College Rankings

Board of Visitors Retreat
August 10, 2018

WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

Presentation Goals

- A better understanding of ranking methodologies

- Engaged discussion:

  – How does a focus on improving one rankings factor potentially impact others? Alignment or misalignment?

  – What's the appropriate awareness of rankings within pursuing strategic goals?

Key Takeaways

- W&M has enjoyed remarkable stability in ranking

- Real movement is rare and hard to achieve

- Spending, not efficiency, is rewarded

Assorted W&M Rankings

Rank	Category	Publication
6	Best Colleges: Top Public Schools	*USNWR* (2018)
7	Best Colleges: Undergraduate Teaching	*USNWR* (2018)
9	Best College Values: Public (Out-of-State Students)	*Kiplinger* (2018)
10	America's Top Colleges: Public Schools	*Forbes* (2017)
11	Best College Values: Public (In-State Students)	*Kiplinger* (2018)
15	College Affordability Index: Public Universities	*NY Times* (2017)
30	America's Top Colleges: Research Universities	*Forbes* (2017)
32	Best Colleges: National Universities	*USNWR* (2018)

Rankings Are A Powerful Force

"The rankings matter to our university because they matter to people who matter to us."

-Anonymous Provost

Rankings Are A Business

- The USNWR website views within 72 hours of releasing its annual higher education rankings are ***20 times*** the normal amount for a month (Freedman, 2007)
  - ***80%*** of those viewers enter via the website's rankings pages

- A Global Business
  - USNWR – added global list for 2015, plans a list for Arab countries
  - Times Higher Education – plans a list for emerging economies (BRIC)
  - Shanghai Ranking – government-sponsored effort

The Rankings Game: Players and Motivations

Publications

Motivation = Volatility

Universities

Motivation = Mobility

Change in Rankings
(bound by "stickiness")

Prospective Students

Motivation = Information

Adapted from Dearden, Grewal, & Lilien (2014)

ADMINISTRATION

August 17, 2012 by Beckie Supiano

A Rankings Mess, Getting Worse

#Admissions Insider

#Admissions Insider

RESEARCH

Is Climbing the Carnegie Research Rankings Worth the Price Tag?

By Eric Kelderman | JULY 29, 2018 ✔ PREMIUM

GRAD BUSINESS RANKINGS   TEMPLE UNIVERSITY®   GRAD BUSINESS RANKINGS

# U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT NATIONAL UNIVERSITY RANKING

USNWR Formula Categories and Weights	2017	2018
Undergraduate Academic Reputation	**22.5%**	**22.5%**
o Peer assessment survey	15%	15%
o HS counselor assessment survey	7.5%	7.5%
Graduation and Retention	**22.5%**	**22.5%**
o Six-year graduation rate	18%	18%
o Freshman retention rate	4.5%	4.5%
Faculty Resources	**20%**	**20%**
o Class size index		8%
o Proportion of classes with < 20 students	6%	
o Proportion of classes with ≥ 50 students	2%	
o Faculty salary	7%	7%
o Professors with terminal degree	3%	3%
o Student-to-faculty ratio	1%	1%
o Proportion of FT faculty	1%	1%
Student Selectivity	**12.5%**	**12.5%**
o SAT/ACT scores	8.1%	8.1%
o Freshmen in top 10% of HS class	3.1%	3.1%
o Acceptance rate	1.3%	1.3%
Financial Resources	**10%**	**10%**
Graduation Rate Performance	**7.5%**	**7.5%**
Alumni Giving Rate	**5%**	**5%**

