

# Visualize Your Dopplegänger: Using Information Graphics to Benchmark AACSB-Accredited Business Schools

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**Doppelgänger (noun):**  
An apparition or double of a living person.  
From the German, "double-goer".  
(Oxford Dictionary of English, 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ed.).



## 1. Motivation

- Business School Strategic Plan includes a goal to "plan for a PhD program".
- The Business School received a **transformational endowment** in 2012 which made some funds available for new database subscriptions.
- An AACSB Maintenance of Accreditation review occurred in 2012.
  - Any new programs launched between accreditation cycles are assumed to be accredited until **next review cycle**.
  - During the next review, the school must indicate resource sufficiency for new programs (including adequate library support).

Q: How do you determine if you have **adequate library support & sufficient resources** for a PhD program?

A: By benchmarking business schools with existing doctoral programs and the libraries that serve them.

## 3. AACSB Peer Comparisons

- As part of the accreditation process, business school applicants must identify **6 Comparable Peers** and **3 Aspirant Peers** for consideration to serve on the Peer Review Team.
- What are Comparable Peers?**  
*A list of schools considered similar in mission and assumed appropriate for performance comparison.... The schools should be chosen carefully to match key characteristics of the applicant. In addition to mission, some features that might be salient when choosing comparison schools include student populations served, size, degree levels, and primary funding source.*
- What are Aspirant Peers?**  
*A list of schools that provides a developmental goal for the applicant, represents management education programs or features that the applicant hopes to emulate, and place the vision and strategy of the applicant in context.*

AACSB International (2012). Initial Accreditation Handbook.  
[http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/initial\\_accreditation\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/initial_accreditation_handbook.pdf)

## 5. DataDirect Search Criteria

- Basic characteristics:** Accreditation Status, Community (Urban, Suburban, Rural) Country, State/Province, FTE Faculty.
- Degrees/Programs:** Delivery Method, Educational Level, Enrollment, Program Type.
- US schools:** Carnegie Classification, Institutional Control (Public/Private), Religious Affiliation.
- Mission:** General Orientation, Mission Statement, Scholarly Orientation.
- Finance:** Currency, Operating Budget, Tuition.

## 7. A Canadian Case Study: Qualitative Factors

How do these 16 schools compare according to their mission?

- DataDirect contains codes which indicates the relative emphasis (high/medium/low) that a schools' mission with respect to their:
  - General orientation** (teaching, intellectual contributions, and service).
  - Scholarly orientation** (discipline-based scholarship, contributions to practice, learning & pedagogical research).

[https://datadirect.aacsb.edu/public/misc/clients/aacsb/help\\_orientation\\_codes.cfm](https://datadirect.aacsb.edu/public/misc/clients/aacsb/help_orientation_codes.cfm)

Faculty intellectual contributions are driven by a school's research mission (scholarly orientation) [See AACSB Standard 2].

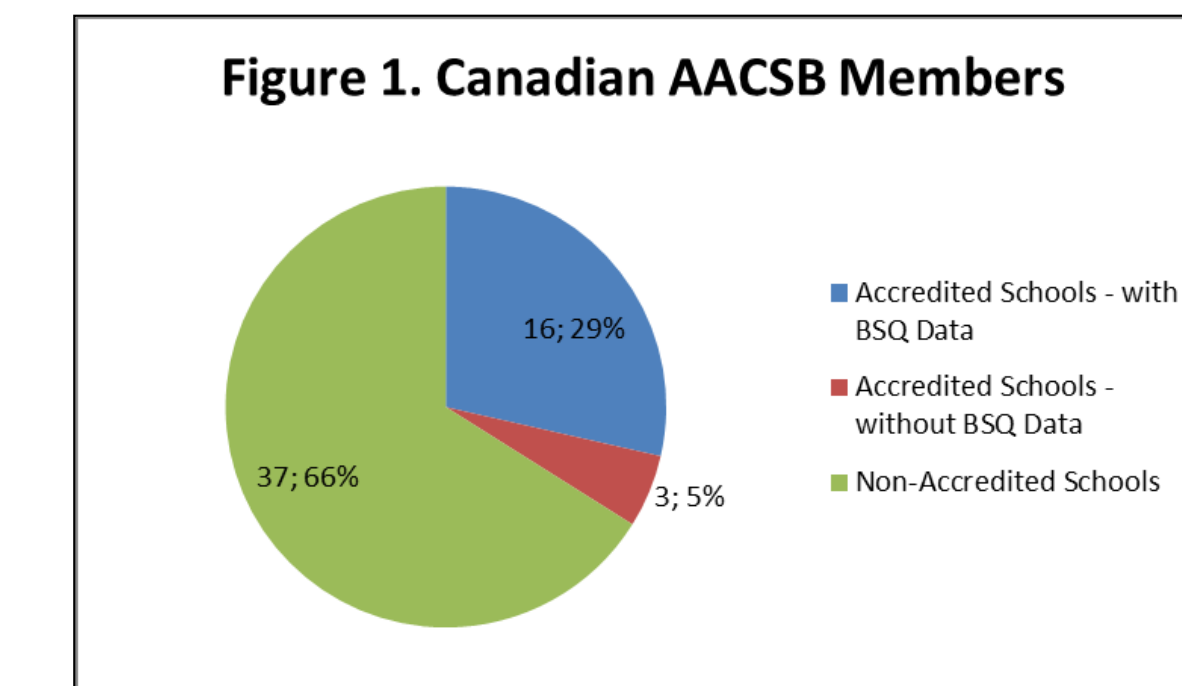
Venn diagrams (Figure 5) can be used to visualize qualitative data such as areas of emphasis for scholarly orientation.

