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Abstract

This manuscript seeks to better understand the extent to which urban universities have pursued prestige over time. I situate the institution-level decisions made by campus leaders over time and within the higher education context to better understand how these efforts collectively reflect broader forces within the higher education environment towards prestige that aligns with standards of excellence misaligned with the equity-serving mission of urban-serving universities. Findings demonstrate widespread engagement in prestige seeking among urban universities, with greater engagement in areas of enhancing research revenue, graduate enrollment and completions, and enhancing incoming student SAT scores. Implications for administrators at these institutions and for higher education overall are discussed.

Keywords

Prestige, urban universities, organizational mission, equity, higher education administration

Prestige-Seeking Across Urban-Serving Research Universities

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Abstract

This manuscript seeks to better understand the extent to which urban universities have pursued prestige over time. I situate the institution-level decisions made by campus leaders over time and within the higher education context to better understand how these efforts collectively reflect broader forces within the higher education environment towards prestige that aligns with standards of excellence misaligned with the equity-serving mission of urban-serving universities. Findings demonstrate widespread engagement in prestige seeking among urban universities, with greater engagement in areas of enhancing research revenue, graduate enrollment and completions, and enhancing incoming student SAT scores. Implications for administrators at these institutions and for higher education overall are discussed.

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Prestige acts as a driving force in U.S. higher education, as the leaders of colleges and universities prioritize prestige-boosting behaviors to enhance their perceptions in the public eye and in rankings by external entities (Brewer, 2002; Gumpert & Sporn, 1999; Hossler, 2000; Thelin, 2004). Noted benefits of these pursuits include improved ability to generate revenue, recruitment of desired faculty, obtainment of highly-sought research grants, and attracting desired students (Brewer, Gates, & Goldman, 2002; Ehrenberg, 2003; McCormick & Zhao, 2005; Monks & Ehrenberg, 1999). However, pursuing prestige can be problematic, as when leaders make and implement decisions to enhance or maintain prestige, they sometimes do so at the expense of other aspects of the institution's mission (Bowen, Kurzweil, & Tobin, 2005; Kezar, Chambers, & Burkhardt, 2005; O'Meara, 2007). Particularly within the changing context of higher education in which financial resources for public education have been reduced and institutional leaders must adapt to a *new normal* of higher education funding (State Higher Education Executive Officers, 2014), consideration of the role of prestige as a resource in these times is important to consider.

Further, although all institutions are subject to pressures to engage in prestige seeking, some institutions may be more susceptible than others. Middle-tier institutions and universities just below the status level of top research universities are among "most likely strivers" (O'Meara, 2007, p. 155), i.e., those most likely to seek higher levels of prestige. While pressure to partake in the prestige pursuit may have influence on the decisions college and university

administrators make, they also navigate these pressures and make strategic decisions about how they will respond.

A particular set of institutions considered to be disposed to prestige-seeking pressures are urban-serving research universities (USRUs) (Kerr, 2001; Lynton & Elman, 1987; Mulhollan, 1990; Severino, 1996; Zerquera, 2016). Single case-study examinations have highlighted the presence of these endeavors, as evidenced within the decisions and actions taken by administrators in these institutions and the consequential implications (e.g., Doran, 2015; Gonzales, 2012; Tuchman, 2009). While this work has contributed to the understanding of prestige seeking within the microcosm of a single institution, a broader lens is needed to better capture the extent of prestige-seeking activity that has been enacted within these institutions. Through a descriptive analysis of trend data from USRUs over a span of two decades, this manuscript seeks to situate the institution-level decisions made by campus leaders over time and within the higher education context to better understand how these efforts collectively reflect broader forces within the higher education environment. College and university administrators and policy makers can use this understanding to critically reflect on their own decision making and the potential implications of their efforts.

Perspectives Informing this Work

This work examines a specific type of institution—USRUs—and the extent to which they have engaged in

prestige seeking over time. To better situate this study, USRUs are described as a specific institution type. Then, prestige seeking is explained and a framework for capturing its activity is described. Last, organizational theories are presented that help situate this work within the higher education context.

