and effectiveness in key, surveyed areas (Farrell and van der Werf 2007; Webster and Mare 2005). An example of this effect is presented by Ellen Hazelkorn, the Dean of the

Graduate School at the Dublin Institute of Technology, who states that a greater push has been made in recent times to hire Nobel Prize laureates in select UK institutions (2007). A similar domestic example of this process was Baylor University's strategy for lowering its acceptance rate, thus being viewed as a more competitive institution to gain admittance to (Farrell and Van Der Werf 2007). By more than doubling their scholarship offerings and creating an honors college, applications increased more than three-fold (Farrell and Van Der Werf 2007). As a result, the school was able to become more selective in its admissions process, cutting its acceptance rate in half with the added externality of raising the average entering freshman average SAT score by 30 points (Farrell and Van Der Werf 2007). Institutions providing a better academic product to students, whether because of their student-focused nature or because they desire to ascend in published rankings, represent a positive movement in the direction of overall higher education quality.

Selecting Performance Measures

In order to conclusively determine whether universities have improved in comparison to other universities, appropriate performance measures must be selected and then applicable tests must be administered to gauge academic quality (Perkmann, Neely, and Walsh 2011). Choosing these measures, however, requires research in order to make appropriate selections. According to Kehm and Stensaker, the process of determining university performance measures was and continues to be muddled for a number of reasons (2009). Because so many pre-conceived notions of which universities were considered "good" and which were considered "average" or "poor" existed prior to universities being formally ranked, measures intended to mimic the strengths of the more

highly regarded universities were generally accepted as measures of university success (Bastedo and Bowman 2010; Kehm and Stensaker 2009). It is important to try to neglect these preconceived notions prior to measuring academic quality in order to attain a more accurate description of the included programs' respective standings (Bastedo and Bowman 2010).

The first step in the process of determining appropriate performance measures is to determine which input and output measures are most appropriate for the study at hand (Dill and Soo 2005). By incorporating both input and output performance measures, a level of confidence can be attained in terms of being able to accurately assess the quality of incoming students to the university, as well as the university's ability to contribute to student success (Dill and Soo 2005; Sarrico, Rosa, Teixeira, and Cardoso 2010).

Input measures comprise the variables that are believed to measure aspects related to the quality of the first-year students that are matriculating to the included institutions. At the most basic level, the belief is that institutions that draw students with high GPAs and standardized test scores while only accepting a small percentage of applicants possess a greater proportion of higher quality students who are more prepared for college-level work (Dwyer, Millett, and Payne 2006). In the context of basing university academic quality on input variables, these factors can be likened to the academic potential that students entering colleges and universities possess (Cremonini 2010). While these variables paint a general picture of the kind of students that universities are attracting, they say nothing in relation to the institution's quality of instruction.

Output measures comprise the variables that are believed to measure aspects related to the enrolled students' abilities to complete their coursework in a timely manner

as well as their staying power (Dwyer, Millett, and Payne 2006; Federkeil 2008). Again, looking at the statistics at a basic level, a common belief is that institutions that graduate a large portion of their students in a timely manner while also retaining them after the freshman year possess higher academic quality than institutions where students fail to graduate within six years and/or do not return after their freshman year (Federkeil 2008). Output measures are believed to serve as better indicators of institutional quality in regards to institutions accomplishing one of their most paramount tasks: graduating their students, although, by themselves, they do not measure student academic credentials (Dwyer, Millett, and Payne 2006). The diametrically opposed variables that make up input and output performance measures utilized in the process of determining institutional academic quality are best used in tandem with each other to ensure a more holistic view of the college and universities in question (Ding, Dalbert, and Landry 2007).

The three input measures of institution academic quality (entering freshman SAT/ACT $25^{th}/75^{th}$ percentiles, entering freshman acceptance rate, and the average entering freshman GPA) and two output measures (freshman retention percentage and six-year graduation percentage of students who initially enrolled at the institution) are five of the most commonly referenced performance measures in publications ranking/rating colleges and universities as well as in the literature devoted to assessing these types of publications (Ding, Dalbert, and Landry 2007; Institute for Higher Education Policy 2007).

Theoretical Public Administration Anchors Present

The processes that higher education institutions engage in in order to assess themselves and peer colleges and universities can be likened to very distinct public administration theory. The most visible of these theories is the knowledge-based or collaboration approach that states that "organizations that have access to know-how will perform differently to the ones who do not" (Thomson 2007, 17). On a micro-scale, the institutions are cognizant of the fact that the more motivated they are to learn about themselves and other successful institutions, while developing plans for further growth, the more likely they are of becoming successful (Willem and Buelens 2007). Equally important is the concept of converting raw data into "knowledge-based assets" that will allow the organization/institution to use the data for the practical use as a "factor of production." (Marr and Spender 2004). On a macro-scale, by submitting information about themselves and by willingly collaborating with other institutions, Osterloh Frost, and Frey state that participants "engage voluntarily in a course of collective action and contribute to common pool resources that can only be generated in the body of an organized group" (2002, 11). The self-evaluation, self-reporting, and assessment cycle incorporates both levels of collaboration theory.

Management by Objectives (MBO) is another theory present in this performance measurement and evaluation process with its three main tenants: participation in decision making, goal setting, and objective feedback, all occurring in a continuous cycle (Rodgers and Hunter 1992). Participation in decision making can be compared to the inclusive benchmarking process that attempts to secure the participation of the organization's employees. The goal-setting phase involves the continuous review and

revision of objectives (Rodgers and Hunter 1992). This phase involves institutional analysts attempting to identify performance measures that they would like to emphasize and other institutions that they would either like to compare themselves against (Paunescu, Florian, and Hancean 2012). This is an example of when "Best Colleges" rankings become increasingly relevant as colleges and universities, now cognizant of their strengths and deficiencies, begin to identify strategies for improving their esteem. At this point, the cycle has completed as this stage requires different approaches to the same task to address areas of deficiency or to spur participation in decision making (Drucker 1976).

The final public administration theory reviewed is the systems theory. The General Systems Theory dates back to the mid 1900s and emphasizes the importance of flexibility in an organization or objective. By creating a medium for inputs to efficiently "communicate" and interact with one another, relevant outputs, whether in the form of physical assets or knowledge, are obtained (Boulding 1956). Although there are "chaotic" factors such as economic and demographic affiliation, as well as motivation level that also shape outputs, it is primarily the non-complex elements combined with exclusively linear factors equates to an unchaotic system (Boulding 1956). By virtue of the belief that chaotic and complex natural systems can still yield organized social systems and relevant outputs, a system as natural as the process of assessment and goal setting that higher education institutions engage in is relied upon to provide valid indicators of esteem (Jantsch 1980).

Higher education institutions normally do not explicitly state which administrative and organizational theories they are subscribing too when engaging the

process of benchmarking, establishing peer institutions and making what they perceive to be necessary changes for future growth. However, the linkages outlined above display an explicit influence that popular administrative theories have on this process, establishing a variety of political choices further legitimizing the process and the conclusions that result from them.

Summary and Statement of the Problem and Hypothesis

Higher education expenses have grown exponentially, prompting financial aid-granting entities to alter many of their traditional aid-granting policies (Callender 2003; Schofer and Meyer 2005). A recent form of wide-spread financial aid is the merit-based scholarship, which awards financial aid according to student aptitude as opposed to the more traditional practices of awarding aid based on student financial needs (Dynarski 2004; Fitzpatrick and Jones 2012; Henry and Rubenstein 2001).

Georgia's HOPE Scholarship program is the oldest state merit-based financial aid program and has inspired similar programs in numerous others states (Cornwell, Lee, and Mustard 2003; Orsuwan and Heck, 2009). The belief that HOPE's existence has improved the academic quality of the state's higher education institutions prompts questions of comparison that inevitably lead to discussions of the effects on institutional growth and benchmarking. University benchmarking tactics are rarely identical and the selection of peer institutions for the purpose of comparison is largely based on institutional priorities (Bender 2002; Levy and Ronco 2012). Though these issues have not been addressed or defined through this process, the selection of appropriate performance measures is vital, although institutional researchers must be mindful of the distortionary effects the mass media often has on certain performance input and output

measures (Rafols, Leydesdorff, O'Haire, Nightingale, and Stirling 2012).

The next chapter delves into the methods that were utilized to determine whether merit-based scholarships, particularity the HOPE Scholarship, are having effects on higher education institutions. The rationale for using the particular research methods devices, as well as the proposed means for collecting, statistically testing, analyzing, and reporting results, are explained, as well as the expected outcomes from the analyses. The chapter focuses on the results that were observed and culminates with further discussion on the relevance of the information. The methods chapter addresses the research question: How has the HOPE Scholarship's existence, particularly since the 2000 policy changes, affected the academic quality of Georgia's four-year colleges and universities?

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

The data presented for this analysis are drawn from 143 higher education institutions during the 1997 through 2008. This chapter focuses on the methods used to conduct the analysis. The reasoning behind the selection of the units of analyses is addressed in addition to the subjects included and the devices used to sample them. Next, the data analysis proposal formally states how the hypothesis was tested. The justification for using the selected measures is discussed followed by an explanation of the procedures used to acquire data. Finally limitations of the analysis close the chapter.

Identification of the Population

The populations that were included in this analysis are public institutions of higher education that are members of the University System of Georgia, as well as institutions outside of the state of Georgia that have been deemed peer institutions. Selected University System of Georgia institutions and their selected peers have been removed from the study for reasons that are explained.

Sampling Design

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia regularly establishes a list of peer institutions for each of its member institutions. Selecting the institutions to include in the peer group based on established, published peer and comparator institutions lists, acknowledge the expertise and process that appropriate officials

undertook to identify comparable institutions. Because the peer institutions are derived from a diverse group of Georgia institutions, collectively, they represent an extremely wide variety of four-year, higher education institutions from across the country. Using other methods to choose appropriate peer institutions may not have resulted in as effective of a combination of comparison institutions.

With a few exceptions, all of the University System of Georgia institutions classified as "State Universities" or larger by the University System of Georgia and their peer institutions were included in the analysis' samples (Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia 2009). State universities and higher classified institutions place a greater priority on research endeavors and less priority on local interests than lower classified institutions (Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia 2009). By incorporating most of the public Georgia higher education institutions, a more conclusive analysis of the scholarships effects on a variety of institutions was possible to acquire.

Because of the unique mission of HBCUs, the three Georgia public HBCUs were not included in the sample. Also, Georgia Southwestern State University and Southern Polytechnic State University were excluded because they do not meet the "Master's College or University with larger programs" Carnegie Classification. Carnegie Classifications are used in higher education research as a means of grouping institutions that are roughly comparable to one another (The Carnegie Foundation 2012).

Of the remaining institutions, there were thirteen, four-year, public, non-HBCUs that were included in the study. Of these, two are classified as "Research Universities with very high research activity," one as a "Research University with high research

activity," one as a "Doctoral/Research University," and nine as "Master's College or Universities with larger programs."

In regards to the comparison institutions, there are a total of 130 colleges and universities deemed by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia as peer institutions for the included Georgia institutions. These institutions and their respective Carnegie Classifications are organized in Appendix D. In total, thirteen Georgia institutions and 130 peer institutions were included in the study.

Description of the Variables

The availability of the HOPE Scholarship since the 2000 program policy changes was the dependent variable. The period from 2000 through 2008 introduced HOPE Scholarship program stipulations that differed from previous years' policies. Significant differences were anticipated to exist between years where the HOPE Scholarship was (from 2000 on) and was not (pre-2000) established as well as between institutions where students were (Georgia institutions) and were not (non-Georgia institutions) able to obtain the scholarship.

Six academic quality variables were the independent variables as they were expected to change based on the availability of the HOPE Scholarship. Each of the included independent variables represented an input performance measure or an output performance measure. The variables that were included are as follows:

Entering freshman GPA was defined as the average high school GPA for accepted first-year freshmen at the institution, and is reported using data from the previous year's admissions cycle. This is not to be confused with college-preparatory GPA, as all high school courses that contribute to the overall GPA are accounted for in this statistic. This

variable is reported using the standard 4.0 scale because it is overwhelmingly used by both secondary schools and higher education institutions. For institutions using a 100 point scale, a conversion chart provided by the Princeton Review will be referenced to standardize the data.

Entering freshman GPA was considered to be affected by the presence of the HOPE Scholarship due to the possibility that students will devote more time and effort during high school in order to obtain the scholarship. This variable was also believed to be affected by high school teachers and administrators inflating their students' grades in order for them to obtain HOPE eligibility. For this measure, the presence of the HOPE Scholarship was the dependent variable and the GPA was the independent variable.

The freshman acceptance rate was defined as the percentage of first-year freshmen that are accepted to the institution over the course of the institution's academic year. This variable is reported using data from the previous year's admissions cycle. This statistic does not include transfer students. This variable is reported by using a 100 point scale.

Freshman acceptance rate was believed to be affected by the presence of the HOPE Scholarship due to the possibility that more academically capable students will apply to Georgia colleges and universities. In turn, Georgia institutions were believed to have become more selective, lowering their acceptance rates. For this measure, the presence of the HOPE Scholarship was the dependent variable and the acceptance rate was the independent variable.

The SAT/ACT 25th-75th percentile was defined as the average first and third quartile scores on college admissions tests for accepted, first-year freshmen at the

institution. This variable is reported using data from the previous year's admissions cycle. Many institutions report statistics for both the SAT and the ACT, but others only report the percentiles for the test that the majority of their applicants submit. The SAT is the more commonly taken college placement test in Georgia, and all of the University System of Georgia institutions receive SAT scores from a majority of their applicants.

In order to compare these statistics with institutions who primarily receive ACT scores, an SAT/ACT scale was consulted that was believed to accurately convert ACT scores into their SAT equivalent. Currently, the SAT is comprised of three components, but during the early years of this analysis, the SAT was comprised of only two components, the Critical Reading and the Mathematics section. These sections were the only sections included in the analysis. In order to attain a cumulative 25th and 75th quartiles, the means were found for the SAT Critical Reading and the Mathematics sections for both quartiles for each institution. These means served as the statistics for these variables. The ACT scores were directly converted to overall SAT quartiles, therefore, further calculations were not necessary. This variable is reported using a 400-1600 point scale.

SAT 25th/75th percentiles are believed to be affected by the HOPE Scholarship due to the possibility that more able students will apply to Georgia colleges and universities. These students are expected to possess higher entrance exam scores in order to gain admittance to the institutions. For these measures, the presence of the HOPE Scholarship was the dependent variable and the aggregate SAT score was the independent variable.

Freshman retention rate was defined as the percentage of the first-year freshmen

who entered an institution and returned to that institution for a second consecutive year. This variable is reported using data from the previous year's admissions cycle and is reported using a 100 point scale.

Freshman retention rate was believed to be affected by the HOPE Scholarship due to the possibility that more able students would apply to and attend Georgia colleges and universities. By being prepared for college-level work, it was believed that students would be less likely to leave school because of academic concerns. In addition, the HOPE Scholarship was believed to alleviate some financial concerns for students. This would, in theory, make them less likely to leave school. For this measure, the presence of the HOPE Scholarship was the dependent variable and the freshman retention rate was the independent variable.

Six-year graduation rate was defined as the percentage of first-year freshmen that graduated from the institution within six academic years of their starting year. This variable is reported using data from the cohort who entered the institution six years prior to the most current data set. This variable is reported using a 100 point scale.

Six-year graduation rate was believed to be affected by the HOPE Scholarship due to the possibility that more able students will apply to and attend Georgia colleges and universities. By being prepared for college-level work, students were believed to be less likely to leave school because of academic concerns. Also, the HOPE Scholarship was believed to alleviate some financial concerns for students making them less likely to leave school. For this measure, the presence of the HOPE Scholarship was the dependent variable and the Six-year graduation rate was the independent variable.

Scholarly Findings on the Usefulness of Included Variables

Numerous scholars have written on the topic of the appropriate usage of commonly utilized performance measures found in CDS in regards to college and university quality and esteem (DeBerard, Spielmans, and Julka 2004; Dill and Soo 2005; Schmitz 1993; Gamsemer-Toph and Shuh 2006; Geiser and Santelices 2007; Lotkowski, Robbins, and Noeth 2004; Neumark and Rothstein 2003). DeBerard, Spielmans, and Julka attempted to find linkages between freshman academic achievement and retention, incorporating a number of variables believed to affect academic success into their analysis. Although only one of the factors was found to be statistically significant, both high school GPA and cumulative SAT scores were found to be correlated with improved freshman retention (2004). Neumark and Rothstein's study of the performance of students at universities within the University of California system observed that while individual SAT scores are useful in predicting freshman GPA, the average scores of each individual freshman's respective high school better predict their freshman year GPA (2003). Applying this logic to the institutional level leads to the belief that higher incoming freshman SAT scores correlate better with student success and institutional academic quality.

The academic quality measures used in this study, all of which are also used in the *U.S. News and World Reports* "Best Colleges" series were examined by Schmitz, her finding that "the validity of the six input and process indicators…was further strengthened when their relationships with educational outcomes and reputational scores were considered" (1993, 511). These findings represent both the usefulness of these measures when determining academic quality, while also predicting student educational

success, i.e., justifying the output measures used in this study. Gamsemer-Toph's and Shuh study on institutional selectivity and institutional expenditures observed correlations between both input measures and freshman retention and graduation rates, although only the relationship with institutional selectivity was found to be statistically significant (2006). Universal acknowledgement of academic quality variables is discussed by Sill and Doo, as they examined ranking methodologies of higher education institutions in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. As higher education costs have risen for both education providers and students, ranking methodologies are becoming increasingly similar (2005). The implication from this reality is that with higher price tags, institutions are under greater pressure to display their value to consumers and that certain factors, such as those included in this analysis, are increasingly being acknowledged as variables associated with institutional quality.

Identification of Data Sources

This analysis relied on secondary data sources. The included statistical data were collected from entities that had previously calculated the data and compiled the information into their respective databases. The sources of most of these data are college and university offices of institutional research that are tasked with collecting and compiling institutional statistics (Webber 2012). Roughly 60% of the included institutions replied to e-mails soliciting data, although two-thirds of the data used in the study was taken from information on university webpages while one third came from e-mail responses. Primary data sources generally include data that a researcher has collected whether by survey means or through some method of observation. It is very useful to the researcher as he can often draft questions directly pertaining to what he is

attempting to analyze (Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel, and Page 2011). Secondary data includes data that are generally readily available, having already been collected from another researcher or institution and published (McMillan and Schumacher 2009). Although this information lacks the flexibility of primary data, the availability, as well as the fact that many primary calculations have already been conducted, make these data valuable (McMillan and Schumacher 2009). The statistics that will be referenced were collected from entities that had previously calculated the statistical data and compiled the information into their respective databases.

Instrumentation

This study relied very heavily on information compiled by the Common Data Set Initiative (CDS). According to its website, the Common Data Set Initiative is "a collaborative effort among data providers in the higher education community and publishers as represented by the College Board, Peterson's, and *U.S. News & World Report*. The combined goal of this collaboration is to improve the quality and accuracy of information provided to all involved in a student's transition into higher education, as well as to reduce the reporting burden on data providers" (2012, 3). An example of a CDS report can be found in Appendix E.

