

NETWORK NEWS

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FOCUS ON THE 1999 NETWORK CONFERENCE AND IPEDS WORKSHOP

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Network News provides highlights from the 1999 SHEEO/NCES Network Conference and IPEDS Workshop held in Arlington, Virginia from May 10-12. Over 160 people attended, including state IPEDS coordinators, state directors of research and information systems, representatives from statewide community college associations, NCES and Census Bureau staff, and members of national postsecondary organizations. In addition to the annual IPEDS Workshop, this year's conference included thirteen concurrent sessions covering a variety of data and policy topics, an address by Clifford Adelman, Senior Research Analyst from the U.S. Department of Education, and table topic discussions.

This issue of *Network News* provides e-mail addresses of session presenters and relevant web site locations. Selected presentations can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/sheeocon>. You may also contact the SHEEO office for more information on the conference.

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IPEDS Redesign Update

A redesign of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) has been in progress for several months. There has been a lot of activity surrounding this complex system, and the NCES staff has shared their progress at several recent meetings including the SHEEO/NCES Network Conference and IPEDS Workshop.

Forces for change. Multiple forces are driving the need for a redesigned system. NCES has identified several flaws in the existing paper systems and the timeliness of the data needs to be improved. Developing the new forms each year can take from four to six months to get from the design stage to mailing. Once mailed, the forms must then be routed through various levels of coordinators and institutions. Some forms are completed and returned in hard copy; other responses are electronically generated. Paper forms then require data entry time. For either paper or electronic submissions, data editing and error resolution must also take place and in some cases, this occurs months after the institution has responded to the survey. In sum, the current process is both time-consuming and costly. External factors are also influencing the redesign. The recent 1998 reauthorization of the HEA reflected congressional concerns with data timeliness and accuracy. Under a section titled "Redesign of Data Systems", the legislation states that "...the Secretary shall redesign relevant parts of the postsecondary education data systems to improve the usefulness and timeliness of the data collected by such systems."

Designing a new process. Two major groups, one internal and one external, have invested a substantial amount of time in the redesign project. A NCES internal review has been taking place under the direction of Dr. Samuel Peng. He has compared the project to remodeling a house; it can be both painful and enjoyable, and everyone has an opinion on the new structure. The internal review team has been charged with identifying problems, strengths, and weaknesses of the existing system as well as identifying the congressional mandates and standards that NCES is required to meet. They are listening to and gathering input from various sources, and after synthesizing and analyzing what they have learned, they must identify alternatives that solve the problems, address the deficiencies, and meet the mandates and standards. A report with recommendations is due to the NCES Commissioner by the end of August.

The process has also involved multiple external stakeholders. Presentations and discussions have taken place at several national meetings. In addition, four working groups from the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) have been meeting to generate input and recommendations for the review process. The purpose of these focused committees is to provide specific solutions to problems and deficiencies including identifying specific data elements and definitions, recommending formats for data collections, and recommending an implementation schedule.

NPEC Committees and issues. The IPEDS/NPEC Institutional **Universe Working Group** is addressing which data elements would be collected from the various institutional sectors. The data requested could range from a minimum data set for non-Title IV institutions to a maximum data set for postsecondary Title IV eligible institutions. The minimum data set would include student headcount, the number of completers by program, the number of faculty and staff, tuition and fees, and some general institutional characteristics. The maximum data set would include all of these items (in greater detail) plus salaries for faculty and staff, finance data, and additional general characteristics.

The **Student-focus Working Group** has suggested organizing and collecting data when it is available, regardless of content, rather than the current collection process using separate content-specific surveys. The group's recommended schedule is as follows:

August Collection	Institutional Characteristics
October Collection	Completions
December Collection	Enrollment, Salaries, Staff
March Collection	Graduation Rate Survey, Finance

Other recent NCES discussions have suggested collapsing the schedule into three data collection periods (October, December, and March) and expanding the time period for each submission from the proposed six weeks to a longer eight-to-ten week period.

The Student Working Group has also suggested modifications to the forms. The Institutional Characteristics (IC) form would include new items on admissions to address congressional concerns. Additional consumer information including special curriculum offerings would also be added. The December data collection would include the unduplicated headcount by level (currently on the IC form), with, perhaps racial/ethnic and gender detail and credit hour activity. More detail on the unduplicated headcount for a 12-month period would address concerns about using fall only enrollments since a fall only data collection ignores 40 percent of the community college enrollments. The definition of a traditional student is also changing regardless of campus type, and it may be necessary to request this level of detail for both fall enrollment and full year unduplicated headcount. The group is also recommending additional data items to reflect and measure the growth of non-credit activity; this is aimed primarily at the institutional sectors who have non-credit activity as an important part of their mission.

