

**Mississippi  
Jim Hood**

**History**

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?  
Initial establishment varies by file. Most files go back to early 1990s.
2. By whom?  
The governing board initiated and developed the SUR databases in conjunction with institutions within the system.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?  
The SUR system was initially and primarily developed to provide comparable information for resource (funding) allocation. It has also been used for numerous other purposes and projects designed to assist the governing Board and its staff in their decision-making processes.

**Coverage**

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?  
All public four-year universities in Mississippi. They include the following: Alcorn State University, Delta State University, Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, Mississippi University for Women, Mississippi Valley State University, University of Mississippi, University of Mississippi Medical Center, and University of Southern Mississippi.
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?  
Our SUR only includes the public institutions mentioned above, and they are on the same reporting schedule.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.  
No, there are no plans to expand our coverage in terms of institutions.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?  
Files like the student and course are collected by term. Other files like the degree and scholarship are collected by academic year and fiscal year.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?  
No, not at this time.

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 non-credit enrollment.

## Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?  
The governing Board has sole authority to make changes to data elements and definitions. This is almost always done in conjunction with the institutions.
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?  
We do use SSNs as the key link.
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, campuses cannot directly access system data.
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 almost always release aggregated data. In cases where we are asked for unit record data we remove the SSN or replace it with a random unique identifier.
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, but we are mindful of FERPA and privacy issues.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?  
No, not at this time. Preliminary plans are underway to link to high school graduation data and employment data from the state employment office.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.  
No, not at this time.

## Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?  
Standard statistical publications and information available at the following address:  
<http://www.ihl.state.ms.us/research/default.asp>

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)?  
We use IPEDS retention and graduation data when possible.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?  
No projects have recently been undertaken.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?  
We struggle with getting clean and consistent data from the institutions within our system and balancing institutional autonomy with system consistency.

## Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR since 2002?  
We are currently in the process of overhauling our data elements and data definitions. This process should be complete by fall 2006.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?  
No response.