Who are USRUs?

USRUs are a group of institutions that are more so identified by a common mission and orientation and are not easily captured by standard classification systems (Barlow, 1998; Grobman, 1988; Severino, 1996). USRUs emphasize not just location within the urban context, but being composed of the city they inhabit, with the life and vitality of USRUs thriving from the activities of their surroundings (Hathaway, Mulhollan, & White, 1990; Ruch & Trani, 1995). They are charged with serving their surrounding urban contexts by conducting research that identifies and works to solve urban problems (Barlow, 1998; Soo, 2010), responding to regional economic needs (Harclerod & Ostar, 1987; Mulhollan, 1990) and providing access to higher education for residents of its surrounding regions (Barlow, 1998; Grobman, 1988; Hathaway et al., 1990). Ultimately, USRUs are poised to truly serve the public good via the embodiment of their missions in provision of access, research, and community engagement (Zerquera, 2016).

The urban-serving philosophy of USRUs has created several conflicts for these institutions. Leaders within these institutions navigate the pressures of balancing providing access to their urban communities while reaching externally- and internally-defined measures of excellence (Zerquera, Arámbula Ballysigh, & Templeton, 2017). Connection with the urban context may bring about associations that colleges and universities might try to reject, such as connotations of urban, underprepared students (Elliot, 1994; Severino, 1996). Further, urban problems that USRUs aim to address through their service and research are large, costly, and difficult (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1972; Cisneros, 1995; Martinez-Brawley, 2003; van der Wusten, 1998) and may beget additional issues politically, for seeking funding and donors, and for establishing prestige within the academic hierarchy. Concurrently, USRUs have been considered the inferior counterparts to land-grant institutions (Severino, 1996). Given the tensions that surround this mission, they provide an important context through which to understand how multiple pressures from the higher education environment are enacted and rejected within colleges and universities.

Prestige Seeking in Higher Education

Prestige conveys value internally and externally while signifying the level of excellence of higher education institutions (Brewer et al., 2002; O'Meara, 2007; O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011). Because of its benefits, which include revenue generation and attractiveness to desired faculty and students (Brewer et al., 2002; Ehrenberg, 2003; McCormick & Zhao, 2005; Monks & Ehrenberg, 1999; O'Meara, 2007), administrators and leaders often will prioritize these efforts at the cost of other institutional activities (Bowen, 1980; Gumpert & Sporn, 1999; Hossler, 2000; Thelin, 2004). Combining the frameworks provided by Brewer and colleagues (2002) and O'Meara (2007), prestige may be understood as being generated in six general areas of activity.

Research. Ratcheting research activities is a typical practice of colleges and universities seeking prestige (Gonzales, 2012; Morphew & Baker, 2004; Morphew & Huisman, 2002; O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011). Research is invested in as facilities are enhanced, research-focused faculty are newly acquired, and faculty expectations for productivity are ratcheted to increase grant funds and garner national attention via publications and innovation (Gonzales, 2012; Morphew & Baker, 2004; Morphew & Huisman, 2002; O'Meara, 2007; O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011). These efforts may be evidenced in increased federal grant research revenue (as a proportion of all revenue), with evidence of efforts seen in a change in the institution's Carnegie Classification status.

Athletics. Athletics provides another source of prestige, as sports teams are developed and invested in to foster name recognition (Geiger, 2004). Institutions may invest in developing prestige-boosting athletic teams (i.e., men's football and basketball) that they did not have previously, or might seek to reach a more prestigious division level.

Marketing and branding. Similarly, in an effort to increase visibility, marketing and branding efforts play a key role. Institutions seeking to enhance their prestige may use language and symbols to reshape their image (Brewer et al., 2002; Morphew, 2002; Tuchman, 2009). This may be evidenced, for example, by the removal of "urban" wording in planning and mission documents or institutional name changes, for instance, from college to university or from a name that is more local to one that reflects a more regional orientation.

