
2020 Peer Report: Nebraska State College System



Approved by the Commission April 30, 2020



COMMISSIONERS

Dr. Deborah Frison, Chair
Omaha, District 2

Timothy Daniels
Omaha, Member-at-Large

Mary Lauritzen
West Point, Member-at-Large

Dr. John Bernthal, Vice Chair
Lincoln, District 1

Charles Garman
Omaha, Member-at-Large

Dr. Paul Von Behren
Fremont, District 3

Colleen Adam
Hastings, District 5

Dr. Ronald Hunter
Hay Springs, District 6

W. Scott Wilson
Plattsmouth, Member-at-Large

Gwenn Aspen
Omaha, Member-at-Large

STAFF

Dr. Michael Baumgartner
Executive Director

Kadi Lukesh
*Bookkeeper, Budget Coordinator,
& Office Manager*

Gary Timm
*Chief Finance &
Administrative Officer*

Dr. Kathleen Fimple
Academic Programs Officer

Ritchie Morrow
Financial Aid Officer

Joe Velasquez
Database Manager

Jill Heese
Research Coordinator

Helen Pope
Executive Assistant

Mike Wemhoff
Facilities Officer

Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
140 N. 8th Street, Suite 300 · P.O. Box 95005 · Lincoln, NE 68509-5005
Phone: (402) 471-2847

The Commission's reports are available online at ccpe.nebraska.gov/reports

The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in the employment or the provision of services.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Evaluation Process	2
Data Source	2
Selection Criteria	2
Screening Variables.....	2
Evaluation Variables	3
Rational for Selection Criteria	3
Peers and Alternates	5
Chadron State College	6
Peru State College	8
Wayne State College.....	10
Suitability of Peers over Time.....	11
Appendix A.....	12
Appendix B.....	13

Introduction

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-1413(5)(g) requires that Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education establish peer groups for public institutions in Nebraska. *The Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education* further defines the Commission's purpose for establishing peer groups for Nebraska public colleges and universities as follows:

Peer Groups

A peer institution is one that is representative of the institution to which it is compared. The Commission is required by statute to identify peer institutions for each public postsecondary education institution in the state. The Commission reviews and compares several characteristics of institutions, such as enrollment and program offerings, in identifying peers. Peer groups are used for budget and program review, as well as for other comparisons that will aid in Commission decision making. The Commission's purpose for the use of peer groups does not include influencing the collective bargaining process.

Selection of peer groups for Nebraska's state colleges was last conducted in 2014. These peer groups were to remain in effect for 10 years, provided that the peers remained suitable over time. If at any time the Nebraska State College System (NSCS) felt that a peer was no longer viable, the NSCS was encouraged to contact the Commission to review the peer in question. In late 2019, the NSCS requested that the Commission reevaluate the suitability of each state college's peer group.

For the Commission's purposes, peer institutions are defined as institutions sufficiently similar in mission, programs, size, students, wealth, etc., and are used to establish basic central tendencies. Aspirational institutions in some ways excel the target institution, which would like to emulate the aspirational institutions' accomplishments and set similar goals.¹ Competitors are rival institutions contesting for students, faculty, research dollars, etc.

The Commission staff identified peer institutions consistent with the definition above. As the peer groups are used for program reviews, budget analysis, tuition and fees comparisons, facilities analysis, and similar types of comparisons, aspirational and competitor institutions were not specifically included. Commission staff worked closely with the Nebraska State College System throughout the evaluation process to ensure selection of the most suitable peer institutions.

The following report describes the peer selection process utilized by Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education for the state colleges. The Commission's updated peer groups for the state colleges are outlined in [Table 2](#), [Table 3](#), and [Table 4](#).

¹ Halstead, K. (1991). *Higher Education Revenues and Expenditures: A Study of Institutional Costs*. Washington DC: Research Associates of Washington.

Evaluation Process

Data Source

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) served as the data source for the listing of potential peers. For all variables, the Commission used the most up-to-date data available. To obtain a more accurate snapshot of the program offerings at each institution, the Commission aggregated two-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes into seven discipline clusters.

Selection Criteria

The Commission focused on key *input variables*—percent of applicants admitted, 12-month unduplicated headcount, percent of students that are minorities, etc.—that are likely to affect outcome variables. *Outcome variables*, such as graduation and retention rates, were excluded from the Commission’s analysis.

Focusing on these key variables, peers were selected through the use of screening variables as well as evaluation variables. Institutions not matching on identified important categorical criteria or falling outside Commission-established parameters for numeric variables were withdrawn, at least temporarily, from consideration.

Screening Variables

The listing of potential peers was narrowed by first applying selection criteria to screen in/out potential peer institutions. The use of screening variables ensures essential characteristics of each college are present in its respective peer group. For example, since it would be illogical to compare Nebraska’s state colleges to two-year institutions, two-year institutions were screened completely out of the potential peer pools even though most two-year institutions are classified as open admission. (See [Rational for Selection Criteria](#) for more information on selection criteria.)

As outlined in [Table 1](#), the following screening variables were utilized for the state colleges: location, sector, rurality, percent admitted, 12-month unduplicated headcount, percent of awards that are master’s degrees, and the percentage of students who are minorities. Through the implementation of these screening variables, the remaining peer pools for the state colleges were reduced to 27 institutions.

