

NETWORK NEWS

SHEEO

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FOCUS ON 2010 SHEEO/NCES DATA CONFERENCE AND IPEDS WORKSHOP

In This Issue

...Network News provides a summary of the 33rd annual SHEEO/NCES Network Data Conference and IPEDS Workshop. Approximately 140 invited participants attended the conference in Washington, DC. The goal of the conference is to provide professional development and networking opportunities for state IPEDS coordinators, state directors of research and information systems, NCES staff, and representatives from state wide community college associations and the independent sector. It also gives IPEDS staff and state coordinators an important opportunity to discuss data and collection issues face-to-face.

This issue of the Network News provides summaries of selected conference presentations, as well as an overview of the annual IPEDS Workshop. Please visit the IPEDS website for additional information at: <http://nces.edu.gov/ipeds/>. To access the most recent information regarding the 2009-10 IPEDS schedule and Technical Review Panel reports, see the "Announcements and Alerts" section under the "Newsroom" link on the IPEDS website.

All presentations, including those highlighted here and others not summarized, can be found on the SHEEO website:

<http://www.sheeo.org/network/netmeet/netmeet10.htm>

The 2011 conference will be held May 3-6 at the Hyatt Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco. Please contact Natalie Mischler if you have questions or suggestions for next year's meeting.

Annual IPEDS Workshop

The annual IPEDS Workshop is a fundamental part of the Data Conference. The IPEDS staff is present to answer questions, provide updates and plans, and give guidance on upcoming reporting changes. The Workshop is an excellent opportunity for state data collectors, reporters, and key holders to share their comments and questions with the IPEDS staff and with each other. There are also several opportunities for hands-on IPEDS tool demonstrations and presentations.

IPEDS Update: 2009-10 Year in Review

Jan Plotczyk, IPEDS Team Leader, presented an overview of the 2009-10 data collection and reporting year. First on the agenda was reporting compliance. Ms. Plotczyk clarified that it is a mandatory requirement that all institutions with program participation agreements (PPA) with the US Department of Education for Title IV federal student financial aid, report to IPEDS.

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Widespread participation and quality discussions make [the IPEDS Listserv] a valuable tool, which data providers can access through the Data Provider Center.

Ms. Plotczyk noted that penalties for noncompliance in IPEDS reporting have increased in the past two years. Fines up to \$27,500 per violation can be imposed and institutions' eligibility to participate in Title IV programs may be suspended. On the other hand, all institutions that submit and lock data up to three weeks before the close of collection, receive thank you e-mails, which are sent directly to institutions' CEOs.

The IPEDS Listserv was also highlighted during the IPEDS overview. Launched in fall 2009, it has 1,031 members and continues to grow. Topics such as cohorts, entering students, and financial aid and HR concepts have been facilitated through the listserv. Widespread participation and quality discussions make this a valuable tool, which data providers can access through the Data Provider Center.

Ms. Plotczyk ended the IPEDS overview with a list of lessons learned and helpful hints from the last year.

Lessons learned by IPEDS Staff:

- Many completions report errors occur when coding Divinity Degrees, LLM, and SJD.
- Another common mistake is not reporting the correct price of attendance for the length of the program (i.e., reporting 12 month costs for a 24 month program). This affects net price.
- GASB reporters did not allocate depreciation and interest expenses to other functional expenses. They showed up in other expenses instead, however efforts should be made to allocate these expenses (to better align FASB and GASB).

Helpful hints from IPEDS Staff:

- Don't forget first time professional students. Graduate enrollments now include all post-baccalaureate students.
- Instructional Activity does NOT equal the length of the program. Contact hours should include totals not averages.
- Entering class means students who are new to your institution. This category includes FTFTs, transfers, and non-degree/certificate seeking students that are new to the institution in the fall.

Help Desk Update

The IPEDS Help Desk call center is operated by RTI International in Raleigh, NC. The call center is operated by 16-18 staff members who are specially trained to serve IPEDS customers. Throughout the year, they respond to phone calls and emails; make prompting (reminder) calls during the last weeks of collection; and review and migrate all survey data after it is locked and completed.

To demonstrate the high level of activity at the Help Desk, Jamie Isaac of RTI International, provided an overview of call center statistics from the past year. Total call center communication during the 2009-10 collection period included 22,931 incoming phone calls; 5,823 emails; and 21,375 outgoing calls.