The **Faculty/Staff Working Group** has had several meetings and is formulating their suggestions for NCES. They have identified three over-arching issues:

- How many faculty are there in postsecondary education institutions?
- How do we distinguish among faculty, other instructional personnel, administrators, and other staff in postsecondary institutions?
- Who teaches in postsecondary institutions?

This group has been developing terms and definitions that are more indicative of the way campuses view their faculty and staff. Their short-term goals are to develop better definitions for staff categories, create a definition of faculty that encompasses all individuals with that description, and clarify the administrative/managerial category. Long-term goals include considering collecting salary data on part-time faculty, examining the need to collect faculty counts by discipline, and exploring the notion of service months as a measure of faculty activity.

The fourth NPEC working group has focused on **Finances, Costs, and Financial Aid**. A primary charge to this group is a review of the IPEDS Finance form but any redesign of this form is on hold while other discussions about the GASB and FASB standards are taking place. The finance group has also been charged with developing the guidelines for the congress-

sionally mandated **Cost Study** and the separate **Study of Expenditures**. This requires developing standards for reporting costs, developing a data collection process for tuition, fees, and financial aid, and advising NCES on data issues surrounding expenditures. Standards development will include developing a uniform methodology for reporting costs and developing standard definitions for tuition, cost of attendance, and data related to financial assistance. These elements must be collected beginning in 2000-01; however, the group recommended using a new web-based collection procedure beginning in August 1999. The first web collection would be considered a pilot study and will take place this July and August. The web-based tools for this collection were demonstrated at the recent meetings.

The finance working group has also been discussing the national study of expenditures. The goal of this congressionally-mandated study is to evaluate the relationship between institutional expenditures and the price to a student of attending college. The intent is to review changes in expenditures over time and to look at the effect of financial aid and tuition discounting on tuition increases. This study will be conducted at 800 randomly chosen but representative institutions. The RFP for this study is currently in the evaluation stage.

Race and ethnicity. The other substantial change for IPEDS coordinators and data users and providers will be the new race and ethnicity standards developed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that allow individual respondents to choose one or more racial/ethnic categories (i.e., Hispanic or Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hawaiian Native or other Pacific Islander, White). Issues for IPEDS include determining the best way to aggregate data and developing reasonable expectations for when institutions will start collecting the new data and when the changes will be on the IPEDS forms. Two meetings, sponsored by NCES, NSF, and NPEC, have been held to review these issues and the following recommendations have emerged:

- Institutions should collect the data through one question;
- Institutions are encouraged to re-survey all continuing students/staff and collect data on new students/staff at the same time; and
- Institutions should carry the old as well as the new codes.

Other recommendations state that the categories should be consistent among all IPEDS surveys, that NCES should attempt to develop a bridge between the old and the new categories, and that institutions should not report some data under the old categories and other data under the new categories. The timing recommendations call for the draft data collection forms to be prepared by this fall and the final forms ready by

spring 2000. Institutions could begin using the new categories in fall 2000, with full implementation on the enrollment and staff form in 2002-03 and the completions and staff forms in 2003-04.

Web technology and new tools. At the heart of all these changes is the application of web technology for data collection. The goal is to improve the timeliness, usefulness and quality of the data collected by NCES. On-line edits will provide feedback on obvious errors and out-of-range or inconsistent data. There will also be areas to provide comments and explanations for what may appear to be unusual situations. Once respondents have completed the data entry and all edit checks have been resolved through correction or explanation, the institutional representative (key holder) electronically "locks" the data. If the school is "coordinated", an email message is automatically generated and informs a system or state coordinator that the data are ready for review. Once the coordinator is satisfied, they also "lock" the data and it is electronically submitted to NCES. The web-based collection will not affect the reporting status of the state coordinators.

The rapid electronic submission of the data, combined with on-line edits, means that some of the data will be available more quickly. NCES has developed a web page for each institution in IPEDS that will be updated with information collected this July and August. C.O.O.L. - College Opportunities on Line - is designed to provide quick and current consumer information about institutions and can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool>. NCES is also developing a peer analysis tool that will allow institutions to electronically access and analyze data provided by their peers.