Since 1997, the CDS initiative has administered questionnaires to universities throughout the United States in order to collect data from areas perceived to be vital to higher education research (The Common Date Set Initiative 2012). The data are collected each academic year. Much of the data found in national "Best Colleges" publications are derived from CDS. The CDS data are collected at the individual institution level. Most institutions list their current and previous CDS on their office of

institutional research website or comparable webpage. While each of the observed areas of academic quality utilized in this analysis are present on the CDS survey form, in many cases, this information is omitted for one or multiple years. Also, in many cases, institutions no longer possess certain CDS records or have access to comparable information. In almost every case where CDSs are unavailable, they are missing from a particular year and all years preceding that year.

Data Collection Procedure

For each of the institutions included in the analysis, attempts were made to locate historic data related to the included variables. This was accomplished by consulting CDS survey data that offices of institutional research had made available on their webpages. Data were requested and collected from each of the included institutions for each of the independent variables for the years 1997 through 2008. If these data were not readily available a direct e-mail request was sent to appropriate institutional research officials outlining the projects goals and a request for the appropriate CDS. Responding institution officials either provided the missing CDS, produced the requested data in a non-CDS format, were unable to provide the information, or failed to respond. Those who failed to respond were contacted one additional time. Those that did not respond were omitted from the analysis.

A possible avenue for collecting data that could have been utilized but was not is the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). IPEDS includes institutional data related to a number of areas and can be organized and reported in accordance with the users' preferences. IPEDS was actually consulted during the early stages of data collection, but oftentimes contained data that were not consistent with CDS

data i.e. CDS data for a particular variable during a particular year at times differed from the IPEDS data. In order to maintain consistency, only CDS data and data provided directly from the institutions were ultimately included in the analyses.

Data Analysis

The purpose of including each variable was to determine if the included Georgia institutions had improved in a statistically significant manner when compared to their peer institutions since the 2000 HOPE policy changes. In order to determine this, Welch's *T*-tests were utilized for each of the included academic quality measures (Satterthwaite 1946).

For each variable included in the analysis, the means of the Georgia institutions' sample set and the means of the peer institutions' sample set were calculated in order to perform the Welch's *T*-tests. For each year of the analysis, the Welch's *T*-test was utilized to determine whether statistically significant relationships existed. *T*-tests, more commonly utilized versions of the Welch's *T*-test, are primarily used to determine whether the sample means of two groups are statistically different from each other (McDonald 2009). Statistical significance indicates confidence that the perceived relationship between two variables did not occur because of random chance (McDonald 2009).

By performing these tests on the academic quality measures, differences between institutions where students had access to the HOPE Scholarship and where students did not have access to HOPE could be confirmed as being statistically significant or not. By performing them on a yearly basis, significance trends could be identified. In order to determine whether the trends observed from the 2000 through 2008 period were due to

the changes in the HOPE eligibility criteria, or if they were a part of a long-term trend of rising or lowering academic quality statistics, Welch's *T*-tests were also applied to the data representing the years 1997 through 1999. Results from these years that mirror the analysis years were believed to possibly indicate that changes occurring in the academic quality variables would have occurred with or without the HOPE policy changes.

The Welch's *T*-Tests were performed by inserting the data for each variable, during each year of the analysis, into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Once the data were entered for both the Georgia institutions and the Peer institutions, *T*-test function specifications were entered into an appropriately empty cell (University of Trieste 2006). Once the analyses were run, significance values were produced.

Descriptive and Inferential Statistics

In order to be as accurate and conclusive as possible in testing the relationships between the included populations, both descriptive and inferential statistical procedure were utilized.

Descriptive statistics attempt to describe either the population or sample of the population that is being studied (Trochim and Donnelly 2006). In this analysis, attempts were made to collect data from the entire study population, although a sample of the population was more likely. On their own, descriptive statistics should not be used to make generalizations about all populations, in this case, all states with merit-based scholarship programs. Finding the means, or the averages of the sets of scores, is one of the primary steps when conducting t-tests (Trochim and Donnelly 2006). They are classified as descriptive statistics (Trochim and Donnelly 2006). The variance and standard deviation (the square root of the variance, which is used to indicate where the

majority of the sampled population is distributed) are key components of *T*-tests (Trochim and Donnelly 2006). One of the variables included in the study included the range, or the distance between the higher and lower data points, between quartiles, another type of descriptive statistic (Trochim and Donnelly 2006).

The inferential statistical procedures used in this analysis were included in an attempt to make generalizations about the larger populations from what could be found from the descriptive statistical procedures. Although a large sample size existed, the descriptive statistics related to the institutions with HOPE Scholarship-eligible students and their peer institutions was not believed to apply to all colleges and universities (Trochim and Donnelly 2006). The *T*-test is one of the most commonly used tools for testing hypotheses about the relationship between the means of two sets of data. In order to correctly administer the *T*-test, the null hypothesis must be stated. If the null hypothesis is rejected, the difference between the two means has significance and the researcher can be confident that the difference will exist amongst the greater population. If the null hypothesis is not rejected, the difference between the means is not significant, could have occurred by chance, and the researcher cannot be confident that difference will exist amongst the greater population. When reporting results from the *T*-test, several assumptions must be confirmed in order to maximize the analyses' accuracy (Trochim and Donnelly 2006). These assumptions include the following:

The data must be sampled from a normally distributed population: This implies that the sample data will be shaped like a curve, with the majority of the sample's population clustering near a central value, with higher and lower values tapering off to either extreme (Norman and Steiner 2002). This assumption exists more in theory than in

reality as data are rarely absolutely normally distributed (Norman and Steiner 2002).

For two-sample tests, homogeneity of variance must exist: Variance tells how far each value within the sample is from the mean. Again, this assumption exists more in theory as achieving uniform variance is nearly impossible.

Data collected to run the tests should be collected independently from the sample populations being compared: Independence in data collection ensures that one participant/statistic does not influence another statistic or is used in any other statistic. This assumption is vital and can be upheld as long as proper recordkeeping and testing procedures are exercised.

The Welch's *T*-test is different from the basic *T*-test in a few key areas, most notably in its assumption of variance (Minitab 2010). Generally, *t*-tests are administered for groups of roughly the same sample size where a certain commonality of standard deviation and variance between the samples is assumed. Welch's *T*-test does not assume that the samples have the same standard deviation or variance. This test is useful, especially in the context of this analysis, because it goes further than asking if two samples differ by determining how different the samples' means are from each other (Sawilowsky 2002).

The Welch's *T*-test is administered, like the basic *t*-test, by finding the difference between each samples' means and assigning this number as the numerator. It differs from other t-tests because the denominator is not based on a pooled variance estimate and instead is estimated by employing the Welch-Satterthwaite equation (Sawilowsky 2002). This equation gives an approximation of the effective degrees of freedom of a linear combination of independent sample variances (Satterthwaite 1946). From here, these

statistics can be inserted into the normal *t*-test equation in order to test the hypothesis. Attaining the means of each of the academic quality variables was conducted as follows:

For the entering freshman GPA variable, the raw average GPA data reported by each institution were observed and used in statistical comparison. The total, aggregate GPA for Georgia institutions and non-Georgia institutions was computed for each year of the analysis in order to make comparison between the institutions. The mean of each year's sample were tabulated before performing a Welch's *T*-test;

For the entering freshman acceptance rate variable, the raw average acceptance rate data reported by each institution were observed. The total, aggregate acceptance rate for Georgia institutions and non-Georgia institutions was computed for each year of the analysis in order to make comparison between the institutions. If the acceptance rate was not provided, the total number of applicants was divided into the total number of accepted applicants in order to determine the acceptance rate. The mean of each year's sample was tabulated before performing a Welch's *T*-test;

For the entering freshman SAT 25th-75th quartile variable, each quartile was calculated independently using the raw data reported by the institutions, creating variables thereafter referred to as "SAT 25th quartile" and "SAT 75th quartile." These data included the SAT Critical Reading and Mathematics sections, but did not include the SAT Writing scores which were introduced in 2005. In order to attain a cumulative 25th and 75th quartiles, the means were calculated for the SAT Critical Reading and the Mathematics sections for both quartiles for each institution. These means served as the representative test statistics for these variables. Raw ACT composite 25th and 75th quartile scores were converted into SAT scores by using a score conversion chart

provided by Collegeboard.org. The converted ACT percentiles were factored into the SAT 25th percentile and SAT 75th percentile variable means of each year's sample before conducting a Welch's *T*-test;

For the freshman retention rate variable, the raw percentage data reported by each institution were observed. The total, aggregate freshman retention rate for Georgia institutions and non-Georgia institutions was computed for each year of the analysis in order to make comparison between the institutions. The mean of each year's sample were tabulated before performing a Welch's *T*-test;

For the six-year graduation rate variable, the raw percentage data reported by each institution were observed. The total, aggregate six-year graduation rate for Georgia institutions and non-Georgia institutions was computed for each year of the analysis in order to make comparison between the institutions. The mean of each year's sample were tabulated before performing a Welch's *T*-test.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions were all related to the perceived effect of the HOPE Scholarship program on each of the included academic quality variables. They were as follows:

Research Question 1: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the entering freshman 25th SAT percentile and 75th SAT percentile for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and the included peer institutions (see Appendix B) for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

Research Hypothesis: The entering freshman 25th and 75th SAT percentiles for included Georgia institutions is significantly higher than the included peer institutions in each year

since the 2000 HOPE policy changes.

Null Hypothesis: There is no statistically significant difference in the entering freshman 25th and 75th percentiles for the included Georgia institutions and the included peer institutions in each year since the HOPE policy changes.

Research Question 2: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the freshman retention rate for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and the included peer institutions (see Appendix B) for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

Research Hypothesis: The freshman retention rate for included Georgia institutions is significantly higher than for the included peer institutions in each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes.

Null Hypothesis: There is no statistically significant difference in the freshman retention rate for the included Georgia institutions and the included peer institutions in each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes.

Research Question 3: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the six-year graduation rate for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and the included peer institutions (see Appendix B) for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

Research Hypothesis: The six-year graduation rate for the included Georgia institutions is significantly higher than for the included peer institutions in each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes.

Null Hypothesis: There is no statistically significant difference in the six-year graduation rate for the included Georgia institutions and the included peer institutions in each year since the HOPE policy changes.

Research Question 4: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the entering freshman GPAs for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and the included peer institutions (see Appendix B) for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

Research Hypothesis: The entering freshman GPA for included Georgia institutions is significantly higher than the included peer institutions in each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes.

Null Hypothesis: There is no statistically significant difference in entering freshman GPA for the included Georgia institutions and the included peer institutions in each year since the HOPE policy changes.

Research Question 5: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the entering freshman acceptance rate for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and the included peer institutions (see Appendix B) for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

Research Hypothesis: The entering freshman acceptance rate for included Georgia institutions is significantly higher than the included peer institutions in each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes.

Null Hypothesis: There is no statistically significant difference in the entering freshman acceptance rate for the included Georgia institutions and the included peer institutions in each year since the HOPE policy changes.

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the steps that were taken in order to effectively answer the research questions presented in the chapter, and are at the core of what this analysis sought to determine. The variables included have been argued by scholars as effective indicators of institutional quality and are frequently referenced in university rankings and prestige publications. The process used to select institutions for analysis provides a comprehensive assortment of higher education institutions that represent the cross-section of colleges and universities within the state of Georgia, as well as the greater United States of America. The research methods devices that were used were valid and reliable indicators of the performances of both the Georgia sample as well as the peer sample, providing valuable insight into the effect that the HOPE Scholarship has had on the included institutions.

The next chapter provides a meticulous overview of what the tests concluded from the collected data. Basic assumptions are made about what the results mean and why the results are significant.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

This research study was conducted to understand any possible relationship between the Georgia HOPE Scholarship program and academic quality of Georgia's higher education institutions. This chapter provides an analysis of the collected data.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through the combination of accessing readily available data found on college and universities respective offices of institutional research webpages as well as through e-mail solicitation. The e-mails were sent to research and data analyst professionals in each institution's office of institutional research. A total of 123 officials were sent an initial e-mail between August 1, 2012 and October 12, 2012 (see Appendix B). This e-mail described the study and requested the needed data. Minor changes were made to each e-mail due to the varying amounts of data that each institution had previously made available on their webpages. Appropriate alterations were made to the e-mails in order to ensure that the correct data was requested.

Acquiring the requisite data revealed a number of diversities in regards to the general availability of institutional information. Generally, the vast majority of institutions made at least a portion of their institutional information, specifically CDSs, available on their webpages with less than ten of the included institutions not providing data online. Of those that did have information posted on institutional webpages,

roughly two-thirds of the institutions had data available dating back to 2003, which is the midpoint of the analysis' timeframe, although only four institutional websites possessed data for every year of the analysis. Of the institutions that were e-mailed, which was almost all of them, a little more than 60% responded to e-mail inquiries. Many of the respondents provided additional CDSs or provided the requested information in non-CDS form, although much of the time, very little additional information was provided. Ultimately, around two-thirds of the data compiled was derived directly from what was available on college and university webpages, while the other third was acquired through direct e-mail solicitation.

Although determining an exact response rate is difficult due to the fact that varying amounts of data were provided for each year, statistic, and variable, reasonable estimates were made by breaking the data down between two time periods: 1997 through 2001 and 2002 through 2008. For some reason, data were much more readily available, particularly for the Georgia institutions, after 2001. During the first five years, roughly two-thirds of the data were missing for the included institutions for any particular variable. Because of the lower response rate, less confidence was given to the effects of the HOPE Scholarship during this time period. During the final seven years, however, only about thirty percent of the data were missing, drastically improving the confidence in the results.

Upon receiving the e-mail responses, data were acquired for each year from 1997 through 2008. The response rates from the Georgia and peer institutions is detailed in Appendix F.

Data Screening

Descriptive statistics were used in order to ensure that the means and standard deviations were plausible. In the earlier of the included years, data were more difficult to obtain. As a result, both the Georgia sample pool and the peer sample pool were smaller than in later years. While these years were still included in the final analysis, proper discretion must be exercised when making assumptions from small sample sizes. For certain variables in the 1997 and 1998 years, the sample size for the Georgia institutions was one, therefore, these years were omitted from the analysis.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the entering freshman 25th SAT percentile and 75th SAT percentile for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and the included peer institutions (see Appendix B) for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

For both SAT 25th percentile and 75th percentile data were received from between two and twelve of the Georgia institutions and between 12 and 108 of the peer institutions depending on the year. During each year of the analysis, the conditions were met to perform the Welch's *T*-tests. These conditions were met by including data from a comparable sample of institutions which produced a normal population. Also, none of the data were believed to influence any of the other data, as they were sampled independently of each other. As stated in the methods section, Welch's *T*-tests do not require equal variance, therefore, this condition was not met.

From 1997 through 2001, only two of the Georgia institutions returned percentile data, one of which was Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech). Georgia Tech

consistently reports the highest SAT scores of any of the included Georgia institutions and with only one other institution to balance this effect out, the mean SAT 25th percentile was generally between 60 and 90 points higher for the Georgia institutions during the 1997 through 2001 timeframe than during the rest of the period. The higher prevalence of Georgia Tech's peer that provided SAT scores during this timeframe resulted in a similar effect for the peer institutions, who were found to generally have higher mean scores from the 1997 through 2001 timeframe, than during the remainder of the included years. Between 1997 and 2001, the two Georgia institutions' 25th percentile mean SAT scores were between 1055 (1997 and 1998) and 1085 (2002). During the same time period, the peer institutions' 25th percentile mean SAT scores were between 993.93 (2002) and 1042.61 (1998). A Welch's *T*-test was performed during each year of analysis between the two samples with a low *P*-value of .6343 (2001) and a high *P*-value of .9462 (1998), leading to the conclusion that in none of the years were the differences between the samples statistically significant. This results in a decision by the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Between 2002 and 2009, SAT percentile scores were found for at least 11 Georgia institutions each year and at least 96 peer institutions each year. During this time frame, the Georgia intuitions' 25th percentile mean SAT scores were between 966.82 (2002) and 995 (2005). During the same time period, the peer institutions' 25th percentile mean SAT scores were between 978.44 (2002) and 996.10 (2005). *P*-value scores for this time period ranged from .7260 (2008) to .9744 (2005), leading to the conclusion that in none of the years were the differences between the samples statistically significant. This results in a decision by the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis. The following

tables contain statistics associated with the 25th SAT percentiles. Table 1 includes the Georgia institutions' aggregate descriptive statistical data. Table 2 includes the Peer institutions' aggregate descriptive statistical data. Table 3 includes inferential statistical data obtained from conducting tests of significance between the Georgia institutions and the peer institutions.

Table 1:

Georgia Higher Education Institutions 25th SAT Percentiles

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1997	2	1055	247.49	175
1998	3	1050	160	92.38
1999	2	1055	233.35	165
2000	2	1085	233.35	165
2001	2	1095	219.20	155
2002	11	966.82	117.22	35.34
2003	12	975.25	110.92	32.02
2004	12	990.83	110.41	31.87
2005	12	995	107.58	31.05
2006	12	991.08	105.45	30.44
2007	12	988.67	83.34	24.06
2008	12	982.50	111.94	32.31

Table 2:

Peer Higher Education Institutions 25th SAT Percentiles

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1997	12	1004.17	120.94	34.91
1998	23	1042.61	141.97	29.60
1999	36	1028.47	143.61	23.94
2000	46	1022.39	139.67	20.59
2001	56	993.93	140.20	18.74
2002	96	978.44	141.65	14.46
2003	99	987.20	141.11	14.18
2004	102	988.28	140.13	13.87
2005	105	996.10	138.16	13.48
2006	108	986.96	133.99	12.89
2007	105	990.03	138.26	13.49
2008	107	994.95	134.49	13.00

Table 3:

Georgia and Peer Higher Education Institutions 25th SAT percentile *T*-values, *P*-values and Significance Levels

Year	T	p	Df	Significance Level
1997	.2849	.8233	1	Not significant
1998	.0762	.9462	2	Not significant
1999	.1591	.8996	1	Not significant
2000	.3765	.7707	1	Not significant
2001	.6474	.6343	1	Not significant
2002	.3043	.7567	13	Not significant
2003	.3413	.7376	15	Not significant
2004	.0733	.9425	15	Not significant
2005	.0326	.9744	15	Not significant
2006	.1246	.9025	15	Not significant
2007	.0494	.9612	18	Not significant
2008	.3575	.7260	14	Not significant

Similar to the SAT 25th percentiles, the SAT 75th percentiles were generally sparse from 1997 through 2001 (two or three Georgia institutions and between 12 and 56 peer institutions), while later years saw a substantial increase in provided SAT scores (11 or 12 Georgia institutions and between 96 and 107 peer institutions). Also, like the 25th percentile scores, Georgia Tech was one of the two or three respondents, and may once again be responsible for the Georgia scores being substantially higher during the first of the five years included than during later years. Between 1997 and 2001, the Georgia institutions' mean, 75th percentile SAT scores were between 1240 (1997 and 1998 and 1265 (2001). During the same time period, the peer institutions' mean, 75th percentile SAT scores ranged from 1200.36 (2001) and 1239.43 (1998). A Welch's *T*-test was performed between the samples for each year of the analysis with *P*-values ranging from .75 (2002) and .9961 (1998), leading to the conclusion that none of the differences between the samples was considered statistically significant. This results in a decision by the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Between 2002 and 2009, SAT percentile scores were found for at least 11 Georgia institutions each year and at least 96 peer institutions each year. During this time period, the Georgia institutions' mean, 75th percentile SAT scores were between 1156.36 (2002) and 1181.67 (2005). From 2002 through 2009, the peer institutions' mean, 75th percentile SAT scores ranged from 1186.67 (2002) and 1202.61 (2005). *P*-values acquired from Welch's *T*-tests performed between the samples for each year of the analysis ranged from .2957 (2007) and .5289 (2005), leading to the conclusion that none of the differences between the samples was considered statistically significant. This results in a decision by the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

The following tables contain statistics associated with the 75th SAT percentiles. Table 4 includes the Georgia institutions' aggregate descriptive statistical data. Table 5 includes the Peer institutions' aggregate descriptive statistical data. Table 6 includes inferential statistical data obtained from conducting tests of significance between the Georgia institutions and the peer institutions.