Table 1*Screening Variables Applicable to All State Colleges*

Variable Description	Screen In Responses	Remaining N
1. Data source	Institutions that reported to IPEDS in 2018	6,857
2. Location	U.S. only	6,534
3. Sector	Public 4-year or above	754
4. Degree of urbanization	Town or rural	236
5. Percent admitted	Blank (open admission or NA) or $\geq 67\%$	185
6. 12-month unduplicated headcount graduate students	> 0	123
7. Percent of awards that are master's degrees	$\geq 10\%$	90
8. 12-month unduplicated headcount total	1,200 - 7,500	47
9. % of students who are minorities ^a	\neq blank AND $\leq 30\%$	28
10. Removal of Chadron, Peru, or Wayne from its own peer pool	Chadron, Peru, or Wayne	27

Data source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

^aExcludes nonresident alien students and students whose race is unknown. Data is based on 12-month unduplicated headcount.

Evaluation Variables

After the peer pools were each reduced to 27 institutions through screening variables, each remaining peer was evaluated on an individual basis. Variables examined during this step included completions by discipline cluster and by award level, distance education, state appropriations per FTE, and net tuition and fees per FTE.

Rational for Selection Criteria

The initial listing of peers had the potential to include institutions from any of the 50 states as well as Washington, D.C. The sector of the institution was used to restrict the control and level of the peer pool to those classified as public four-year and higher.

Based on a school's physical address and proximity to urban areas, the urban-centric locale codes found in IPEDS utilize a methodology developed by the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Division. This variable is important since an institution's surrounding area has a tremendous influence on its current and potential enrollment.

An institution's degree of selectivity and rigor of admission requirements influence the type of students who enroll, often serving as strong predictors of retention and graduation rates. As schools with open admission policies accept any student who applies, these institutions are more likely to experience diminished achievement rates. All of Nebraska's state colleges have open admission policies. Therefore, the selection criteria ensured the institution either accepted a high percentage of applicants (67% or higher) or the institution had an open admission policy.

Graduate enrollments account for 16.4% to 24.4% of 12-month enrollments at the state colleges while master's degrees account for 22.8% to 32.5% of awards conferred at the state colleges. Therefore, all potential peers were required to have graduate enrollments and to have at least 10% of awards coming from the master's degree level.

An institution's enrollment size invariably affects countless important institutional characteristics, including facility usage, tuition income, student-to-faculty ratios, and program offerings. At the state colleges, 12-month unduplicated headcounts range from 3,233 to 4,194.

Stemming from higher incidence of poverty, lower parental educational attainment, and greater likelihood of attending low-performing K-12 schools, many minority students require additional academic, financial, and social supports to be successful in postsecondary education compared to white non-Hispanic students. At the state colleges, between 14.7% and 17.6% of students are from minority racial or ethnic groups.²

Selection criteria also ensured potential peers were comparable to each state college in terms of the program mix of awards granted. The Commission aggregated two-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes into seven discipline clusters and analyzed the proportion of completions within each cluster. (See [Appendix A](#) for CIP code descriptions and discipline cluster groupings.)

Distance education impacts the need for facilities, equipment, and faculty. At the state colleges, between 12.9% and 45.3% of fall students were enrolled in exclusively distance education courses.

Lastly, state appropriations and tuition and fees per FTE were critical evaluation variables to ensure peers are comparable in terms of wealth and student costs.

² Excludes nonresident alien students and students whose race is unknown.

Peers and Alternates

The Commission's objective was to identify distinct peer groups for the state colleges, consisting of 10 peers and two alternate peers for each state college.³ While the screening variables were applied across the board for the peer groups, evaluation variables allowed for closer examination of fit for institutions within each state college's peer group.

As previously stated, Commission staff worked closely with the Nebraska State College System throughout the selection process to identify updated peer groups. Following the application of screening variables, the NSCS Chancellor and Vice Chancellor sent the remaining peer pools to each campus president for their review and suggestions.

The Nebraska State College System submitted their preferred peer institutions to Commission staff and staff evaluated each of their recommendations. Initially, the NSCS requested the Commission reconsider a number of institutions that were screened out of selection via screening variables. Commission staff evaluated their recommendations and allowed for one institution to be added back into the peer pool. The institution (Southwest Minnesota State University) had initially been screened out of the peer pool because they admitted 62% of applicants (cut-point set at 67% or higher) and their 12-month enrollment was 8,739 (high cut-point set at 7,500). Upon closer examination, the institution's large enrollment was influenced by presumptive dual enrollments (58.3% of fall enrollments were under the age of 18). The institution was a suitable match based on other selection criteria; therefore, Commission staff accepted the proposal to add the institution back into the peer pool, increasing the number of potential peers to 28.

Narrowing the peer groups was very much an iterative process, with the state colleges making suggestions and the Commission staff reviewing their suggestions and accepting or countering with a different peer. The final peer groups for the state colleges are itemized in [Table 2](#), [Table 3](#), and [Table 4](#). Additionally, maps detailing the location of each peer are included in [Figure 1](#), [Figure 3](#), and [Figure 5](#), and discipline cluster comparisons are provided in [Figure 2](#), [Figure 4](#), and [Figure 6](#).