## 6. A Canadian Case Study: Quantitative Factors

Step 1:

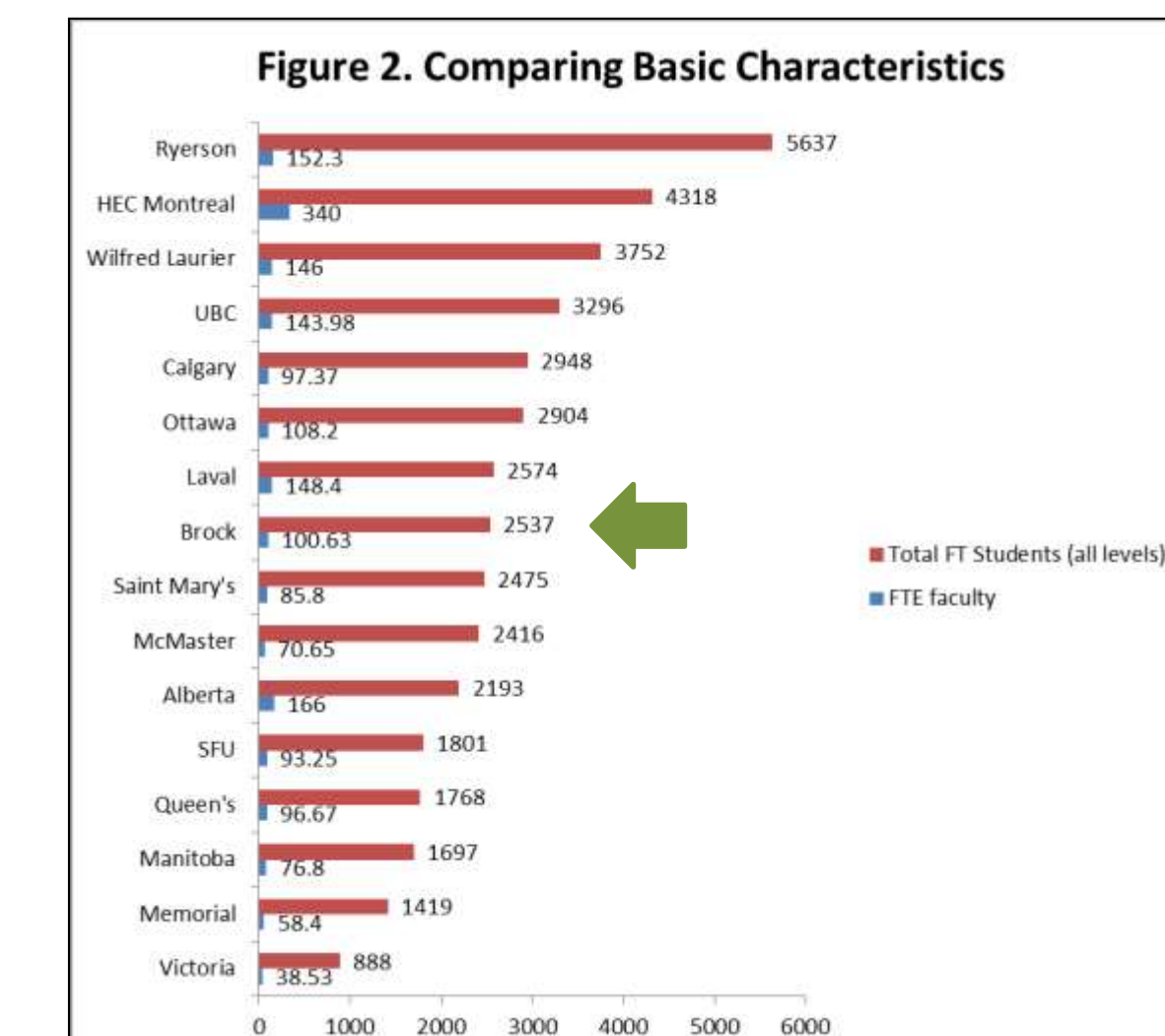
- How many Canadian schools are AACSB members?
- Are they accredited?
- Is public BSQ data available?

