APPENDIX B

COMPARISONS OF RELEVANT INSTITUTIONAL DATA:
MINNESOTA STATE MANKATO AND ASPIRANT PEER INSTITUTIONS
As indicated above, one purpose of identifying aspirant peer institutions was to establish benchmarks against which to gauge Minnesota State Mankato’s current position, establish goals for improvement, and measure progress toward goal attainment. Identifying the variables on which to base comparisons between Minnesota State Mankato and its aspirant peers was one of the first tasks undertaken by the original subcommittees of the Task Force. These variables included graduate enrollment, number of graduate degrees awarded, the annual dollar amount of external funding (grants and contracts), student-to-faculty ratio, the number of institutionally funded graduate assistantships, the stipend and tuition benefits for institutionally funded assistantships, per-credit tuition rates, and the number of online graduate programs. Comparisons between Minnesota State Mankato and its aspirant peers are summarized below.

Based on its review of the comparisons, the Task Force made several observations. First and foremost, the Task Force concluded that—given Minnesota State Mankato’s position relative to the other universities—it is clear that the eight institutions identified as benchmark institutions are, in fact, “aspirant” peers. As indicated in the graphs below, on all but a few variables Minnesota State Mankato occupies the least favorable position relative to the other institutions. (The exceptions are particularly interesting to consider and are highlighted below.)

Figure 1

The most current data available from each institution is presented in the bar graphs on pages 23-29. In cases where data were not available, the institution(s) with missing data are excluded from the graphs.

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As noted in Figure 1, only the University of Northern Iowa has a smaller graduate enrollment than Minnesota State Mankato. However, when calculated as a percentage of total enrollment (Figure 2), graduate enrollment at Minnesota State Mankato comprises a smaller share than at any of its aspirant peer institutions. Previous enrollment management and graduate task forces have recommended that Minnesota State Mankato strive to increase its graduate enrollment to 15% of total enrollment, which would place the university near the middle of the aspirant peer group.

**Figure 2**

Graduate Enrollment as a Percentage of Total Enrollment

Not surprisingly, given the above enrollment data, Minnesota State Mankato awards fewer master's degrees per year than any of its aspirant peers (Figure 3). In addition, five of the aspirant institutions award more doctoral degrees annually. The remaining three aspirant

**Figure 3**

Number of Master's Degrees Awarded Per Year
institutions have only recently begun offering doctoral degrees and did not award any doctorates during the most recent year for which data were available (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**

![Number of Doctoral Degrees Awarded Per Year](image)

Perhaps the most marked difference between Minnesota State Mankato and its aspirant peers is in the annual dollar amounts of externally funded grants and contracts (Figure 5). Our closest competitor, the University of Northern Colorado, brought in nearly twice the amount in FY 09, while Eastern Kentucky University brought in nearly 10 times more than Minnesota State Mankato. As noted in Appendix A, these disparities have important implications for graduate education, both because external grants and contracts provide funding (and valuable research experiences) for graduate students, and because they result in indirect cost recovery that allows for reinvestment in the graduate and research enterprises.

**Figure 5**

![Annual Dollar Amount of External Funding (Grants and Contracts)](image)
A final variable on which Minnesota State Mankato compares unfavorably with its aspirant peers is student-to-faculty ratio. As noted in Figure 6, only California State University at San Bernardino has a higher ratio.

**Figure 6**

![Students Per FTE Faculty Member](image)

An interesting and unexpected finding was that Minnesota State Mankato compares quite favorably with its aspirant peers in terms of the number of institutionally funded graduate assistantships (Figure 7). Of the institutions from which data were available, only Ball State University surpassed Minnesota State Mankato on this variable. However, it is important to note that many assistantships are funded by external grants and contracts, a variable on which Minnesota State Mankato severely underperforms relative to its aspirant peers.

**Figure 7**

![Number of Assistantships](image)
Equally surprising given conventional wisdom about the competitiveness of Minnesota State Mankato’s graduate assistantship stipends was the finding that only three aspirant peers provide higher stipends to their institutionally funded graduate assistants (Figure 8). Again, it is important to note that externally funded assistantships are funded at much higher rates (as high as $30,000 at one of the aspirant institutions) and that, at several of the aspirant peer institutions, externally funded assistantships constitute the majority.