Academic offerings. Academic offerings are oftentimes revised, as efforts to generate prestige may center on adding or eliminating aspects of the curriculum and educational programs, for instance through adding graduate degrees (Morphew, 2002; Morphew & Jenniskens, 1999). An institution may deemphasize developmental offerings

and emphasize graduate programs in hopes of serving the needs of certain students over others (Morphew, 2002; Morphew & Jenniskens, 1999). Evidence of this could include increase in number of graduate students and degrees awarded each year, while processes may include elimination of developmental offerings, such as remedial services or Adult Basic Education/high school equivalency.

Resource allocation. Similarly, resource allocation may often be involved to shift funds from traditional areas of spending to new investments that will enhance prestige (Longanecker, 2008; Morphew, 2002; Morphew & Baker, 2004). What might be expected of prestige-seeking institutions are decreases in the proportion of expenditures on instruction and academic support or the development of on-campus residence halls.

Student levers. Last, and a dominant area through which prestige is generated, is in the area of students. Investment is made to enhance student recruitment to attract larger application pools and yield students with high academic achievement in areas that connect to national recognition, such as SAT scores (Ehrenberg, 2003; Geiger, 2004a; Volkwein & Sweitzer, 2006). These efforts may be seen in institutions that implement a selective admissions process after having open admissions, or evidenced by larger applicant pools to support increased selectivity.

Although O'Meara (2007) and Brewer and colleagues (2002) described prestige seeking collectively, little is known about the extent to which prestige has actually been engaged in at a macro-level. And while all institutions are subject to pressures to engage in the prestige pursuit, USRUs are more susceptible than others (Lynton & Elman, 1987; O'Meara, 2007). Given the potential pernicious effects of prestige seeking, particularly for these susceptible institutions, this study responds to a need to better understand the extent of the trends of prestige seeking within an understudied institutional context—USRUs.

Understanding Organization-Environment Interactions

The framework informing this study ties together perspectives on prestige seeking in higher education and approaches this as an organization-environment interaction process through which the environment exerts pressures on an organization and the organization makes strategic decisions about how to respond. As such, this work responds to a need for more studies that consider the organization-environment relationship and university responses. Institutional theory provides a rich framework through which to understand this interaction.

Institutional theory insists on the importance of the wider context or environment as it constrains, shapes, and penetrates an organization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Scott, 1992). The model focuses on collective organizational adaptation processes in response to social rules, expectations, norms, and values (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Power is granted based on the extent to which an organization's values are aligned with those of the dominant system (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Meyer & Scott, 1983; Parsons, 1953; Stinchcombe, 1968).

Institutional theory has been critiqued as being too prescriptive without sufficient acknowledgment of collective actors' autonomy (DiMaggio, 1988; Oliver, 1991; Scott, 1992). Oliver (1991) critiqued institutional theorists for overemphasizing the effects of the institutional environment on isomorphism and assumed the potential of organizations for "resistance, awareness, proactiveness, influence, and self-interest" (Oliver, 1991, p. 151). She proposed a typology of strategic responses to institutional pressures and corresponding precursors—Strategic Response Theory (SRT). These responses fall into categories of compliance or resistance, ranging from passive acquiescence and compliance with institutional pressures to the extreme of manipulation of current systems of power. Choice in strategy depends on the degree to which an organization agrees with the intent of institutional pressures, or the extent to which they might align with their own interests. In considering her typology, Scott (1992) added a condition to Oliver's; he argued, "it is also important to recognize the extent to which institutional environments influence and delimit what strategies organizations *can* use...Not only structures but also strategies are institutionally shaped" (pp. 124-125; emphasis added). Both of these perspectives are important frames for understanding the potential effects of environmental pressures on universities. In this study, they are used to frame understanding of engagement in prestige seeking as a simultaneous process of the higher education environment exerting pressure on USRUs and these institutions making decisions about their activities and efforts.