Higher Education Opportunity Act

Elise Miller, Program Director of the Postsecondary Institutional Studies Program, discussed new reporting and disclosure requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA). Reporting requirements include information reported through IPEDS for College Navigator and the multi-year tuition calculator. New

disclosure requirements include employment placement rates, graduation rates by federal aid categories and net price calculator. She noted that while institutions should be aware of disclosure requirements, they are not IPEDS requirements.

To help identify disclosure requirements and “suggested practices” for making the information available to students, a National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) working group has developed a handbook geared toward institutions.

The NPEC guide is available at:
<http://nces.ed.gov/npec/>

Further information on HEOA can be found at:
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html>

Advisory Committee on Measures of Student Success

Another requirement under HEOA is the development of an Advisory Committee on Measures of Student Success. NCES Education Statistician, Archie Cubarrubia discussed the committee, which will advise the Secretary of Education in assisting two-year degree granting institutions in meeting the completion and graduation rate disclosure requirements outlined in HEOA. The committee will work to develop recommendations for additional and alternative measures of student success during a series of meetings, which will be open to the public. The committee’s final report is due to the Secretary no later than eighteen months after the first meeting, tentatively scheduled for June 2010.

2010-11 Changes and Improvements to Data Collection

Several changes and improvements will be implemented for the upcoming collection year. The newest changes will affect institutional characteristics and fall enrollment reporting:

Institutional Characteristics:

- Collection of selected professional tuitions will be reinstated
- This is the last year for the accidental, temporary reporting reprieve

Fall Enrollments:

- Column for non-certificate seeking students will be reinstated
 - o This change was submitted to OMB for approval
 - o No Federal Register notice; OMB will approve or disapprove
 - o If approved, change will be mandatory in 2010-11.

For further information about these and other ongoing changes, please visit the following links:

<http://www.ipeds.gov>

<http://airweb.org>

www.sheeo.org

IPEDS staff is also working to make improvements to data entry screens and survey instructions to increase the consistency and accuracy of data. Error messages and editing features are currently being re-written and re-coded, and new terms and definitions are frequently added to the glossary.

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Looking Ahead to 2011 and Beyond

The IPEDS Workshop closed with a preview of plans for 2011 and beyond. At this time, a significant change to the collection calendar was highlighted. Pending OMB approval, the Student Financial Aid (SFA) Survey will become a winter survey, per recommendations from an NCEC-convened Technical Review Panel (TRP). The winter collection period will be three weeks longer to provide time for IPEDS reporters to complete the SFA survey. Winter data collection is scheduled to run from early December through mid-February.

Sabrina Ratchford, Statistician with the Postsecondary Institutional Studies Program, discussed the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and upcoming changes which will affect IPEDS reporting. The SOC system is used by Federal agencies to classify workers and jobs into occupational categories for purposes of data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

Recently, the SOC manual went through a substantial revision. The changes will be incorporated into IPEDS collection after they are approved by OMB, but not before the 2010-11 collection period.

The final topic of discussion at the Workshop was the IPEDS Technical Review Panels (TRP). TRPs are conducted by RTI International with the purpose of obtaining peer reviews and suggestions on IPEDS projects and to foster communication with potential data users.

Four TRPs were held during the 2009-10 year. The meetings focused on a range of topics including HEOA requirements, improvements to the completions and HR surveys, and tools and resources for reducing IPEDS reporting burden.

The TRP website is hosted by RTI, and available through the IPEDS website. It contains summaries of recent meetings for review and comment, summaries from previous meetings, as well as dates for upcoming panels.

To visit the TRP website, please follow this link:
https://edsurveys.rti.org/IPEDS_TRP/Index.aspx

Plenary Sessions

Ideal State Data Systems, presented by Allison C. Bell

As part of the Network contract, SHEEO was charged to "undertake expert advisory meetings to develop and review state data system characteristics, and disseminate the resulting agreed-upon benchmarks or best practice characteristics and functionality." This presentation disseminated the results of four, two-day meetings held by SHEEO in December of 2008 and February, March, and April of 2009. The expert panelists included state postsecondary data system/warehouse officials, data users/researchers, policy staff from state governments, and representatives from the public and independent (not-for-profit) postsecondary communities as well as K-12 and workforce data systems.