Table 4:

Georgia Higher Education Institutions 75th SAT Percentiles

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1997	2	1240	240.42	170
1998	3	1240	170	98.15
1999	2	1242.5	243.95	172.5
2000	2	1255	233.35	165
2001	2	1265	219.2	155
2002	11	1156.36	111.92	33.74
2003	12	1166.67	103.69	29.93
2004	12	1174.75	104.08	30.05
2005	12	1181.67	103.29	29.82
2006	12	1166.67	104.39	30.13
2007	12	1163.08	87.71	25.32
2008	12	1177.5	100.37	28.98

Table 5:

Peer Higher Education Institutions 75th SAT Percentiles

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1997	12	1217.5	120.92	34.91
1998	23	1239.43	139.39	29.04
1999	36	1229.86	135.65	22.61
2000	46	1225.87	139.26	20.53
2001	56	1200.36	134.88	18.02
2002	96	1186.67	134.58	13.74
2003	99	1192.17	138.97	13.97
2004	102	1196.08	135.76	13.44
2005	104	1202.61	131.30	12.87
2006	107	1194.25	134.26	12.98
2007	105	1194	138.56	13.52
2008	107	1202.48	133.45	12.90

Table 6:

Georgia and Peer Higher Education Institutions SAT 75th Percentile *T*-values, *P*-values and Significance Levels

Year	T	P	Df	Significance Level
1997	.1296	.9179	1	Not significant
1998	.0055	.9961	2	Not significant
1999	.0726	.9538	1	Not significant
2000	.1752	.8896	1	Not significant
2001	.4143	.7500	1	Not significant
2002	.8317	.4206	13	Not significant
2003	.7722	.4513	15	Not significant
2004	.6480	.5268	15	Not significant
2005	.6447	.5289	15	Not significant
2006	.8408	.4137	15	Not significant
2007	1.0771	.2957	18	Not significant
2008	.7875	.4433	15	Not significant

Research Question 2: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the freshman retention rate for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and the included peer institutions (see Appendix B) for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

The reported freshman retention rates, like the SAT percentiles, experienced an

increase in the number of respondents from the early years of the study to the later years. From 1997 to 2001, the number of Georgia institutional respondents ranged from three to five, while the peer institutions ranged from 19 to 55. From 2002 through 2008, the number of Georgia institutional respondents ranged from seven to 11, and the peer institutions ranged from 69 to 84. The associated statistics will be reported in the same 1997 through 2001 and 2002 through 2009 timeframes. During each year of the analysis, the conditions were met to perform the Welch's *T*-tests. These conditions were met by including data from a comparable sample of institutions which produced a normal population. Also, none of the data were believed to influence any of the other data as they were sampled independently of each other. As previously stated, Welch's *T*-tests do not require equal variance, therefore, this condition was not met.

Between 1997 and 2001, the Georgia institutions' mean freshman retention rates were between 67.45 (1999) and 73.28 (2000). During the same time period, the peer institutions' mean freshman retention rates were between 77.83 (1997) and 81.82 (1998). A Welch's *T*-test was performed during each year of analysis between the two samples with a low *P*-value of .1953 (1999) and a high *P*-value of .5309 (1997), leading to the conclusion that in none of the years were the differences between the samples statistically significant. This results in a decision by the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

From 2002 through 2009, the Georgia institutions' mean freshman retention rates were between 74.1786 (2002) and 78.109 (2008). During the same time period, the peer institutions' mean freshman retention rates were between 77.964 (2008) and 79.7237 (2004). The *P*-values derived from Welch's *T*-tests conducted between the samples

during each year of the analysis ranged from .2311 (2002) and .9629 (2008), leading to the conclusion that in none of the years were the differences between the samples statistically significant. This results in a decision by the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis.

The following tables contain statistics associated with freshman retention rates. Table 7 includes the Georgia institutions' aggregate descriptive statistical data. Table 8 includes the Peer institutions' aggregate descriptive statistical data. Table 9 includes inferential statistical data obtained from conducting tests of significance between the Georgia institutions and the peer institutions.

Table 7:

Georgia Higher Education Institutions Freshman Retention Rates

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1997	3	72	13	7.506
1998	3	71.967	13.050	7.534
1999	4	67.450	15.254	7.627
2000	5	73.275	10.45595	4.67604
2001	5	72.260	11.179	5
2002	7	74.1786	8.3419	3.1529
2003	10	76.170	9.205	2.911
2004	11	77.8018	8.6366	2.6040
2005	11	78.182	8.815	2.658
2006	11	76.191	9.224	2.781
2007	11	76.8	8.943	2.696
2008	11	78.109	8.750	2.638

Table 8:

Peer Higher Education Institutions Freshman Retention Rates

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1997	19	77.832	8.642	1.983
1998	28	81.818	9.123	1.724
1999	41	80.4	10.344	1.615
2000	49	80.66939	10.64396	1.52057
2001	55	79.893	9.734	1.313
2002	69	78.6290	11.3012	1.3605
2003	70	79.143	11.625	1.389
2004	76	79.7237	11.0970	1.2729
2005	80	78.848	11.3	1.263
2006	84	79.133	11.429	1.247
2007	83	79.155	11.542	1.267
2008	84	77.964	14.289	1.559

Table 9:

Georgia and Peer Higher Education Institutions Freshman Retention Rate *T*-values, *P*-values and Significance Levels

Year	T	P	Df	Significance Level
1997	.7512	.5309	2	Not significant
1998	1.2745	.3305	2	Not significant
1999	1.6611	.1953	3	Not significant
2000	1.5038	.2071	4	Not significant
2001	1.4766	.2138	4	Not significant
2002	1.2960	.2311	8	Not significant
2003	.9217	.3735	13	Not significant
2004	.6631	.5174	15	Not significant
2005	.6447	.5803	14	Not significant
2006	.9654	.3507	14	Not significant
2007	.7906	.4424	14	Not significant
2008	.0473	.9629	17	Not significant

Research Question 3: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the six-year graduation rate for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and the included peer institutions (see Appendix B) for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

Before delving into the six-year graduation analyses, it is important to note that with the HOPE Scholarship going into effect in 1993, that the six-year graduation rates

reported for the years 1997 and 1998 will include students who did not have access to the scholarship for a portion of their college careers.

Six-year graduation rates followed the pattern set by reported SAT scores and freshman retention rate in the sense that from 1997 through 2001, less than half of the included Georgia institutions and less than half of the peer institutions provided data. From 2002 through 2008, at least half of the Georgia institutions and at least half of the peer institutions provided six-year graduation rate data. Like the previous variables' samples, observations were made for the 1997 through 2001 timeframe and for the 2002 through 2008 timeframe. During each year of the analysis, the conditions were met to perform the Welch's *T*-tests. These conditions were met by including data from a comparable sample of institutions which produced a normal population. Also, none of the data were believed to influence any of the other data as they were sampled independently of each other. As previously stated, Welch's *T*-tests do not require equal variance, therefore, this condition was not met.

Between 1997 and 2001, the Georgia institutions' mean freshman six-year graduation rates were between 34.180 (2000) and 40.333 (1997). During the same time period, the peer institutions' mean freshman six-year graduation rates were between 47.676 (1997) and 57.738 (1998). Welch's *T*-tests were performed during each year of analysis between the two samples with a low *P*-value of .0280 (2000) and a high *P*-value of .6757 (1997). Although only the difference experienced in 2000 is considered statistically significant, it is important to mention that the 1997 *P*-value was significantly higher than any other year during this period, with all other years' *P*-values being .1666 or lower. This results in a decision by the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis

for all years except 2000.

From 2002 through 2008, the Georgia institutions' mean freshman six-year graduation rates were between 35.7821 (2002) with a low standard deviation of 16.9744 (2005) and 43.400 (2008) and a high standard deviation of 18.182 (2006). During the same time period, the peer institutions' mean freshman six-year graduation rates were between 52.1915 (2004) with a low standard deviation of 19.7512 (2004) and 55.625 (2008) and a high standard deviation of 21.2744 (2002). The *P*-values derived from Welch's *T*-tests conducted between the samples during each year of the analysis ranged from .0185 (2003) and .4424 (2007). As a result, the difference between the samples is believed to be significant in the years 2003, 2005, and 2008 and not statistically significant in the years 2004, 2006, and 2007. This results in a decision by the research to fail to reject the null hypothesis during the years, 2004, 2006, and 2007 and to reject it for 2003, 2005, and 2008.

The following tables contain statistics associated with six-year graduation rates. Table 10 includes the Georgia institutions' aggregate descriptive statistical data. Table 11 includes the Peer institutions' aggregate descriptive statistical data. Table 12 includes inferential statistical data obtained from conducting tests of significance between the Georgia institutions and the peer institutions.

Table 10:

Georgia Higher Education Institutions Six-Year Graduation Rates

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1997	3	40.333	25.775	14.881
1998	4	35.575	23.511	11.755
1999	5	35.780	19.695	8.808
2000	6	34.18	18.0624	7.3739
2001	5	35.380	19.706	8.813
2002	7	35.7871	16.9828	6.4189
2003	10	39.790	17.466	5.523
2004	12	41.9025	17.5403	5.0634
2005	12	41.9442	16.9744	4.9001
2006	12	42.808	18.182	5.249
2007	12	44.608	17.627	5.088
2008	12	43.4	18.13	5.234

Table 11:

Peer Higher Education Institutions Six-Year Graduation Rates

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1997	17	47.676	11.649	2.825
1998	26	57.738	16.430	3.222
1999	39	54.905	17.945	2.874
2000	47	56.7170	17.9048	2.6117
2001	53	54.417	18.822	2.585
2002	65	55.0420	21.2744	2.6388
2003	68	56.122	20.738	2.515
2004	106	52.1915	19.7512	1.9184
2005	109	53.2670	19.7998	1.8965
2006	107	53.504	20.052	1.939
2007	107	53.987	19.705	1.905
2008	108	55.625	19.918	1.917

Table 12:

Georgia and Peer Higher Education Institutions Six-Year Graduation Rate *T*-values, *P*-values and Significance Levels

Year	T	P	Df	Significance Level
1997	.4848	.6757	2	Not significant
1998	1.8183	.1666	3	Not significant
1999	2.0643	.1079	4	Not significant
2000	2.8809	.0280	6	Significant
2001	2.0728	.1069	4	Not significant
2002	2.7744	.0241	8	Significant
2003	2.6911	.0185	13	Significant
2004	1.9002	.0782	14	Almost significant
2005	2.1550	.0491	14	Significant
2006	1.9115	.0766	14	Almost significant
2007	1.7261	.1063	14	Not Significant
2008	2.1934	.0457	14	Significant

The remaining two categories of variables, entering freshman GPA and entering freshman acceptance rate, include years (1997 and 1998) where only one of the included Georgia institutions provided the necessary data. Because of this, neither year's samples were tested for significance due to the problems associated with having only one institution representing the entire sample. As such, the conditions were not met in 1997 and 1998 to perform the Welch's *T*-test for entering freshman GPA and entering freshman acceptance rate, however, conditions were met to run Welch's *T*-tests in every other year of analysis. These conditions were met from 1999 through 2008 by including data from a comparable sample of institutions which produced a normal population. In 1997 and 1998, data were only provided by one Georgia institution which could not have produced a normal population. None of the data were believed to influence any of the other data as they were sampled independently of each other. As previously stated, Welch's *T*-tests do not require equal variance, therefore, this condition was not met. Like the previously discussed variables, data were more available for both the Georgia

institutions as well as the peer institutions after 2002, although freshman grade point average data were never made available by more than half of the peer institutions. As such, these variables will be split into timeframes from 1999 through 2002 and from 2003 through 2008.

Research Question 4: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the entering freshman GPAs for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and the included peer institutions (see Appendix B) for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

Between 1999 and 2002, the Georgia institutions' mean entering freshman undergraduate GPAs were between 2.885 (1999) and 3.00 (2001). During the same time period, the peer institutions' mean entering freshman undergraduate grade point averages were between 3.3367 (2002) and 3.4035 (1999). Welch's *T*-tests were performed during each year of analysis between the two samples with a low *P*-value of .0001 (2000 and 2001) and a high *P*-value of .0233 (2002). In all of these cases, the differences are considered to be very statistically significant. This results in a decision to reject the null hypothesis for all years.

From 2003 through 2008, the Georgia institutions' mean entering freshman undergraduate grade point averages were between 3.1562 (2004) and 3.2215 (2008). During the same time period, the peer institutions' mean entering freshman undergraduate grade point averages were between 3.3118 (2006) and 3.3602 (2004). The *P*-values derived from Welch's *T*-tests conducted between the samples during each year of the analysis ranged from .0248 (2004) and .2564 (2006). The *P*-values for 2003 (.0347) and 2004 (.0248) suggest that the difference between the samples is statistically significant, although after 2004, each *P*-value is too large to suggest that the differences

are statistically significant. This results in a decision by the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis for all years from 2005 through 2008 with the exception of 2004. The null hypothesis is rejected for 2003 and 2004.

The following tables contain statistics associated with entering freshman GPAs. Table 13 includes the Georgia institutions' aggregate descriptive statistical data. Table 14 includes the Peer institutions' aggregate descriptive statistical data. Table 15 includes inferential statistical data obtained from conducting tests of significance between the Georgia institutions and the peer institutions.

Table 13:

Georgia Higher Education Institutions Entering Freshman GPAs

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1999	2	2.885	.06364	.0450
2000	3	2.99	.01	.00577
2001	2	3	.01414	.01
2002	5	3.0420	.1947	.0871
2003	13	3.1592	.2709	.0751
2004	13	3.1562	.2650	.0735
2005	13	3.1831	.2620	.0727
2006	13	3.2177	.2552	.0708
2007	13	3.2208	.2679	.0743
2008	13	3.2215	.2826	.0784

Table 14:

Peer Higher Education Institutions Entering Freshman GPAs

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1999	27	3.40348	.23851	.04590
2000	34	3.39526	.32313	.05542
2001	41	3.35551	.31074	.04853
2002	46	3.3367	.2966	.0437
2003	43	3.3553	.2812	.0429
2004	53	3.3602	.2918	.0401
2005	56	3.3221	.2786	.0372
2006	61	3.3118	.2983	.0382
2007	57	3.3218	.2949	.0391
2008	59	3.3590	.2599	.0338

Table 15:

Georgia and Peer Higher Education Institutions Entering Freshman GPA *T*-values, *P*-values and Significance Levels

Year	T	P	Df	Significance Level
1999	8.0660	.0040	3	Very significant
2000	7.2738	.0001	33	Very significant
2001	7.1749	.0001	40	Very significant
2002	3.0245	.0233	6	Significant
2003	2.2667	.0347	20	Significant
2004	2.4369	.0248	19	Significant
2005	1.7034	.1057	18	Not significant
2006	1.1702	.2564	19	Not significant
2007	1.2030	.2438	19	Not significant
2008	1.6098	.1270	16	Not significant

Research Question 5: Does a statistically significant difference exist between the entering freshman acceptance rate for the included Georgia institutions (see Appendix B) and the included peer institutions (see Appendix B) for each year since the 2000 HOPE policy changes?

As previously discussed, entering freshman acceptance rates were also limited in the initial years included in the study and included only one Georgia institution for both

1997 and 1998. Because of this, the conditions were not met in 1997 and 1998 to perform the Welch's *T*-test for entering freshman GPA and entering freshman acceptance rate, however, conditions were met to run Welch's *T*-tests in every other year of analysis. These conditions were met from 1999 through 2008 by including data from a comparable sample of institutions which produced a normal population. In 1997 and 1998, data were only provided by one Georgia institution which could not have produced a normal population. None of the data were believed to influence any of the other data as they were sampled independently of each other. As previously stated, Welch's *T*-tests do not require equal variance, therefore, this condition was not met. Again, the logical organization calls for the samples to be split into the 1999 through 2002 timeframe, where less than half of the Georgia institutions' information was available, and from 2003 through 2008, where more than half of the data were provided.

Between 1999 and 2002, the Georgia institutions' mean entering freshman acceptance rate averages were between 77.5 (1999 and 63.833 (2002). During the same time period, the peer institutions' mean entering freshman acceptance rate averages were between 68.264 (2001) and 62.90 (2000). Welch's *T*-tests were performed during each year of analysis between the two samples with a low *P*-value of .0009 (2000) and a high *P*-value of .5295 (2002). This results in a decision by the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis for 1999, 2001, and 2002. The null hypothesis is rejected for 2000.

From 2003 through 2008, the Georgia institutions' mean entering freshman undergraduate acceptance rates were between 65.11 (2003) and 56.667 (2007). During the same time period, the peer institutions' mean entering freshman undergraduate acceptance rates ranged between 68.197 (2005) and 64.16 (2008). The *P*-values derived

from Welch's *T*-tests conducted between the samples during each year of the analysis ranged from .0006 (2007) and .8375 (2003). The entering freshman acceptance rate is the one variable where the years, other than 2000, with statistically significant differences, acknowledged that the differences favored the Georgia institutions. Statistically significant differences every year from 2005 through 2008 imply the extent to which the Georgia institutions were selective compared to their peer institutions. This results in a decision by the researcher to fail to reject the null hypothesis from 2003 through 2004. The null hypothesis is rejected for the years 2005 through 2008.

The following tables contain statistics associated with entering freshman acceptance rates. Table 16 includes the Georgia institutions' aggregate descriptive statistical data. Table 17 includes the Peer institutions' aggregate descriptive statistical data. Table 18 includes inferential statistical data obtained from conducting tests of significance between the Georgia institutions and the peer institutions.