For comparison purposes, an analysis of the 2014 peers and alternates is provided in [Table B1](#) in [Appendix B](#). Additionally, [Figure B1](#) in [Appendix B](#) details a comparison of discipline clusters for the 2014 peers.

³ Alternate peers are available for permanent substitution in the event that an institution from the peer group becomes a nonviable peer. For example, if a peer merges with another institution and increases enrollments or if a peer begins conferring a large number of associate's degrees, it may be prudent to exchange an alternate in place of the original peer.

Chadron State College

Table 2

Peer Group for Chadron State College and Select Screening Variables

Description & Unit ID	Institution Name	State	12-Month Unduplicated HC			% Master's	% Minority
			Under Grad	Grad	Total		
Target Institution:							
180948	Chadron State College	NE	2,643	854	3,497	32%	18%
Peer Institutions:							
219046	Black Hills State University	SD	5,402	673	6,075	15%	16%
208646	Eastern Oregon University	OR	4,318	484	4,802	19%	25%
200253	Minot State University	ND	3,574	372	3,946	18%	24%
219259	Northern State University	SD	4,414	724	5,138	12%	10%
178624	Northwest Missouri State University	MO	6,032	1,370	7,402	27%	14%
207306	Northwestern Oklahoma State University	OK	2,148	308	2,456	12%	27%
181534	Peru State College	NE	2,703	530	3,233	30%	15%
178615	Truman State University	MO	6,264	546	6,810	15%	14%
181783	Wayne State College	NE	3,218	976	4,194	23%	15%
128391	Western Colorado University	CO	3,271	573	3,844	24%	21%
Alternates:							
219082	Dakota State University	SD	4,297	889	5,186	22%	15%
210429	Western Oregon University	OR	5,370	709	6,079	14%	30%

Note. HC = headcount. Percent minority excludes nonresident alien students and students whose race is unknown. Data source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Figure 1

Chadron State College Peer Locations

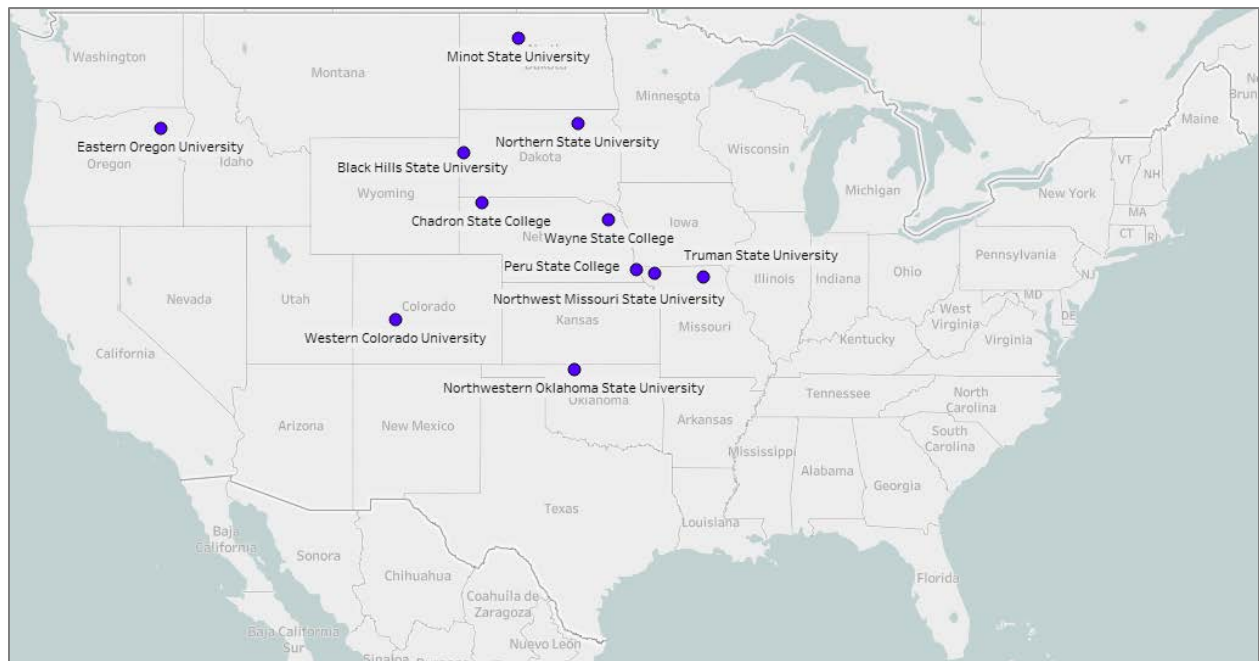
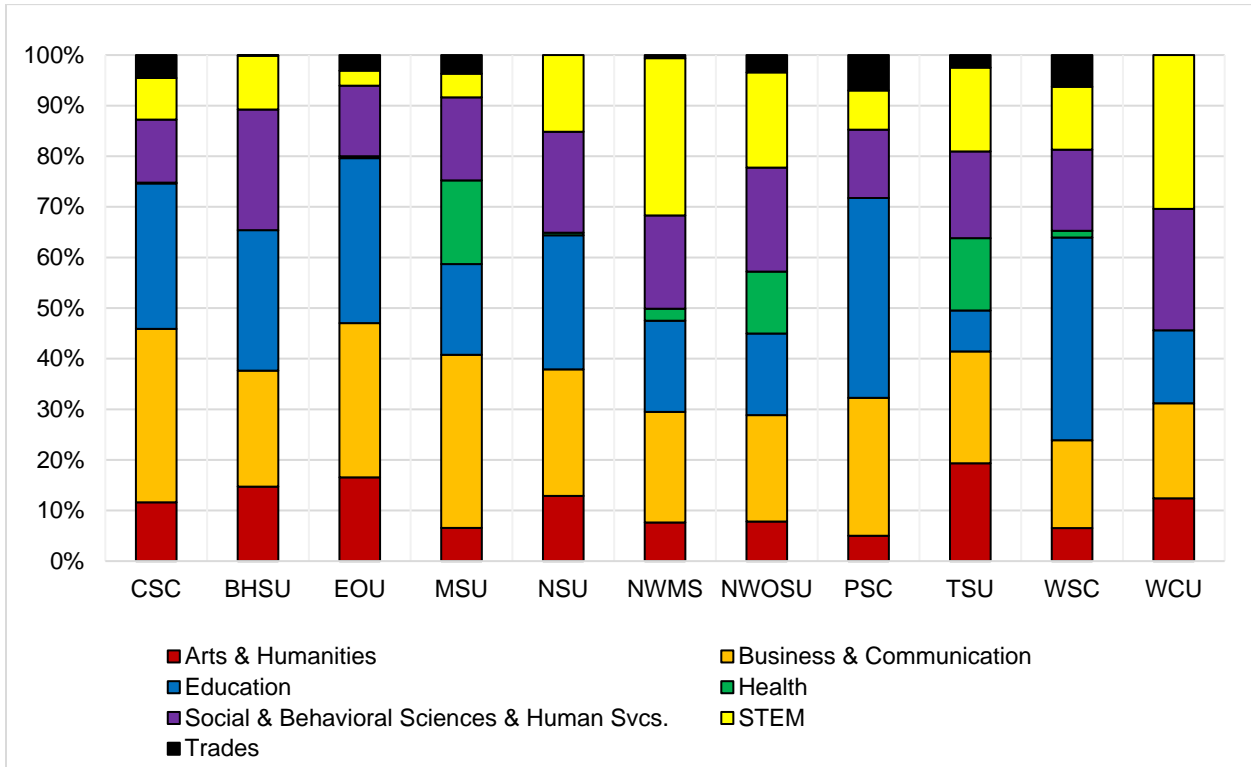