Pie charts (Figure 1) are good for visualizing portions of the whole pie.



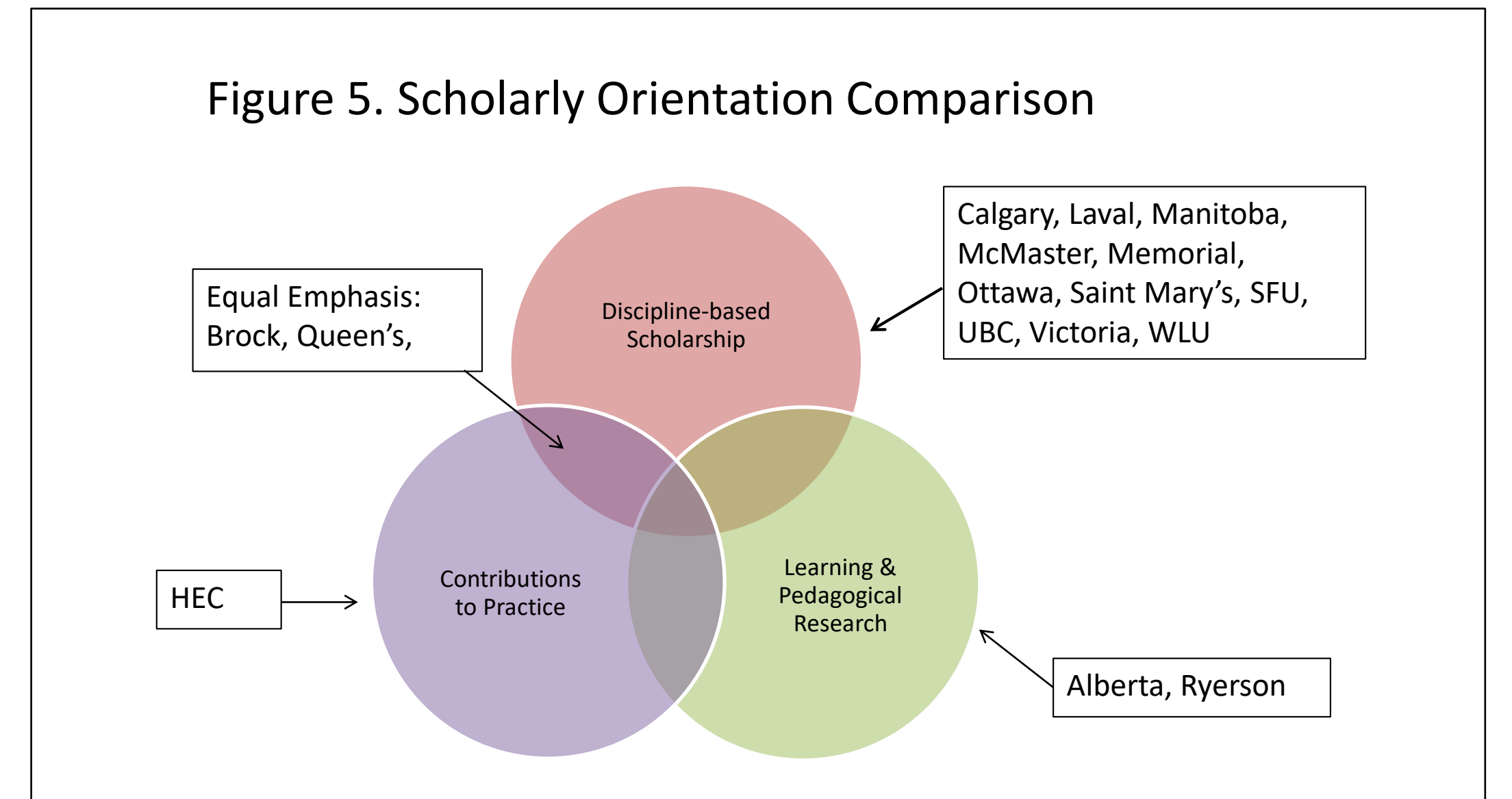