Taken all together, the changes to IPEDS over the next few years will be substantial. NCES is instituting a series of training sessions and developing both a help desk and on-line tutorial help for the data providers. There will also be assistance for data users through electronic codebooks and user training. NCES' goal is to generate tools that are easy to access and friendly to use. This all requires congressional funding and these postsecondary data initiatives make up all of NCES' request for a budget increase for the next year.

IPEDS is currently an evolving system and decisions are still being made regarding its final configuration. A variety of web sites provide a good way to keep track of all the changes. Complete and current information on the IPEDS Redesign and the Cost Study can be found on the sites listed in the accompanying box.

Web Sites Related to the IPEDS Redesign

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/whatsnew.html>

NCES site with latest IPEDS updates; good general guide

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/ipedsrd.pdf>

Interim report of the NCES Taskforce for IPEDS Redesign; January 1999

<http://www.fsu.edu/~air/alert9.htm>

AIR Alert #9 describing IPEDS Redesign; good site from the Association for Institutional Research posted in October 1988

<http://www.fsu.edu/~air/Alert9u1.htm>

An update from AIR in December 1988

<http://www.fsu.edu/~air/Alert9u2.htm>

A second update from AIR in February 1999

<http://www.fsu.edu/~air/Alert9u3.htm>

Third update from AIR in April 1999

<http://www.fsu.edu/~air/Alert9u4.htm>

Fourth update from AIR in June 1999

<http://www.fsu.edu/~air/Alert9u5.htm>

Fifth update from AIR in June 1999 (revised July 1, 1999)

<http://www.fsu.edu/~air/Alert9u6.htm>

Sixth update from AIR in July 1999

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/augdraft.htm>

August pilot cost study collection instrument; February 1999 update

<http://www.fsu.edu/~air/ipedsrev/student3.htm>

Web site with questions related to IPEDS Students; opportunity to provide feedback

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/newicitems.html>

Proposed data changes on the IC Survey

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/finalracerec.pdf>

Recommendations from the Policy Panel on Racial/Ethnic Data Collection; February 1999

<http://www.fsu.edu/~air/ipedtabl.htm>

Proposed Processing Cycle for 1999-2000; currently under review

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/>

Link to COOL - College Opportunities On Line

<http://nces.ed.gov/newsflash/index.asp>

Link to subscribe to the NCES News Flash service; source of early announcements from NCES

Student Transition Data Systems

Many challenging questions about student transitions are being asked today. Why do students leave college, and where do they go after leaving? How large is the flow of students from public to private institutions, and vice versa? Are students finding employment after completing their programs of study? Are they earning more than they would have without the degree or certificate? How do college graduates rate their institutions in preparing them for a job or for pursuing advanced degrees? How do employers rate the workforce skills of recent college graduates?

The need for answers to these kinds of questions is motivating the development of more complex and comprehensive postsecondary data systems. At the 1999 Network Conference, three related sessions were developed to examine different approaches being taken at the state level to the study of student transitions.

Using survey data to address student transitions. In response to legislative concerns about the quality of education in North Carolina, the University of North Carolina General Administration (UNC-GA) has begun to produce monthly reports addressing student transition issues including access; incidence and effectiveness of remedial instruction; student skill gains and aspirations; alumni employment; retention, graduation, and time-to-degree; and pass rates on licensure exams. These reports, begun in October 1998, build on a long tradition of assessment activities in the state that utilize statewide student surveys in conjunction with a unit record database to permit in-depth analysis of issues.

Assessment activities at the UNC-GA include:

- Alumni Survey (1974, 1979, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, 1998)
- Retention, graduation, and persistence rates (since 1977)
- Remedial education enrollments and expenditures (since 1984-85)
- Transfer student performance report (since 1969; major revisions in 1982, 1992, and 1998)
- High school feedback reports (since 1992-93)
- Teaching workload report (since 1996-97)
- Performance/Program Budgeting (since 1997-98)
- Biennial surveys (since 1997)
- Second-semester sophomores
- Graduating seniors
- Alumni (redesign of old survey)
- Employer satisfaction (new in summer of 1999)
- Monthly reports on key topics (since October 1998)

In addition to activity conducted by the UNC-GA, other materials used by them include a survey of High School Graduate Intentions, conducted by the Department of Public Instruction since 1972, and a UNC Freshman Survey conducted by institutions at freshman orientation.