Figure 2
Chadron State College Discipline Cluster Comparison



Note. CSC = Chadron State College; BHSU = Black Hills State University; EOU = Eastern Oregon University; MSU = Minot State University; NSU = Northern State University; NWMS = Northwest Missouri State University; NWOSU = Northwestern Oklahoma State University; PSC = Peru State College; TSU = Truman State University; WSC = Wayne State College; WCU = Western Colorado University. Data source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Peru State College

Table 3
Peer Group for Peru State College and Select Screening Variables

Description & Unit ID	Institution Name	State	12-Month Unduplicated HC			% Master's	% Minority
			Under Grad	Grad	Total		
Target Institution:							
181534	Peru State College	NE	2,703	530	3,233	30%	15%
Peer Institutions:							
219046	Black Hills State University	SD	5,402	673	6,075	15%	16%
180948	Chadron State College	NE	2,643	854	3,497	32%	18%
237330	Concord University	WV	2,175	535	2,710	21%	11%
208646	Eastern Oregon University	OR	4,318	484	4,802	19%	25%
237367	Fairmont State University	WV	4,294	326	4,620	11%	11%
200253	Minot State University	ND	3,574	372	3,946	18%	24%
207306	Northwestern Oklahoma State University	OK	2,148	308	2,456	12%	27%
200572	Valley City State University	ND	1,669	211	1,880	11%	13%
181783	Wayne State College	NE	3,218	976	4,194	23%	15%
237932	West Liberty University	WV	2,338	364	2,702	19%	7%
Alternates:							
219259	Northern State University	SD	4,414	724	5,138	12%	10%
175078	Southwest Minnesota State University	MN	8,093	646	8,739	31%	11%

Note. HC = headcount. Percent minority excludes nonresident alien students and students whose race is unknown. Data source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Figure 3
Peru State College Peer Locations

