

Illinois
Mike Baumgartner

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
In 1983.
2. By whom?
Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the public universities and the Illinois Community College Board.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Monitor student progress, retention, transfer and degree completion.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All four year public institutions (4 year and 2 year) and 2 private institutions
2. Are any independent institutions included (number or percentage)? What about proprietary institutions? Are different kinds of data or different schedules for data collection used for any of these institutions?
We currently have 2 private not-for-profit institutions participating – they report the same data and on the same schedule. We do not have any proprietary institutions.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
Yes, we would like to have more private for-profits and private not-for-profits participate in the system.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Data are collected once a year and include data from all semesters of the previous fiscal year.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
No.
6. Is non-credit enrollment or instructional activity covered (e.g. ABE, ESL, GED, other job-related continuing education activity, etc.)? If so, is this in a separate database and what data elements are captured?
No, we do not collect transcript level data.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
We do this by committee – specifically the steering committee (which includes representation from all public schools and members of the board). We must have consensus to change/add/delete data elements and definitions.
2. Are SSNs used as a key link? If they are not, what is used instead? Are there immediate or long-range plans to discontinue use of the SSN as a key link?
Yes, although we will probably be moving away from using the SSN in the next few years.
3. Can campuses access datasets (unit records) themselves -- access in what terms (results, unit record data after it has been cleaned, unit-record data value added). If yes, who has access and how is this managed?
No. Although, campuses can and do receive data on their own students, which can include tracking previously enrolled students.
4. How do you handle privacy and FERPA issues? Do you have an explicit privacy policy and/or policies governing the use of SUR data by third parties such as institutions and researchers?
We limit access to the data (and all reports and data uses must be approved by the steering committee). I don't think we have an explicit privacy policy, as data is kept very secure and any use has to be approved.
5. Have any FERPA or privacy issues come up recently in your state? If so, how have they affected your ability to use student record information?
No.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
Not yet, we are talking about this with the high schools.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
No.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
We do not generate statistics and reports regularly for any institution nor for statewide purposes – all reports are ad hoc.
2. If graduation and retention statistics are generated for institutions (or for the state or system as a whole), how are they calculated (e.g. IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey method, other methods)?
No, we do not generate graduation and retention statistics other than IPEDS reports. We do use IPEDS graduation rate survey method.

3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
We do projection projects (for example, nursing) and a project with ACT. We typically work on 3-4 projects per year.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
The data we collect is very limited in scope. We would like to collect data from more privates, although this would raise some issues in terms of personnel and resources.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
Adding additional data elements is under consideration and linking with the High School data is also being talked about (but this might be hard, given that the high schools use an educational number and not the SSN).
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.