Although the discussion details varied at each of the four meetings, there were key points of commonality raised at each meeting. In general, participants agreed that state data systems should be flexible, transparent, longitudinal, bridge sectors, and have meaningful data. Further, there was consensus that data systems should enable policymakers to understand their state's educational environment, make data-driven decisions and answer key policy questions, and not replicate institutional, transaction-based data systems. Participants also discussed the uses for such a system, what to keep in mind when building a system (including the challenges inherent in building one), and specific data elements that might be included in a state-level postsecondary data system.

The full report from these meetings can be found at:

<http://www.sheeo.org/network/State%20Data%20System%20Advisory%20Panel%20Report%20-%202011-23-09.pdf>

SREB States Sharing Data, presented by Alicia A. Diaz

Dr. Alicia A. Diaz from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) presented the results of a study conducted with the goal of assessing the use of linked data in the SREB states. Dr. Diaz interviewed representatives from state K-12 and postsecondary education agencies on how they are linking data with each other and other state agencies and how they are using those data to measurably improve student and organization outcomes. The results were surprising: despite the fact that it is too early for most of the states to have a comprehensive P-20W education data system, all agencies reported some form of ongoing data exchange. However, these data exchanges were in different stages of development. The presentation included some strategies that might help further data linkage efforts, including a culture of sharing, relationship building, standards, and balanced policy, to name a few.

In addition to having linked data, many states reported measurable changes to outcomes and policies based on those data. Policy issues at both the K-12 and higher education levels have been addressed using linked data. Some of the measured outcomes of linked data use included: saving money, improving student learning, improving completion rates, improving enrollment and retention, better aligning curriculum, and remediation and teacher training.

Accountability in and for Community Colleges, presented by Kent Philippe and Patrick Perry

Patrick Perry, Vice Chancellor for the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, described the difficulties that make accountability at two-year institutions a complex endeavor. Dr. Perry likened community colleges to hospitals:

- they serve a local community;
- they admit everyone and don't turn anyone away;
- they treat you no matter what shape you arrive in;
- their goal is to make you better; and
- some of the staff there are doctors.

Student intent is what distinguishes community colleges from K-12 and 4-year institutions. The number one question for community college accountability is determining who is at a community college and for what reason(s). Dr. Perry stated that the lack of distinction and adjustment for remedial students is a major problem in community college metrics.

Kent Philippe, Associate Vice President for Research & Student Success at the American Association of Community Colleges, presented information on the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), a multi-year initiative to develop accountability measures that are most appropriate for community colleges. The initial planning phase has concluded and the second phase includes development of the measures and metrics. The goal of the second phase is to create a framework that defines institutional success and draft a strategic plan to ensure college participation in the VFA.

South Dakota's Ready Adult Profiles: Factors that Influence Ready Adult Departure, presented by Paul Turman

Paul Turman, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at the South Dakota Board of Regents, described South Dakota's participation in the Non-Traditional No More grant project funded by the Lumina Foundation for Education and managed by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. The project seeks to eliminate policies and practices that serve as barriers to Ready Adult degree attainment.

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IR professionals have gone from being “bean counters” to “providers of knowledge,” expected to not only collect and maintain data systems, but also translate the meaning of the data at the policy level.

Dr. Turman featured the process of identifying ready adults (students with significant credit but no degree) in South Dakota, many of whom are single parents who work part- or full-time and have experienced life-changing events such as deaths in the family or have entered military service. Dr. Turman also discussed state-level efforts to assess system- and institutional-level data to enact policy solutions for enhancing Ready Adult re-entry into their postsecondary educational experience.

What do Stakeholders Need to Know About the State of State Postsecondary Data Systems?, presented by Tanya I. Garcia

Tanya I. Garcia, Policy Analyst at the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) association, began with a description of the data collection instrument SHEEO used to collect information about state-level postsecondary student unit record systems (SURs). The study features 59 SUR systems in 44 states and the District of Columbia.

The instrument was divided into six main sections:

- Background Information
- Data Collected, Data Elements, and Metadata
- Using Student Unit Record Data
- Linking Postsecondary Student Unit Record System Data to Other Systems
- Mechanisms to Ensure Data Quality
- Sustaining Student Unit Record Systems

Audience members provided their thoughts on how state agencies and entities use IPEDS, describe and document remedial/developmental courses, and refining the questions on linking arrangements across sectors to include the goals of these relationships.