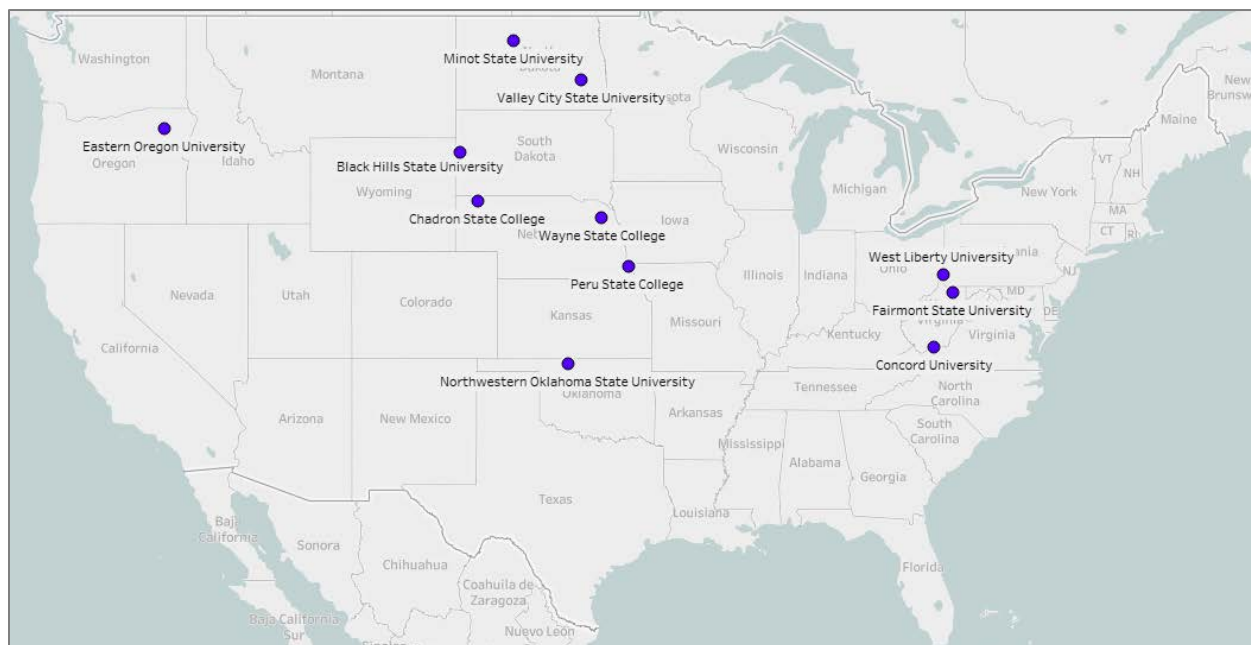
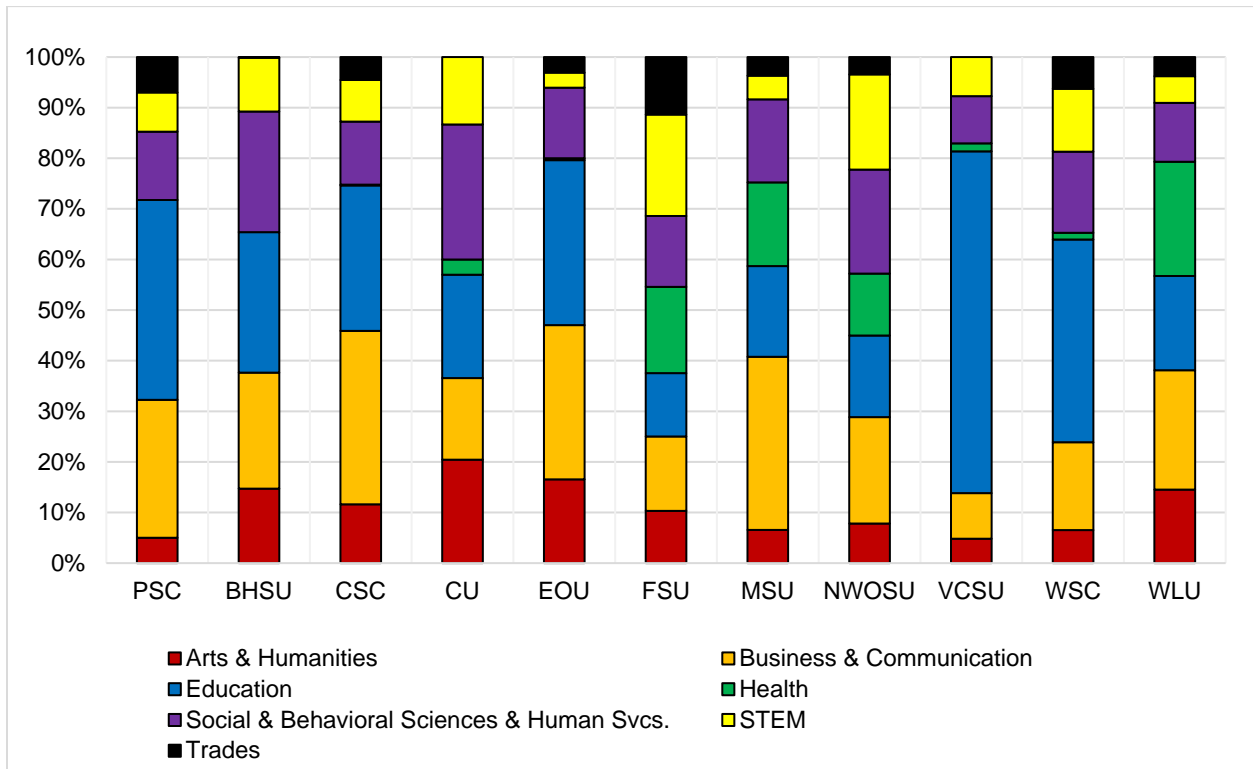


