Name: ______________________ ELP 390G Denning

Problem Set 3 – Four Institutions, Four Sectors

*Estimated time: about two hours. Submit a single PDF with your completed table and your written responses *ON CANVAS*. Every number needs a data year – IPEDS collects enrollment, tuition, aid, and finances on different schedules, so a single report mixes several years at once.*

You will pick four institutions – one public two-year, one public four-year, one private nonprofit, and one for-profit – fill in a common table, and interpret it. Almost every number comes from a single document per institution. Follow the five steps below in order.

Step 1. Pick your four institutions

IPEDS sorts institutions into numbered **sectors**. Sector is **not** the same as level – it is control and level combined into one number:

	4-year or above	2-year
Public	**1**	**4**
Private nonprofit	**2**	5
Private for-profit	**3**	6

You need one institution from each of the four bolded sectors. If you know an institution's control and its level, you have its sector – you never need to find a field labeled "sector."

Pick places you are curious about, enrolling at least 1,000 students; smaller institutions have suppressed cells throughout the finance data.

One warning. Do not guess sector from the name. IPEDS classifies by **highest degree awarded**, and many community colleges now grant bachelor's degrees, which moves them from sector 4 to sector 1. Austin Community College, Dallas College, Lone Star, San Jacinto, Collin County, and Houston Community College are all classified as **public four-year**. For your two-year institution, confirm the highest award is an associate degree.

Step 2. Find each institution's UNITID

Go to College Navigator, search the institution by name, and open its page. The six-digit **UNITID** appears in the page's web address and in the General Information box. Write down all four. Every other tool takes the UNITID, not the name.

Step 3. Open each institution's Data Feedback Report

In your browser's address bar, type `nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data-feedback-report/` followed by the UNITID. For UT Austin that is `nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data-feedback-report/228778`.

That page lists reports going back to 2005. Open the most recent one, in either PDF or HTML, and note which year you used. This single report contains nearly every number in the table, and each figure prints its values directly on the bars, with the data year in the figure title and the source survey named underneath.

Step 4. Read the table off the report

Each row below names the **figure title** to look for. **Go by title, not by figure number** – the numbering is different for two-year and four-year institutions, so Figure 23 at one of your institutions may be Figure 25 at another.

– *Total enrollment, percent part-time* – "Total 12-month enrollment, full-time and part-time 12-month enrollment. . . "

– *Percent with Pell* – "Percent of degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students awarded Federal Pell grants. . . "

– *Tuition and fees* – "Tuition and required fees for full-time, first-time. . . "

– *Average net price* – "Average net price of attendance for full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students, who were awarded grant or scholarship aid. . . "

– *Percent with an institutional grant* – "Percent of full-time, first-time. . . awarded grant or scholarship aid, or loans, by type of aid." Use the **institutional grants** bar, not the total.

– *Average institutional grant* – "Average amounts of awarded grant or scholarship aid, or loans. . . by type of aid." Again the institutional grants bar.

– *Graduation rate* – "Graduation and transfer-out rates. . . within 150% of normal time to program completion."

– *Tuition and appropriations as percentages of core revenues* – "Percent distribution of core revenues, by source." Both numbers are slices of this one figure.

– *Instruction expense per FTE* – "Core expenses per FTE enrollment, by function."

Expect the appropriations slice to be missing entirely from that revenue figure at your private nonprofit and your for-profit. That is not an error and not a zero – write ***not collected*** *and hold the thought for Question 5.*

Step 5. Get median earnings from College Scorecard

One row is not in IPEDS. Go to College Scorecard and search the institution, or type `collegescorecard.ed.gov/school/?` followed by the UNITID. Report the figure labeled **Median Earnings**, and write down the definition the site gives for it – read that definition before you use the number.

The Table

1. List your four institutions with name, UNITID, sector number, and the finance form each files – **F1** for public, **F2** for private nonprofit, **F3** for for-profit. Add a sentence on why you picked them. *(50–75 words plus the list)*

2. Fill in the table, noting the data year for each row. Where a measure is not collected for an institution, write **not collected** rather than 0.

Measure (year)	Public 2-yr	Public 4-yr	Private NP	For-profit
UNITID IPEDS sector Finance form filed				
Total enrollment Pct. part-time Pct. undergrads w/ Pell				
Tuition and fees Average net price Pct. w/ instit. grant Avg instit. grant				
Graduation rate, 150 pct. Median earnings				
Tuition pct. of core rev. Appropriations pct. of core rev. Instruction exp. per FTE				

If you would rather build this as a spreadsheet than read it off four reports, Compare Institutions will export all four institutions at once. It is a three-step wizard with a large variable tree, and it takes longer to learn than the reports take to read – optional, not required.

Reading the Table

3. **Who attends.** Using the enrollment, part-time, and Pell rows, describe how the four student bodies differ, and say whether these institutions are competing for the same students.

   Then one caution about the graduation rate: it counts only students who arrived full-time, first-time, and degree-seeking. Name which of your institutions that definition describes worst. *(150–200 words)*

4. **Price.** Published tuition is a sticker price for tuition alone. Average net price is the full cost of attendance – tuition, fees, books, housing, food – minus grant aid, for students who got any grant aid.

   Use the two institutional grant rows to place your four on a spectrum running from high-sticker, high-discount to low-sticker, low-discount. Explain why an institution might prefer to post a high price and discount it heavily rather than posting a lower price outright – and say whether any of your four looks like it is doing that. *(200–250 words)*

5. **Money.** Compare tuition as a percent of core revenues across the four, and account for the differences – for the public institutions, bring in appropriations. Then say which institution is most exposed to a sudden drop in enrollment, and why.

   Finally, the blank cells: your four institutions did not file the same form. Public institutions file F1 under government accounting rules; private nonprofits file F2 and for-profits file F3 under private-sector rules, and the forms do not ask the same questions. Explain why the appropriations row is empty for two of your institutions. "Because they are private" is not enough – say what about those sectors makes the question inapplicable. *(200–250 words)*

6. **Synthesis.** A state legislator asks which of your four institutions gives students the best deal. Answer – you may not say the question is unanswerable. Name the institution, say for **which students**, and identify the one figure in your own table that most undercuts your answer.

   Use the earnings row in your answer, and handle it carefully: what former students earn reflects who enrolled – their age, prior work history, field of study, and local labor market – as much as anything the institution did. Name one thing the earnings figure cannot tell you about the institution's own contribution. *(200–250 words)*