

**New York (CUNY)**  
**David Crook**

**History**

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?  
The original proposal for the project was written in May 1990. Development began in April 1999, but it was not until January 2002 that the database really started being used.
2. By whom?  
The Dean of the Office of Institutional Research.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?  
While the general purpose of the database has always been to develop a system that would facilitate the tracking of students both prospectively and retrospectively across campuses within the university, the narrow focus of the project over the past three years has been to enhance the ability of the campuses to identify special populations as defined by VTEA reporting requirements.

**Coverage**

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?  
All CUNY 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?  
None.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.  
As CUNY adds additional schools their data will be incorporated.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?  
Registration data on semester census date 20% into term; grade file at end of term; graduation data 3 times per year. Staff & teaching load data on semester census cycle. Skills assessment data on semester schedule.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?  
None.
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?  
Non-credit enrollment is not covered.

## Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?  
[Office of Institutional Research.](#)
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?  
[SSNs are used. No plans at this time to discontinue the use of the SSN.](#)
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?  
[IR directors and their designees have password-protected access to unit record data for current and former students. They may also access computed fields and numerous canned queries and reports, as well as summarized 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 very rarely release data with identifiers.](#)
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?  
[New York has not been able to facilitate a match of student data with Dept of Labor records, compromising our ability to do employment tracking for VTEA purposes. But this is a longstanding problem—not recent.](#)
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?  
[We do regularly link high school records for students in CUNY's collaborative programs in order to track student progress. For a research project, a third party linked SUR data with NYS employment records for teachers and with NYC Dept of Ed records in order to track pathways into teaching.](#)
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?  
[Please see our web site for a complete list: \[www.oira.cuny.edu\]\(http://www.oira.cuny.edu\)](#)  
[We produce an array of reports that are available in a secure part of the site. Virtually all of the analytical work of the office is done from the Oracle database in which the data reside.](#)

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 produce rates both as specified in IPEDS and system rates, in which students who move to another institution in the system are counted as still enrolled/graduated from the institution at which they first enrolled.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?  
The most notable are the following:
  - a. A study of the determinants of performance in mathematics courses at all undergraduate colleges at CUNY.
  - b. A report on performance in reading and writing developmental course sequences at all 11 institutions that offers non-credit developmental courses in these areas.
  - c. We completed the most recent NPSAS transcripts almost entirely from our data repository.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?  
Not enough staff to add new types of data and new reports quickly.

## Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?  
We have integrated Crystal Reports—enterprise version—to add drill down capabilities.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?  
The CUNY system will begin implementing ERP software starting fall 2007.