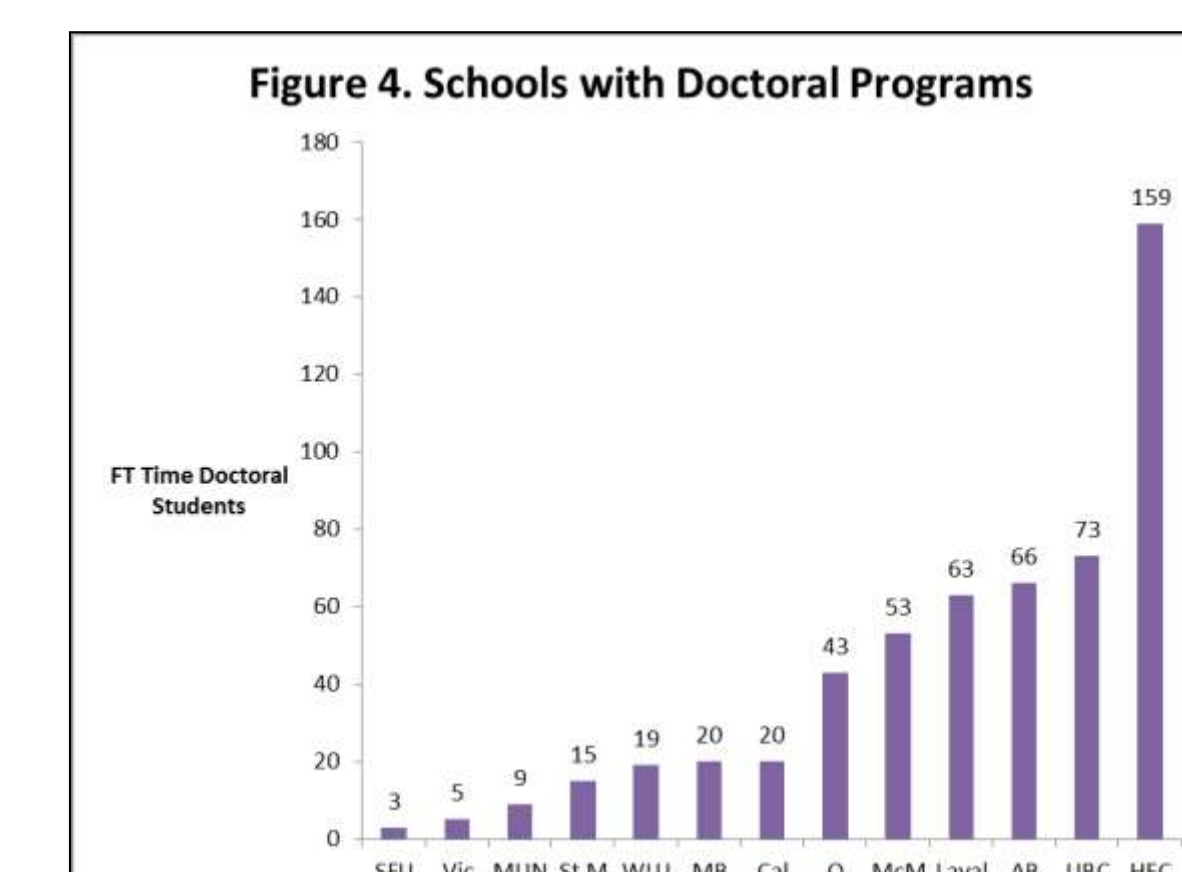
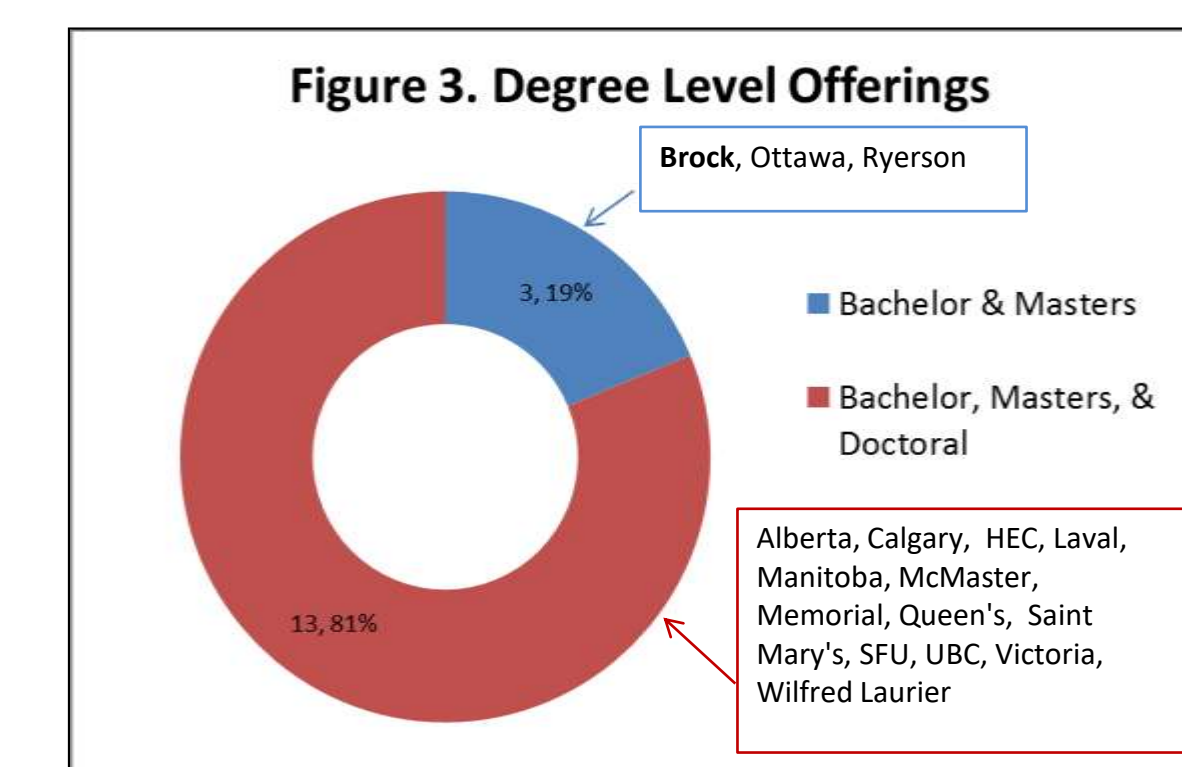
Step 2:

- How do these 16 schools compare based on 2 key characteristics: student enrollment & faculty size?
- Horizontal bar charts are good for illustrating comparisons between schools.
- Clustered bar charts (Figure 2) let you compare multiple data categories.



Step 3:

- How do these 16 schools compare based on degree level offerings (bachelors, masters, or doctoral)?
- Doughnut charts (Figure 3) can also help to visualize parts of the whole.
- Vertical column charts (Figure 4) work best with short labels.



## 8. Who are my doppelgänger?

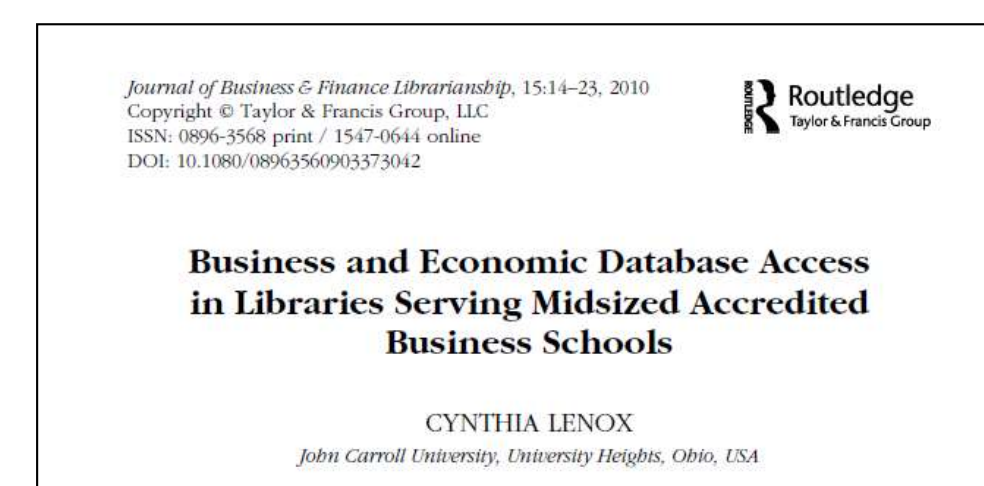