Table 16:

Georgia Higher Education Institutions Entering Freshman Acceptance Rates

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1999	2	77.5	13.435	9.5
2000	3	76	3	1.732
2001	3	64.333	6.658	3.844
2002	6	63.833	6.616	2.701
2003	9	65.11	6.57	2.19
2004	10	64.3	6.129	1.938
2005	10	61.9	4.954	1.567
2006	12	58.083	6.748	1.948
2007	12	56.667	5.382	1.554
2008	12	58.92	4.76	1.37

Table 17:

Peer Higher Education Institutions Entering Freshman Acceptance Rates

Year	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
1999	39	65.731	19.242	3.081
2000	42	62.9	18.752	2.893
2001	53	68.264	19.936	2.738
2002	62	66.261	20.850	2.648
2003	60	65.83	21.13	2.73
2004	62	67.202	20.491	2.602
2005	62	68.197	20.022	2.543
2006	101	67.789	19.211	1.912
2007	100	65.649	19.055	1.905
2008	98	64.16	20.36	2.06

Table 18:

Georgia and Peer Higher Education Institutions Entering Freshman Acceptance Rate *T*-values, *P*-values and Significance Levels

Year	T	P	Df	Significance Level
1999	1.1784	.4480	1	Not significant
2000	3.8847	.0009	20	Very significant
2001	.8328	.4518	44	Not significant
2002	.6419	.5295	17	Not significant
2003	.2065	.8375	39	Not significant
2004	.8942	.3758	47	Not significant
2005	2.1083	.0393	58	Significant
2006	3.5562	.0010	38	Very significant
2007	3.6533	.0006	55	Very significant
2008	2.1218	.0373	73	Significant

Summary

In summary, the response rate was between three and one hundred and nine institutions, depending on the year analyzed. Unfortunately, only four of the six variables could be used for the 1997 and 1998 years due to low response rate, resulting in a less than an ideal baseline.

Null hypothesis 1 regarded SAT percentiles. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis during the duration of the study for both SAT 25th and 75th percentiles.

Null hypothesis 2 regarded first-year freshman retention rate. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis during the duration of the study.

Null hypothesis 3 regarded six-year graduation rate. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis for the years 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2004, and 2006. The null hypothesis is rejected for the years 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2008.

Null hypothesis 4 regarded entering freshman grade point averages. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis from 2005 through 2008. The null hypothesis is rejected from the years 1999 through 2004.

Null hypothesis 5 regarded entering freshman acceptance rate. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis from 1999 through 2004. The null hypothesis is rejected during the years 2005 through 2008.

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations that have arisen from the results of the research. A brief review of the study's purpose, research design, and data analysis is included, as well as final conclusions and recommendations for future studies related to merit-based scholarships and the HOPE Scholarship in particular.

State merit-based scholarship programs continue to provide access to higher education for much of the population (Doyle 2006). The concept of keeping the "best and the brightest" within the state not only allows states to maintain their own human capital, but can also positively affect the student population of state universities (Zhang and Ness 2010). More able student populations' increases popular perception and can positively impact the academic quality of institutions (Pike 2004).

Georgia's HOPE Scholarship has been studied at length and numerous analyses have been conducted to determine the effects that the scholarship has had on Georgia students and universities (Cornwell, Lee, and Mustard 2003; Cornwell, Mustard, and Sridhar 2006; Dynarski 2000; Francis 2001; Henry, Rubenstein, and Bugler 2004). However, these studies have generally been limited to select universities or have only focused on a single variable. This study has been about discovering the possible effects that the HOPE Scholarship has had on Georgia universities by using these institutions assigned peer institutions as bases of comparison.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine what relationship, existed between the presence of the HOPE Scholarship, specifically since the 2000 policy changes that the program experienced, and academic quality amongst select University System of Georgia institutions. The study contained institutional statistics including both input and output measures that are believed to reflect institutional academic quality.

A quantitative analysis of institutional data was conducted that included significance testing. Data were collected by consulting university office of institutional research webpages, which often contained necessary statistics, and by direct e-mail solicitation. The e-mails were sent to institutional research officials at included colleges and universities.

Six academic quality measures were included (entering freshman SAT 25th percentile, entering freshman SAT 75th percentile, entering freshman cumulative grade point average, freshman retention rate, six-year graduation rate, and entering freshman acceptance rate) and each served as an independent variable for each year of the analysis. In 2000, the HOPE Scholarship program experienced a policy change that required that Georgia high school students attain a 3.0 GPA in college-preparatory classes in order to be eligible for the award. Previously, students only needed to obtain a 3.0 in all high school coursework to be eligible for the award. The presence of the HOPE Scholarship over the course of the study was the dependent variable in the study.

Data Collection

The office of institutional research website for each of the included colleges and universities was consulted in order to find preliminary, institutional data. Most of the

institutions' webpages were missing data from some or all of the years of the analysis and in these cases an e-mail was sent to a member of each institution's office of institutional research requesting the needed data. The reason for the request, as well as the use of the data, were included in the e-mail, as well as specifications about which years and which data in particular were needed. Information was collected over the span of four months.

A total of 143 institutions were included in the analysis (13 Georgia institutions and 130 of the schools' designated peer institutions). An e-mail describing the study and requesting data from these institutions were sent to 123 of the institutions. More data were provided by institutions in more recent years with data from earlier years, specifically pre-2002, being provided in much smaller quantities.

Data Analysis Summary

SAT Percentiles

The first hypothesis tested the significance of the presence of the HOPE Scholarship and its perceived effect on entering freshman SAT scores. From 1997 to 2001, between two and three Georgia institutions provided SAT percentiles and between 12 and 56 peer institutions provided SAT percentiles. Welch's *T*-tests performed between the samples populations revealed no statistically significant differences in entering freshman SAT scores at the 25th or at the 75th percentile levels during this time period. From 1997 through 2001, possibly as a result of a small sample size, statistics revealed both higher scores for Georgia institutions and their peer institutions, as well as an erratic pattern of rising and falling scores.

From 2002 through 2008, 11 or 12 Georgia institutions provided SAT percentiles and between 96 and 108 peer institutions provided SAT percentiles. Welch's *T*-tests

performed between the sample populations revealed no statistically significant differences in entering freshman SAT scores at the 25th or 75th percentile levels during this time period. From 2002 through 2008, Georgia institutions did experience a rise in SAT scores at both the 25th and 75th percentile levels (966.82 to 982.50 and 1156.36 to 1177.50), although their ascent was almost perfectly comparable to the improvement of their peer institutions' scores (978.44 to 994.95 and 1186.67 to 1202.48).

Freshman Retention Rate

The second hypothesis concerned the presence of the HOPE Scholarship and its perceived effect on freshman retention rate. From 1997 through 2001, between two and five Georgia institutions provided freshman retention rate statistics and between 19 and 55 peer institutions provided the same data. Welch's *T*-tests performed between the sample populations revealed no statistically significant differences in the freshman retention rate during this time period. Like the SAT percentile results from 1997 through 2001, both Georgia institutions and their peer institutions experienced erratic rises and falls in the freshman retention academic quality measure, possibly as a result of the smaller sample size.

From 2002 through 2008, between seven and 11 Georgia institutions provided freshman retention rate statistics and between 69 and 84 peer institutions provided the same data. Welch's *T*-tests performed between the sample populations revealed no statistically significant differences during this time period. From 2002 through 2008, Georgia institutions did experience a rise in the mean freshman retention rate (74.1786 to 78.109) and actually rose to a slightly higher level than the peer institutions (78.6290 to 77.964). Although the difference is not statistically significant, the Georgia institution's

more defined ascent may imply that the financial incentive associated with the HOPE Scholarship is enabling students to continue their academic studies.

Six-year Graduation Rate

The third hypothesis concerned the presence of the HOPE Scholarship and its perceived effect on six-year graduation rate. From 1997 through 2001, between three and six Georgia institutions provided six-year graduation rate statistics and between 17 and 53 peer institutions provided the data. Welch's *T*-tests performed between the sample populations revealed a statistically significant difference in six-year graduation rate in 2000, but during none of the other included years.

From 2002 through 2008, between seven and 12 Georgia institutions provided six-year graduation rate statistics and between 65 and 108 peer institutions provided the same data. Welch's *T*-tests performed between the sample populations revealed a statistically significant difference in every year except for 2004 and 2006, where the difference was considered to not be statistically significant by a very small margin. This result is surprising and directly contrasts one of the main HOPE missions to retain the state's "best and brightest" students and graduate them so they can obtain positions within the state of Georgia (Zhang and Ness 2010). While the six-year graduation rates for the Georgia institutions did rise (35.781 in 2002 to 43.4 in 2008), and the peer institutions remained stagnant (55.0420 in 2002 to 55.625 in 2008) the large discrepancy suggests a continuous problem with the Georgia institutions' ability to graduate their students in a timely manner.

Grade Point Average

The fourth hypothesis concerned the presence of the HOPE Scholarship and its

perceived effect on the entering freshman cumulative GPA. From 1999 through 2002, (only one Georgia institution provided data for the 1997 and 1998 years) between two and five Georgia institutions provided cumulative GPA statistics and between 27 and 46 peer institutions provided the same statistics. Welch's *T*-tests performed between the sample populations revealed statistically significant differences in the entering freshman cumulative GPA during every included year with the peer institutions reporting higher mean GPA. Over both time periods, the Georgia institutions' mean cumulative GPA rose (2.885 in 1997 to 3.042 in 2002) while the peer institutions' grades fell (3.40348 in 1999 to 3.3367 in 2002).

From 2003 through 2008, all 13 included Georgia institutions provided cumulative GPA statistics and between 43 and 59 peer institutions provided grade point average data. Welch's *T*-tests performed between the sample populations revealed a statistically significant difference in the entering freshman mean cumulative grade point average in 2003 and 2004, but not for 2005 through 2008, although the peer institutions reported higher mean grade point averages in every year of the study. Georgia institutions' GPAs rose from 3.1592 in 2003 to 3.2215 in 2008, while the peer institutions' GPAs actually declined (3.40348 in 1999 to 3.3367 in 2002) or stagnated (3.3553 in 2002 to 3.3590 in 2008).

Acceptance Rate

The fifth hypothesis concerned the presence of the HOPE Scholarship and its perceived effect on entering freshman acceptance rate. From 1999 through 2002, (only one Georgia institution provided data for the 1997 and 1998 years) between two and six Georgia institutions provided six-year graduation rate statistics and between 39 and 62

peer institutions provided the data. Welch's *T*-tests performed between the sample populations revealed a statistically significant difference in the entering freshman acceptance rate in 2000, but during none of the other included years. In 2000, the *P*-value for this variable was .0009, while in 1999 and 2001 the *P*-value was at least .4480 suggesting that the 2000 year value could have been an outlier.

From 2003 through 2008, between nine and 12 Georgia institutions provided acceptance rate statistics and between 60 and 101 peer institutions provided the same data. Welch's *T*-tests performed between the sample populations revealed a statistically significant difference in every year from 2005 on, suggesting that the Georgia institutions have become more selective in relation to their peers since the HOPE policy changes. Over the entire course of the study, the Georgia institutions' mean acceptance rate fell from 77.5 (1999) to 58.92 (2008), while the peer institutions' remained almost stagnant, falling from 65.731 (1999) to 64.16 (2008).

Discussion

SAT Percentiles

The initial scores between the Georgia institutions and the peer institutions were comparable, although the gaps were wide enough, specifically at the 75th percentile, that much improvement would have been needed to surpass the peers, especially at a statistically significant level. By beginning at a lower aggregate score than the peer institutions, the Georgia institutions were at an inherent disadvantage. This comparable improvement could be the result of a number of factors. National initiatives to improve education in secondary schools such as *No Child Left Behind* may have had a universal effect on schools across the country, leading to similar improvements in standardized test

scores (U.S. Department of Education 2006). Because these initiatives are federally mandated and are effective in all of the K-12 institutions in the United States, it can reasonably be assumed that the effects of such initiatives are universal. As such, comparable gains are not surprising for performance on standardized tests that cannot be manipulated by human influences. Also, the merit-based scholarships present in some of the peer states may have influenced student progress to comparable levels that the HOPE Scholarship influenced students enrolling in Georgia institutions (Hernandez-Julian 2010). Over time, the Georgia institutions may find themselves in a position to overtake the peer institutions, although this possibility appears difficult with the raising standards necessary to receive a full-tuition waiver (which may cause students to attend college out of state) and due to the rising number of other states that are employing merit-based scholarship programs (Georgia Student Finance Commission 2012; Levitz and Thurm 2012).

Retention Rate

The peer institution's overall stagnant growth rate (the retention rate was 77.832 in 1997) may imply that economic conditions at both the macro and micro levels had an impact on students ability to attend college (Paulsen and St. John 2002). With the rise of merit-based scholarships at these institutions, students who lost financial funding may have been less likely to return for their second year (Levitz and Thurm 2012). In addition, the retention rate does not necessarily equate to student dropout rate because these students may have transferred to other institutions between the beginning of their first year and the beginning of their second year of college or university study (Lau 2003). The availability of academic support centers and student learning centers, which

are in many cases directed at freshman students, can contribute to institutional retention rate (Lau 2003). The possibility also exists that the minor advances by the Georgia institutions and minor declines by the peer institutions were random fluctuations that are not associated with the presence of outside factors (Sanford and Hunter 2011). According to Sanford and Hunter, over a 15 year span, "the results show tying retention and graduation rates to performance-funding was unrelated to changes in the performance measures" (2011, 1). While this study only analyzed one state's (Tennessee) merit-based funding trends, when taken in conjunction with the results from this study, the likelihood of negligible effects of merit-based scholarship on retention is a distinct possibility.

Six-Year Graduation Rate

Much of the same reasoning for the changes in freshman retention rates also apply to six-year graduation rates, therefore, most of the theory will not be repeated in this section. A possible explanation for the discrepancy between the Georgia institutions and the peers is that Georgia high school students are receiving inflated grades and then being admitted to institutions that they are not prepared for (Chen 2004). When the context of the respectable freshman retention rate that is comparable to their peer institutions is taken into account, this explanation seems less likely. This development is surprising due to the fact that institutions where students experience a high retention rate generally also experience a high six-year graduation rate (Lau 2003). School-associated expenses (room, board, books, etc.) may become too high for families to support, leading students to withdraw from their institution at a higher rate than in other states (Paulsen and St. John 2002). The Sanford and Hunter study referenced in the freshman retention rate section must also be considered, as it found no linkage between six-year graduation rates

and merit-based scholarship funding (2011). The incremental increase in the six-year graduation rate over time may imply that the HOPE Scholarship has a positive effect on this statistic, but the fact that it remains under fifty percent is a cause for concern.

Grade Point Average

One of the most common arguments for this ascent in GPA is grade inflation (Chen 2004). Secondary school teachers may feel pressure to assign better grades to say that more students are able to become HOPE-eligible, or so that they have better GPA when applying to competitive state institutions (Bradbury and Campbell 2003). A popular counter argument is that Georgia students work more diligently to secure grades required to become HOPE-eligible (Dynarski 2004). This possible incentive to attain a 3.0 GPA may correlate to lowered acceptance rates/increased selectivity by the Georgia institutions that will be discussed below. The initial stagnation and eventual lowering of the peer institutions' aggregate GPAs over the course of the study is more difficult to explain. A possibility is that these institutions have collectively reached a ceiling for GPAs of students that they are admitting. The Georgia institutions that trailed the peers throughout the study may also experience an increase until their aggregate GPA begins to plateau.

Acceptance Rate

Entering freshman acceptance rate represents the single area where the Georgia institutions experienced a statistically significant difference from the peer institutions that was in their favor. The almost 20 point drop in the aggregate acceptance rate implies that Georgia institutions are becoming much more selective about who they admit. This may truly be the result of the "best and the brightest" deciding to stay in-state, thus increasing

competition for admittance to Georgia's colleges and universities (Cornwell, Mustard, and Sridhar 2006; Doyle 2006; Dynarski 2002; Heller 2008). As mean SAT scores and grade point averages have risen, it is possible that Georgia institutions have raised their admission standards, requiring higher scores in order to gain admittance (Diamond 2011). It is also possible that Georgia, being a rapidly growing state, has more high school students seeking admission to Georgia institutions (Diamond 2012). Without the infrastructure to support the multitude of students applying, the institutions may be accepting the same number of students, but the percentage of students accepted has decreased. The miniscule decrease experienced by the peer institutions is, once again, somewhat of a mystery in relation to the substantial drop by the Georgia institutions. A possibility is that the 65% acceptance rate could be a standard aggregate norm for college acceptance rates with some states, such as Georgia possessing a slightly lower rate. Whether this acceptance rate plateaus or if the peer institutions' aggregate score drops may provide better insight into this phenomenon. Regardless of the reasons for the drastic decrease, HOPE proponents should feel more comfortable that the program has succeeded in its goal to retain the "best and brightest" students in Georgia.

Recommendations

Based upon the review of the literature and the current study, the following are recommendations for action by higher education policymakers and recommendations for future research.

Recommendations for Action

Based on the review of the literature and the study described in this final project, the following are recommendations for action by current higher education policymakers.

Because of the relatively recent implementation of state merit-based scholarships, both collectively as well as for individual states, a lack of research studying the merits as well as the false realities of the programs have either not been discovered at length or have not been given adequate attention. In addition, many previous studies only focus on one or a small number of variables and compare only a small number of institutions. While focusing on individual academic quality measures related to merit-based scholarships may provide some insight into both the comparison of programs with differing levels of award amounts as well as the effect that the scholarships may have had on particular variable over time, small sample sizes of schools and a small collection of variables cannot provide conclusive results (McDonald 2009).

Out of the five academic quality variables, entering freshman GPA and entering freshman acceptance rate were the only variables that experienced prolonged statistically significant differences between the Georgia institutions and their peers. Six year-graduation rate experienced a statistically significant difference during the last three years of the study, but trended inconsistently prior to this period. This result may suggest that with a more selective institution, (lower acceptance rate) better credentials are required (higher GPA). However, with higher GPA, statistically significant differences in college placement test scores would also be expected. On its own, the statistically significant increase in entering freshman GPA, amidst areas where the Georgia institutions are significantly underperforming in comparison to their peer institutions, may provide additional justification for the high school grade inflation argument (Chen 2004). State of Georgia policymakers have already elevated the HOPE Scholarship standards to include SAT score requirements as well as a higher GPA in order to earn the full tuition

scholarship (those who meet the old criteria are still awarded ninety percent scholarships), although requiring certain SAT thresholds for different award amounts could more effectively control for grade inflation. A greater emphasis on attaining an adequate SAT score could also serve as an impetus for high school students to prepare for these exams and to perform at a higher level.

Conducting further research as to possible reasons why comparable gains were achieved by the Georgia institutions and the peer institutions in certain areas is also advisable. Areas, such as SAT percentiles in this study, where both the Georgia institutions and the peer institutions made represent academic progress and the reasons for this universal progress should be discovered and analyzed. If success can be traced back to federal initiatives designed to improve educational performance or to the presence of merit-based scholarships, additional, similar public policies may be incorporated to build upon this success.