Gary Barnes, Vice President for Program Assessment and Public Service, University of North Carolina General Administration, noted some of the strengths of the current survey strategy. First, the surveys are designed to be short, to address specific topic areas, and to be conducted in a timely manner. That is, instead of using one survey to ask about all aspects of postsecondary education, three surveys now cover topics once addressed by alumni: second-semester sophomores are asked to evaluate the general education experience, seniors report on experiences in the major, and alumni evaluate employment and postgraduate schooling and satisfaction. This approach encourages higher completion rates and more accurate information. Second, the alumni survey is used to generate a sample of employers to be surveyed about workforce issues. This addresses the problem of how to develop an appropriate employer sample that will produce high response rates for a relatively low cost. Third, some key survey items such as family income and educational attainment of parents are merged with unit record data. This produces a powerful analytic device for examining many transition issues. Finally, the regular, ongoing nature of these surveys is designed to encourage over-time analysis of issues and trends. For example, the High School Graduate Intentions Survey, conducted since 1972, has been used to document a striking increase in college intentions of high school graduates over past decades.

While surveys have been useful thus far as part of the overall assessment process, they could prove to be even more powerful instruments for change in the future. Barnes would begin by thinking about student surveys in a new way, more as mandatory student "evaluations" of college experiences, and less as "surveys" to be completed at the students' discretion. In this sense, an evaluation connotes the obligation of the student to provide the information needed to improve the educational enterprise. In addition, Barnes feels these instruments can be more fully exploited as powerful sources of information for the public. For example, when 88 percent of graduates overall said college prepared them well for the job, this type of information might be a major marketing tool for the University System.

Using unemployment insurance and job record data to track community college outcomes. Representing another effort in the same state, the purposes of North Carolina's Common Follow-up System (CFS) include the tracking of employment and earnings of community college students and the determination of the number of individuals receiving services

from multiple agencies. Initiated in 1992 by the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) as a voluntary system, a 1995 legislative action mandated that all agencies in the state that provide training must submit data to the Employment Security Commission (ESC) for matching and analysis. Participating agencies include:

- Department of Labor
- Division of Employment and Training
- North Carolina Community College System
- University of North Carolina General Administration
- Department of Public Instruction
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Department of Social Services
- Employment Security Commission (ESC)
- Department of Corrections

Records from these agencies plus the following are matched by social security number:

- ESC wage records
- ESC job registrations
- ESC Unemployment Insurance files
- U.S. Department of Defense
- U.S. Postal Service
- U.S. Office of Personnel Management
- North Carolina Office of State Personnel

For 1995-96, over half a million community college records were matched to one or more other files with an 83 percent match rate. Unlike other states in which aggregate data is returned to participating agencies, North Carolina's CFS returns unit record data to participants on all matches with other agencies; this includes quarterly wage data, employer, and SIC code.

J. Keith Brown, Associate Vice President for Planning and Research, North Carolina Community College System noted a number of strengths of the Common Follow-up System:

- uses objective data (not self-reported)
- not dependent on response rate
- interagency matching
- cost-effective
- allows for longitudinal analysis (13 years)
- includes employer information (name and address) which can be used to determine samples for employer surveys.

However, weaknesses of the system include:

- does not capture everyone, particularly persons who moved out-of-state following completion of education
- does not distinguish between part-time/full-time employment
- cannot determine field of employment
- provides multiple records on individuals if they have multiple matches, e.g., more than one job; this makes it difficult to analyze.

On balance thus far, CFS seems best able to meet its goals for the Community College System, and less suited to serving the needs of the University System. It is a system still evolving, however, and its future potential for assessing the transition from college to work remains to be seen.

Linking public and private postsecondary databases.

Even as many states are establishing data linkages across diverse public agencies, one data sharing barrier that has remained largely in place is the boundary between public and private sector databases. The third conference session on student transitions provided one exception to the general rule, discussing a collaborative data sharing initiative for and by public and private colleges in Indiana.