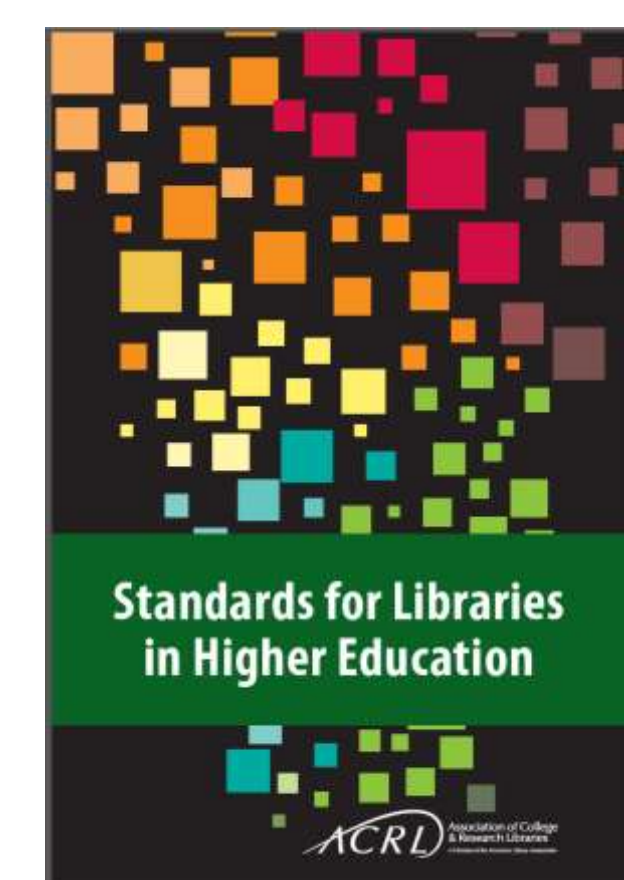
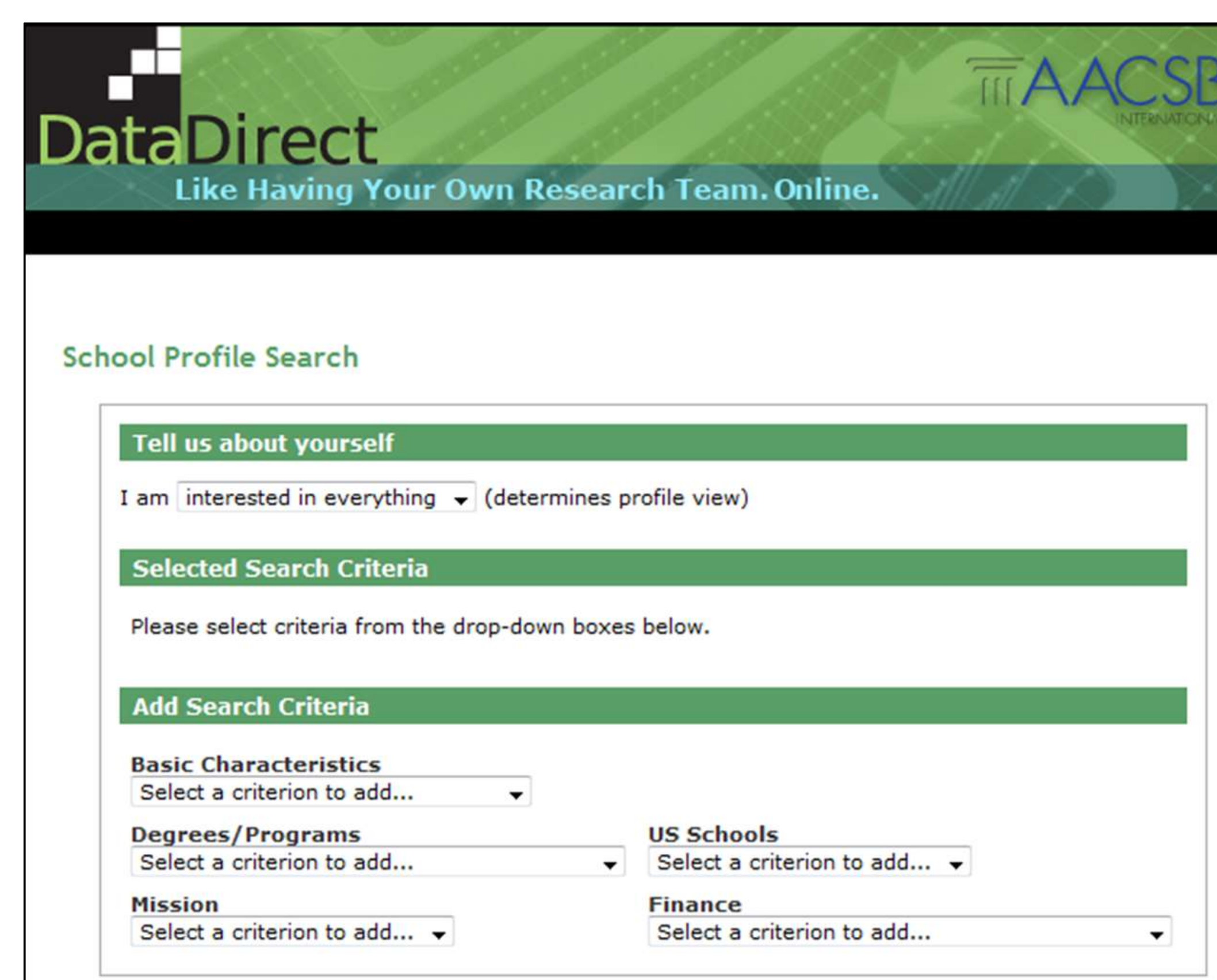
- Comparable Peers:** no single Canadian school matches on all four factors.
- Enrollment Size: Laval, McMaster, Saint Mary's.
  - Faculty Size: SFU, Queen's, Calgary.
  - Degree Level Offerings: Ottawa, Ryerson.
  - Scholarly Orientation: Calgary, Queen's, HEC, McMaster (...).
- Aspirant Peers:** focus on similar sized schools with small doctoral programs and a high emphasis on discipline-based scholarship.
- Calgary, McMaster, Saint Mary's.