The relationships between freshman retention rates and six-year graduation rates are interesting yet possibly troubling because the Georgia institutions possess nearly identical retention levels as their peers, yet lagged behind their peers in most of the years in regards to six-year graduation rates. This reality raises questions as to what is happening to students in years two through six that is causing them to graduate at such lower rates than their peers. Policymakers may want to study the effects of losing HOPE-eligibility on students withdrawing from their colleges and universities which may account for part of this disparity.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the review of the literature and the study described in this report, the

following are recommendations for further research by current higher education scholars, as well as public administration and policy scholars alike.

This research focused on the possible effect of the HOPE Scholarship program on college and university academic quality. The minimal research related to merit-based scholarships, particularly the HOPE Scholarship, that involves multiple variables to determine the programs effect on state colleges and universities necessitates further studies that attempt to make a conclusive look at the program's performance measurement.

Of the five Georgia institutions excluded from the study, three were HBCUs. As stated in Chapter 2, HBCUs have a collective unique mission that makes comparisons with other public institutions more difficult. However, it would be wise to include the institutions in future research. Black students graduating from HBCUs earn on average 38% more than black students graduating from traditional colleges and universities (Constantine 1994). Blacks may be doing a service to themselves by graduating from HBCUs so analyzing HOPE's effects on these students would be beneficial for both HBCUs' efforts and for understanding HOPE more holistically.

Logic dictates the merit-based scholarships, combined with higher education institutions that draw students that are awarded such scholarships, would result in these colleges and universities performing at a higher level in the included academic quality areas. However, in only four of the instances over the course of the study were there statistically significant difference in favor of the Georgia institutions. More research should be conducted to determine outside factors that could be hamper the Georgia institutions' and students' progress. This research could include addressing the

competency of Georgia high schools at preparing their students for college and examining the Georgia higher education institutions' efforts to increase retention. The University System of Georgia Board of Regents process for selecting peer institutions could also be further scrutinized in future research.

Although the Georgia institutions rarely experienced a statistically significant difference when compared to their peer institutions that was in their favor, it is important to note that in many of the measured variables, the Georgia institutions improved to a greater degree than their peer institutions did. The Georgia institutions still have areas to improve on, but the positive trend may suggest that the HOPE Scholarship program is having a positive effect on these select areas. Ultimately, more research needs to be conducted to more definitely identify linkages between merit-based scholarships, specifically the HOPE Scholarship, and with measurable outcomes of academic quality, such as increased entering freshman GPAs, increased SAT scores, increased retention and graduation rates, and lowered acceptance rates, at applicable institutions.

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Appendix A

E-mail Sent to University Officials

Appendix A

E-mail Sent to University Officials

Dear Office of Institutional Research Official,

My name is Tom Eskey and I am currently a doctoral candidate at Valdosta State University studying Public Administration. I am focusing on Higher Education policy and have decided to research the impact that merit-based scholarships have had on colleges, universities, and other institutions. The years that I am including in my analysis are 2001-2008 (the years that Georgia's HOPE scholarship was active in its current form) and my baseline year is 1997.

On the (insert school name), Institutional Research and Reporting webpage I have located Common Data sets dating back to (insert year that the school has made their data available for). I appreciate your making these available and am wondering if I you might be able to provide me with the CDS ranging back to 1997 or any other data sets that would include the following information about the institution: 1. entering freshman GPA, 2. entering freshman acceptance rate, 3. the SAT/ACT 25-75 percentile range(s), 4. the freshman retention rate, 5. the six-year graduation rate, and 6. institutional undergraduate enrollment.

I appreciate your help with this project and any information that you are able to provide me. Please let me know if you need any further information or if you need further clarification or some other credential from me. Thanks again!

Best,
Michael T. "Tom" Eskey Jr.

Appendix B

List of Included Georgia and Peer Higher Education Institutions

Appendix B

List of Included Georgia and Peer Higher Education Instituions

Georgia Institution	Peer Institution	Public/Private	State Awards at Least 10% of Aid Based on Merit	Data Included in Analysis
Georgia Institute of Technology		Public	Yes	Yes
	California Institute of Technology	Private	No	Yes
	Carnegie Mellon University	Private	No	Yes
	Cornell University	Private	No	Yes
	Johns Hopkins University	Private	No	Yes
	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Private	No	Yes
	Stanford University	Private	No	Yes
	Virginia Polytechnic and State University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Northwestern University	Private	No	Yes
	Pennsylvania State University	Public	No	Yes
	Purdue University	Public	No	Yes
	Texas A&M University	Public	No	Yes
	University of California-Berkley	Public	No	Yes
	University of California-Los Angeles	Public	No	Yes
	University of Florida	Public	Yes	Yes
	University of	Public	No	Yes

	Illinois			
	University of Michigan	Public	No	Yes
	University of Minnesota	Public	No	Yes
	University of Texas	Public	No	Yes
	University of Washington	Public	No	Yes
Georgia State University		Public	Yes	Yes
	George Mason University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Old Dominion University	Public	Yes	Yes
	San Diego State University	Public	No	Yes
	University of Central Florida	Public	Yes	Yes
	University of Nevada-Las Vegas	Public	No	Yes
	University of Texas at Dallas	Public	No	Yes
	University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	Public	No	Yes
	Wichita State University	Public	No	Yes
	Indiana University, Purdue University	Public	No	Yes
	Temple University	Public	No	Yes
	University of Houston	Public	No	Yes
	University of Louisville	Public	Yes	Yes
	University of Missouri	Public	Yes	Yes
	University of Texas-Arlington	Public	No	Yes
	Virginia	Public	Yes	Yes

	Commonwealth University			
University of Georgia		Public	Yes	Yes
	University of Maryland-College Park	Public	No	Yes
	Ohio State University	Public	Yes	Yes
	University of Florida	Public	Yes	Yes
	Michigan State University	Public	No	Yes
	University of California-Davis	Public	No	Yes
	University of Arizona	Public	No	Yes
	University of Iowa	Public	No	No
	North Carolina State University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Iowa State University	Public	No	Yes
	Louisiana State University	Public	Yes	Yes
	University of Kentucky	Public	Yes	Yes
Georgia Southern University		Public	Yes	Yes
	Appalachian State University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Bowling Green State University	Public	Yes	No
	Indiana University of Pennsylvania	Public	No	Yes
	Sam Houston State University	Public	No	Yes
	University of North Carolina-Wilmington	Public	Yes	Yes
	Ball State	Public	No	Yes

	University			
	East Carolina University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Illinois State University	Public	No	Yes
	James Madison University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Middle Tennessee State University	Public	Yes	Yes
Valdosta State University		Public	Yes	Yes
	Arizona State University at West Campus	Public	No	No
	Bridgewater State University	Public	No	Yes
	Fitchburg State College	Public	No	Yes
	Framingham State College	Public	No	Yes
	Indiana University-South Bend	Public	No	Yes
	Southern Oregon University	Public	No	Yes
	University of Central Oklahoma	Public	Yes	Yes
	University of North Alabama	Public	Yes	No
	Western Connecticut State University	Public	No	Yes
Armstrong Atlantic State University		Public	Yes	Yes
	Indiana University-South Bend	Public	No	Yes
	Youngstown State University	Public	Yes	No
	Marshall University	Public	Yes	Yes

	Columbus State University	Public	Yes	Yes (as a member of the Georgia institutions)
	University of Louisiana-Monroe	Public	Yes	No
	The College of New Jersey	Public	No	Yes
	Western Connecticut State University	Public	No	Yes
	University of Central Oklahoma	Public	Yes	Yes
	Valdosta State University	Public	Yes	Yes (as a member of the Georgia institutions)
	Auburn University-Montgomery	Public	Yes	Yes
	The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga	Public	Yes	Yes
	University of South Alabama	Public	Yes	Yes
	University of North Alabama	Public	Yes	No
Augusta State University		Public	Yes	Yes
	Southern University of New Orleans	Public	Yes	No
	Texas Southern University	Public	No	No
	The University of Texas at Brownsville	Public	No	No
	Metropolitan State University	Public	No	No
	Coppin State University	Public	Yes	No
	Cameron University	Public	Yes	No
	Southern	Public	Yes	No

	Polytechnic State University			
	Montana State University-Billings	Public	Yes	Yes
	Midwestern State University	Public	No	Yes
	Angelo State University	Public	No	Yes
Clayton State University		Public	Yes	Yes
	University of Houston-Downtown	Public	No	Yes
	CUNY York College	Public	No	No
	Winston-Salem State University	Public	Yes	No
	Missouri Southern State University	Public	Yes	No
	Missouri Western State University	Public	Yes	No
	Fairmont State University	Public	Yes	No
	Purdue University-North Central Campus	Public	No	Yes
	Shawnee State University	Public	Yes	No
	University of South Carolina-Aiken	Public	Yes	Yes
	Indiana University-Kokomo	Public	No	No
Columbus State University		Public	Yes	Yes
	The University of Texas at Tyler	Public	No	Yes
	Lamar University	Public	No	Yes

	Auburn University-Montgomery	Public	Yes	Yes
	Salem State College	Public	No	Yes
	Salisbury University	Public	No	Yes
	University of Illinois-Springfield	Public	No	No
	The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga	Public	Yes	Yes
	Indiana University-South Bend	Public	No	No
	University of North Alabama	Public	Yes	No
	Armstrong Atlantic State University	Public	Yes	Yes (as a member of the Georgia institutions)
	Northeastern Illinois University	Public	No	No
Georgia College and State University		Public	Yes	Yes
	California University of Pennsylvania	Public	No	Yes
	Murray State University	Public	Yes	No
	Fort Hays State University	Public	No	No
	Western Carolina University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Eastern Washington University	Public	No	Yes
	University of Montevallo	Public	Yes	No
	Southeast	Public	Yes	No

	Missouri State University			
	Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania	Public	No	Yes
	Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania	Public	No	Yes
	University of Wisconsin-Stout	Public	No	No
	Central Washington University	Public	No	Yes
	Salisbury University	Public	No	Yes
	Tennessee Technological University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Florida Gulf Coast University	Public	Yes	Yes
Kennesaw State University		Public	Yes	Yes
	California State University-Sacramento	Public	No	Yes
	California State University-Fresno	Public	No	No
	Illinois State University	Public	No	Yes
	Oakland University	Public	No	Yes
	Western Kentucky University	Public	Yes	No
	Missouri State University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Middle Tennessee State University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Towson University	Public	No	Yes
	University of	Public	Yes	Yes

	North Carolina-Charlotte			
	Eastern Michigan University	Public	No	Yes
	University of North Florida	Public	Yes	Yes
	California State University-Fullerton	Public	No	Yes
	The University of Texas at San Antonio	Public	No	Yes
	Cleveland State University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Portland State University	Public	No	Yes
North Georgia College & State University		Public	Yes	Yes
	Auburn University-Montgomery	Public	Yes	Yes
	Augusta State University	Public	Yes	Yes (as a member of the Georgia institutions)
	Austin Peay State University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania	Public	No	Yes
	Florida Gulf Coast University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Midwestern State University	Public	No	Yes
	Nicholls State University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Pittsburg State University	Public	No	No
	The University of Tennessee-Martin	Public	Yes	No
	The University	Public	No	Yes

	of Texas at Tyler			
	University of Michigan-Flint	Public	No	Yes
	University of Montevallo	Public	Yes	No
	University of Wisconsin-Stout	Public	No	No
	Worcester State College	Public	No	Yes
	Georgia College & State University	Public	Yes	Yes (as a member of the Georgia institutions)
University of West Georgia		Public	Yes	Yes
	Bridgewater State College	Public	No	Yes
	California University of Pennsylvania	Public	No	Yes
	Central Washington University	Public	No	Yes
	East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania	Public	No	Yes
	Edinboro University of Pennsylvania	Public	No	Yes
	Kutztown University of Pennsylvania	Public	No	Yes
	Minnesota State University-Mankato	Public	No	Yes
	Northeastern State University	Public	Yes	Yes
	Saginaw Valley State University	Public	No	Yes
	Salem State College	Public	No	Yes
	Slippery Rock University of	Public	No	Yes

	Pennsylvania			
	Southeastern Louisiana University	Public	Yes	Yes
	University of Central Missouri	Public	Yes	No
	Southeast Missouri State University	Public	Yes	No
	SUNY College of Oswego	Public	No	Yes
	University of Central Oklahoma	Public	Yes	Yes
	University of Wisconsin-Whitewater	Public	No	Yes

Appendix C

List of States Awarding at Least 10% of All Financial Aid in the Form of Merit Aid (and Percentages)

Appendix C

List of States Awarding at Least 10% of All Financial Aid in the Form of Merit Aid (and Percentages)

State	Percentage as Merit Aid
Georgia	99.8
Arkansas	91.8
South Dakota	90.8
Mississippi	85.5
Louisiana	84.9
South Carolina	81.6
Tennessee	77.2
Idaho	73.9
Florida	73.6
New Mexico	71.0
Utah	61.4
West Virginia	58.9
Kentucky	52.4
Nevada	45.8
Missouri	37.3
Virginia	35.1
Ohio	32.6
Delaware	30.5
Montana	24.7

North Dakota	24.6
North Carolina	17.6
Alabama	16.9
Oklahoma	12.2

Appendix D

Carnegie Classifications of Peer Institutions

Appendix D

Carnegie Classifications of Peer Institutions

Carnegie Classification	Number of Institutions
Research Universities with Very High Research Activity	34
Research University with High Research Activity	16
Doctoral/Research Universities	8
Master's College or Universities with Larger Programs	52
Master's College or Universities with Medium Programs	13
Master's College or Universities with Small Programs	3
Baccalaureate Colleges-Diverse Fields	7
Baccalaureate Colleges-Arts & Sciences	1
Unclassified	1

Appendix E

Sample Common Data Set Form

Appendix E

Sample Common Data Set Form

(the form has been slightly altered for formatting purposes)

GENERAL INFORMATION

A0. Respondent Information (Not for Publication)

Name
Title
Office
Mailing Address, City/State/Zip/Country
Phone
Fax
E-mail Address

Are your responses to the CDS posted for reference on your institution's Web site? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please provide the URL of the corresponding Web page:

A0A. We invite you to indicate if there are items on the CDS for which you cannot use the requested analytic convention, cannot provide data for the cohort requested, whose methodology is unclear, or about which you have questions or comments in general. This information will not be published but will help the publishers further refine CDS items.

_____

A1. Address Information

Name of College or University
Mailing Address, City/State/Zip/Country
Street Address (if different), City/State/Zip/Country
Main Phone Number
WWW Home Page Address
Admissions Phone Number
Admissions Toll-free Number
Admissions Office Mailing Address, City/State/Zip/Country
Admissions Fax Number
Admissions E-mail Address
If there is a separate URL for your school's online application, please specify: _____
If you have a mailing address other than the above to which applications should be sent, please provide:

A2. Source of institutional control *(check one only)*

☐ Public
☐ Private (nonprofit)
☐ Proprietary

A3. Classify your undergraduate institution:

☐ Coeducational college
☐ Men's college
☐ Women's college

A4. Academic year calendar

- ☐ Semester
- ☐ Quarter
- ☐ Trimester
- ☐ Other (describe):
- ☐ 4-1-4
- ☐ Continuous
- ☐ Differs by program (describe):

A5. Degrees offered by your institution

- ☐ Certificate
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Associate
- ☐ Transfer
- ☐ Terminal
- ☐ Bachelor's
- ☐ Postbachelor's certificate
- ☐ Master's
- ☐ Post-master's certificate
- ☐ Doctoral degree research/scholarship
- ☐ Doctoral degree – professional practice
- ☐ Doctoral degree -- other

B. ENROLLMENT AND PERSISTENCE

B1. Institutional Enrollment—Men and Women Provide numbers of students for each of the following categories as of the institution's official fall reporting date or as of October 15, 2012. Note: Report students formerly designated as "first professional" in the graduate cells.

	FULL-TIME		PART-TIME	
	Men	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**
Undergraduates				
Degree-seeking, first-time freshmen				
Other first-year, degree-seeking				
All other degree-seeking				
Total degree-seeking				
All other undergraduates enrolled in credit courses				
Total undergraduates				
Graduate				
Degree-seeking, first-time				
All other degree-seeking				
All other graduates enrolled in credit courses				
Total graduate				

Total all undergraduates: _____

Total all graduate: _____

GRAND TOTAL ALL STUDENTS: _____

B2. Enrollment by Racial/Ethnic Category. Provide numbers of undergraduate students for each of the following categories as of the institution's official fall reporting date or as of October 15, 2012. Include international students only in the category "Nonresident aliens." Complete the "Total Undergraduates" column only if you cannot provide data for the first two columns. Report as your institution reports to IPEDS: persons who are Hispanic should be reported only on the Hispanic line, not under any race, and persons who are non-Hispanic multi-racial should be reported only under "Two or more races."

Persistence

B3. Number of degrees awarded by your institution from July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2012.

Certificate/diploma _____
Associate degrees _____
Bachelor's degrees _____
Postbachelor's certificates _____
Master's degrees _____
Post-master's certificates _____
Doctoral degrees – research/scholarship _____
Doctoral degrees – professional practice _____
Doctoral degrees – other _____

Graduation Rates

The items in this section correspond to data elements collected by the IPEDS Web-based Data Collection System's Graduation Rate Survey (GRS). For complete instructions and definitions of data elements, see the IPEDS GRS instructions and glossary on the 2012 Web-based survey.

For Bachelor's or Equivalent Programs

Please provide data for the Fall 2006 cohort if available. If Fall 2006 cohort data are not available, provide data for the Fall 2005 cohort.

Fall 2005 Cohort

Report for the cohort of full-time first-time bachelor's (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduate students who entered in Fall **2005**. Include in the cohort those who entered your institution during the summer term preceding Fall **2005**.

B4. Initial **2005** cohort of first-time, full-time bachelor's (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduate students; total all students: _____

B5. Of the initial **2005** cohort, how many did not persist and did not graduate for the following reasons: death, permanent disability, or service in the armed forces, foreign aid service of the federal government, or official church missions; total allowable exclusions:
_____

B6. Final **2005**cohort, after adjusting for allowable exclusions: _____
(Subtract question B5 from question B4)

B7. Of the initial **2005** cohort, how many completed the program in four years or less (by August 31, 2009):
_____

B8. Of the initial **2005** cohort, how many completed the program in more than four years but in five years or less (after August 31, 2009 and by August 31, 2010):

_____

B9. Of the initial **2005** cohort, how many completed the program in more than five years but in six years or less (after August 31, 2010 and by August 31, 2011):

_____

B10. Total graduating within six years (sum of questions B7, B8, and B9): _____

B11. Six-year graduation rate for **2005** cohort (question B10 divided by question B6): _____ %

For Two-Year Institutions

Please provide data for the 2009 cohort if available. If 2009 cohort data are not available, provide data for the 2008 cohort.

