Harvard, Schmarvard: College Ranking for Financial Aid

College can be expensive. Between tuition costs, books, supplies, room and board, college students are overwhelmingly relying on student loans and financial aid in order to cover the costs of higher education. A large portion of the financial aid received is provided by the federal government through grants or subsidized student loans. But how should the government determine which schools and which students are deserving of aid?

Recently, President Obama proposed that the federal government create a ranking system for the nation’s colleges and universities in order to determine how much federal aid they should receive. There has been much discussion (though not much consensus) as to which factors should be used in developing the rankings. Your task (as a member of a committee on financial aid issues) is to determine which factors to use to rank colleges and universities, and use them to develop a ranking system to fit the government needs.

You may find the following article helpful in your research.

In solving this problem you must present a one page executive summary (abstract) explaining your proposed ranking system to White House Staff. If your explanation requires the use of graphs, figures, or other non-text items, you may opt to include up to one page of other visuals (no narrative on this page). All sources and citations must be listed on a separate citation page which also contains your team’s number.
Question #2

**Dude, Where's My Team?!: College Football Conferencing**

The representatives of college football's 125 NCAA Division 1 Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) teams have decided to put a stop to the unpredictability surrounding conference realignment. They have formed the Commission on College Conference Alignment Criteria (CoCCAC), whose mission is to finalize a structure (set of rules/criteria) for identifying both a 2014 conference realignment and predictable mechanism, such as a timeline or trigger guidelines, for review and realignment, if deemed necessary.

CoCCAC is working to create a new FBS conference structure that they believe will further enhance college football by maximizing equity (i.e., one that allows all FBS teams equal opportunity to benefit from FBS membership). In doing so CoCCAC has identified the following focal points in creating the conferencing structure:

- Geography
- Size of Fan Base
- Competitive Balance
- Academic Standing
- Overall Revenue

Unfortunately, due to conflicting interests CoCCAC has been unable to agree upon an alignment structure. As a result, they have hired your consulting group to solve the problem by creating a model that addresses the following five questions:

1. **How would your group define equity for FBS teams?** *(In other words, should they all make the same amount of money, should they all have to travel the same total distances for events, etc., or is there some other way to balance the set of relevant criteria such that all teams have equal opportunity to benefit from FBS membership?)*
2. **Do any changes (either additions or subtractions) need to be made to the initial criteria list, and if so, why?**
3. **How should criteria be weighted and why?**
4. **How stable is your model?** *(In other words, if you were to use it to realign the conferences every year, how much movement would occur?)*
5. **How frequently, if ever, should you use your model to realign the conferences?** *(For example, every 1, 5, 10, 20 years, never? Why?)*

In solving this problem you must present a one page summary (abstract) addressing the above five questions. **As a supplement, you MUST also provide a full listing of each team with their FAC conference affiliation based on your model.** If your explanation requires the use of graphs, figures, or other non-text items, you may opt to include up to one page of other visuals (no narrative on this page). All sources and citations must be listed on a separate citation page with team’s number.