Research Approaches

Little empirical work has examined prestige seeking to understand its extent across institutional populations. The framework developed for this study on prestige seeking has not been examined empirically, and further exploratory work is needed in order to employ it in inferential analyses. Situating the framing provided primarily by O'Meara (2007) and Brewer et al., (2002) within institutional and

strategic response theory, this study sought to describe prestige-seeking engagement among USRUs. In so doing, this work raises broader questions about the extent to which colleges and universities are proactively engaging in prestige seeking or subject to do so as a result of forces from the broader environment.

Sample

The population of interest for this study was the universe of USRU institutions in the US. This study was built on the work of Zerquera (2014, 2016) that advanced a definition of USRUs as a distinct institutional type and through a comprehensive process identified 51 institutions that make up USRUs. These institutions are mostly (54.9%) located in large cities. Just over half (51.0%) are located within the states of the Southern US, about 30% located in the Midwest, 13.7% in the West, and just 5.9% in the Northeast. USRUs tend to be large, with almost 70% enrolling 20,000 students or more. The majority of these institutions are primarily nonresidential (82.3%), with less than a quarter of undergraduates living on campus. About a quarter of all USRUs engage in the highest levels of research activity, according to their Carnegie Classification, just over half have earned Carnegie's community engagement classification, and about half are members of organizations that serve urban institutions (see Table 1).

Data and Variables

Descriptive analysis was employed primarily using data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and supplemented by historical data from university websites and the NCAA. Altogether, 20 variables were determined and mapped onto the framework. The constructs included within this analysis were described previously in this manuscript and derive from O'Meara (2007) and Brewer et al., (2002). Please see Table 2 for a complete variable description.

To capture the extent to which prestige seeking has occurred, one must examine change and be able to capture change in a way that qualitatively categorizes what constitutes change that is indicative of prestige seeking. Thus, the variables considered to describe change were derived variables that account for change over time. The time period considered for this analysis was 1990 through 2010. This time period was considered for several reasons. First, the start point of 1990 indicates a time during which a shift occurred in the way these institutions were considered

by higher education researchers and policy makers, with the publication of Johnson and Bell's *Metropolitan universities: An emerging model in American higher education*. The two decades following captured a time of intense shifts in the higher education context, signaled by two recessions, increased demands for accountability, greater questions about the value of higher education, great demographic shifts across the US, and increased stratification in higher education (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Kantrowitz, 2010; State Higher Education Executive Officers, 2014).

Because of variations in data availability via IPEDS, not all variables were captured in 1990; and thus, the earliest availability was included when needed. This is justifiable in that this still captured prestige-seeking trends and changes within the time period of this study (years considered for these variables described in Table 1). For all variables, however, the endpoint considered was 2010. Comparisons were made between the earliest data point for which data were available and 2010. For discrete variables, a subjective and research-informed analysis was conducted that qualitatively considered change within that variable; for continuous variables, change was considered any observed increase (or decrease, pending the variable) across the 20 years. Indications of prestige seeking were noted and calculated. Analysis of the derived and observed change variables is summarized below.

Describing Prestige Seeking Across USRUs

This work sought to capture the extent of prestige-seeking activity that has been enacted within USRUs over a span of two decades. In so doing, this manuscript sought to situate the institution-level decisions made by campus leaders over time and within the higher education context to better understand how these efforts collectively reflect broader forces within the higher education environment. Overall, prestige-seeking activities were observed across almost all areas measured. The following describes and discusses these findings along the framework of prestige seeking discussed previously. See Table 3 and Figure 1 for a full summary.

Research

USRUs demonstrated increases in the amount of revenue derived from research grants, as measured by increases in research revenue as a proportion of all revenue (83.7% of institutions). Further, while the average growth in

the proportion of revenue devoted to research was just 0.1, this reflected proportional increases of thousands of dollars amidst a time period in which tuition revenues grew exponentially. Although the majority of institutions demonstrated prestige-seeking trends within research revenue, these investments did not result in the same extent of change in Carnegie Classification. Just eight out of 51 USRUs had a classification designation at the beginning of the study for which prestige seeking could not be observed, as they had already obtained the most research-intensive classification category. Of the remaining institutions, 65% changed status. Combined, these findings might suggest there is an investment in prestige within research activities among most of these institutions; however, that investment does not always result in prestige rewards.