Calculating The USNWR Rankings

"The indicators are scored, normalized and assigned weights that reflect U.S. News' judgment about how much the measures matter. Next, the weighted values are summed and transformed so that each eligible school receives an overall score between 0 and 100, with the top school(s) in each category scoring 100. Finally, colleges and universities are ranked against their peers in descending order of their overall scores."
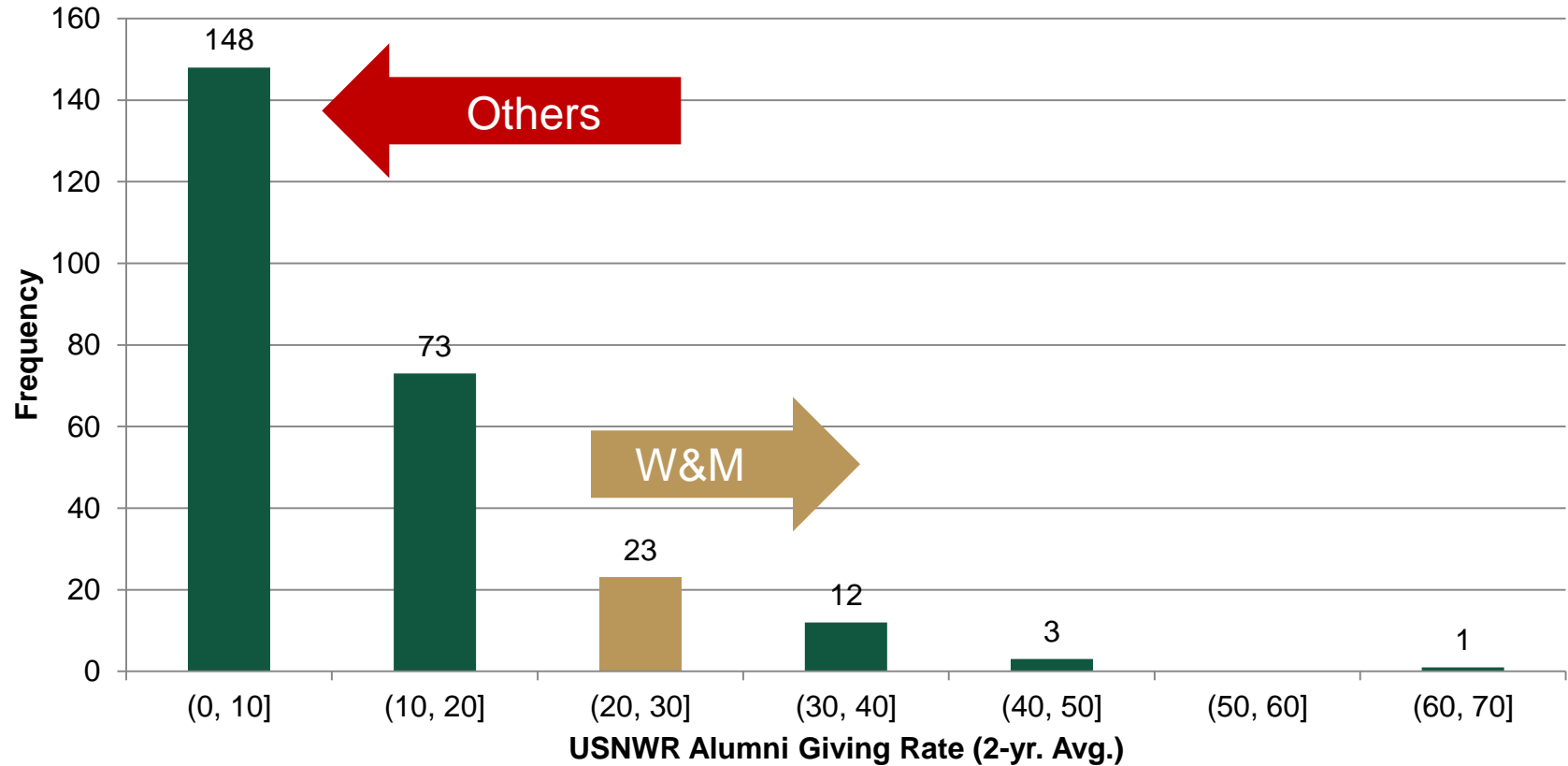
-USNWR 2018 Methodology
(Morse, Brooks, & Mason, 2017)