2008 Cohort

B12. Initial **2008** cohort, total of first-time, full-time degree/certificate-seeking students: _____

B13. Of the initial **2008** cohort, how many did not persist and did not graduate for the following reasons: death, permanently disability, or service in the armed forces, foreign aid service of the federal government, or official church missions; total allowable exclusions:

_____

B14. Final **2008** cohort, after adjusting for allowable exclusions_____

(Subtract question B13 from question B12)

B15. Completers of programs of less than two years duration (total): _____

B16. Completers of programs of less than two years within 150 percent of normal time: _____

B17. Completers of programs of at least two but less than four years (total): _____

B18. Completers of programs of at least two but less than four-years within 150 percent of normal time:

_____

B19. Total transfers-out (within three years) to other institutions: _____

B20. Total transfers to two-year institutions:

_____

B21. Total transfers to four-year institutions:
_____

Retention Rates

Report for the cohort of all full-time, first-time bachelor's (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduate students who entered in Fall 2011 (or the preceding summer term). The initial cohort may be adjusted for students who departed for the following reasons: death, permanent disability, or service in the armed forces, foreign aid service of the federal government or official church missions. No other adjustments to the initial cohort should be made.

B22. For the cohort of all full-time bachelor's (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduate students who entered your institution as freshmen in Fall 2011 (or the preceding summer term), what percentage was enrolled at your institution as of the date your institution calculates its official enrollment in Fall 2012? _____ %

C. FIRST-TIME, FIRST-YEAR (FRESHMAN) ADMISSION

Applications

C1. First-time, first-year (freshman) students: Provide the number of degree-seeking, first-time, first-year students who applied, were admitted, and enrolled (full- or part-time) in Fall 2012. Include early decision, early action, and students who began studies during summer in this cohort. Applicants should include only those students who fulfilled the requirements for consideration for admission (i.e., who completed actionable applications) and who have been notified of one of the following actions: admission, non-admission, placement on waiting list, or application withdrawn (by applicant or institution). Admitted applicants should include wait-listed students who were subsequently offered admission.

Total first-time, first-year (freshman) men who applied _____
Total first-time, first-year (freshman) women who applied _____

Total first-time, first-year (freshman) men who were admitted _____
Total first-time, first-year (freshman) women who were admitted _____

Total full-time, first-time, first-year (freshman) men who enrolled _____
Total part-time, first-time, first-year (freshman) men who enrolled _____

Total full-time, first-time, first-year (freshman) women who enrolled _____
Total part-time, first-time, first-year (freshman) women who enrolled _____

C2. Freshman wait-listed students (students who met admission requirements but whose final admission was contingent on space availability)

Do you have a policy of placing students on a waiting list? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please answer the questions below for Fall 2012 admissions:

Number of qualified applicants offered a place on waiting list _____
Number accepting a place on the waiting list _____
Number of wait-listed students admitted _____

Is your waiting list ranked?
If yes, do you release that information to students?
Do you release that information to school counselors?

Admission Requirements

C3. High school completion requirement

Check the appropriate box to identify your high school completion requirement for degree-seeking entering students:

☐ High school diploma is required and GED is accepted
☐ High school diploma is required and GED is not accepted
☐ High school diploma or equivalent is not required

C4. Does your institution require or recommend a general college-preparatory program for degree-seeking students?

☐ Require
☐ Recommend
☐ Neither require nor recommend

C5. Distribution of high school units required and/or recommended. Specify the distribution of academic high school course units required and/or recommended of all or most degree-seeking students using Carnegie units (one unit equals one year of study or its equivalent). If you use a different system for calculating units, please convert.

	Units Required	Units Recommended
Total academic units		
English		
Mathematics		
Science		
Of these, units that must be lab		
Foreign language		
Social studies		
History		
Academic electives		
Computer Science		
Visual/Performing Arts		
Other *(specify)*		

Basis for Selection

C6. Do you have an open admission policy, under which virtually all secondary school graduates or students with GED equivalency diplomas are admitted without regard to academic record, test scores, or other qualifications? If so, check which applies:

Open admission policy as described above for all students ___
Open admission policy as described above for most students, but
selective admission for out-of-state students ___
selective admission to some programs ___
other (explain)

_____

C7. Relative importance of each of the following academic and nonacademic factors in your first-time, first-year, degree-seeking (freshman) admission decisions.

	Very Important	Important	Considered
Academic			
Rigor of secondary school record	☐	☐	☐
Class rank	☐	☐	☐
Academic GPA	☐	☐	☐
Standardized test scores	☐	☐	☐
Application Essay	☐	☐	☐
Recommendation	☐	☐	☐
Nonacademic			
Interview	☐	☐	☐
Extracurricular activities	☐	☐	☐
Talent/ability	☐	☐	☐
Character/personal qualities	☐	☐	☐
First generation	☐	☐	☐
Alumni/ae relation	☐	☐	☐
Geographical residence	☐	☐	☐
State residency	☐	☐	☐
Religious affiliation/commitment	☐	☐	☐
Racial/ethnic status	☐	☐	☐

Volunteer work	☐	☐	☐
Work experience	☐	☐	☐
Level of applicant's interest	☐	☐	☐

SAT and ACT Policies

C8. Entrance exams

A. Does your institution make use of SAT, ACT, or SAT Subject Test scores in **admission** decisions for first-time, first-year, degree-seeking applicants? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, place check marks in the appropriate boxes below to reflect your institution's policies for use in admission for
Fall 2014.

			ADMISSION	
	Require	**Recommend**	**Require for Some**	**Consider If Submitted**
SAT or ACT	☐	☐	☐	☐
ACT only	☐	☐	☐	☐
SAT only	☐	☐	☐	☐
SAT and SAT Subject Tests or ACT	☐	☐	☐	☐
SAT Subject Tests	☐	☐	☐	☐

B. If your institution will make use of the ACT in admission decisions for first-time, first-year, degree-seeking applicants for Fall 2014, please indicate which ONE of the following applies (regardless of whether the writing score will be used in the admissions process):

___ ACT with Writing component required
___ ACT with Writing component recommended.
___ ACT with or without Writing component accepted

C. Please indicate how your institution will use the SAT or ACT essay component; check all that apply.

	SAT essay	ACT essay
For admission	☐	☐
For placement	☐	☐
For advising	☐	☐
In place of an application essay	☐	☐
As a validity check on the application essay	☐	☐
No college policy as of now	☐	☐
Not using essay component	☐	☐

D. In addition, does your institution use applicants' test scores for academic advising?
___ yes ___ no

E. Latest date by which SAT or ACT scores must be received for fall-term admission_____
Latest date by which SAT Subject Test scores must be received for fall-term admission_____

F. If necessary, use this space to clarify your test policies (e.g., if tests are recommended for some students, or if tests are not required of some students):
_____

G. Please indicate which tests your institution uses for **placement (e.g., state tests):**

SAT ☐
ACT ☐
SAT Subject Tests ☐
AP ☐
CLEP ☐
Institutional Exam ☐
State Exam (specify):_____

Freshman Profile

Provide percentages for **ALL enrolled, degree-seeking, full-time and part-time, first-time, first-year (freshman) students** enrolled in Fall 2012, including students who began studies during summer, international students/nonresident aliens, and students admitted under special arrangements.

C9. Percent and number of first-time, first-year (freshman) students enrolled in Fall 2012 who submitted national standardized (SAT/ACT) test scores. Include information for **ALL enrolled, degree-seeking, first-time, first-year (freshman) students who submitted test scores**. Do not include partial test scores (e.g., mathematics scores but not critical reading for a category of students) or combine other standardized test results (such as TOEFL) in this item. Do not convert SAT scores to ACT scores and vice versa.

The 25th percentile is the score that 25 percent scored at or below; the 75th percentile score is the one that 25 percent scored at or above.

Percent submitting SAT scores _____ Number submitting SAT scores _____

Percent submitting ACT scores _____ Number submitting ACT scores _____

	25th Percentile	75th Percentile
SAT Critical Reading		
SAT Math		
SAT Writing		
SAT Essay		
ACT Composite		
ACT Math		
ACT English		
ACT Writing		

Percent of first-time, first-year (freshman) students with scores in each range:

	SAT Critical Reading	SAT Math	SAT Writing
700-800			
600-699			
500-599			
400-499			
300-399			
200-299			
	100%	100%	100%

	ACT Composite	ACT English	ACT Math
30-36			
24-29			

18-23			
12-17			
6-11			
Below 6			
	100%	100%	100%

C10. Percent of all degree-seeking, first-time, first-year (freshman) students who had high school class rank within each of the following ranges (report information for those students from whom you collected high school rank information).

Percent in top tenth of high school graduating class _____
Percent in top quarter of high school graduating class _____
Percent in top half of high school graduating class _____
Percent in bottom half of high school graduating class _____ } Top half + bottom half = 100%.
Percent in bottom quarter of high school graduating class _____
Percent of total first-time, first-year (freshman) students who submitted high school class rank:
_____

C11. Percentage of all enrolled, degree-seeking, first-time, first-year (freshman) students who had high school grade-point averages within each of the following ranges (using 4.0 scale). Report information only for those students from whom you collected high school GPA.

Percent who had GPA of 3.75 and higher _____
Percent who had GPA between 3.50 and 3.74 _____
Percent who had GPA between 3.25 and 3.49 _____
Percent who had GPA between 3.00 and 3.24 _____

Percent who had GPA between 2.50 and 2.99 _____
Percent who had GPA between 2.0 and 2.49 _____

Percent who had GPA between 1.0 and 1.99 _____
Percent who had GPA below 1.0 _____
100%

C12. Average high school GPA of all degree-seeking, first-time, first-year (freshman) students who submitted GPA: _____

Percent of total first-time, first-year (freshman) students who submitted high school GPA: _____%

Admission Policies

C13. Application fee

Does your institution have an application fee? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Amount of application fee: _____
Can it be waived for applicants with financial need? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have an application fee and an on-line application option, please indicate policy for students who apply on-line:
Same fee: ____
Free: _____
Reduced: ____

Can on-line application fee be waived for applicants with financial need? Yes/no

C14. Application closing date

Does your institution have an application closing date? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Application closing date (fall): _____
Priority date: _____

C15. Are first-time, first-year students accepted for terms other than the fall? ☐ Yes ☐ No

C16. Notification to applicants of admission decision sent *(fill in one only)*

On a rolling basis beginning (date): _____
By (date): _____
Other: _____

C17. Reply policy for admitted applicants *(fill in one only)*

Must reply by (date): _____
No set date: _____
Must reply by May 1 or within _____ weeks if notified thereafter
Other: _____

Deadline for housing deposit (MMDD): _____
Amount of housing deposit: _____
Refundable if student does not enroll?
___ Yes, in full
___ Yes, in part
____ No

C18. Deferred admission: Does your institution allow students to postpone enrollment after admission?
☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, maximum period of postponement: _____

C19. Early admission of high school students: Does your institution allow high school students to enroll as full-time, first-time, first-year (freshman) students one year or more before high school graduation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

C20. Common Application: Question removed from CDS. (Initiated during 2006-2007 cycle)

Early Decision and Early Action Plans

C21. Early decision: Does your institution offer an early decision plan (an admission plan that permits students to apply and be notified of an admission decision well in advance of the regular notification date and that asks students to commit to attending if accepted) for first-time, first-year (freshman) applicants for fall enrollment? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "yes," please complete the following:

First or only early decision plan closing date _____
First or only early decision plan notification date _____

Other early decision plan closing date _____
Other early decision plan notification date _____

For the Fall 2012 entering class:

Number of early decision applications received by your institution _____
Number of applicants admitted under early decision plan _____

Please provide significant details about your early decision plan:
_____
_____
_____

C22. Early action: Do you have a nonbinding early action plan whereby students are notified of an admission decision well in advance of the regular notification date but do not have to commit to attending your college?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If "yes," please complete the following:

Early action closing date _____
Early action notification date _____

Is your early action plan a "restrictive" plan under which you limit students from applying to other early plans?

☐ Yes ☐ No

D. TRANSFER ADMISSION

Fall Applicants

D1. Does your institution enroll transfer students? ☐ Yes ☐ No
(If no, please skip to Section E)
If yes, may transfer students earn advanced standing credit by transferring credits earned from course work completed at other colleges/universities? ☐ Yes ☐ No

D2. Provide the number of students who applied, were admitted, and enrolled as degree-seeking transfer students in Fall 2012.

	Applicants	Admitted Applicants	Enrolled Applicants
Men			
Women			
Total			

Application for Admission

D3. Indicate terms for which transfers may enroll:
☐ Fall ☐ Winter ☐ Spring ☐ Summer

D4. Must a transfer applicant have a minimum number of credits completed or else must apply as an entering freshman?
☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, what is the minimum number of credits and the unit of measure? _____

D5. Indicate all items required of transfer students to apply for admission:

D6. If a minimum high school grade point average is required of transfer applicants, specify (on a 4.0 scale): _____

D7. If a minimum college grade point average is required of transfer applicants, specify (on a 4.0 scale): _____

D8. List any other application requirements specific to transfer applicants:
_____
_____
_____
_____

D9. List application priority, closing, notification, and candidate reply dates for transfer students. If applications are reviewed on a continuous or rolling basis, place a check mark in the "Rolling admission" column.

D10. Does an open admission policy, if reported, apply to transfer students? ☐ Yes ☐ No

D11. Describe additional requirements for transfer admission, if applicable:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Transfer Credit Policies

D12. Report the lowest grade earned for any course that may be transferred for credit: _____

D13. Maximum number of credits or courses that may be transferred from a two-year institution:
Number _____ Unit type _____

D14. Maximum number of credits or courses that may be transferred from a four-year institution:
Number _____ Unit type _____

D15. Minimum number of credits that transfers must complete at your institution to earn an associate degree: _____

D16. Minimum number of credits that transfers must complete at your institution to earn a bachelor's degree: _____

D17. Describe other transfer credit policies:

_____
_____
_____
_____

E. ACADEMIC OFFERINGS AND POLICIES

E1. Special study options: Identify those programs available at your institution. Refer to the glossary for definitions.

- ☐ Accelerated program
- ☐ Cooperative education program
- ☐ Cross-registration
- ☐ Distance learning
- ☐ Double major
- ☐ Dual enrollment
- ☐ English as a Second Language (ESL)
- ☐ Exchange student program (domestic)
- ☐ External degree program
- ☐ Other (specify):
- ☐ Honors program
- ☐ Independent study
- ☐ Internships
- ☐ Liberal arts/career combination
- ☐ Student-designed major
- ☐ Study abroad
- ☐ Teacher certification program
- ☐ Weekend college

E2. Has been removed from the CDS.

E3. Areas in which all or most students are required to complete some course work prior to graduation:

- ☐ Arts/fine arts
- ☐ Computer literacy
- ☐ English (including composition)
- ☐ Foreign languages
- ☐ History
- ☐ Other (describe):
- ☐ Humanities
- ☐ Mathematics
- ☐ Philosophy
- ☐ Sciences (biological or physical)
- ☐ Social science

Library Collections: The CDS publishers will collect library data again when a new Academic Libraries Survey is in place.

F. STUDENT LIFE

F1. Percentages of first-time, first-year (freshman) degree-seeking students and degree-seeking undergraduates enrolled in Fall 2012 who fit the following categories:

F2. Activities offered Identify those programs available at your institution.

- ☐ Campus Ministries
- ☐ Choral groups
- ☐ Concert band
- ☐ Dance
- ☐ Drama/theater
- ☐ International Student Organization
- ☐ Jazz band
- ☐ Literary magazine
- ☐ Marching band
- ☐ Model UN
- ☐ Music ensembles
- ☐ Musical theater
- ☐ Opera
- ☐ Pep band
- ☐ Radio station
- ☐ Student government
- ☐ Student newspaper
- ☐ Student-run film society
- ☐ Symphony orchestra
- ☐ Television station
- ☐ Yearbook

F3. ROTC (program offered in cooperation with Reserve Officers' Training Corps)

Army ROTC is offered:

- ☐ On campus
- ☐ At cooperating institution (name): _____

Naval ROTC is offered:

☐ On campus
☐ At cooperating institution (name): _____

Air Force ROTC is offered:
☐ On campus
☐ At cooperating institution (name): _____

F4. Housing: Check all types of college-owned, -operated, or -affiliated housing available for undergraduates at your institution.

☐ Coed dorms
☐ Men's dorms
☐ Women's dorms
☐ Apartments for married students
☐ Apartments for single students
☐ Special housing for disabled students
☐ Special housing for international students
☐ Fraternity/sorority housing
☐ Cooperative housing
☐ Theme housing
☐ Wellness housing

☐ Other housing options (specify): _____

G. ANNUAL EXPENSES

G0. Please provide the URL of your institution's net price calculator:

_____

Provide 2013-2014 academic year costs of attendance for the following categories that are applicable to your institution.

☐ Check here if your institution's 2013-2014 academic year costs of attendance are not available at this time and provide an approximate date (i.e., month/day) when your institution's final 2013-2014 academic year costs of attendance will be available: _____

G1. Undergraduate full-time tuition, required fees, room and board

List the typical tuition, required fees, and room and board for a full-time undergraduate student for the FULL 2013-2014 academic year (30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours for institutions that derive annual tuition by multiplying credit hour cost by number of credits). A full academic year refers to the period of time generally extending from September to June; usually equated to two semesters, two trimesters, three quarters, or the period covered by a four-one-four plan. Room and board is defined as double occupancy and 19 meals per week or the maximum meal plan. **Required fees** include only charges that all full-time students must pay that are ***not*** included in tuition (e.g., registration, health, or activity fees.) Do ***not*** include optional fees (e.g., parking, laboratory use).

	FIRST-YEAR	UNDERGRADUATES
PRIVATE INSTITUTION Tuition:		
PUBLIC INSTITUTION Tuition: In-district:		
In-state (out-of-district):		
Out-of-state:		
NONRESIDENT ALIEN: Tuition:		
REQUIRED FEES:		
ROOM AND BOARD: (on-campus)		
ROOM ONLY: (on-campus)		
BOARD ONLY: (on-campus meal plan)		

Comprehensive tuition and room and board fee (if your college cannot provide separate tuition and room and board fees): _____

Other:

_____
_____

G2. Number of credits per term a student can take for the stated full-time tuition ___minimum ___maximum

G3. Do tuition and fees vary by year of study (e.g., sophomore, junior, senior)?

G4. Do tuition and fees vary by undergraduate instructional program?

If yes, what percentage of full-time undergraduates pay more than the tuition and fees reported in G1? _____

G5. Provide the estimated expenses for a typical full-time undergraduate student:

	Residents	Commuters (living at home)	Commuters (not living at home)
Books and supplies:			
Room only:			
Board only:			
Room and board total (if your college cannot provide separate room and board figures for commuters not living at home):			
Transportation:			
Other expenses:			

G6. Undergraduate per-credit-hour charges (tuition only):

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS:	
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS In-district:	
In-state (out-of-district):	
Out-of-state:	
NONRESIDENT ALIENS:	

H. FINANCIAL AID

Please refer to the following financial aid definitions when completing Section H.

Awarded aid: The dollar amounts offered to financial aid applicants.

Financial aid applicant: Any applicant who submits **any one of** the institutionally required financial aid applications/forms, such as the FAFSA.

Indebtedness: Aggregate dollar amount borrowed through any loan program (federal, state, subsidized, unsubsidized, private, etc.; excluding parent loans) while the student was enrolled at an institution. Student loans co-signed by a parent are assumed to be the responsibility of the student and **should** be included.

