

**North Carolina (Community College System)
Keith Brown**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
In 1980. Prior to that, community colleges were part of the K-12 system and were under that system's data-gathering process.
2. By whom?
The General Assembly.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Funding, central record keeping for the system.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All 58, two-year public community colleges in North Carolina.
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?
No.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
No.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
All student data and course data are collected on a semester basis, after the end of the semester. Staff data are collected annually in November. For specific times of collection, please see our Annual Reporting Plan at:

<http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/Reports/docs/AnnualReportingPlan/rptplan05.pdf>
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 included?
Yes, the data are available and in a separate collection system.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
That is a System Office function; an Information Needs Committee chaired by the Vice President for Administration reviews and approves requests for changes.
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?
SSN's are the key link and there are no plans to change this.
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?
Campuses can access the unit record data for their own colleges where privacy is an issue (student and staff records); they can access all course records since no student identifiable data are included in those files. The files are unit record data once they have been loaded into our data warehouse. Campuses also have access to over 130 "canned reports" that are run from the SUR data, but return aggregate results only.

To have access to unit record data, a person must first be approved by the college's president to have such access, must attend a two day training session at the System Office to learn the software used in the data warehouse; must understand the privacy and FERPA issues and sign a statement indicating they have been instructed on privacy and FERPA policies and will abide by them. The individual is then issued a userid and password for access.
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 have such a policy. Please see our web site at:

<http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/Training/docs/DataWarehouseTraining/DataWarehouseSecurityAgreementv1.0.PDF>
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?
As described previously, we submit SUR to the Employment Security Commission to be matched against the UI files. We receive back from ESC the unit record data along with employer, wage and unemployment benefit information on our students.

7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.

Work is ongoing with the UNC system on this issue. They do receive our SUR files, but we have not yet been able to receive the same from them.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
Please see the following:

http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/Statistical_Reports/index.html

In addition, there are over 130 reports in our data warehouse, a listing of those reports can be found in the Appendix of the data warehouse user manual at:

<http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/Training/docs/DataWarehouseTraining/UniverseDocument.pdf>

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)?

In addition to GRS, we calculate the fall to fall graduation/retention rate for all degree seeking students.

3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?

Ongoing projects:

- o Earnings gains of basic skills students who complete the GED or Adult High School Diploma.
- o Percent of students who transition from basic skills to a curriculum program
- o Beginning AtD project on percent of students who take developmental and earn 12 credit hours of college level work and who also go on to complete or transfer, compared with those students not taking developmental work.

4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?

Staff resources and time are the biggest obstacles.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?

None

2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?

No.