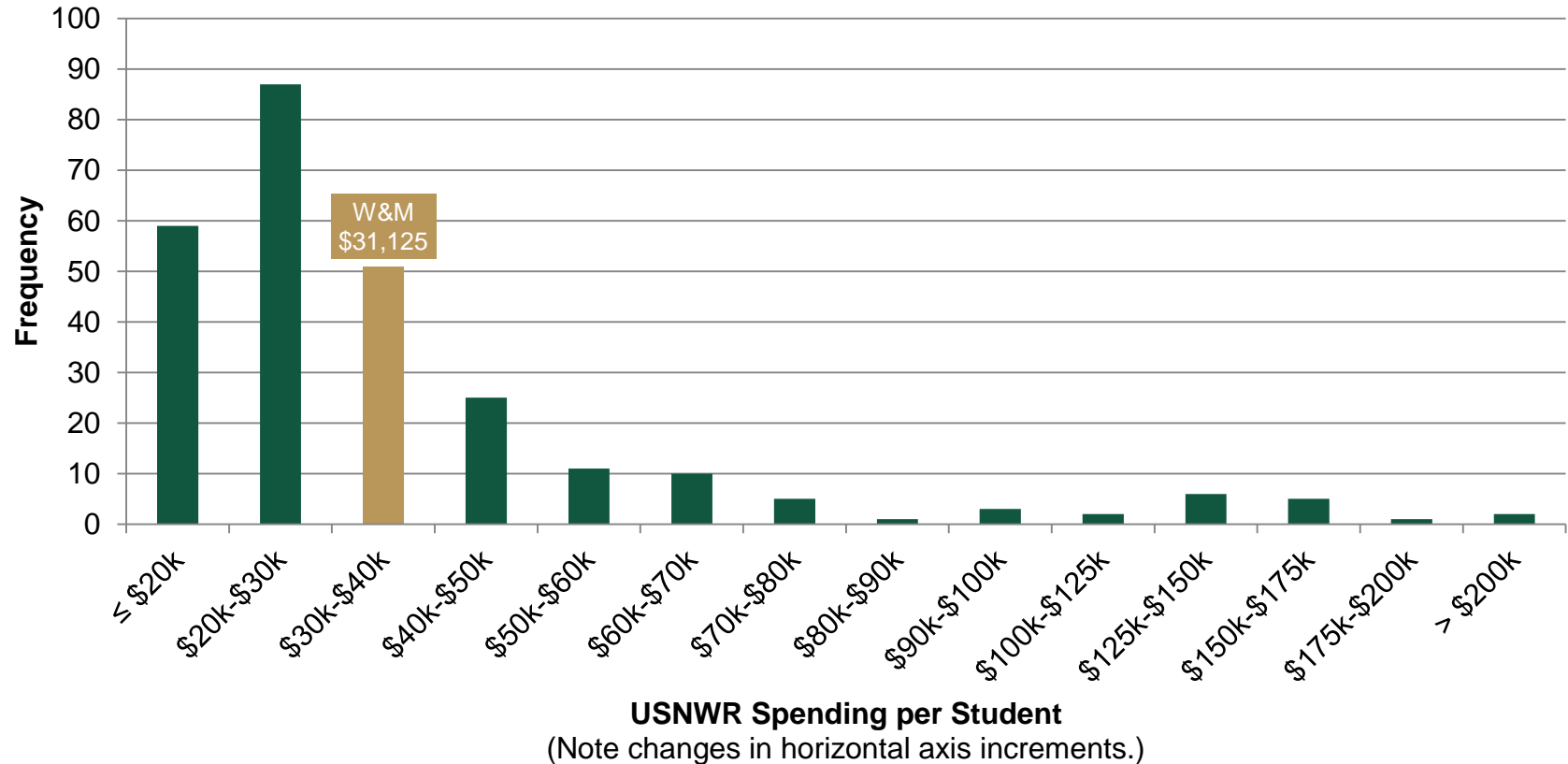
What Does "Normalized" Mean?
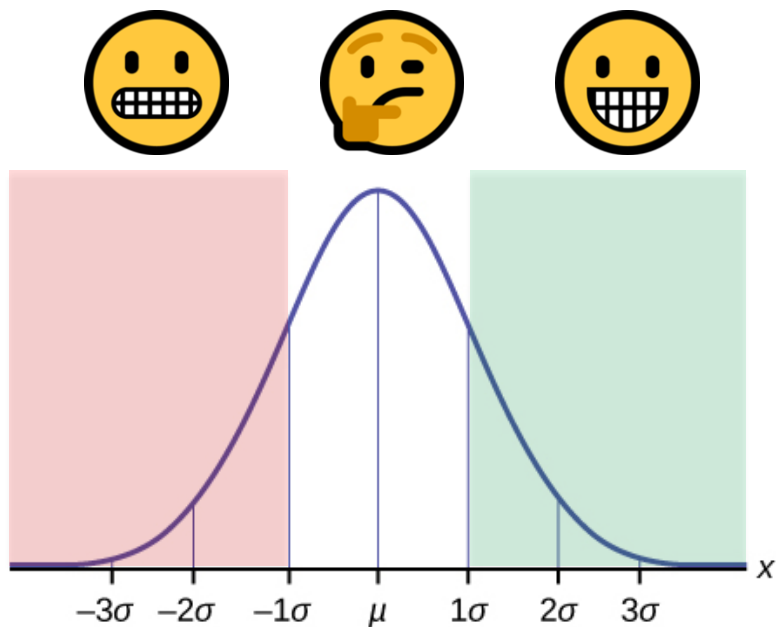
- The position within the distribution matters
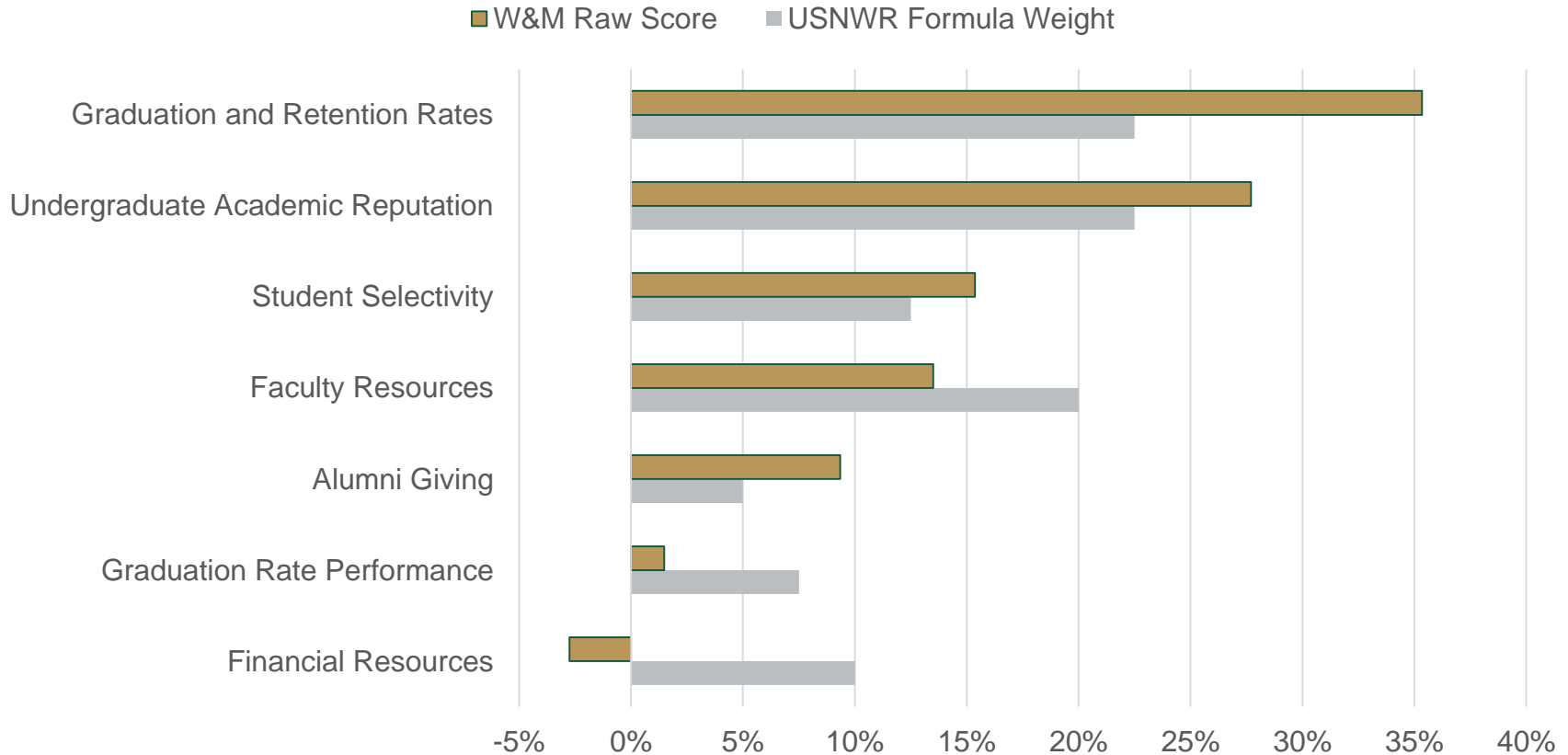- The USNWR formula weight does not equal the maximum possible points in a category