## 9. What's Next?

- I plan to benchmark comparable and aspirant peer groups with respect to:
- Types of libraries (centralized or separate) & database holdings.
  - Business school IT facilities (e.g., trading labs).
- Benchmarking data sources include:
- Institutional websites (libraries, business schools) for qualitative data on the nature of programs, facilities, and services.
  - AACSB Facilities Resource Centre spotlights, virtual tours, and recent builds/renovations list (<http://www.aacsb.edu/resources/facilities/>).

## 4. AACSB DataDirect Website

- Data comes from the Business School Questionnaire (BSQ) completed by participating member schools.
- Note: Not all AACSB members are accredited, and not all accredited members complete the BSQ.
- Participating schools have access to a password protected site for benchmarking purposes.
- The general public can access much of this data using the Advanced School Search: <https://datadirect.aacsb.edu/public/profiles/search.cfm>



## 2. Benchmarking

Academic libraries may engage in benchmarking activities as part of accreditation reviews or strategic planning exercises.

- ACRL's *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* (2011) recommends benchmarking as a tool for evaluation and self-improvement, both internally and against external peer groups (both actual and aspirational).
- Recent library benchmarking studies focused on database holdings for libraries serving different types of business schools.
  - The number of business research databases provided by highly ranked US business schools was related to enrollment in graduate business programs, but not related to the overall level of undergraduate enrollment, or to the status of the university as private or public (Gottfried, 2010).
  - Lenox (2010) found that libraries serving mid-sized AACSB accredited US business schools without PhD programs provided fewer databases in comparison to previous studies of large academic business libraries.