Several factors have made possible the Independent College of Indiana's (ICI) Data Exchange project, according to **Greg Fawcett**, Independent Colleges of Indiana, and **Jeff Weber**, Indiana Commission for Higher Education. First, there is an active independent college association in the state and a long history of cooperation between the two sectors. As far back as 1980-81, some independent colleges in the state voluntarily participated in the Commission's database, and the number has grown over the years. Second, a \$2 million, four-year grant to ICI from the Lilly Endowment has facilitated data system development, though this does not seem to be a necessary condition. Third and perhaps most important, argues Fawcett, is the fact that this effort is perceived as "an operation among and between colleges, not state agencies." In effect, campuses sign releases allowing ICI, the project host, to act on their behalf, and control remains with the college presidents. ICI serves as custodian of the data, and data matching by social security number occurs under ICI's direction. After matching takes place, fictitious identifying numbers are assigned to each record, and although data are returned to the Commission, they are not identifiable by SSN. In essence, the state has "direct but controlled access" to the data. In return for participation, colleges receive many benefits, including analytic support and services, and web access to data.

Beyond the development of the ICI Retention Database, an Action Research Program is in place with six statewide projects to be accomplished from 1999 to 2002. The first project on student transfer is now well underway, designed to answer the central question: *what is the extent of student transfer among and between public and independent colleges and universities in Indiana?* This project also examines historic patterns of transfer, characteristics of students who transfer, and which students who transfer eventually complete their degrees in Indiana. Future projects include:

- Role of financial aid packaging in retention
- College persistence patterns by K-12 district

- Needs, goals, gains of students by K-12 district
- Characteristics of four-year college graduates
- ACT, CSEQ, SIS factors relevant to graduation

In their collaborative efforts, Fawcett and Weber have put into place a data exchange system that might be of interest to colleagues in other states who are still battling the barriers between sectors. The value of this system to both independent and public sector institutions should grow as these research projects are developed, and perhaps other states may follow the lead of Indiana.

Concluding thoughts. Each of these sessions illustrated an innovative approach to the study of student transitions, putting forth models of complex data systems that are crossing previously unexplored boundaries. These systems have already demonstrated the ability to produce crucial data needed to answer increasingly demanding questions, while at the same time reducing the institutional data collection burden and keeping costs down. However, each system also has its limitations, and none to date offers a definitive approach to the study of all student transitions. We will continue to monitor activity as more states develop these more comprehensive data systems and to document new data system innovations in the future.

For more information, contact Gary Barnes at barnes@ga.unc.edu, J. Keith Brown at brownk@ncccs.cc.nc.us, Greg Fawcett at gawcett@dialin.ind, or Jeff Weber at jeffw@che.state.in.us.

Also, SHEEO has recently completed a report "The Status of Statewide Student Transition Data Systems: A Survey of the States." The executive summary is available on the SHEEO web site and the full report is available from SHEEO for \$10.

The Role of IPEDS in America's Learning eXchange

Lifelong learning...anyone, anywhere, anytime. As the workplace increasingly demands higher skills, America's Learning eXchange (ALX) is a new web-based system designed to connect people to the training and education they need. Its goal is to be a one-stop electronic marketplace for classroom instruction, distance learning, computer-based training, web-based courses, degree and certificate programs, and workshops and seminars. It is designed to organize the training market, provide better access to information, expand learning opportunities, and lower the costs of training. In this regard, it offers services for learners, employers, providers, and software developers.

The challenge in building ALX, however, has been how to "populate the database"—where to find the relevant information on education and training activities and how to keep it current. A starting point has been to extract two kinds of skeletal information from IPEDS surveys: provider information from the Institutional Characteristics Survey, and program information from the Completions Survey. A subsequent activity has been the building of partnerships with other organizations in order to get providers to correct and update this information. Since community colleges comprise the largest piece in the database, ALX developers have worked through the American Association of Community Colleges in particular to contact colleges to review information on their offerings—to give colleges "ownership" for the information provided through ALX.

At this conference session, **Mark Schaff**, Ohio State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee and **Harvey Ollis** and **Barbara Derwart** of the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee described the current status of ALX and invited audience reaction. One purpose in presenting this session was to seek further help from the higher education community for building the database and spreading the word about ALX. Conference participants offered a number of suggestions, including linking up with SHEEO agencies, electronic community college course catalogs, the Council on Higher Education Accreditation, and proprietary school associations.

For more information, visit the ALX website at <http://www.alx.org> or write to info@alx.org.