Institutional scholarships and grants: Endowed scholarships, annual gifts and tuition funded grants for which the institution determines the recipient.

Financial need: As determined by your institution using the federal methodology and/or your institution's own standards.

Need-based aid: College-funded or college-administered award from institutional, state, federal, or other sources for which a student must have financial need to qualify. This includes both institutional and non-institutional student aid (grants, jobs, and loans).

Need-based scholarship or grant aid: Scholarships and grants from institutional, state, federal, or other sources for which a student must have financial need to qualify.

Need-based self-help aid: Loans and jobs from institutional, state, federal, or other sources for which a student must demonstrate financial need to qualify.

Non-need-based scholarship or grant aid: Scholarships and grants, gifts, or merit-based aid from institutional, state, federal, or other sources (including unrestricted funds or gifts and endowment income) awarded solely on the basis of academic achievement, merit, or any other non-need-based reason. When reporting questions H1 and H2, non-need-based aid that is used to meet need should be counted as need-based aid.

Note: Suggested order of precedence for counting non-need money as need-based:
Non-need institutional grants
Non-need tuition waivers
Non-need athletic awards
Non-need federal grants
Non-need state grants
Non-need outside grants
Non-need student loans
Non-need parent loans
Non-need work

Non-need-based self-help aid: Loans and jobs from institutional, state, or other sources for which a student need not demonstrate financial need to qualify.

External scholarships and grants: Scholarships and grants received from outside (private) sources that students bring with them (e.g., Kiwanis, National Merit scholarships). The institution may process paperwork to receive the dollars, but it has no role in determining the recipient or the dollar amount awarded.

Work study and employment: Federal and state work study aid, and any employment packaged by your institution in financial aid awards.

Aid Awarded to Enrolled Undergraduates

H1. Enter total dollar amounts **awarded** to enrolled full-time and less than full-time degree-seeking undergraduates **(using the same cohort reported in CDS Question B1, "total degree-seeking" undergraduates)** in the following categories. (Note: If the data being reported are final figures for the 2011-2012 academic year (see the next item below), use the 2011-2012 academic year's CDS Question B1 cohort.) Include aid awarded to international students (i.e., those not qualifying for federal aid). **Aid that is non-need-based but that was used to meet need should be reported in the need-based aid column. (For a suggested order of precedence in assigning categories of aid to cover need, see the entry for "non-need-based scholarship or grant aid" on the last page of the definitions section.)**

Indicate the academic year for which data are reported for **items H1**, **H2**, **H2A**, and **H6** below:
☐ 2012-2013 estimated or ☐ 2011-2012 final

Which needs-analysis methodology does your institution use in awarding institutional aid? **(Formerly H3)**

___ Federal methodology (FM)
___ Institutional methodology (IM)
___ Both FM and IM

	Need-based (Include non-need-based aid use to meet need.)
	$
Scholarships/Grants	
Federal	
State (i.e., all states, not only the state in which your institution is located)	
Institutional: Endowed scholarships, annual gifts and tuition funded grants, awarded by the college, excluding athletic aid and tuition waivers (which are reported below).	
Scholarships/grants from external sources (e.g., Kiwanis, National Merit) not awarded by the college	
Total Scholarships/Grants	
Self-Help	
Student loans from all sources (excluding parent loans)	
Federal Work-Study	
State and other (e.g., institutional) work-study/employment (Note: Excludes Federal Work-Study captured above.)	
Total Self-Help	
Parent Loans	

Tuition Waivers Note: Reporting is optional. Report tuition waivers in this row if you choose to report them. Do not report tuition waivers elsewhere.	
Athletic Awards	

H2. Number of Enrolled Students Awarded Aid: List the number of degree-seeking full-time and less-than-full-time undergraduates who applied for and were awarded financial aid from any source. **Aid that is non-need-based but that was used to meet need should be counted as need-based aid.** Numbers should reflect the cohort awarded the dollars reported in H1. Note: In the chart below, students may be counted in more than one row, and full-time freshmen should also be counted as full-time undergraduates.

		First-time Full-time Freshmen	Full-time Undergrad (Incl. Fresh)
a)	Number of degree-seeking undergraduate students (CDS Item B1 if reporting on Fall 2012 cohort)		
b)	Number of students in line **a** who applied for need-based financial aid		
c)	Number of students in line **b** who were determined to have financial need		
d)	Number of students in line **c** who were awarded any financial aid		
e)	Number of students in line **d** who were awarded any need-based scholarship or grant aid		
f)	Number of students in line **d** who were awarded any need-based self-help aid		
g)	Number of students in line **d** who were awarded any non-need-based scholarship or grant aid		
h)	Number of students in line **d** whose need was fully met (exclude PLUS loans, unsubsidized loans, and private alternative loans)		
i)	On average, the percentage of need that was met of students who were awarded any need-based aid. Exclude any aid that was awarded in excess of need as well as any resources that were awarded to replace EFC (PLUS loans, unsubsidized loans, and private alternative loans)	%	%
j)	The average financial aid package of those in line **d.** Exclude any resources that were awarded to replace EFC (PLUS loans, unsubsidized loans, and private alternative loans)	$	$
k)	Average need-based scholarship or grant award of those in line **e**	$	$
l)	Average need-based self-help award (excluding PLUS loans, unsubsidized loans, and private alternative loans) of those in line **f**	$	$
m)	Average need-based loan (excluding PLUS loans, unsubsidized loans, and private alternative loans) of those in line **f** who were awarded a need-based loan	$	$

H2A. Number of Enrolled Students Awarded Non-need-based Scholarships and Grants: List the number of degree-seeking full-time and less-than-full-time undergraduates who had no financial need and who were awarded institutional non-need-based scholarship or grant aid. Numbers should reflect the cohort awarded the dollars reported in H1. Note: In the chart below, students may be counted in more than one row, and full-time freshmen should also be counted as full-time undergraduates.

		First-time Full-time Freshmen	Full-time Undergrad (Incl. Fresh)
n)	Number of students in line **a** who had no financial need and who were awarded institutional non-need-based scholarship or grant aid (exclude those who were awarded athletic awards and tuition benefits)		
o)	Average dollar amount of institutional non-need-based scholarship and grant aid awarded to students in line **n**	$	$
p)	Number of students in line **a** who were awarded an institutional non-need-based athletic scholarship or grant		

q)	Average dollar amount of institutional non-need-based athletic scholarships and grants awarded to students in line **p**	$	$

Note: These are the graduates and loan types to include and exclude in order to fill out CDS H4, H4a, H5 and H5a.

Include:

* 2012 undergraduate class who graduated between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012 who started at your institution as first-time students and received a bachelor's degree between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012.
* only loans made to students who borrowed while enrolled at your institution.
* co-signed loans.

Exclude:

* those who transferred in.
* money borrowed at other institutions.

H4. Provide the percentage of the class (defined above) who borrowed at any time through any loan programs (institutional, state, Federal Perkins, Federal Stafford Subsidized and Unsubsidized, private loans that were certified by your institution, etc.; exclude parent loans). Include both Federal Direct Student Loans and Federal Family Education Loans.
_____%

H4a. Provide the percentage of the class (defined above) who borrowed at any time through federal loan programs--Federal Perkins, Federal Stafford Subsidized and Unsubsidized. Include both Federal Direct Student Loans and Federal Family Education Loans. NOTE: exclude all institutional, state, private alternative loans and parent loans. _____%

H5. Report the average per-undergraduate-borrower cumulative principal borrowed of those in line H4. $_____

H5a. Report the average per-undergraduate-borrower cumulative principal borrowed, of those in H4a, through federal loan programs--Federal Perkins, Federal Stafford Subsidized and Unsubsidized. Include both Federal Direct Student Loans and Federal Family Education Loans. These are listed in line H4a. NOTE: exclude all institutional, state, private alternative loans and exclude parent loans.$ _____

Aid to Undergraduate Degree-seeking Nonresident Aliens (Note: Report numbers and dollar amounts for the same academic year checked in item H1.)

H6. Indicate your institution's policy regarding institutional scholarship and grant aid for undergraduate degree-seeking nonresident aliens:

☐ Institutional need-based scholarship or grant aid is available
☐ Institutional non-need-based scholarship or grant aid is available
☐ Institutional scholarship and grant aid is not available

If institutional financial aid is available for undergraduate degree-seeking nonresident aliens, provide the number of undergraduate degree-seeking nonresident aliens who were awarded need-based or non-need-based aid: _____

Average dollar amount of institutional financial aid awarded to undergraduate degree-seeking nonresident aliens:
$ _____

Total dollar amount of institutional financial aid awarded to undergraduate degree-seeking nonresident aliens:
$ _____

H7. Check off all financial aid forms nonresident alien first-year financial aid applicants must submit:

☐ Institution's own financial aid form
☐ CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE
☐ International Student's Financial Aid Application
☐ International Student's Certification of Finances
☐ Other: _____

Process for First-Year/Freshman Students

H8. Check off all financial aid forms domestic first-year (freshman) financial aid applicants must submit:

☐ FAFSA
☐ Institution's own financial aid form
☐ CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE
☐ State aid form
☐ Noncustodial PROFILE
☐ Business/Farm Supplement
☐ Other: _____

H9. Indicate filing dates for first-year (freshman) students:

Priority date for filing required financial aid forms: _____
Deadline for filing required financial aid forms: _____
No deadline for filing required forms (applications processed on a rolling basis): _____

H10. Indicate notification dates for first-year (freshman) students (answer a or b):

a.) Students notified on or about (date): _____

b.) Students notified on a rolling basis: yes/no If yes, starting date: _____

H11. Indicate reply dates:

Students must reply by (date): _____ or within _____ weeks of notification.

Types of Aid Available

Please check off all types of aid available to undergraduates at your institution:

H12. Loans

FEDERAL DIRECT STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM (DIRECT LOAN)
☐ Direct Subsidized Stafford Loans
☐ Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans
☐ Direct PLUS Loans

☐ Federal Perkins Loans
☐ Federal Nursing Loans
☐ State Loans
☐ College/university loans from institutional funds
☐ Other (specify): _____

H13. Scholarships and Grants

NEED-BASED:

☐ Federal Pell
☐ SEOG
☐ State scholarships/grants
☐ Private scholarships
☐ College/university scholarship or grant aid from institutional funds
☐ United Negro College Fund
☐ Federal Nursing Scholarship
☐ Other (specify): _____

H14. Check off criteria used in awarding institutional aid. Check all that apply.

Non-need	Need-based		Non-need	Need-based
		Academics		
		Alumni affiliation		
		Art		
		Athletics		
		Job skills		
		ROTC		----------

H15. If your institution has recently implemented any major financial aid policy, program, or initiative to make your institution more affordable to incoming students such as replacing loans with grants, or waiving costs for families below a certain income level please provide details below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I. INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY AND CLASS SIZE

I-1. Please report the number of instructional faculty members in each category for Fall 2012. Include faculty who are on your institution's payroll on the census date your institution uses for IPEDS/AAUP.

The following definition of full-time instructional faculty is used by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in its annual Faculty Compensation Survey (the part time definitions are not used by AAUP). Instructional Faculty is defined as those members of the instructional-research staff whose major regular assignment is instruction, including those with released time for research. Use the chart below to determine inclusions and exclusions:

	Full-time	Part-time
(a) instructional faculty in preclinical and clinical medicine, faculty who are not paid (e.g., those who donate their services or are in the military), or research-only faculty, post-doctoral fellows, or pre-doctoral fellows	Exclude	Include only if they teach one or more non-clinical credit courses
(b) administrative officers with titles such as dean of students, librarian, registrar, coach, and the like, even though they may devote part of their time to classroom instruction and may have faculty status	Exclude	Include if they teach one or more non-clinical credit courses
(C) other administrators/staff who teach one or more non-clinical credit courses even though they do not have faculty status	Exclude	Include
(d) undergraduate or graduate students who assist in the instruction of courses, but have titles such as teaching assistant, teaching fellow, and the like	Exclude	Exclude
(e) faculty on sabbatical or leave with pay	Include	Exclude
(f) faculty on leave without pay	Exclude	Exclude
(g) replacement faculty for faculty on sabbatical leave or leave with pay	Exclude	Include

Full-time instructional faculty: faculty employed on a full-time basis for instruction (including those with released time for research)

Part-time instructional faculty: Adjuncts and other instructors being paid solely for part-time classroom instruction. Also includes full-time faculty teaching less than two semesters, three quarters, two trimesters, or two four-month sessions. Employees who are not considered full-time instruction faculty but who teach one or more non-clinical credit courses may be counted as part-time faculty.

Minority faculty: includes faculty who designate themselves as Black, non-Hispanic; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or Hispanic.

Doctorate: includes such degrees as Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Education, Doctor of Juridical Science, and Doctor of Public Health in any field such as arts, sciences, education, engineering, business, and public administration. Also includes terminal degrees formerly designated as "first professional," including dentistry (DDS or DMD), medicine (MD), optometry (OD), osteopathic medicine (DO), pharmacy (DPharm or BPharm), podiatric medicine (DPM), veterinary medicine (DVM), chiropractic (DC or DCM), or law (JD).

Terminal master's degree: a master's degree that is considered the highest degree in a field: example, M. Arch (in architecture) and MFA (master of fine arts in art or theater).

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
a.) Total number of instructional faculty			
b.) Total number who are members of minority groups			
c.) Total number who are women			
d.) Total number who are men			
e.) Total number who are nonresident aliens (international)			
f.) Total number with doctorate, or other terminal degree			
g.) Total number whose highest degree is a master's but not a terminal master's			
h.) Total number whose highest degree is a bachelor's			
i.) Total number whose highest degree is unknown or other (Note: Items **f**, **g**, **h**, and **i** must sum up to item **a**.)			
j.) Total number in stand-alone graduate/professional programs in which faculty teach virtually only graduate-level students			

I-2. Student to Faculty Ratio

Report the Fall 2012 ratio of full-time equivalent students (full-time plus 1/3 part time) to full-time equivalent instructional faculty (full time plus 1/3 part time). In the ratio calculations, exclude both faculty and students in stand-alone graduate or professional programs such as medicine, law, veterinary, dentistry, social work, business, or public health in which faculty teach virtually only graduate level students. Do not count undergraduate or graduate student teaching assistants as faculty.

Fall 2012 Student to Faculty ratio: _____ to 1 (based on _____ students and _____ faculty).

I-3. Undergraduate Class Size

In the table below, please use the following definitions to report information about the size of classes and class sections offered in the Fall 2012 term.

Class Sections: A class section is an organized course offered for credit, identified by discipline and number, meeting at a stated time or times in a classroom or similar setting, and not a subsection such as a laboratory or discussion session. Undergraduate class sections are defined as any sections in which at least one degree-seeking undergraduate student is enrolled for credit. Exclude distance learning classes and noncredit classes and individual instruction such as dissertation or thesis research, music instruction, or one-to-one readings. Exclude students in independent study, co-operative programs, internships, foreign language taped tutor sessions, practicums, and all students in one-on-one classes. Each class section should be counted only once and should not be duplicated because of course catalog cross-listings.

Class Subsections: A class subsection includes any subsection of a course, such as laboratory, recitation, and discussion subsections that are supplementary in nature and are scheduled to meet separately from the lecture portion of the course. Undergraduate subsections are defined as any subsections of courses in which degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled for credit. As above, exclude noncredit classes and individual instruction such as dissertation or thesis research, music instruction, or one-to-one readings. Each class subsection should be counted only once and should not be duplicated because of cross-listings.

Using the above definitions, please report for each of the following class-size intervals the number of *class sections* and *class subsections* offered in Fall 2012. For example, a lecture class with 800 students who met at another time in 40 separate labs with 20 students should be counted once in the "100+" column in the class section column and 40 times under the "20-29" column of the class subsections table.

Number of Class Sections with Undergraduates Enrolled

Undergraduate Class Size (provide numbers)

	2-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-99
CLASS SECTIONS						

	2-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-99
CLASS SUB-SECTIONS						

J. Disciplinary areas of DEGREES CONFERRED

Degrees conferred between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012

For each of the following discipline areas, provide the percentage of diplomas/certificates, associate, and bachelor's degrees awarded. To determine the percentage, use majors, not headcount (e.g., students with one degree but a double major will be represented twice). Calculate the percentage from your institution's IPEDS Completions by using the sum of 1st and 2nd majors for each CIP code as the numerator and the sum of the Grand Total by 1st Majors and the Grand Total by 2nd major as the denominator. If you prefer, you can compute the percentages using 1st majors only.

Category	Diploma/ Certificates	Associate	Bachelor's	CIP 2010 Categories to Include
Agriculture				1
Natural resources and conservation				3
Architecture				4
Area, ethnic, and gender studies				5
Communication/journalism				9
Communication technologies				10
Computer and information sciences				11
Personal and culinary services				12
Education				13
Engineering				14
Engineering technologies				15
Foreign languages, literatures, and linguistics				16
Family and consumer sciences				19
Law/legal studies				22
English				23
Liberal arts/general studies				24
Library science				25
Biological/life sciences				26
Mathematics and statistics				27
Military science and military technologies				28 and 29
Interdisciplinary studies				30
Parks and recreation				31
Philosophy and religious studies				38
Theology and religious vocations				39
Physical sciences				40
Science technologies				41
Psychology				42
Homeland Security, law enforcement, firefighting, and protective services				43
Public administration and social services				44
Social sciences				45
Construction trades				46
Mechanic and repair technologies				47

Precision production				48
Transportation and materials moving				49
Visual and performing arts				50
Health professions and related programs				51
Business/marketing				52
History				54
Other				
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	

Common Data Set Definitions

- **All definitions related to the financial aid section appear at the end of the Definitions document.**
- Items preceded by an asterisk (*) represent definitions agreed to among publishers which do not appear on the CDS document but may be present on individual publishers' surveys.

***Academic advisement:** Plan under which each student is assigned to a faculty member or a trained adviser, who, through regular meetings, helps the student plan and implement immediate and long-term academic and vocational goals.

Accelerated program: Completion of a college program of study in fewer than the usual number of years, most often by attending summer sessions and carrying extra courses during the regular academic term**.**

Admitted student: Applicant who is offered admission to a degree-granting program at your institution.

***Adult student services:** Admission assistance, support, orientation, and other services expressly for adults who have started college for the first time, or who are re-entering after a lapse of a few years.

American Indian or Alaska Native: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

Applicant (first-time, first year): An individual who has fulfilled the institution's requirements to be considered for admission (including payment or waiving of the application fee, if any) and who has been notified of one of the following actions: admission, nonadmission, placement on waiting list, or application withdrawn (by applicant or institution).

Application fee: That amount of money that an institution charges for processing a student's application for acceptance. This amount is *not* creditable toward tuition and required fees, nor is it refundable if the student is not admitted to the institution.

Asian or Pacific Islander: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, or Pacific Islands. This includes people from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, American Samoa, India, and Vietnam.

Associate degree: An award that normally requires at least two but less than four years of full-time equivalent college work.