USNWR Alumni Giving in 2017

USNWR Spending per Student in 2017

Frequency values by spending category:
- ≤ $20k: 59
- $20k-$30k: 87
- $30k-$40k: 51 (W&M $31,125)
- $40k-$50k: 25
- $50k-$60k: 11
- $60k-$70k: 10
- $70k-$80k: 5
- $80k-$90k: 1
- $90k-$100k: 3
- $100k-$125k: 2
- $125k-$150k: 6
- $150k-$175k: 5
- $175k-$200k: 1
- > $200k: 2

USNWR Spending per Student
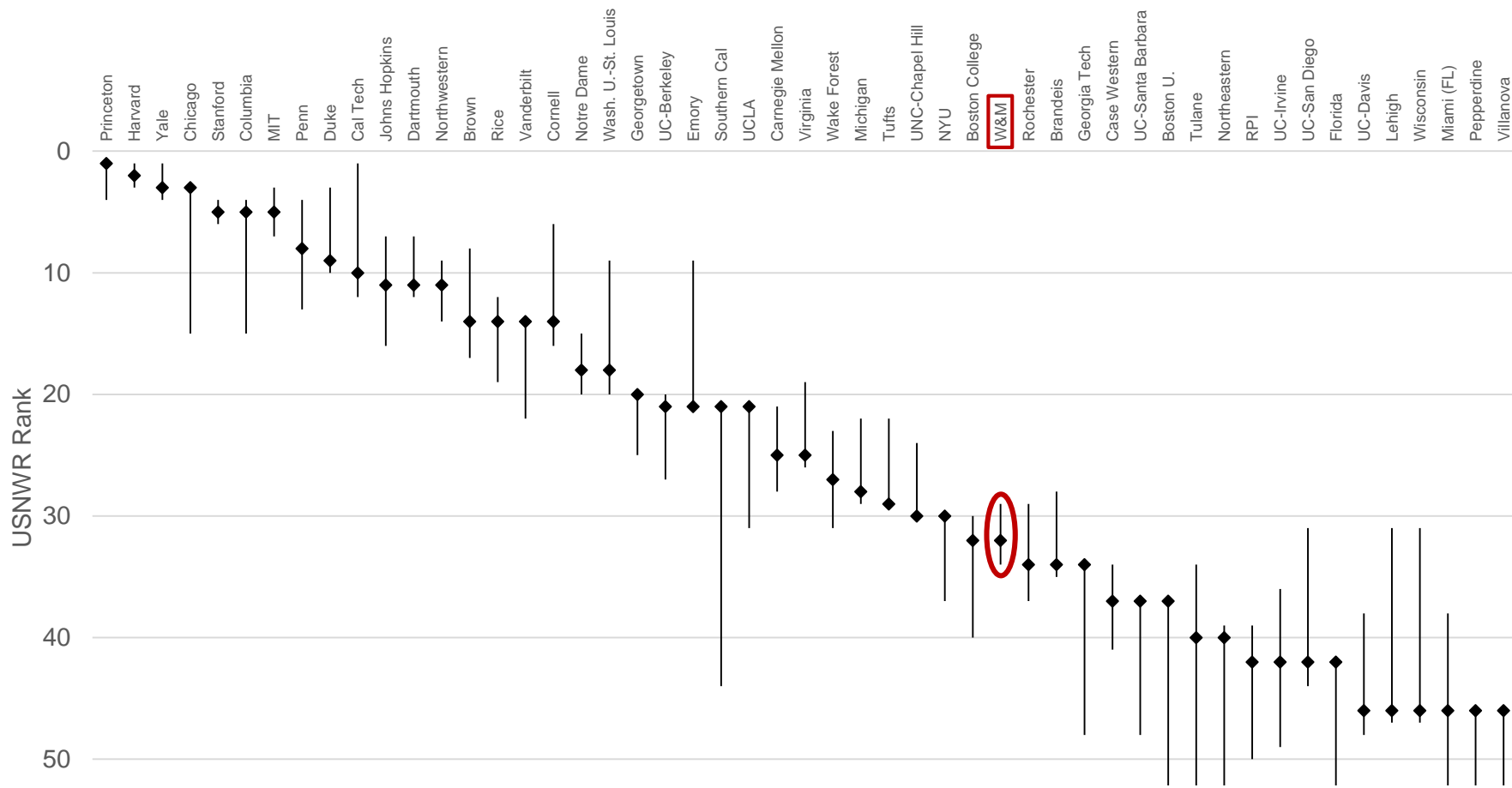(Note changes in horizontal axis increments.)

