



Benchmarking in Higher Education

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Are these examples of benchmarking?

- ▶ A colleague at University of Wisconsin Madison has inquired about our VP Research structure, which includes research and graduate studies. UWM is looking at new models and would like to talk to someone at U.Va. in VPR to learn more. UWM has already talked with Penn State.
- ▶ A survey of all University departments asking about each unit's record retention and destruction practices.
- ▶ U.Va.'s Board of Visitors reviews the University's performance on a set of predefined measures on an annual basis and compares against the performance of 4 public institutions and 4 private institutions.

“Benchmarking” has different meanings.

➤ **Comparative/Scorecard: How do we measure up?**

“A standard or reference by which others can be measured or judged”

Webster’s Dictionary

➤ **Process/Best Practices: Benchmarking for Improvement**

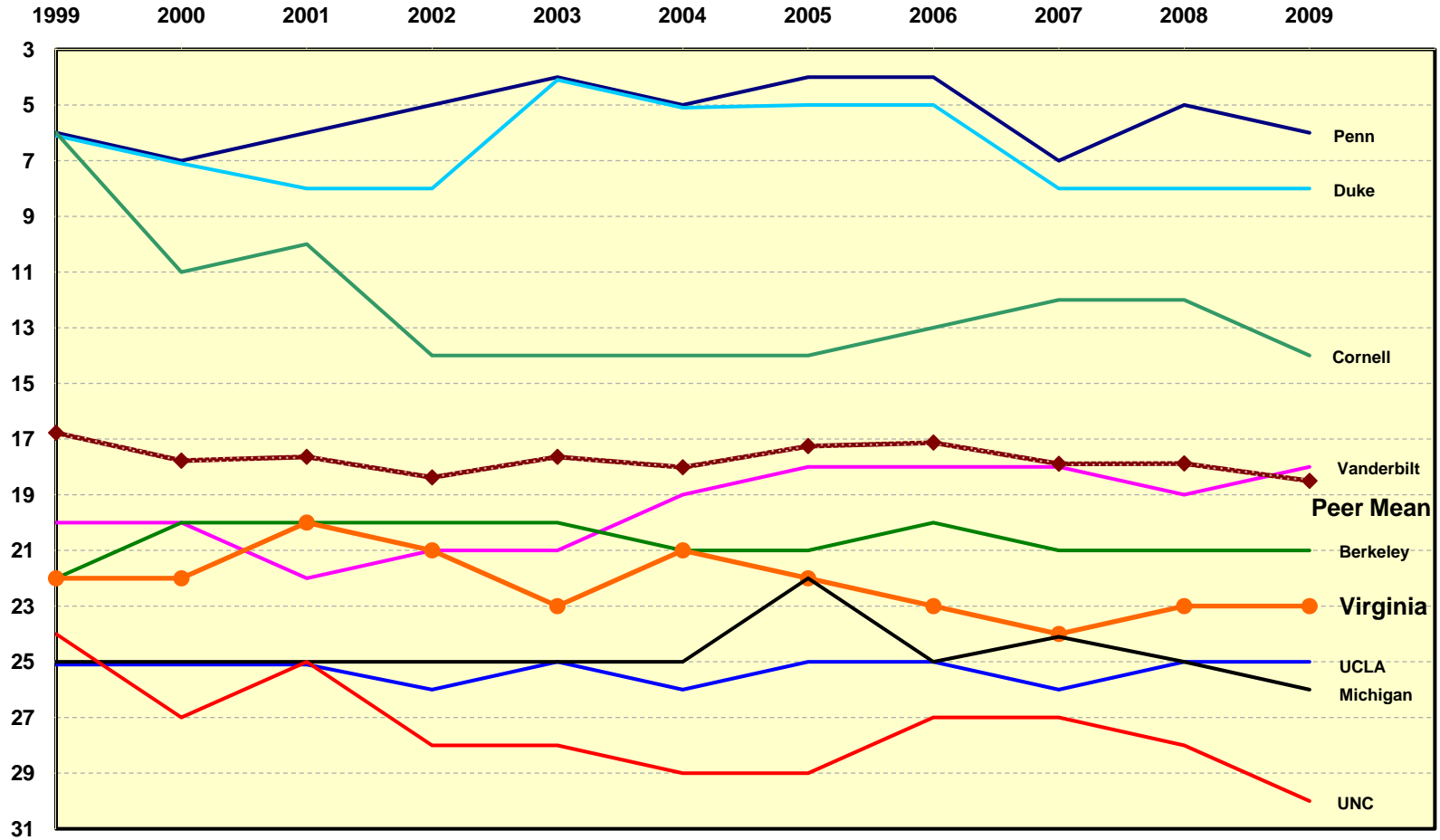
“Benchmarking means finding out who is the best in an area, studying how they work, and adopting the best practices that are suitable to your own organization.”