Bachelor's degree: An award (baccalaureate or equivalent degree, as determined by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education) that normally requires at least four years but *not* more than five years of full-time equivalent college-level work. This includes ALL bachelor's degrees conferred in a five-year cooperative (work-study plan) program. (A cooperative plan provides for alternate class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government; thus, it allows students to combine actual work experience with their college studies.) Also, it includes bachelor's degrees in which the normal four years of work are completed in three years.

Black, non-Hispanic: A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa (except those of Hispanic origin).

Board (charges): Assume average cost for 19 meals per week or the maximum meal plan.

Books and supplies (costs): Average cost of books and supplies. Do not include unusual costs for special groups of students (e.g., engineering or art majors), unless they constitute the majority of students at your institution.

Calendar system: The method by which an institution structures most of its courses for the academic year.

Campus Ministry: Religious student organizations (denominational or nondenominational) devoted to fostering religious life on college campuses. May also refer to Campus Crusade for Christ, an interdenominational Christian organization.

***Career and placement services:** A range of services, including (often) the following: coordination of visits of employers to campus; aptitude and vocational testing; interest inventories, personal counseling; help in resume writing, interviewing, launching the job search; listings for those students desiring employment and those seeking permanent positions; establishment of a permanent reference folder; career resource materials.

Carnegie units: One year of study or the equivalent in a secondary school subject.

Certificate: See **Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma.**

Class rank: The relative numerical position of a student in his or her graduating class, calculated by the high school on the basis of grade-point average, whether weighted or unweighted.

College-preparatory program: Courses in academic subjects (English, history and social studies, foreign languages, mathematics, science, and the arts) that stress preparation for college or university study.

Common Application: The standard application form distributed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals for a large number of private colleges who are members of the Common Application Group.

***Community service program:** Referral center for students wishing to perform volunteer work in the community or participate in volunteer activities coordinated by academic departments.

Commuter: A student who lives off campus in housing that is not owned by, operated by, or affiliated with the college. This category includes students who commute from home and students who have moved to the area to attend college.

Contact hour: A unit of measure that represents an hour of scheduled instruction given to students. Also referred to as clock hour.

Continuous basis (for program enrollment): A calendar system classification that is used by institutions that enroll students at any time during the academic year. For example, a cosmetology school or a word processing school might allow students to enroll and begin studies at various times, with no requirement that classes begin on a certain date.

Cooperative education program: A program that provides for alternate class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government.

Cooperative housing: College-owned, -operated, or -affiliated housing in which students share room and board expenses and participate in household chores to reduce living expenses.

***Counseling service:** Activities designed to assist students in making plans and decisions related to their education, career, or personal development.

Credit: Recognition of attendance or performance in an instructional activity (course or program) that can be applied by a recipient toward the requirements for a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.

Credit course: A course that, if successfully completed, can be applied toward the number of courses required for achieving a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.

Credit hour: A unit of measure representing an hour (50 minutes) of instruction over a 15-week period in a semester or trimester system or a 10-week period in a quarter system. It is applied toward the total number of hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.

Cross-registration: A system whereby students enrolled at one institution may take courses at another institution without having to apply to the second institution.

Deferred admission: The practice of permitting admitted students to postpone enrollment, usually for a period of one academic term or one year.

Degree: An award conferred by a college, university, or other postsecondary education institution as official recognition for the successful completion of a program of studies.

Degree-seeking students: Students enrolled in courses for credit who are recognized by the institution as seeking a degree or formal award. At the undergraduate level, this is intended to include students enrolled in vocational or occupational programs.

Differs by program (calendar system): A calendar system classification that is used by institutions that have occupational/vocational programs of varying length. These schools may enroll students at specific times depending on the program desired. For example, a school might offer a two-month program in January, March, May, September, and November; and a three-month program in January, April, and October.

Diploma: See **Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma.**

Distance learning: An option for earning course credit at off-campus locations via cable television, internet, satellite classes, videotapes, correspondence courses, or other means.

Doctor's degree-research/scholarship: A Ph.D. or other doctor's degree that requires advanced work beyond the master's level, including the preparation and defense of a dissertation based on original research, or the planning and execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement. Some examples of this type of degree may include Ed.D., D.M.A., D.B.A., D.Sc., D.A., or D.M, and others, as designated by the awarding institution.

Doctor's degree-professional practice: A doctor's degree that is conferred upon completion of a program providing the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice. The degree is awarded after a period of study such that the total time to the degree, including both pre-professional and professional preparation, equals at least six full-time equivalent academic years. Some of these degrees were formerly classified as "first-professional" and may include: Chiropractic (D.C. or D.C.M.); Dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.); Law (L.L.B. or J.D.); Medicine (M.D.); Optometry (O.D.); Osteopathic Medicine (D.O); Pharmacy (Pharm.D.); Podiatry (D.P.M., Pod.D., D.P.); or, Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.), and others, as designated by the awarding institution.

Doctor's degree-other: A doctor's degree that does not meet the definition of a doctor's degree - research/scholarship or a doctor's degree - professional practice.

Double major: Program in which students may complete two undergraduate programs of study simultaneously.

Dual enrollment: A program through which high school students may enroll in college courses while still enrolled in high school. Students are not required to apply for admission to the college in order to participate.

Early action plan: An admission plan that allows students to apply and be notified of an admission decision well in advance of the regular notification dates. If admitted, the candidate is not committed to enroll; the student may reply to the offer under the college's regular reply policy.

Early admission: A policy under which students who have not completed high school are admitted and enroll full time in college, usually after completion of their junior year.

Early decision plan: A plan that permits students to apply and be notified of an admission decision (and financial aid offer if applicable) well in advance of the regular notification date. Applicants agree to accept an offer of admission and, if admitted, to withdraw their applications from other colleges. There are three possible decisions for early decision applicants: admitted, denied, or not admitted but forwarded for consideration with the regular applicant pool, without prejudice.

English as a Second Language (ESL): A course of study designed specifically for students whose native language is not English.

Exchange student program-domestic: Any arrangement between a student and a college that permits study for a semester or more at another college **in the United States** without extending the amount of time required for a degree. **See also Study abroad**.

External degree program: A program of study in which students earn credits toward a degree through independent study, college courses, proficiency examinations, and personal experience. External degree programs require minimal or no classroom attendance.

Extracurricular activities (as admission factor): Special consideration in the admissions process given for participation in both school and nonschool-related activities of interest to the college, such as clubs, hobbies, student government, athletics, performing arts, etc.

First-time student: A student attending any institution for the first time at the level enrolled. Includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended a postsecondary institution for the first time at the same level in the prior summer term. Also includes students who entered with advanced standing (college credit earned before graduation from high school).

First-time, first-year (freshman) student: A student attending any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. Includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term. Also includes students who entered with advanced standing (college credits earned before graduation from high school).

First-year student: A student who has completed less than the equivalent of 1 full year of undergraduate work; that is, less than 30 semester hours (in a 120-hour degree program) or less than 900 contact hours.

Freshman: A first-year undergraduate student.

***Freshman/new student orientation:** Orientation addressing the academic, social, emotional, and intellectual issues involved in beginning college. May be a few hours or a few days in length; at some colleges, there is a fee.

Full-time student (undergraduate): A student enrolled for 12 or more semester credits, 12 or more quarter credits, or 24 or more contact hours a week each term.

Geographical residence (as admission factor): Special consideration in the admission process given to students from a particular region, state, or country of residence.

Grade-point average (academic high school GPA): The sum of grade points a student has earned in secondary school divided by the number of courses taken. The most common system of assigning numbers to grades counts four points for an A, three points for a B, two points for a C, one point for a D, and no points for an E or F. Unweighted GPA's assign the same weight to each course. Weighting gives students additional points for their grades in advanced or honors courses.

Graduate student: A student who holds a bachelor's or equivalent, and is taking courses at the post-baccalaureate level.

***Health services:** Free or low cost on-campus primary and preventive health care available to students.

High school diploma or recognized equivalent: A document certifying the successful completion of a prescribed secondary school program of studies, or the attainment of satisfactory scores on the Tests of General Educational Development (GED), or another state-specified examination.

Hispanic: A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

Honors program: Any special program for very able students offering the opportunity for educational enrichment, independent study, acceleration, or some combination of these.

Independent study: Academic work chosen or designed by the student with the approval of the department concerned, under an instructor's supervision, and usually undertaken outside of the regular classroom structure.

In-state tuition: The tuition charged by institutions to those students who meet the state's or institution's residency requirements.

International student: See **Nonresident alien.**

International student group: Student groups that facilitate cultural dialogue, support a diverse campus, assist international students in acclimation and creating a social network.

Internship: Any short-term, supervised work experience usually related to a student's major field, for which the student earns academic credit. The work can be full- or part-time, on- or off-campus, paid or unpaid.

***Learning center:** Center offering assistance through tutors, workshops, computer programs, or audiovisual equipment in reading, writing, math, and skills such as taking notes, managing time, taking tests.

***Legal services:** Free or low cost legal advice for a range of issues (personal and other).

Liberal arts/career combination: Program in which a student earns undergraduate degrees in two separate fields, one in a liberal arts major and the other in a professional or specialized major, whether on campus or through cross-registration.

Master's degree: An award that requires the successful completion of a program of study of generally one or two full-time equivalent academic years of work beyond the bachelor's degree. Some of these degrees, such as those in Theology (M.Div., M.H.L./Rav) that were formerly classified as "first-professional", may require more than two full-time equivalent academic years of work.

Minority affiliation (as admission factor): Special consideration in the admission process for members of designated racial/ethnic minority groups.

***Minority student center:** Center with programs, activities, and/or services intended to enhance the college experience of students of color.

Model United Nations: A simulation activity focusing on conflict resolution, globalization, and diplomacy. Assuming roles as foreign ambassadors and "delegates," students conduct research, engage in debate, draft resolutions, and may participate in a national Model UN conference.

Nonresident alien: A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a visa or temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely.

***On-campus day care:** Licensed day care for students' children (usually age 3 and up); usually for a fee.

Open admission: Admission policy under which virtually all secondary school graduates or students with GED equivalency diplomas are admitted without regard to academic record, test scores, or other qualifications.

Other expenses (costs): Include average costs for clothing, laundry, entertainment, medical (if not a required fee), and furnishings.

Out-of-state tuition: The tuition charged by institutions to those students who do not meet the institution's or state's residency requirements.

Part-time student (undergraduate): A student enrolled for fewer than 12 credits per semester or quarter, or fewer than 24 contact hours a week each term.

***Personal counseling**: One-on-one or group counseling with trained professionals for students who want to explore personal, educational, or vocational issues.

Post-baccalaureate certificate: An award that requires completion of an organized program of study requiring 18 credit hours beyond the bachelor's; designed for persons who have completed a baccalaureate degree but do not meet the requirements of academic degrees carrying the title of master.

Post-master's certificate: An award that requires completion of an organized program of study of 24 credit hours beyond the master's degree but does not meet the requirements of academic degrees at the doctoral level.

Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma: Includes the following three IPEDS definitions for postsecondary awards, certificates, and diplomas of varying durations and credit/contact hour requirements—

Less Than 1 Academic Year: Requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in less than 1 academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters) or in less than 900 contact hours by a student enrolled full-time.

At Least 1 But Less Than 2 Academic Years: Requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in at least 1 but less than 2 full-time equivalent academic years, or designed for completion in at least 30 but less than 60 credit hours, or in at least 900 but less than 1,800 contact hours.

At Least 2 But Less Than 4 Academic Years: Requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in at least 2 but less than 4 full-time equivalent academic years, or designed for completion in at least 60 but less than 120 credit hours, or in at least 1,800 but less than 3,600 contact hours.

Private institution: An educational institution controlled by a private individual(s) or by a nongovernmental agency, usually supported primarily by other than public funds, and operated by other than publicly elected or appointed officials.

Private for-profit institution: A private institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives compensation, other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk.

Private nonprofit institution: A private institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives no compensation, other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk. These include both independent nonprofit schools and those affiliated with a religious organization.

Proprietary institution: See **Private for-profit institution.**

Public institution: An educational institution whose programs and activities are operated by publicly elected or appointed school officials, and which is supported primarily by public funds.

Quarter calendar system: A calendar system in which the academic year consists of three sessions called quarters of about 12 weeks each. The range may be from 10 to 15 weeks. There may be an additional quarter in the summer.

Race/ethnicity: Category used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. A person may be counted in only one group.

Race/ethnicity unknown: Category used to classify students or employees whose race/ethnicity is not known and whom institutions are unable to place in one of the specified racial/ethnic categories.

Religious affiliation/commitment (as admission factor): Special consideration given in the admission process for affiliation with a certain church or faith/religion, commitment to a religious vocation, or observance of certain religious tenets/lifestyle.

***Religious counseling:** One-on-one or group counseling with trained professionals for students who want to explore religious problems or issues.

***Remedial services:** Instructional courses designed for students deficient in the general competencies necessary for a regular postsecondary curriculum and educational setting.

Required fees: Fixed sum charged to students for items not covered by tuition and required of such a large proportion of all students that the student who does NOT pay is the exception. Do not include application fees or optional fees such as lab fees or parking fees.

Resident alien or other eligible non-citizen: A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who has been admitted as a legal immigrant for the purpose of obtaining permanent resident alien status (and who holds either an alien registration card [Form I-551 or I-151], a Temporary Resident Card [Form I-688], or an Arrival-Departure Record [Form I-94] with a notation that conveys legal immigrant status, such as Section 207 Refugee, Section 208 Asylee, Conditional Entrant Parolee or Cuban-Haitian).

Room and board (charges)—on campus: Assume double occupancy in institutional housing and 19 meals per week (or maximum meal plan).

Secondary school record (as admission factor): Information maintained by the secondary school that may include such things as the student's high school transcript, class rank, GPA, and teacher and counselor recommendations.

Semester calendar system: A calendar system that consists of two semesters during the academic year with about 16 weeks for each semester of instruction. There may be an additional summer session.

Student-designed major: A program of study based on individual interests, designed with the assistance of an adviser.

Study abroad: Any arrangement by which a student completes part of the college program studying in another country. Can be at a campus abroad or through a cooperative agreement with some other U.S. college or an institution of another country.

***Summer session:** A summer session is shorter than a regular semester and not considered part of the academic year. It is not the third term of an institution operating on a trimester system or the fourth term of an institution operating on a quarter calendar system. The institution may have 2 or more sessions occurring in the summer months. Some schools, such as vocational and beauty schools, have year-round classes with no separate summer session.

Talent/ability (as admission factor): Special consideration given to students with demonstrated talent/abilities in areas of interest to the institution (e.g., sports, the arts, languages, etc.).

Teacher certification program: Program designed to prepare students to meet the requirements for certification as teachers in elementary, middle/junior high, and secondary schools.

Transfer applicant: An individual who has fulfilled the institution's requirements to be considered for admission (including payment or waiving of the application fee, if any) and who has previously attended another college or university and earned college-level credit.

Transfer student: A student entering the institution for the first time but known to have previously attended a postsecondary institution at the same level (e.g., undergraduate). The student may transfer with or without credit.

Transportation (costs): Assume two round trips to student's hometown per year for students in institutional housing or daily travel to and from your institution for commuter students.

Trimester calendar system: An academic year consisting of 3 terms of about 15 weeks each.

Tuition: Amount of money charged to students for instructional services. Tuition may be charged per term, per course, or per credit.

***Tutoring:** May range from one-on-one tutoring in specific subjects to tutoring in an area such as math, reading, or writing. Most tutors are college students; at some colleges, they are specially trained and certified.

Unit: a standard of measurement representing hours of academic instruction (e.g., semester credit, quarter credit, contact hour).

Undergraduate: A student enrolled in a four- or five-year bachelor's degree program, an associate degree program, or a vocational or technical program below the baccalaureate.

***Veteran's counseling:** Helps veterans and their dependents obtain benefits for their selected program and provides certifications to the Veteran's Administration. May also provide personal counseling on the transition from the military to a civilian life.

***Visually impaired:** Any person whose sight loss is not correctable and is sufficiently severe as to adversely affect educational performance.

Volunteer work (as admission factor): Special consideration given to students for activity done on a volunteer basis (e.g., tutoring, hospital care, working with the elderly or disabled) as a service to the community or the public in general.

Wait list: List of students who meet the admission requirements but will only be offered a place in the class if space becomes available.

Weekend college: A program that allows students to take a complete course of study and attend classes only on weekends.

White, non-Hispanic: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East (except those of Hispanic origin).

***Women's center:** Center with programs, academic activities, and/or services intended to promote an understanding of the evolving roles of women.

Work experience (as admission factor): Special consideration given to students who have been employed prior to application, whether for relevance to major, demonstration of employment-related skills, or as explanation of student's academic and extracurricular record.

Financial Aid Definitions

External scholarships and grants: Scholarships and grants received from outside (private) sources that students bring with them (e.g., Kiwanis, National Merit scholarships). The institution may process paperwork to receive the dollars, but it has no role in determining the recipient or the dollar amount awarded.

Financial aid applicant: Any applicant who submits **any one of** the institutionally required financial aid applications/forms, such as the FAFSA.

Indebtedness: Aggregate dollar amount borrowed through any loan program (federal, state, subsidized, unsubsidized, private, etc.; excluding parent loans) while the student was enrolled at an institution. Student loans co-signed by a parent are assumed to be the responsibility of the student and **should** be included.

Institutional scholarships and grants: Endowed scholarships, annual gifts and tuition funded grants for which the institution determines the recipient.

Financial need: As determined by your institution using the federal methodology and/or your institution's own standards.

Need-based aid: College-funded or college-administered award from institutional, state, federal, or other sources for which a student must have financial need to qualify. This includes both institutional and non-institutional student aid (grants, jobs, and loans).

Need-based scholarship or grant aid: Scholarships and grants from institutional, state, federal, or other sources for which a student must have financial need to qualify.

Need-based self-help aid: Loans and jobs from institutional, state, federal, or other sources for which a student must demonstrate financial need to qualify.

Non-need-based scholarship or grant aid: Scholarships and grants, gifts, or merit-based aid from institutional, state, federal, or other sources (including unrestricted funds or gifts and endowment income) awarded solely on the basis of academic achievement, merit, or any other non-need-based reason. When reporting questions H1 and H2, non-need-based aid that is used to meet need should be counted as need-based aid.

Note: Suggested order of precedence for counting non-need money as need-based:
Non-need institutional grants
Non-need tuition waivers
Non-need athletic awards
Non-need federal grants
Non-need state grants
Non-need outside grants
Non-need student loans
Non-need parent loans
Non-need work

Non-need-based self-help aid: Loans and jobs from institutional, state, or other sources for which a student need not demonstrate financial need to qualify.

Work study and employment: Federal and state work study aid, and any employment packaged by your institution in financial aid awards.

Appendix F

Response Rates for Georgia and Peer Institutions

Appendix F

Response Rates for Georgia and Peer Institutions

Year	Number of Georgia Institutions	Number of Peer Institutions
1997	3	19
1998	3	28
1999	4	41
2000	6	49
2001	5	56
2002	11	96
2003	13	99
2004	13	106
2005	13	109
2006	13	108
2007	13	105
2008	13	108