

**Virginia
Tod Massa**

History

1. When did you establish the SUR system?
1992 (this was when data collection first began).
2. By whom?
It was started by State Council for Higher Education in Virginia.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Originally the SUR was developed for funding formulae under "Appendix M", IPEDS, and student tracking. It is now being used much more to understand student behavior and success.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All publics and most non-profit, private.
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?
Yes, see above. We are working with the proprietary institutions and they should be part of the system as early as next year. The proprietary institutions want to join because we link tuition assistance grants (and other state financial aid) to reporting data.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
Just adding all the proprietary institutions.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
See our web site for complete list – it varies on the data collecting (some annual, some end of term and some census).
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, but we are starting to talk about doing this – right now we don't really collect transcript level data – but this too is in the works and is connected to collecting non-credit enrollment.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV).
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, SSNs are the key link and we have no plans 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?
No, we do it for them. However, we are working on incorporating an online secure system that would allow campuses limited access to data. We would have certain data sets available and templates for reports -- it would be part of their tool set that we provide.
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 take a liberal interpretation of FERPA – we have due diligence: security, privacy policy, firewall, confidentiality, etc.
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?
Yes, there is currently a State Bill in the works that is trying to get higher education institutions to hand over all SSN and addresses of all their applicants for a yearly review against known pedophiles in the state (applicants do not have FERPA rights). This is a big headache – it is being launched by the Director of Crime Division (statewide) and is in response to the 5 rapes of college campus women on one of our campuses this year alone.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
Yes, we link with UI wage (quarterly) and we are working with the State Taxation Department to link with their database (to track defaulters on student loans).

We currently do not link with High Schools, although this may change. High Schools students in Virginia may be assigned a student testing ID number in the next few years– if this happens there is talk that we would have access to this ID number and the student SSN and our office would do the cross-walk so that we could track students.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
We talked about doing this years ago – nothing came of it.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data? How can we access or obtain copies (e.g. URLs, etc.)?
See our web site for a complete list. All sorts of reports are generated using SUR data – enrollment, projections, financial aid, and performance.
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)?
Yes. We do use the IPEDS Method. We also generate statewide and regional statistics for graduation and retention.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
See our web site. We did work just recently on a report, “potential need for another institution in the state of Virginia.” We also worked on the history and benchmarks for the new institutional standards and an affordability report.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Staff resources and priorities – we want to do a lot, but it takes a lot of time to maintain the system and my staff does a lot of handholding for institutions. We need data in a timely fashion.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
Yes, we are building a new companion data warehouse for teacher education (and eventually other high need programs, such as nursing). This system will drill down into the data more fully – by identifying students in undergraduate programs across the state who are interested in the teaching profession. We will track students through their undergraduate experience, the graduate experience, and their work experience (through UI wage and survey). Our hope is to determine how many folks we have in the pipeline, but also to determine over time why students leave the profession and eventually why teachers leave teaching. The idea is to collect certain data, but also have an annual or bi-annual survey that will capture more data (or at least students/teachers intent).
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.