SHEEO will publish the report by mid-July of 2010. The report and supplementary documents will be available online at www.sheeo.org/sspds. Next steps include focus groups to finalize the data collection instrument and site visits to document how student unit record systems are being used in different states.

For more information, contact Tanya I. Garcia, tgarcia@sheeo.org.

Achievements, Dreams, Aspirations, and Reality: A Data Career, presented by J. Keith Brown

J. Keith Brown, Associate Vice President for Planning, Accountability, Research & Evaluation at the North Carolina Community College System, delivered the morning plenary on the final day of the data conference. Spanning a career of more than 30 years, Dr. Brown offered his perspective on the transformation of the institutional research profession. IR professionals have gone from being “bean counters” to “providers of knowledge,” expected to not only collect and maintain data systems, but also translate the meaning of the data at the policy level. The data driven decision-making environment has contributed to this transformation, and institutional researchers are increasingly part of state- and system-level decision-making.

Dr. Brown was a first generation college student. He retired at the end of May, and we not only want to thank him for all of his contributions over the course of his career, but also wish him the best.

Meet the newest members of the SHEEO Staff:

John Blegen is project manager for common data standards, a collaborative project with State Higher Education Officers (SHEEO), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the US Department of Education and national education entities. The goal of this collaborative effort is to leverage and create model data standards that will attract widespread, voluntary adoption and ultimately enhance policy-making and student achievement. Initially, the project will focus on data related to the transition from high school to postsecondary education.

Mr. Blegen brings a wealth of experience to this role, having served as Chief Information Officer (CIO) in both higher education and private industry. He has designed and built administrative software systems widely used in higher education; has done design and development work in the areas of privacy and identity management; and has served as a policy and management consultant focusing on both knowledge management and project management. He received his M.B.A. degree from the University of Iowa with a focus in Management Science and a B.A. Degree from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD.

Julie Carnahan is SHEEO's new senior associate. Prior to joining SHEEO, Dr. Carnahan was the Chief Academic Officer for the Colorado Department of Higher Education where she also held positions as the Director of Research and Information Management and the Chief Information Officer. Dr. Carnahan has also held academic and administrative positions at the University of Colorado Denver, and the University of Alaska, Anchorage.

Julie holds a Ph.D. in Higher Education from the University of Michigan, and an M.A. in Sociology and B.A. in Psychology from the University of Colorado Colorado Springs.

Chris Crumrine joined SHEEO in June 2010 as a research associate. In this position, he primarily works with the State Policy Resource Connection and assists with the Common Data Standards Project. Prior to joining SHEEO, Chris served two terms as a member of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. During his tenure he focused on fiscal policy challenges, equal opportunity access, and strategic planning for Kentucky. During the summer of 2009 he held a fiscal policy internship at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, where he analyzed the use of ARRA funding, Tennessee unemployment rates and workforce redevelopment. He completed a B.A. degree with a dual major in Mass Communications and Political Science at the University of Kentucky. He received his Masters in Public Administration with a focus in higher education policy and finance from the Martin School of Public Policy and Administration at the University of Kentucky.

Katie Zaback joined SHEEO in spring 2010 as a policy analyst. Katie's experience in higher education includes serving as a research associate and institutional researcher at Regis University and a project associate with the National Survey of Student Engagement. In these roles, she helped develop data policies and reporting infrastructures in addition to assisting college and university personnel in understanding and using data.

Before joining SHEEO, Katie worked as a program evaluator with a consulting firm focused on serving non-profit and public sector clients. Katie has a master's in public affairs with a concentration in policy analysis from the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University at Bloomington, she holds a B.A. in economics and political science from Hastings College as well as a Master's Certificate in database design from Regis University.

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SHEEO Publication

Strong Foundations: The State of State Postsecondary Data Systems

This important resource presents information based on a study conducted by SHEEO that cataloged 59 state-level student unit record (SUR) data systems containing postsecondary data in 44 states and the District of Columbia.

The study describes state postsecondary data systems, a task made complex by the organizational reality that there is often no single, uniform entity or organization within a state to respond to survey questions associated with state postsecondary data systems.

The full report can be found at:
<http://www.sheeo.org/sspds/default.htm>

A future issue of *Network News* will also be devoted to this important publication.