

**South Carolina
Camille T. Brown**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
Full implementation in the fall of 1993.
2. By whom?
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
In the beginning, the data were used for the funding formula and IPEDS. As the years have gone by, performance funding, scholarship information and retention/graduation have all used the data that we have collected.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
33 Public Institutions.
26 Independent Institutions (one of which is headquartered out of state and licensed to operate in South Carolina. This institution operated in South Carolina as Columbia Junior College prior to being purchased by South University.)
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?
Enrollment data is collected from the public institutions every term. For the independent institutions, it is only collected in the fall. Public institutions report facilities, course, and faculty data that the independent institutions do not.
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?
Enrollment data is collected as of the reporting institution's matriculation date.
Completions data is reported annually but includes data for each term.
Scholarship data is collected each term from all institutions eligible for the appropriate scholarships. This data matches the time frame for enrollment and allows scholarships that were missed from the previous semester to be included along with any adjustments.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
Not at the present.

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.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
The MIS manager in conjunction with institutional representatives.
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, the SSN is used as a key link. There are no immediate plans to discontinue their use. The SSN is converted to a random identifier, and it is this identifier that is used throughout the database at the Commission on Higher Education.
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, not at this time.
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?
FERPA issues and requests are handled on a case by case basis. They are examined to see if they fall within the FERPA guidelines as deemed by conferring with the Director of Finance, Facilities, & MIS and the MIS Manager.

The requestor gives the reason for the request, and agrees to the following:

- I understand that information concerning any individual student is to be held in strictest confidence and I guarantee that procedures are in place for monitoring and protecting confidentiality of student information.
- I understand that any unauthorized disclosure of confidential student information is illegal as provided in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and in the implementing federal regulations found in 34 CFR Part 99.
- I affirm that the data provided by CHE in response to the request are to remain confidential and are to be used exclusively for purposes stated above and will then be destroyed.
- I affirm that information which can be used to identify individual students will not be included in any published reports resulting from the use of these data.

The requestor then signs and dates the request.

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?
We have linked our data base with teacher loan program recipients and statewide teachers and staff. The match was done in our office, and only summary data was produced.

Our scholarship data for a specific time frame has been cross-matched with data on children in low-income families. Another state agency did the match and signed an agreement with regards to FERPA and the use of the data.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
We share back with the institutions of higher education data regarding their cohort of students for the IPEDS graduation rate survey as to whether we've found the graduated within 150%, graduated from another 4 or 2 year institution in the state, whether the student has transferred to another institution in the state, and whether the student was retained. We do not give the individual schools but simply an indicator in the column.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
The standard reports that we create can be found at:
http://www.che.sc.gov/New_Web/Rep&Pubs/DataRepts.htm

Data on the scholarship programs can be found at:
http://www.che.sc.gov/New_Web/Rep&Pubs/Schol_Stats.htm

Data produced for Performance Funding can be found at
http://www.che.sc.gov/New_Web/Rep&Pubs/PFCHEMISData.htm

In addition there is an online application to find out what programs are being offered by institutions at the following web address:
<http://connect.che.sc.gov/AS400/Inven/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)?
IPEDS Graduation Rates and retention data are generated using the methods described by the GRS.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
None.

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

The biggest challenge we have faced is the lack of personnel for programming. Without the time and staff, we are very judicious about the projects that we undertake. The lack of staff leads to lack of staff resources for analysis.

Overview

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

We are now using the web (a secure web site) for data submissions by the institutions. At present this includes the publics and a few independent institutions that had previously submitted their data as “.txt” files. We are working on including the remainder of the data which is submitted in excel format and hope to have this portion operational by fall.

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

No.