

Common Measures to Assess Postsecondary Persistence & Completion

A Brief History and Context

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BILL & MELINDA
GATES *foundation*

The Rise of Statewide Common Measures

- Statewide measures for **performance reporting, performance budgeting, and performance funding** gained popularity in accountability movement of 1990s
- For example, a 1997 SHEEO Survey showed:

Table 1: Reporting Indicators and States Adopting Them

<u>Indicators</u>	<u>States</u>
Retention/Graduation rates	32*
Transfer rates	25*
Faculty workload	24
Satisfaction surveys	23
Sponsored research funds	23
Remediation activities/effectiveness	21
Pass rates on licensure exams	21
Degrees awarded	20*
Job Placements	19
Admission standards	18*
Number and percent of accredited programs	13

Source: Extracted from Burke, J. (2001)

The Evolution of Federal Common Measures

Because of nature of federal student aid (i.e., students “vote with their feet” where to invest federal dollars), federal policy has focused on consumer info

- **1990: Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-542)**
– required colleges to disclose their graduation rate [established the IPEDS graduation rate]
- **1998: HEA Reauthorization** – Required NCES make info available to students and parents that allowed them to compare tuition and student aid at individual institutions; result was first consumer info site (COOL website)
- **2006: Spellings Commission** – focus on accountability and need for more info for students and parents; led to 2007 launch of College Navigator.
- **2008: Higher Education Opportunity Act** – included new measures to be made available to students through federal government on College Navigator (e.g., 200% graduation rate, first-year retention rate) or directly by institutions (e.g., Pell Grant recipient graduation rate, Federal Loan recipient graduation rate)
- **2009-Today: Obama Administration** -- continued focus on consumer information; (e.g., grad rates on FAFSA; College Shopping Sheet, Gainful Employment reporting and disclosure measures including debt-to-earnings ratio, loan repayment rates , on-time completion)

What is IPEDS?

- Phased in beginning in 1985: The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) is a system of annual surveys collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (part of US Dept of ED) and designed to collect data from all primary providers of postsecondary education
- Beginning in 1992: IPEDS is mandatory for all 7,000+ postsecondary institutions in the United States that participate in the federal student aid programs; institutions that don't comply could be fined \$27,500 per offense or even risk program eligibility in federal student aid
- Currently data collected include: admissions, enrollments, faculty & staff, institutional finances (revenues, expenses, assets, liabilities), student finances (tuition and fees charged, net price, financial aid), retention and graduation rates, counts of degrees and certificates awarded by fields of study/majors

IPEDS (Federal) Persistence and Completion Measures

■ GRADUATION RATES

- Original graduation rate (established by Student Right to Know Act and subsequent regulations); cohort-based graduation rate; broken down by race/ethnicity and gender of students in the cohort.
 - Cohort includes students who
 - ◇ Are attending postsecondary education for the first-time (therefore leaves out students who transfer in)
 - ◇ Begin at the institution as full-time (therefore excluding part-time starters)
 - ◇ Are seeking a credential
 - Tracks the cohort:
 - ◇ To see who completes at the same institution within 150% of “normal time” for the program in which they are enrolled (e.g., 3 years for a 2 year degree program); in 2008, HEOA required cohort also be tracked at 100% of normal time and 200% of normal time
 - ◇ To see if student transfers to another institution – but not for all institutions; any institution can report transfer outs, but only those who have transfer as part of their mission required to report on transfers. Horizontal transfers (2-year to 2-year) not distinguished from vertical ones (2- year to 4-year)

IPEDES (Federal) Persistence and Completion Measures

■ RETENTION RATES

- Includes full-time and part-time students, but only first-timers
- Tracks first-to-second year (fall-to-fall) retention at the institution

■ COMING SOON? (For more info, see Newsroom area of IPEDES website at nces.ed.gov/ipeds)

- IPEDES is considering adding a part-time cohort for graduation rates
- IPEDES is considering adding a non-first-timer (transfer student) cohort for graduation rates
- IPEDES is considering asking institutions to report more detailed outcome info and reporting info more frequently over tracking period:
 - Student received an award at your institution and then:
 - ◇ Subsequently enrolled at your institution
 - ◇ Subsequently enrolled elsewhere (documented)
 - ◇ Did not subsequently enroll at your institution, subsequent enrollment unknown
 - Student did not receive an award at your institution and:
 - ◇ Is still enrolled at your institution
 - ◇ Has subsequently enrollment elsewhere (documented)*
 - ◇ Is not enrolled at your institution, and subsequent enrollment elsewhere is unknown

Current Environment: Multiple Efforts, Uses, & Audiences Varying Degrees of Institutional Coverage

- Federal, mandated: IPEDS
- National, voluntary:
 - Complete College America (national effort with state policymaker focus)
 - Voluntary System of Accountability (developed by 4-year public colleges and universities)
 - Voluntary Framework of Accountability (developed by community colleges, for community colleges)

BMGF Postsecondary Success Team

Overarching goal: Increase completions from higher education institutions

What is the role of data and metrics?

External transparency

Provide data to external stakeholders to inform their decisions (investments) and provide incentive for institutional change

Internal transparency

Provide data and KPIs to internal stakeholders that inform decisions focusing on performance improvement

Build convergence around common measures, recognizing that different audiences/stakeholders may have different informational needs, which may impact which measures are used and perhaps even more so how they are “packaged;” that is, we need to get the right info in the right hands in the right format to inform the decision maker.

More about Complete College America

Stan Jones