Figure 4
Peru State College Discipline Cluster Comparison



Note. PSC = Peru State College; BHSU = Black Hills State University; CSC = Chadron State College; CU = Concord University; EOU = Eastern Oregon University; FSU = Fairmont State University; MSU = Minot State University; NWOSU = Northwestern Oklahoma State University; VCSU = Valley City State University; WSC = Wayne State College; WLU = West Liberty University. Data source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Wayne State College

Table 4

Peer Group for Wayne State College and Select Screening Variables

Description & Unit ID	Institution Name	State	12-Month Unduplicated HC			% Master's	% Minority
			Under Grad	Grad	Total		
Target Institution:							
181783	Wayne State College	NE	3,218	976	4,194	23%	15%
Peer Institutions:							
219046	Black Hills State University	SD	5,402	673	6,075	15%	16%
180948	Chadron State College	NE	2,643	854	3,497	32%	18%
155025	Emporia State University	KS	3,964	3,023	6,987	46%	20%
200253	Minot State University	ND	3,574	372	3,946	18%	24%
219259	Northern State University	SD	4,414	724	5,138	12%	10%
178624	Northwest Missouri State University	MO	6,032	1,370	7,402	27%	14%
207306	Northwestern Oklahoma State University	OK	2,148	308	2,456	12%	27%
181534	Peru State College	NE	2,703	530	3,233	30%	15%
175078	Southwest Minnesota State University	MN	8,093	646	8,739	31%	11%
240471	University of Wisconsin-River Falls	WI	6,248	550	6,798	13%	11%
Alternates:							
219082	Dakota State University	SD	4,297	889	5,186	22%	15%
128391	Western Colorado University	CO	3,271	573	3,844	24%	21%

Note. HC = headcount. Percent minority excludes nonresident alien students and students whose race is unknown. Data source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Figure 5
Wayne State College Peer Locations

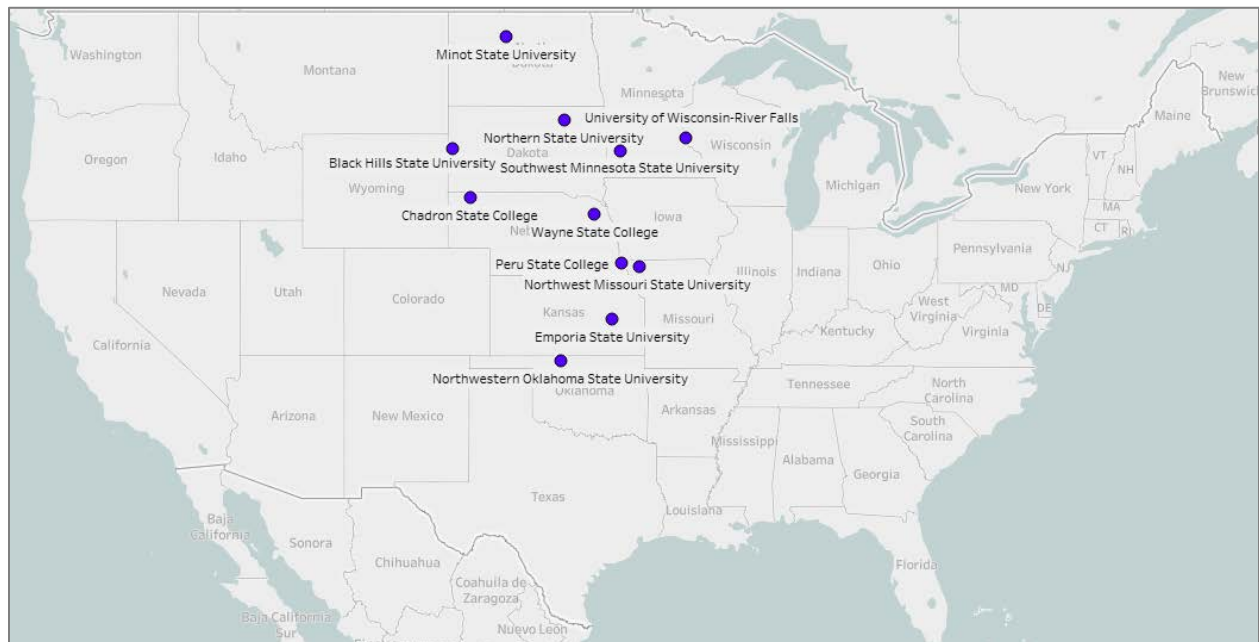
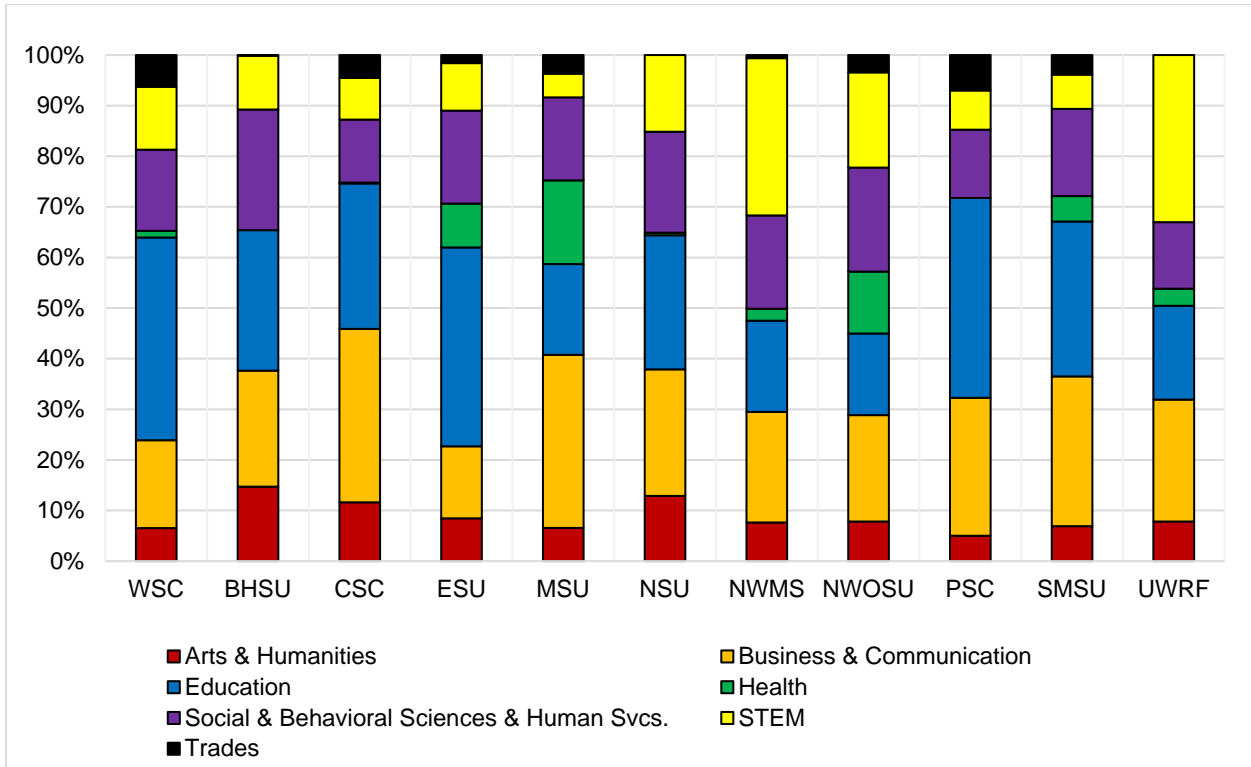