Dew, J. & Nearing, M (2004), Continuous Quality Improvement in Higher Education

➤ **Two approaches can/should complement one another.**

Scorecard Example

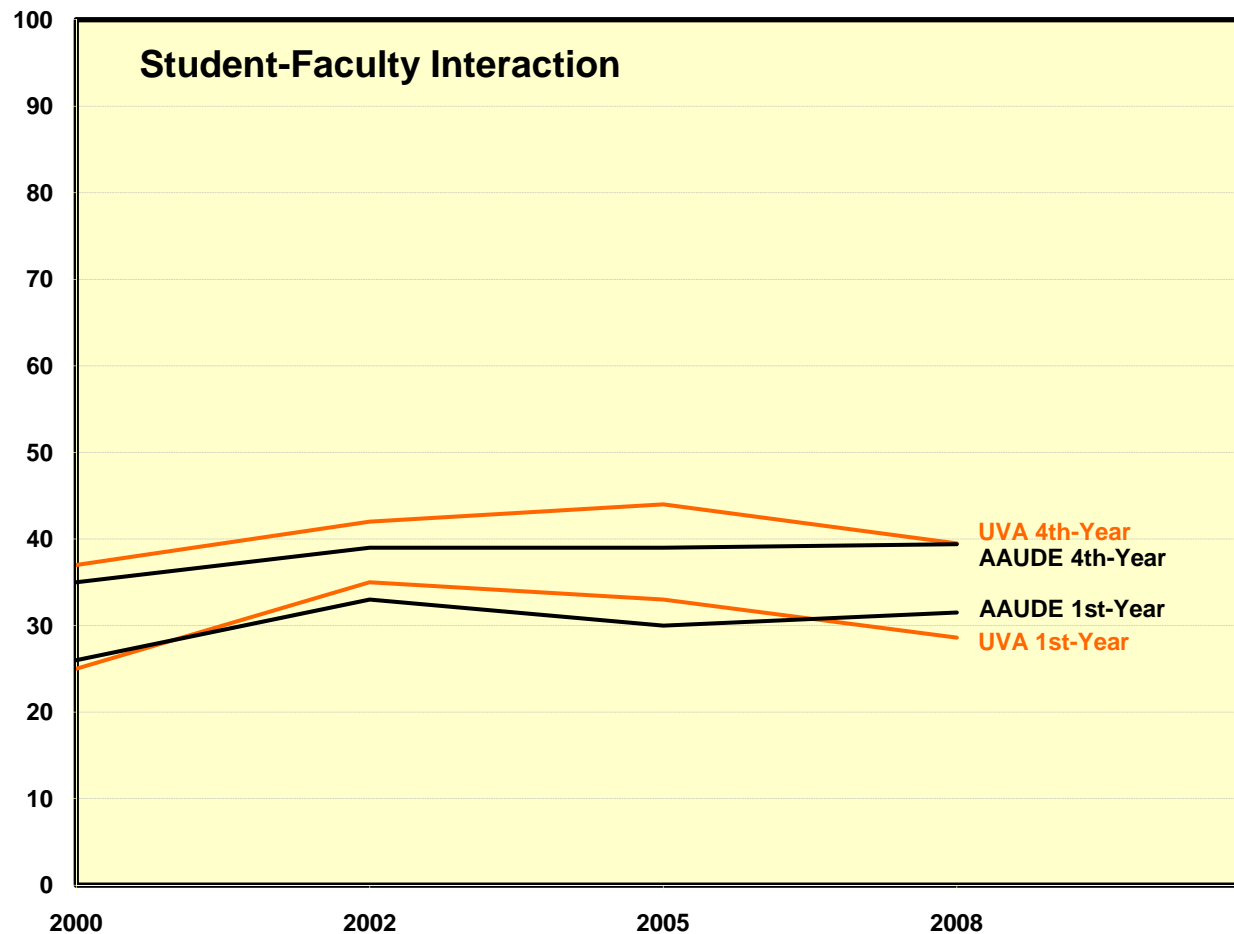
US News Overall Undergraduate Rank



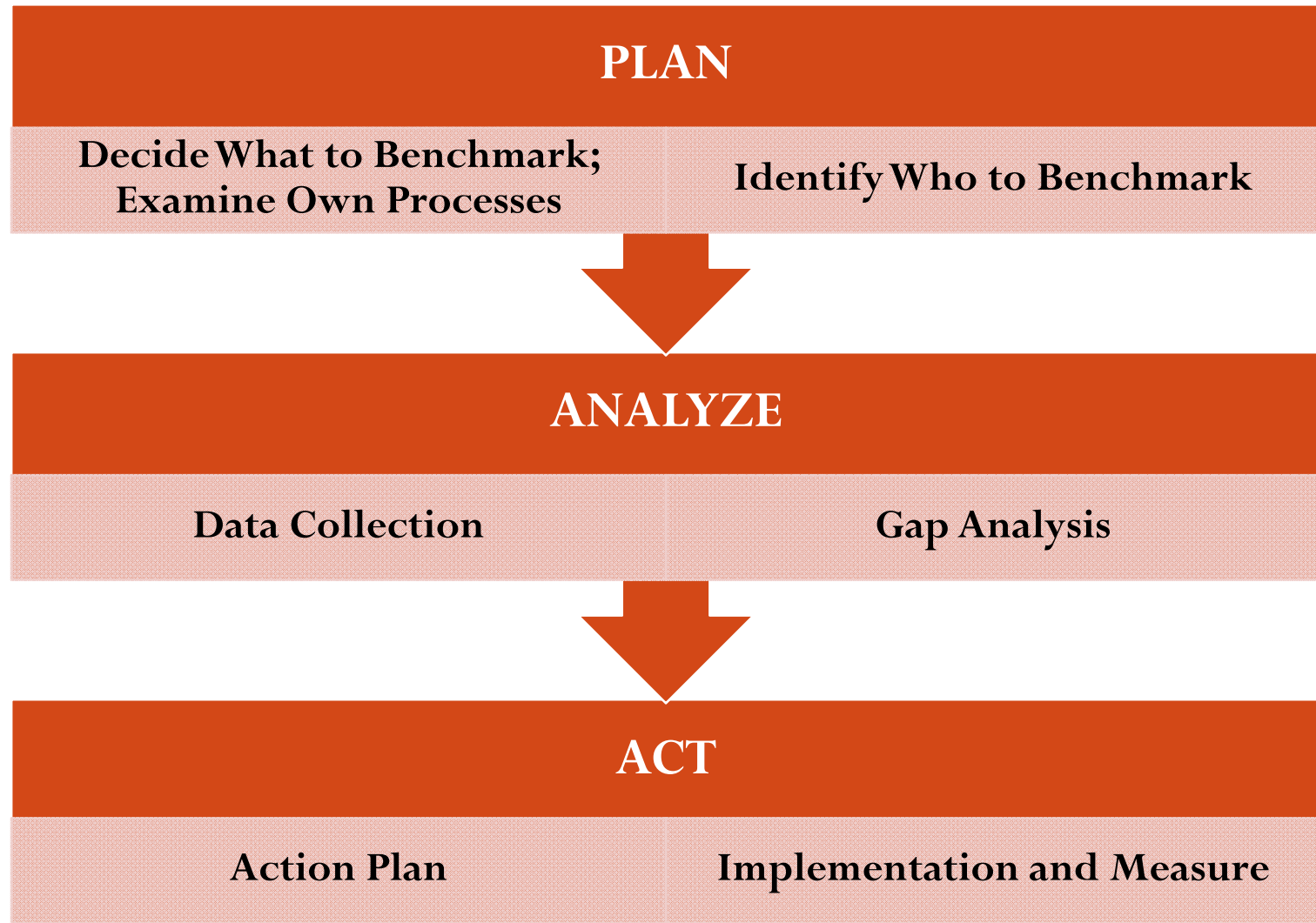
“Turning Surveys Into Reforms”, Inside Higher Ed Article, 10/26/09