Athletics

Athletics is an area that can be utilized to boost prestige in direct and indirect ways. The measures capturing emphasis in areas of athletics demonstrated minimal prestige-seeking activity, with most institutions either maintaining their disinvestment in athletics or already having an athletics program. While only one institution started a football team during this time and just three increased their NCAA division level, these shifts were notable, as they require great investment in the athletic programs on campus to establish or enhance these costly activities.

Resource Allocation

Resource allocation describes efforts regarding how finances are allocated across an institution that might indicate desire to increase levels of prestige. Proportionally, funding shifted more heavily toward research over instruction for the majority of institutions (85.4%), signaling prioritization of spending toward engagements that are more associated with prestige. In terms of development and expansion of on-campus housing facilities for students, 13.7% of institutions instituted on-campus housing facilities for the first time, and 89.4% of institutions increased the capacity of their on-campus housing facilities, with average increases in the capacity nearing 1,000 students. For those USRUs newly developing or expanding housing, these investments are important, as they may signal shifts on campus toward a different student demographic, e.g., from commuter to more “traditional” residential students, or from students from the region to more out-of-state or out-of-region students who might be in higher need of housing options near campus.

Academic Offerings

Changes in academic offerings may be indicative as institutions seek to adapt offerings that garner more rewards in the prestige race. Increased proportions of graduate students in relation to undergraduate enrollments was observed in just over half of institutions (51.0%), while increases in numbers of master’s degrees and doctoral degrees conferred were observed in almost all USRUs (100.0% and 94.1%, respectively). Two processes of developmental services were observed across USRUs, Adult Basic Education (ABE)/high school equivalency programs and remedial services, with similar proportions of USRUs discontinuing their offerings—19.6% for ABE/high school equivalency programs and 21.6% for remedial services. The elimination of these services could signal an institution’s choosing to disinvest in students who are not yet college ready and emphasize curricular programming for different populations. This change in focus reflected prestige-seeking behavior; however, these changes also may have reflected statewide decisions regarding mission differentiation across their state’s higher education institutions (e.g., Nelms et al., 2005).

Marketing and Branding

Name changes that suggest rebranding, as determined by the researcher and informed by the prestige-seeking literature, were considered. Types of name changes that might have suggested prestige seeking included a name that reflected a broader service region (i.e., from a name reflecting a nearby city to a larger region of a state) or *university* as a part of its label for the first time. Just one institution did so in the time period captured.

Student Levers

This area of prestige seeking considers shifting admissions processes and outcomes related to enhancing the competitiveness of the incoming class. While most USRUs had selective admissions policies in place by 2000, two (out of 51) changed from open admissions to selective admissions between 2000 and 2010. Forty-five (88.2%) institutions increased the percentage of students receiving institutional aid, increases which could point to greater investment in the use of aid to yield students that benefit the institution’s rankings. Further, just under 80% of institutions became more selective over the time period captured, accepting lower proportions of students who sought admission. This could reflect fewer numbers of students being accepted, greater numbers of students

applying, or a combination of the two. However, not all institutions became more selective; a handful became *less* selective, by as much as 16 percentage points. Not surprisingly, while institutions became more selective, their yield decreased. While yield may be a consequence of a number of other factors in the environment, institutions take efforts to manipulate admissions yield strategically to improve their rankings and standings (O'Meara, 2007). Overall, institutions' admissions yield declined over time—enrolling proportionally fewer admitted students, and just 12.5% increased their yield. This could reflect any combination of the following: institutions admitting more students, fewer spaces to fill, or greater difficulties in enrolling admitted students. This might be expected given the selectivity increases that were found. Thus, although some institutions exhibited non-prestige-seeking responses, it does not necessarily indicate that prestige seeking was not intended; but rather, these efforts were not rewarded as might have been expected.