Figure 6
Wayne State College Discipline Cluster Comparison



Note. WSC = Wayne State College; BHSU = Black Hills State University; CSC = Chadron State College; ESU = Emporia State University; MSU = Minot State University; NSU = Northern State University; NWMS = Northwest Missouri State University; NWOSU = Northwestern Oklahoma State University; PSC = Peru State College; SMSU = Southwest Minnesota State University; UWRF = University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Data source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Suitability of Peers over Time

Since institutions are subject to change over time, the Commission has built in a five-year evaluation process to ensure the peer groups for the state colleges remain suitable. In 2025, the Commission will verify the suitability of the peer groups and make modifications if warranted. Before any changes are finalized, the Commission will distribute the modified list to each state college and the State College System Office for their review and suggestions. Additionally, if any state college determines at any point in time that a peer is no longer viable, it may contact the Commission to request a review of the peer group.

If no changes to the peer groups are identified by the state colleges or by Commission staff, the peer groups will remain valid until 2030, when the Commission generates new peer groups for the state colleges.

Appendix A

Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Codes Discipline Clusters

Arts and Humanities

- 5 Area, ethnic, cultural, and gender studies
- 16 Foreign languages, literatures, and linguistics
- 23 English language and literature/letters
- 24 Liberal arts and sciences, general studies and humanities
- 30 Multi/interdisciplinary studies
- 38 Philosophy and religious studies
- 39 Theology and religious vocations
- 50 Visual and performing arts
- 54 History

Business and Communication

- 9 Communication, journalism, and related programs
- 10 Communications technologies/technicians and support services
- 52 Business, management, marketing, and related support services

Education

- 13 Education

Health

- 51 Health professions and related clinical sciences

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)

- 1 Agriculture, agriculture operations, and related sciences
- 3 Natural resources and conservation
- 4 Architecture and related services
- 11 Computer and information sciences and support services
- 14 Engineering
- 15 Engineering technologies and engineering-related fields
- 26 Biological and biomedical sciences
- 27 Mathematics and statistics
- 29 Military technologies and applied sciences
- 40 Physical sciences
- 41 Science technologies/technicians

Social and Behavioral Sciences and Human Services

- 19 Family and consumer sciences/human sciences
- 25 Library science
- 31 Parks, recreation, leisure, and fitness studies
- 42 Psychology
- 44 Public administration and social service professions
- 45 Social sciences

Trades

- 12 Personal and culinary services
- 22 Legal professions and studies
- 43 Homeland security, law enforcement, firefighting, and related protective services
- 46 Construction trades
- 47 Mechanic and repair technologies/technicians
- 48 Precision production
- 49 Transportation and materials moving

Appendix B

Analysis of 2014 State College Peer Groups

All previous peers and alternates for the NSCS were listed in IPEDS as U.S. public four-year institutions that enrolled graduate students. [Table B1](#) itemizes the reason(s) prior peers and alternates were excluded from the 2020 NSCS peer groups. [Figure B1](#) compares the discipline clusters for the prior peers.