[The largest challenge facing NSSE is finding ways to be sure “that campuses actually use the results not just administer the survey.”] S. Ikenberry, former president of ACE

National Survey of Student Engagement Benchmarks



Basic Benchmarking Methodology



PLAN

1. What to benchmark

- Identify critical processes
- Collect internal data for comparison – how measure performance; Understand strengths and weaknesses of current process

2. Who to benchmark

- **Internal Units** - comparison within an institution
- **Other Colleges and Universities** – comparison across institutions
- **Functional Comparisons** - across diverse settings - higher education, corporate, industry, etc.
- **Best in Class**—compare with exceptional performers

ANALYZE

3. Collect data

- Collect comparative data – qualitative/quantitative
- Calls, surveys, site visits, interviews, review of websites
- Systematic collection

4. Analyze data

- Gap between performance - Are others better? Why are they better ?
- New strategies/practices for adoption - What practices could we adapt and adopt?

ACT

5. Implement improvements

- Action plan for change
- Implement changes
- Measure results for effectiveness

Examples

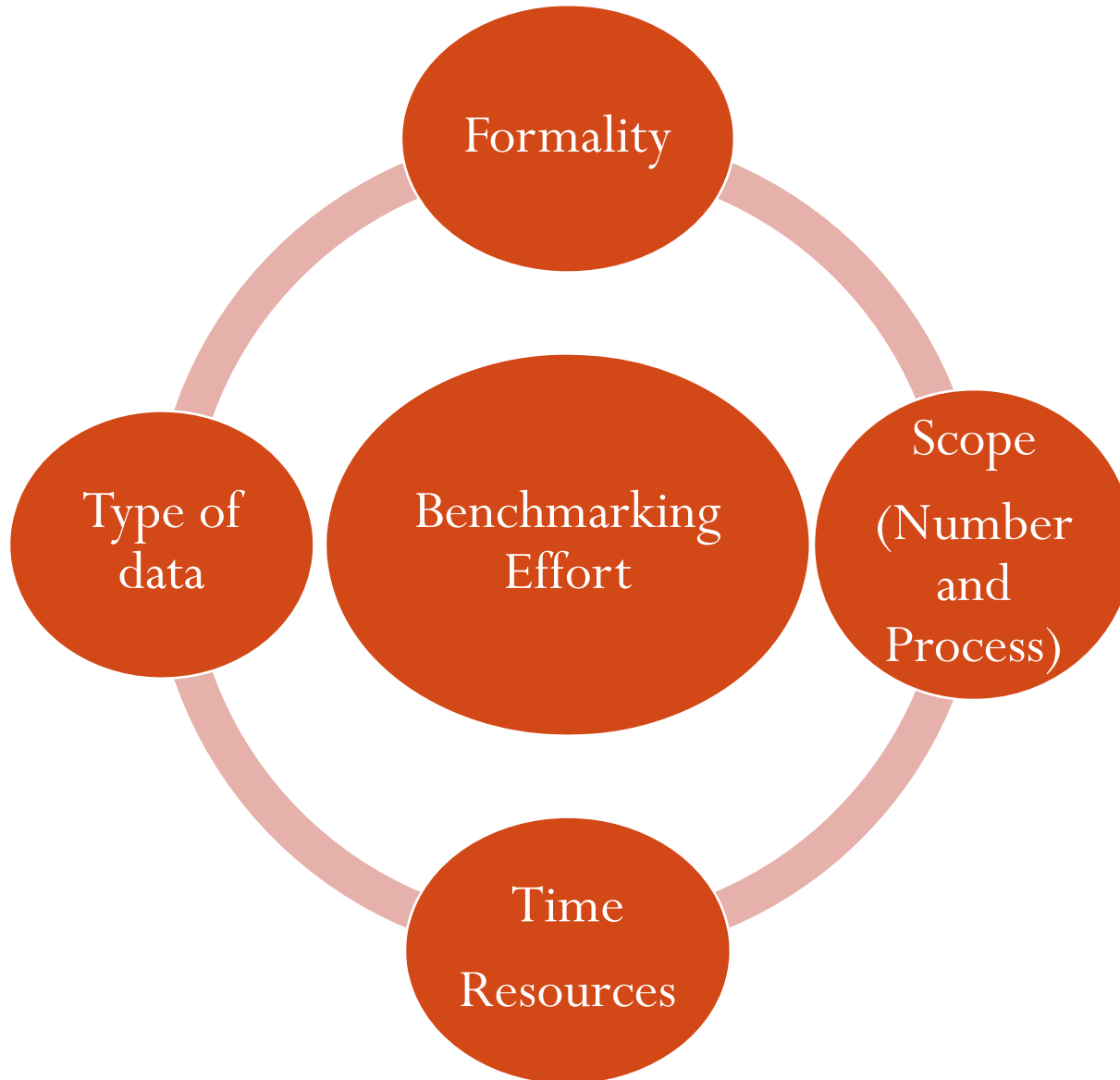
Benchmarking at U. Va.