In terms of pre-college academic achievement, two variables were considered and compared that focused on the average SAT scores of incoming first-time-in-college students for the top and bottom score quartiles for the institution. Perhaps related to previously noted changes in selectivity, a number of institutions saw increases in SAT scores for incoming students, as reflected by the top and bottom quartile scores of their incoming classes. Prestige seeking was noted among 54.9% (28 institutions) and 82.4% (42 institutions) of USRUs for increases in their top and bottom quartile SAT composite scores, respectively. Institutions made greater strides overall in their prestige efforts by shifting their lower end of scores than they did by shifting their higher end of scores. This suggests that students are being scored out of these institutions. Given the contentions surrounding SAT, an exam that has been criticized as not being an adequate assessment of students' abilities, particularly for students of color (e.g., Sedlacek, 2004), this raises questions about the potential implications of these decisions on the equity-oriented mission of these institutions.

Implications and Future Directions

This work sought to provide a broad context through which to situate case studies that have examined prestige seeking in important ways but focused on single institutions. Collectively, the findings presented here demonstrate engagement in prestige seeking among USRUs that is notable and not isolated to a few exceptional cases. Prestige-seeking work such as that of Gonzales (2012,

2013) on experiences of faculty, Tuchman (2009) on the corporatization of higher education, and Doran (2015) on access and excellence within a Hispanic-Serving Institution are all situated within USRU institutions, although they do not identify them as such. This work argues for the important role these institutions play in higher education, the susceptibility of these institutions to prestige pressures, and their active engagement within the prestige race. The current work complements these previous studies by providing a backdrop to these single narratives of experiences of institutions and the people who lead them, so as to forge connections across this research and the broader trends impacting the decisions colleges and universities make.

Highlighting its potential pernicious nature, prestige seeking has been observed to result in academic drift (Aldersley, 1995). Across USRU-like institutions in particular, some have noted the diminishing urban-serving mission amidst institutional striving (Daly & Dee, 2006; Kelderman, 2011; Mundt, 1998; Nelson, 2011; Zerquera et al., 2017). Mundt (1998) argued that in their pursuit of prestige, USRUs have “abandoned the urban mission or marginalized it” (p. 252), diminishing commitments to USRU goals. However, little work has examined these claims empirically, aside from the case studies discussed earlier. This empirical, macro-level examination of prestige seeking confirms that these trends are occurring more broadly. Having established these broad trends, leaders, policy makers, and researchers should build on this work to examine the effects of prestige seeking on mission fulfillment.

Additionally, similar to much other work that draws on organizational framing, this discussion so far has anthropomorphized colleges and universities and the higher education context. It is important to keep in mind that this work reports on trends that reflect the collective decisions made by individual leaders within these spaces. Thus, these findings directly connect strategic actions taken by administrators and policy makers at USRUs to compete for prestige within their higher education context. Administrators and policy makers should use this information to consider the ways the decisions that have been made on their campus reflect a response to pressures within the higher education context for prestige. This requires critical reflexive practice on decisions leaders have made (Alvesson, Blom, & Sveningsson, 2017) and examination of data to better understand trends in the resulting activities and their implications.

Conclusion

Surely, many of the endeavors captured here promote positive and mission-driven outcomes and may very well reflect the good and non-prestige related intentions of campus leaders at urban universities. Research endeavors to draw revenues may be specifically aligned with urban-serving missions, e.g., via partnerships with community organizations; the expansion of graduate programs most certainly provides opportunities that had not been afforded to USRU students prior. However, these changes are in line with the research literature on prestige seeking; thus, a critical and careful eye should be given to what these dramatic increases might indicate regarding overall investments and changes. For university leaders in particular, this perspective is essential so as to prevent loss of mission and the implications of these actions.