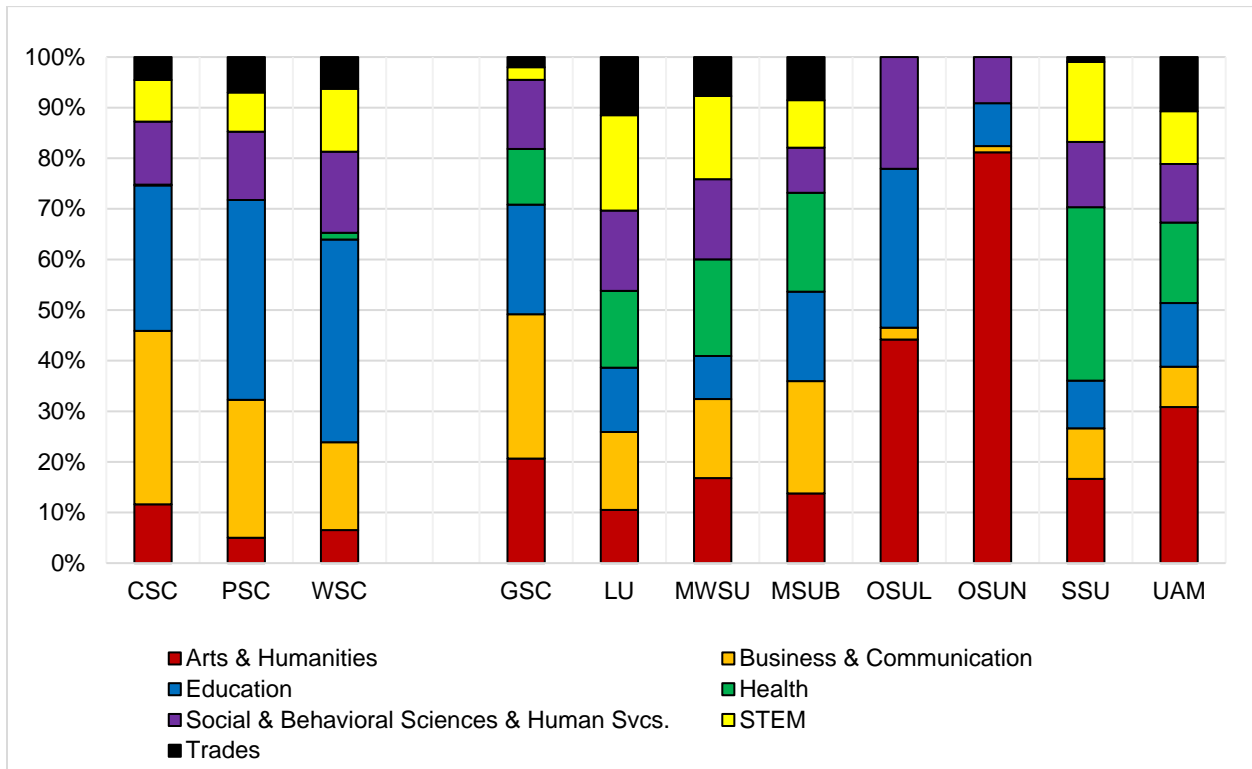
Table B1

Rational for Screening Out 2014 State College Peers and Alternates

Institution Name	Degree of Urbanization <i>Town or Rural</i>	% Admitted <i>Blank or ≥ 67%</i>	% Master's Degrees <i>≥ 10%</i>	12-Month Undup HC <i>1,200 - 7,500</i>	% Minority <i>≤ 30%</i>	Removed from Peer Groups
Target Institutions:						
Chadron State College	Town	Blank	32%	3,497	18%	No
Peru State College	Rural	Blank	30%	3,233	15%	No
Wayne State College	Town	Blank	23%	4,194	15%	No
Peer Institutions:						
Granite State College	Town	Blank	8%	3,125	10%	Yes
Lincoln University	City	Blank	12%	3,096	55%	Yes
Missouri Western State University	City	Blank	10%	6,302	17%	Yes
Montana State University Billings	City	Blank	16%	5,718	16%	Yes
Ohio State University-Lima Campus	Rural	Blank	0%	1,196	14%	Yes
Ohio State University-Newark Campus	Suburb	Blank	0%	3,029	28%	Yes
Shawnee State University	Town	69%	6%	4,080	10%	Yes
University of Arkansas at Monticello	Town	Blank	10%	4,302	35%	Yes
Alternate Institutions:						
Mayville State University	Rural	48%	1%	1,601	18%	Yes
Wright State University-Lake Campus	Rural	99%	0%	1,665	10%	Yes

Note. Undup = unduplicated. HC = headcount. Percent minority excludes nonresident alien students and students whose race is unknown. Data source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Figure B1
2014 NSCS Peer Group Discipline Cluster Comparison



Note. CSC = Chadron State College; PSC = Peru State College; WSC = Wayne State College; GSC = Granite State College; LU = Lincoln University; MWSU = Missouri Western State University; MSUB = Montana State University Billings; OSUL = Ohio State University-Lima Campus; OSUN = Ohio State University-Newark Campus; SSU = Shawnee State University; UAM = University of Arkansas at Monticello. Data source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.