Actual Contribution to W&M's Score in USNWR

Remarkable Stability

- Since 1996, W&M has ranked from 29th (2000) to 34th (1996, 2016), a range of five spots

- Only five institutions have a smaller range in the USNWR rankings (2-Harvard and Stanford; 3- Princeton and Yale; 4-MIT)

USNWR Top-50 National Universities in Rank Range, 1996-2018

Real Movement Is Rare

- Former Johns Hopkins Provost, "the trustees would go bananas" over small drops; "Every year Hopkins went from 15 to 16 to 15 to 16 – and I thought, 'What a silly waste of energy.'"

- Distinct bands, or "neighborhoods," are also incredibly stable over time; schools merely change addresses on the same street (Martin, 2015)

Top 50 USNWR National Universities Within Score Clusters, 2005-2014
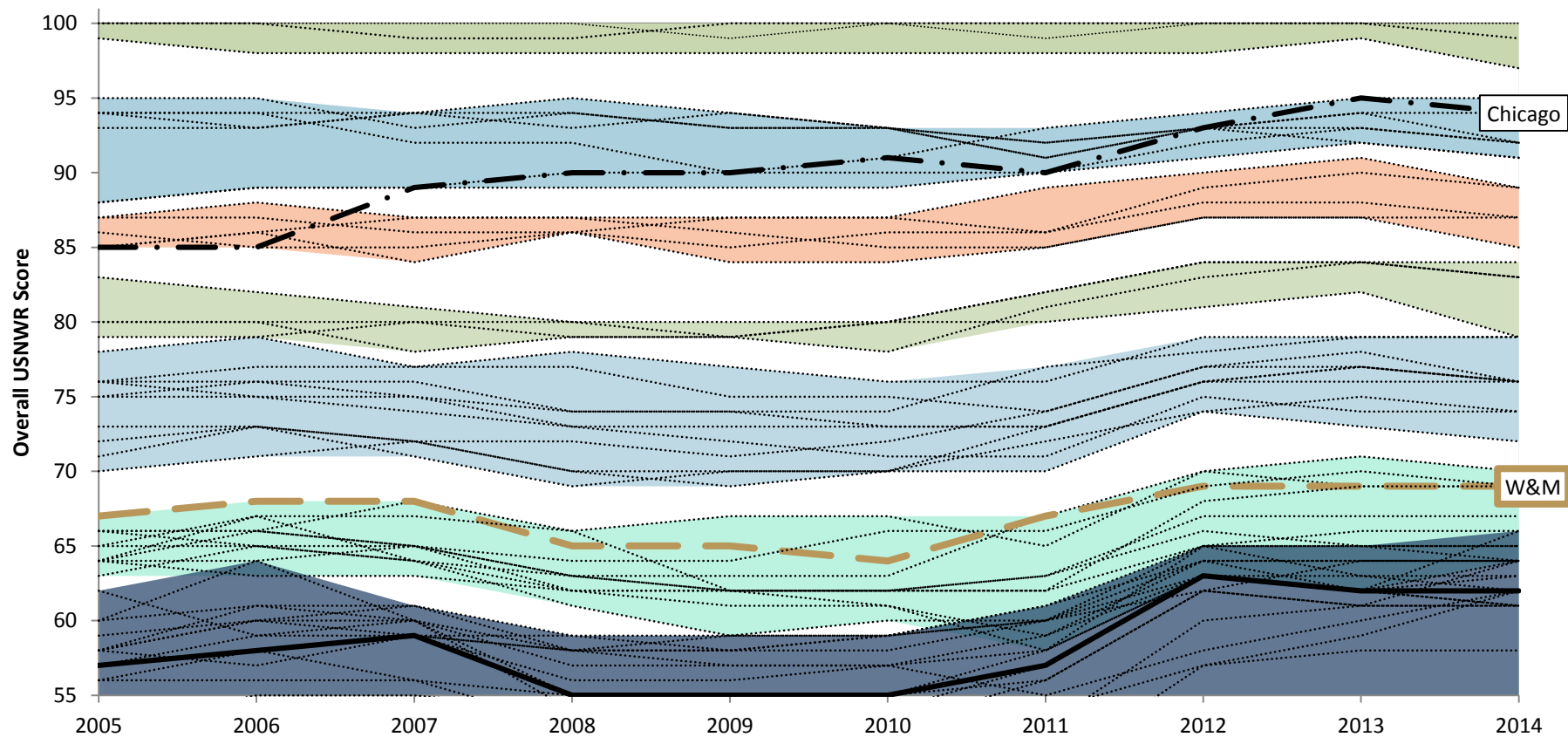
W&M as Scored in USNWR