Oftentimes, implementation of costly new investments such as a new residence hall or a football team may be well intended, and/or framed in a way that foregrounds ability to better serve students, or the expected rewards from these engagements such as more visibility. What may be masked in these discussions is the way these resource-allocation decisions truly feed a different agenda that comes at the cost of better serving students and the university community. This work serves as a starting point to foster reflection and consideration by leaders and policy makers of how the changes made are contextualized within this broader context.

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Table 1*Select USRU Characteristics*

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Variable	Frequency	Percent
<i>Geographic Regions</i>			<i>Carnegie Classification: Size and Setting</i>		
Northeast	3	5.9	Medium, primarily nonresidential	5	9.8
Midwest	15	29.4	Large, primarily nonresidential	37	72.5
South	26	51.0	Large, primarily residential	9	17.6
West	7	13.7	<i>Institution Size Category (2010)</i>		
<i>Degree of Urbanization</i>			5,000 - 9,999	1	2.0
City: Large	28	54.9	10,000 - 19,999	16	31.4
City: Midsize	11	21.6	20,000 and above	34	66.7
City: Small	4	7.8	<i>Membership in CUMU or USU</i>		
Suburb: Large	8	15.7	CUMU	24	52.9
<i>Carnegie Classification 2010: Basic</i>			USU	24	47.1
Research Universities—Very High Research Activity	13	25.5	None	20	39.2
Research Universities—High Research Activity	33	64.7	<i>Type of State Governing Agency</i>		
Doctoral/Research Universities	5	9.8	Consolidated governing board	24	47.1
<i>Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (Any Years 2006-2010)</i>			Coordinating board	21	41.2
No	25	49.0	Planning/service agency	6	11.8
Yes	26	51.0			

Table 2*Prestige-Seeking Variables*

Category of Activity	Variable Measured	Variable Details	Mean of Difference, $t_2 - t_1^*$	Standard Deviation of Difference, $t_2 - t_1^*$
<i>Research</i>				
	Increased Research Revenue (as a proportion of all revenue) (between 1990 and 2010)	Derived variable: Research Revenue Proportion = total revenue from government grants and contracts/total operating revenues	0.1	0.1
	Shift in Carnegie Classification towards a classification with greater research emphasis (between 1994 and 2010 classifications)	Derived variable: Based on observed change in Carnegie Classification	-	-
<i>Athletics</i>				
	New National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) membership (between 1999 and 2010)	Derived variable: Based on observed change in NCAA membership	-	-
	New NCAA Football membership (between 1999 and 2010)	Derived variable: Based on observed change in NCAA football membership	-	-
	Changing NCAA division level (between 1999 and 2010)	Derived variable: Based on observed change in division level	-	-

Resource Allocation				
Decrease in the proportion of Instruction-to-Research Expenditures (between 1990 and 2010)	Derived variable: Instruction-to-Research Expenditures = total instruction expenditures/ total research expenditures**	-4.1		11.8
Instituting on-campus housing facilities (between 1990 and 2010)	Derived variable: Based on observed change in on-campus housing offerings	-		-
Increased residence hall capacity (between 2001 and 2010)	Derived variable: Difference in reported capacity (number of allotted spaces for residents) for on-campus student housing	988.5		1098.8
Academic offerings				
Increased proportion of graduate students (in relation to undergraduate students) (between 1990 and 2010)	Derived variable: Graduate enrollment = fall graduate enrollment (graduate and first professional students)/ (fall graduate enrollment (graduate and first professional students)+fall degree-seeking undergraduate enrollment)	0.0		0.1
Increased number of master's degrees awarded (between 1990 and 2010)	Derived variable: Difference in number of degrees offered	729.3		531.9
Increased number of doctoral and professional degrees awarded (between 1990 and 2010)	Derived variable: Difference in the sum of total doctoral degrees and professional degrees awarded	136.1		125.2
Change in offering Adult Basic Education or High School Equivalent programs (2000-2010)	Derived variable: Based on observed change in offerings	-		-
Change in offering remedial services (2004-2010)	Derived variable: Based on observed change in offerings	-		-