- Records Management
- Interactions with Prospective Undergraduates
- Embedded in unit operations

Other Unique Institutional Approaches

- Missouri State University - Identified a set of 11 Benchmark Institutions. Purposes: 1) to provide a group that can be used as benchmarks when comparing public performance measures; 2) to identify and analyze "best practices" that would make Missouri State more effective and/or efficient; and 3) to analyze salary levels as one component toward identifying salary goals for Missouri State University.
<http://www.missouristate.edu/President/benchmark.htm>
- Carleton University, <http://www.carleton.ca/qualityinitiatives/index.html>
The Office of Quality Initiatives reports into the Office of Institutional Research and Planning. Establishes Benchmarking Teams to identify and understand the best practices in work processes, in order to improve our ability to deliver services at Carleton University.

Benchmarking Considerations



Resources

(in addition to content specific professional associations)

- NCCI – National Consortium for Continuous Improvement in Higher Education

www.ncci-cu.org/

Catalyst for h.ed. institutions to work collaboratively across institutions to employ effective methods for advancing academic and administrative excellence

- Higher Education Consortia www.highereducationconsortia.com/

To deliver information that supports and helps to facilitate cooperative endeavors in h.ed.

- NACUBO – National Association of College and University Business Officers, <http://www.nacubo.org/> (Examples: Student Financial Services, Endowment)

- Academic Quality Improvement Program,
<http://www.aqip.org/>

Innovation Exchange – searchable database of innovative practices

- The Advisory Board, <http://www.advisoryboardcompany.com/>

The Advisory Board is a best practice research firm serving a membership of more than 2,500 of the nation's leading hospitals and academic medical centers, colleges and universities. Our staff of 950 conducts extensive research and produces 55 major best practice studies and more than 10,000 customized research reports for our members each year.



Concluding Thoughts

Benchmarking is...

- Intentional
- Deliberate
- Planned
- Action-oriented
- Results in change - adapt and adopt for improvement
- Ongoing and continuous

Benchmarking Tips

- Commit adequate time and resources to plan and execute
- Involve the right people
- Select good benchmarking partners
- Don't limit to organizations that you consider to be superior or those that appear to be most similar.
- Collect relevant data
- Keep an open mind