### Figure 8

#### Average Dollar Amount of Assistantship Stipends (Masters and Doctoral)

In contrast, Minnesota State Mankato waives fewer graduate credits per semester for graduate assistants than any of the aspirant peers for which data were available (Figure 9). This obviously reduces the overall value of the Minnesota State Mankato graduate assistantship package relative to the packages provided by its aspirant peers. Even institutions with slightly lower stipends may provide greater financial assistance when the value of the tuition waiver is included in the cost-benefit analysis.

### Figure 9

#### Number of Credits Waived Per Semester for Graduate Assistants
Also surprising were the data regarding tuition-per-credit for both master’s (Figure 10) and doctoral (Figure 11) credits. Although Minnesota State Mankato has generally promoted itself as a high-quality, affordable option for graduate school (which is likely accurate compared to private and for-profit alternatives in the state), its graduate tuition is higher than most of its aspirant peers at both the master’s and doctoral levels.

**Figure 10**

![Tuition Per Credit for Masters-Level Credits](image)

**Figure 11**

![Tuition Per Credit for Doctoral Credits](image)
Finally, Minnesota State Mankato’s position vis-à-vis its aspirant peers in terms of online graduate program offerings was unexpected—particularly in light of the emphasis placed on online and distance education by the graduate deans interviewed. As indicated in Figure 12, Minnesota State Mankato offers more online programs than four of its aspirant peers and only Ball State University offers significantly more online programs. The Task Force surmised that, more than the sheer number of programs, the strategic development and promotion of online programs with high enrollment potential and/or the potential to capture untapped market share is key to the success of the graduate enterprise.

**Figure 12**

![Number of Online Graduate Programs](image)

In addition to data collected from each institution, the Task Force took advantage of the National Center for Education Statistics’ Executive Peer Tool, which allows an institution to compare itself to a custom comparison group on any of the variables reported annually to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Using a custom comparison group consisting of the eight aspirant institutions identified above, the Task Force was able to compare Minnesota State Mankato to the aspirant peer median on several variables of note, which are highlighted in Figures 13-20.

As Figure 13 indicates, Minnesota State Mankato is thinly staffed compared to its aspirant peers—particularly in administrative and managerial positions, where the median for our aspirant peers is 106 positions compared to Minnesota State Mankato’s 39 positions. While some of the differences in staffing levels can be explained by differences in enrollment, size alone cannot account for the disparity: The difference between Minnesota State Mankato’s FTE enrollment and the median for its aspirant peers is fewer than 700 students (13,421 vs. 14,071). As noted in Figure 6 above, Minnesota State Mankato has fewer faculty members per FTE enrollment than its aspirant peers, and similar patterns are likely evident in other staffing categories.
Despite having fewer staff in every category, Minnesota State Mankato spends a proportionately greater amount on salaries and benefits than its aspirant peers—no doubt because its salaries are higher than the aspirant peer median. Figure 14 demonstrates that salaries for full-time instructional staff are indeed higher at Minnesota Mankato than at its aspirant peer institutions and that this difference is evident at all faculty ranks.

**Figure 14:** Average Salaries of Full-Time Instructional Staff (Adjusted to 9-mo. Contracts)

Although Minnesota State Mankato spends more on salaries and benefits as a percentage of total expenses than its aspirant peers, this pattern does not hold true in every functional category (Figure 15). Notable exceptions include institutional support, research, and academic support, in which our aspirant peer institutions spend proportionally more on salaries and benefits than Minnesota State Mankato.
Overall, compared to its aspirant peers, Minnesota State Mankato spends a greater percentage of its budget on academic support and student services and a smaller percentage on research and public service than its aspirant peers (Figure 16). When broken down by FTE enrollment, it is clear that our aspirant peers spend more on instruction, research, public service, and institutional support per FTE student, while Minnesota State Mankato spends more per student on academic support and student services (Figure 17).
Figure 17: Core Expenses per FTE Enrollment, by Function

Not surprisingly, given the data in Figure 5 above, a greater share of total revenue comes from grants and contracts at our aspirant peer institutions than at Minnesota State Mankato (a difference that is equivalent to $1,500 per FTE enrollment annually), while a smaller share of our aspirant peers’ revenues comes from tuition and state allocations (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Percent Distribution of Core Revenues by Source
Compared to its aspirant peers, however, Minnesota State Mankato receives approximately $1,000 less per FTE enrollment in state appropriations than the aspirant peer median (Figure 19). Endowment assets per FTE enrollment are comparable (Figure 20).

**Figure 19:** Core Revenues per FTE Enrollment, by Source

![Core Revenues per FTE Enrollment, by Source](image-url)

**Figure 20:** Endowment per FTE

![Endowment per FTE](image-url)