I use DataDirect to provide relevant benchmarking information for informed decision-making. My college generates comparison metrics from DataDirect throughout the academic year to evaluate and develop business cases for moving the college forward to achieve its strategic goals.

—Ginger Breon
Chief Information Officer, College of Engineering, The Ohio State University
Problem: As part of a school’s initial application for achieving AACSB accreditation, the accreditation coordinator of a South Korean school was trying to identify a set of peer and aspirant schools for her institution. While she had a few nominees in mind for her aspirant schools, she wanted to use data to more accurately determine her school’s peer institutions, both within Asia and globally.

Solution: Using the comparison group wizard in DataDirect, she develops a list of peer schools that closely match her own institution along a number of dimensions, including operating budget, faculty size, and degree programs offered. After establishing her peer group, she is able to benchmark her institution against those peers and also gain confidence in putting forth nominations for her school’s peer review team.

Process:
1. Go to the Comparison Groups page, select New Group Wizard.
2. Choose appropriate survey variables, such as full-time faculty strength and school operating budget. A good general rule is to select a faculty and/or budget range that is plus or minus 25 percent of your own school’s figures.
3. Choose appropriate classifications, such as region, institutional control (public/private), activity or research emphases, degree programs offered, and AACSB accreditation status.
4. Select search to generate a customized group of peer institutions with which you can create benchmarking reports.

Comparable Schools for Accreditation

This process of creating a Comparison Group can be applied in a variety of other situations and is used as an initial step in the process of each subsequent case in this guide.
Problem: As a hub of financial activity, businesses in a Texas city are looking to hire graduates with greater financial knowledge. In response, a mid-sized, private business school in the area established several new courses for non-business majors in basic financial principles. To accommodate this increased course load, the school’s Finance Department chair needs to hire a new assistant professor of finance. The chair needs to know what the current salaries are for professors of this level in his region to make a competitive offer.

Solution: The chair creates a custom comparison group of business schools in the southwestern U.S. and uses it for a personalized report, finding salary information for new assistant professors of finance on the tenure track. The report provides mean, quartile, median, and total categories, for highly usable data. With these salary figures, the chair is able to confidently approach candidates with a starting number in mind for salary negotiations.

Process:
1. Create a comparison group of business schools in your desired comparative market.
2. From the Benchmarking menu, go to Quick Results. Locate Quick Reports for Staff Compensation & Demographics Survey. Select Salaries: Faculty.
3. Choose the comparison group you created. Select the most recent year and desired variables. Variable options include tenure track, year hired, discipline, faculty level, and more.
4. Choose Go to Report for a custom report.

At a Glance: Hiring a new assistant professor of finance—where should we start the salary negotiations?

Assistant Professor Salary Distributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All</th>
<th>New Hires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>first quartile</td>
<td>$115,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average</td>
<td>$153,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third quartile</td>
<td>$195,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problem: The marketing director of a business school is developing a student-facing brochure, hoping it will set her school apart in a very competitive environment. Knowing that finding work soon after graduation is often of great interest to prospective students, she wants to find out how her school compares to other schools in her region in terms of post-graduation placement.

Solution: She discovers that her school’s MBA graduates find employment within three months of graduation at a higher rate than other schools in the country. Further, she looks at the starting base salary for MBA graduates in her region and finds that her school places above the average by several hundred dollars. Recognizing that these figures will look very favorable in the student brochure, she emails her findings to the rest of her marketing staff for their feedback.

Process:
1. Create a comparison group of business schools in your desired comparative market.
2. From the Benchmarking menu, go to Quick Results. Locate Quick Reports for BSQ Employment Module. Select the BSQ Employment Module – AACSB Sections Quick Report.
3. Choose the custom comparison group you created and the most recent survey year.
4. Scroll down to the Education Level – MBA Degree Title Only heading, select the tables you are interested in, and click Go to Report for a custom report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment After Graduation</th>
<th>Focus School</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed (90.9%)</td>
<td>$65,472</td>
<td>$58,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (9.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Salary</td>
<td>$65,472</td>
<td>$58,467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problem: An advisory council for a college of business convened to discuss the value of adding a PhD program to their portfolio of graduate programs. The college has never had a PhD program, but they believe they would attract students to enroll if the program were properly designed and marketed. The associate dean of graduate programming agreed that this idea was worth further consideration and offered to research the growth of PhD programs in advance of their next meeting.

Solution: The associate dean reaches out to her university’s institutional research office and works with one of their data analysts to create a five-year trend analysis that demonstrates a clear growth in the number of students enrolling in business PhD programs at similar institutions. To increase the value of her results for her school’s specific needs, she limits her comparison group to schools with a similar institutional control and region. The data analyst saves the data to include in a briefing that will be distributed at the next advisory council meeting.

Process:
1. Create a comparison group of schools with relevant characteristics. Limit your group to schools that participated in the Business School Questionnaire (BSQ) in each year of your analysis period.
2. From the Benchmarking menu, go to Quick Results. Select Quick Exports. Select Business School Questionnaire (BSQ).
3. Choose the comparison group you created. Designate the start and end year of your analysis.
4. Click on Go to Report and download the CSV file for use with a software program for data analysis and display (e.g. Excel, SPSS, R, SAS, Tableau, etc.).
Problem: The assistant dean of finance for the college of business wants to report to her university’s provost office on how their college net flow (defined as the difference between the total revenue generated by the business school and the total of all business school funds spent) compares to other business schools residing in large public universities.

Solution: The assistant dean of finance creates a comparison group consisting of all business schools residing in large public institutions that participated in the BSQ Finances Module and generates a report that displays the distribution of net flow across all the schools. She explains to the provost that a positive net flow suggests that the business school provides a net positive cash flow to the parent institution, a negative net flow suggests that the parent institution provides a net positive cash flow, and a zero net flow suggests that there is no transfer of funds between the school and the parent institution.

Process:
1. Create a comparison group of peer schools.
3. Scroll down in the variable list and select Net Flow of Funds Between Business School and University. Click Add Selected Variables.
4. Click on Generate Report.

Budgeting

Data User: Associate Dean or Director of Finance
At a Glance: How does our business school’s net financial contribution to the parent university compare to that of other schools?

Average Net Flow = $11,000,000
Member Resources

AACSB DataDirect
With AACSB DataDirect, members can access customizable business school data that is vital to everyday decision-making. DataDirect doesn’t just show you the data; it allows you to find exactly what you need in the format you need—whether it’s a customized report, specialized comparison group, table, chart, or percentile.

Because DataDirect is the world’s most comprehensive database on business schools, it provides vast quantities of data you won’t find anywhere else.

Visit aacsb.edu/datadirect for more information.

Guides and Support
Access the DataDirect user manual and tutorial videos to improve your experience while using DataDirect. These videos include step-by-step instructions for recreating the data collected in this guide.

Get started at aacsb.edu/datadirect/help.

Innovations That Inspire
An annual initiative, the Innovations That Inspire challenge recognizes institutions from around the world serving as champions of change in business education. Now in its fourth year, the challenge has highlighted more than 100 business school efforts that exemplify forward-looking approaches to research, education, engagement and outreach, and leadership. To date, members of AACSB’s Business Education Alliance have shared more than 800 innovations, creating a robust repository via AACSB’s DataDirect system to inform and inspire fellow members and the industry.

Visit aacsb.edu/innovations-that-inspire for more information.