America's Learning eXchange Strategic Partners

ACT, Inc.
 American Association of Community Colleges
 American Society for Training and Development
 The Career College Association
 Community Learning and Information Network
 The Council for Excellence in Government
 DoD's Advanced Distributed Learning Initiative
 Instructional Management System
 Joint Employment and Training Technology Conference
 National Guard Bureau Distributive Training Technology Program
 The National Institute for Literacy
 The National Partnership for Reinventing Government
 The National Skills Standards Board
 PBS Adult Learning Service
 The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Business Partners

Seminar Finder
 Seminar Information Service, Inc.
 TSCentral

Other Conference Sessions

"The Rest of the River:" A Portrait from the National Data.

This session featured **Clifford Adelman**, Senior Research Analyst from the U.S. Department of Education, speaking in response to Bowen and Bok's book *The Shape of the River* which addressed minority student success in elite institutions. Adelman discussed how the national data available from IPEDS present a very different picture of minority achievement in mainstream postsecondary education. His studies show that the majority of students start out in non-selective institutions. He also presented a preview of his new work, *Answers in the Tool Box*. This study looks at what contributes most to long-term bachelor's degree completion. His conclusions include a recommendation to follow a student and not the institution when determining completion rates; it doesn't matter how many institutions a student attends. *For more information, contact Clifford Adelman at clifford_adelman@ed.gov.*

Evaluating Distance Learning. In this session, **Rick Voorhees**, Associate Vice President, Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System, explored the status of current research on distance education and outlined policy implications at the national, state, and institutional levels. *For more information, contact Rick Voorhees at rick.voorhees@cccs.cccoes.edu.*

The Status of Academic Women in the 1990s: No Longer Outsiders, but Not Yet Equals. **Robert K. Toutkoushian**, Executive Director, Office of Policy Analysis, University System of New Hampshire, explored the following questions: Do men and women have equal access to faculty employment in higher education? Are men and women equally successful with regard to time allocation, research productivity, rank attainment, and compensation? Using data from IPEDS surveys and from the National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF-93), he identified gains made by women in terms of access to higher education, but noted that once in academia, there are considerable differences between men and women in how they allocate time and the amount of research output. After accounting for traditional factors, an earnings and rank gap still persist. *For more information, contact Rob Toutkoushian at r_toutkoush@usnh.unh.edu.*

The Alabama Experience: Using IPEDS Completions Data for Program Viability. This presentation by **Kitty Collier**, from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, presented an overview of her state's use of IPEDS data to address legislative requirements. State law now requires the Commission to report on degree productivity and specifically states that IPEDS completion data will be used as the data source. Programs that do not meet a viability standard will be

phased out over time. This action makes IPEDS a critical piece of the Alabama's postsecondary education environment and presents a number of challenges especially since the state will potentially be making termination decisions using data definitions that are not under their control. Campus liaison groups were developed to encourage communication and formal definitions and crosswalks were developed. Collier presented several "lessons learned" including the value of communication and the importance of data accuracy. *Contact Kitty Collier at kcollier@mail.state.al.us for more information.*

The National Postsecondary Cooperative. A brief history of the National Postsecondary Cooperative (NPEC), along with recap of current activities and products, was presented by **Hans L'Orange**, Director of the SHEEO/NCES Communication Network. This cooperative and voluntary organization has as its motto "Better Decisions through Better Data," and numerous working groups meet to address postsecondary education data issues and develop related products. The written and video products fall into four categories: Student Outcomes, Access to Postsecondary Education, Data Infrastructure and Relationships, and The IPEDS Review. *More information on NPEC including products can be found at the web site <http://nces.ed.gov/npec> or by contacting Project Director Nancy Borkow Schantz at Nancy_Borkow@ed.gov.*

An Update on HEA Title II State and Institutional Teacher Preparation Report Cards. Under Title II of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act, all states with teacher preparation programs are required to present an annual "report card" on the quality of their teacher preparation programs which will contain a state level profile as well as institutional indicators such as licensure pass rates. As explained by **David Boesel**, U.S. Department of Education, NCES was assigned responsibility for developing the definitions and reporting methods that will be used for this reporting. In this session, Boesel described NCES activity to date and answered many audience questions about the specifics of the required reporting. *For more information including the text of the legislation and draft definitions, visit the NCES web site at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/teacherprep/index.htm> or contact David Boesel at david_boesel@ed.gov.*