Strengths

- Graduation/Retention
- Reputation
- Selectivity
- Alumni Giving

Weaknesses

- Financial Resources
- Faculty Resources

WALL STREET JOURNAL/
TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION

| WSJ Formula Categories and Weights	2018	W&M Score	W&M Rank
Outcomes	**40%**	**75.1**	**65**
o Value added to graduate salary	12%	63.4	
o Graduation rate	11%	96.4	
o Academic reputation (THE survey)	10%	79.5	
o Value added to loan default	7%	55.6	
Resources	**30%**	**59.5**	**187**
o Finances per student	11%	66.8	
o Faculty per student	11%	63.5	
o Research papers per faculty (Elsevier bibliographic dataset)	8%	43.8	
Engagement	**20%**	**77.8**	**571**
o Student engagement (THE survey)	7%	87.0	
o Student recommendation (THE survey)	6%	87.9	
o Interactions with teachers and students (THE survey)	3%	85.4	
o Subject breadth	3%	25.9	
Environment	**10%**	**45.1**	**585**
o Student diversity	3%	70.8	
o Faculty diversity	3%	38.1	
o Proportion of international students	2%	57.9	
o Student inclusion	2%	4.1	

W&M Score in WSJ

Black Dot = W&M

5th-95th pctl. range = line

25th-75th pctl. range = box

Median = line within box
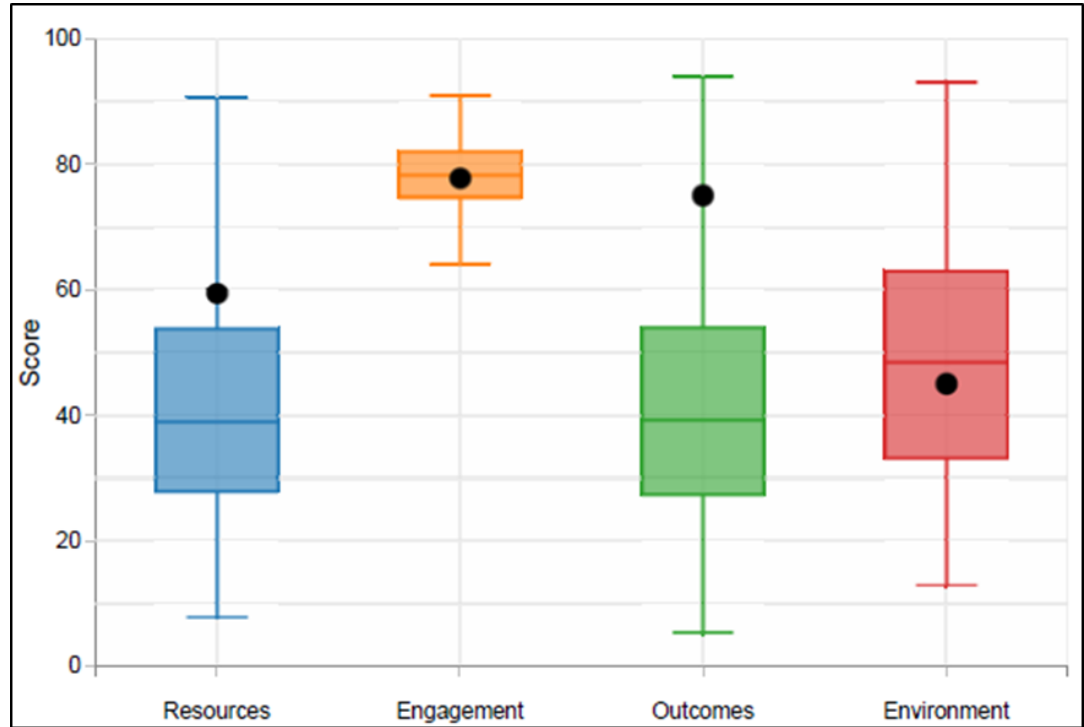
W&M as Scored in WSJ

Strengths

- Graduation
- Student Engagement
- Reputation
- Student Diversity (race/ethnicity)

Weaknesses

- Student Inclusion (Pell, first-gen.)
- Number of Programs
- Faculty Diversity
- Research Papers per Faculty

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Discussion

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