Marketing and branding

Changing institution name (between 1990 and 2010)	Derived variable: Based on observed institution name change to one that reinforces a broader service region or stronger university identity	-	-
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Student levers

Increased selectivity (i.e., decreased admission rate) (between 2001 and 2010)	Derived variable: Selectivity=total number of FTIC admissions/total number of FTIC applications	-7.7	10.4
Increased admission yield (i.e., more admitted students enrolling) (between 2001 and 2010)	Derived variable: Admission yield=total number of FTIC enrollees/total number of FTIC admissions	-8.7	9.8
Shifting from open admissions to selective admissions (between 2000 and 2010)	Derived variable: Based on observed change in process	-	-
Increase in percentage of students who receive institutional aid (between 1999 and 2010)	Derived variable: Difference in percentage of students receiving aid	19.3	20.2
Increased average SAT Composite scores of FTIC students in the 75th percentile (between 2001 and 2010)	Derived variable: Difference in average SAT score	29.7	77.2
Increased average SAT Composite scores of FTIC students in the 25th percentile (between 2001 and 2010)	Derived variable: Difference in average SAT score	103.2	88.4

*: Means and standard deviations only provided for continuous variables.

**.: For most of the continuous variables reported, prestige seeking is noted when the difference is positive (> 0). However, for a few of the variables included here, prestige seeking is indicated when there is a negative difference (< 0) (i.e., instruction-to-research ratio and selectivity). For ease of interpretability, these variables were reverse coded for the analysis.

Table 3
Prestige-Seeking Behavior Observed

Variable Measured	Percent and Number of Institutions for which Prestige-Seeking Trends were Observed
<i>Research</i>	
Increased Research Revenue (as a proportion of all revenue) (between 1990 and 2010)	83.7% (n = 41)
Shift in Carnegie Classification toward a classification with greater research emphasis (between 1994 and 2010 classifications)	54.9% (n = 28)
<i>Athletics</i>	
New National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) membership (between 1999 and 2010)	0.0% (n = 0)
New NCAA Football membership (between 1999 and 2010)	2.0% (n = 1)
Changing NCAA division level (between 1999 and 2010)	5.9% (n = 3)
<i>Resource Allocation</i>	
Decrease in the proportion of Instruction-to-Research Expenditures (between 1990 and 2010)	85.4% (n = 41)
Instituting on-campus housing facilities (between 1990 – 2010)	13.7% (n = 7)
Increased residence hall capacity (between 2001 and 2010)	89.4% (n = 42)
<i>Academic offerings</i>	
Increased proportion of graduate students (in relation to undergraduate students) (between 1990 and 2010)	51.0% (n = 26)
Increased number of master's degrees awarded (between 1990 and 2010)	100.0% (n = 51)
Increased number of doctoral and professional degrees awarded (between 1990 and 2010)	94.1% (n = 48)
Change in offering Adult Basic Education or High School Equivalent programs (2000-2010)	19.6% (n = 10)
Change in offering remedial services (2004-2010)	21.6% (n = 11)
<i>Marketing and branding</i>	
Changing institution name (between 1990 and 2010)	2.0% (n = 1)
<i>Student levers</i>	
Increased selectivity (i.e., decreased admission rate) (between 2001 and 2010)	79.2% (n = 38)
Increased admission yield (i.e., more admitted students enrolling) (between 2001 and 2010)	12.5% (n = 6)
Shifting from open admissions to selective admissions (between 2000 and 2010)	3.9% (n = 2)
Increase in percentage of students who receive institutional aid (between 1999 and 2010)	88.2% (n = 45)
Increased average SAT Composite scores of FTIC students in the 75th percentile (between 2001 and 2010)	54.9% (n = 28)
Increased average SAT Composite scores of FTIC students in the 25th percentile (between 2001 and 2010)	82.4% (n = 42)

Note: For most of the continuous variables reported, prestige seeking is noted when the difference is positive (> 0). However, for a few of the variables included here, prestige seeking is indicated when there is a negative difference (< 0) (i.e., instruction-to-research ratio and selectivity).