

Tracking Student Progression: The State of the States

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In April 2003, the Lumina Foundation published a comprehensive inventory of state-level Student Unit Record (SUR) capacity prepared by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (Ewell, Schild and Paulson 2003). The primary intent of this effort was to examine the feasibility of linking student data drawn from multiple states to track students on a national basis. Since that time, interest in SUR databases has evolved considerably. On the one hand, the need for states to develop capable K-12 databases to meet the reporting requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has stimulated vigorous efforts to design and implement new systems, as well as a national Data Quality Campaign (DQC) to promote best practice in this arena.¹ One of the “ten essential elements” for state K-12 longitudinal data systems cited by the DQC is the ability to link individual student records from secondary schools to higher education systems and the most straightforward route to doing so, for the states that possess them, is to match records with already-established postsecondary SURs. At the same time, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) determined that it was feasible to develop a national student unit record system and recommendations to do so featured prominently among the recommendations of both the National Commission on Accountability (SHEEO 2005) and the National Commission on the Future of Higher Education (USDOE 2006). Eventually establishing such a database, of course, speaks directly to the need to track students on a national basis and would provide state SURs—which are frequently far richer in data content than the proposed federal system—with a mechanism for following students beyond their own borders.²

Meanwhile, the need for solid longitudinal information about student progression and how to improve it has only grown in importance for state policy. The compelling metaphor of increasing flow through the “educational pipeline” is now common in state policy discussions, fueled by more vocal recognition by business and civic leaders of the importance of the critical “supply chain” of educational capital in their states (e.g. Miller and Ewell 2004). And the task is more formidable than ever as the U.S. has fallen behind other nations in the proportion of young adults with a postsecondary credential and continues to show significant gaps in attainment between majority students and students of color.

These changes in context, together with the rapidly developing sophistication of state SUR resources in higher education, suggest the need to re-examine “the state of the states” in this important area. This report presents the results of a new fifty-state inventory of state SUR capacity undertaken by NCHEMS with further Lumina support. In addition to the topics of data element coverage and analytical capability addressed by the 2002 survey, the current inventory examines more closely how states are linking SUR data with other data sources and how they are

¹ NCHEMS is a Founding Partner of the Data Quality Campaign (see www.dataqualitycampaign.org).

² This is a function that some states discharge partially through the National Student Clearinghouse.

using the resulting information. It also examines some of the cross-cutting issues that states are facing in this arena and how they are addressing them. Results are presented in six sections. The first section describes the methodology used by NCHEMS to conduct the 50-state survey and analyze its results. The second presents results on the overall status of state and system-level SURs on a number of dimensions, including the proportion of states that have such databases and their overall capabilities. The third takes these findings to a finer level of detail by examining the specific data elements contained in these systems and the extent of definitional commonality across systems. It also examines the capacity of states to generate a “common core” of data elements suitable for consistent tracking. The fourth section examines the most common applications of state SUR data through regular reporting. The fifth section presents cross-cutting challenges and issues, while the report’s final section provides some recommendations for moving forward.

Methodology

The basic approach used to conduct the 2006 inventory was broadly similar to the method NCHEMS used to conduct the earlier effort in 2002. Staff first identified and updated the contacts used for each state in the earlier study and sent them an initial letter describing the project and the type of information sought.³ We then asked each contact by telephone or email to provide extensive written documentation about their state’s SUR database including (if available) overall descriptions of the system, institutional reporting instructions and/or formats, data element definitions and dictionaries, applicable data structures and record layouts, and examples of the kinds of reports generated by the system. NCHEMS staff then reviewed this primary source material to develop initial answers to questions contained in a standard protocol.⁴ Gaps in topical coverage were addressed through follow-up phone or e-mail interviews with the original state informants—a process that frequently went through several rounds.

As in the 2002 project, we used this approach rather than the more common method of simply sending a survey to state contacts because we believed that direct examination of primary source documentation would reveal more about actual state database capabilities. Using this method, we successfully contacted all fifty states and obtained usable documentation for 47 databases in 40 states. At the conclusion of the data collection process, we summarized results in the form of a write-up for each database and sent respondents drafts of these write-ups for final verification.⁵

Survey results were compiled and tabulated in Excel. In addition, as in the 2002 survey, we used a standard data element template based on the NCHEMS’ extensive past work with states and institutions in the development of longitudinal data systems (Ewell, Parker, and Jones 1988). For each data element on this list, the template addressed such matters as coding structures and source of definitions. The resulting set of Excel spreadsheets were used to conduct a series of descriptive analyses addressing such topics as the number and percentage of states currently maintaining SUR databases with particular capacities, and the proportion of states maintaining different combinations of “common core” data elements.

³ See Appendix A for a copy of the initial contact letter.

⁴ See Appendix B for a copy of the email/interview protocol.

⁵ Appendix C contains all 47 individual database summaries.

Overall Status of State SUR Data Systems

Forty of the fifty states have operational SUR databases covering public institutions in their states (see Table 1). This represents a gain of one state (Kansas) since the 2002 survey and a gain of seven since 1999 (Russell 1999). The ten states not covered by SUR databases are, for the most part, fairly small. Among them, only Pennsylvania and Michigan have substantial numbers of higher education institutions and enrollments. As a result, the actual coverage of these databases is greater than it appears with respect to enrollments, though not for institutions. 81% of the nation's total headcount enrollment and 77% of its FTE enrollment is collectively covered by current state SURs.

These databases share a number of important characteristics:

- **Multiple Databases.** Seven of the forty states that maintain SURs do so through more than one database. These states contain several independently governed public higher education systems, each of which maintains its own student information for planning and reporting. One state (California), maintains three SUR systems governed by the three sectors of higher education in that state.⁶ Others maintain separate SUR systems for the two-year and four-year public sectors (North Carolina, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming), and one (New York) maintains two databases corresponding to the two public systems of higher education (CUNY and SUNY). In most cases, states with multiple databases have established mechanisms to share unit record data with one another. But in some cases, community college systems are only supplied with aggregate reports by the state's four-year sector.
- **Institutional Coverage.** Most SUR databases contain information only on public institutions within the state. Although all public enrollments are covered by the SUR databases of the forty states that maintain them, a total of 17 states now contain at least some information drawn from independent institutions—a gain of five states since 2002. Four of these (Florida, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas) contain data on all independent non-profit institutions in the state, with three additional states (Colorado, Minnesota and Virginia) about to join them with full independent participation. Most of the remaining states with independent college participation contain records on most independent institutions (Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, and Ohio). Two others (Illinois and North Carolina) contain information on only a handful of independent institutions. Six states include at least some proprietary institutions.

Respondents in nine states report that they plan to increase the institutional coverage of their SUR databases. While the primary vehicle for non-public participation in state SURs remains participation in lucrative state scholarship programs, there is growing interest on the part of the independent college sector in accessing and analyzing data that can show the sector's contribution to the state. Proprietary institutions remain largely unaddressed in extant state SURs, although one state (Virginia) plans to include all

⁶ Negotiations are currently under way in California to create a single SUR database using records drawn from the three system-level databases.

proprietary institutions in its upcoming data cycle and another (Florida) has greatly expanded proprietary participation. But the fact that independent and proprietary institutions are in many cases included in SUR data collection does not mean that the full range of data is available for all students. Several states include only those students enrolled at private colleges who participate in state scholarship programs, while others only collect data for independent attendees who are state residents. Similarly, most states collect fewer data elements for students attending private institutions and do so less frequently. For example, many states only collect fall term enrollment information and degrees granted for independent institutions. Nevertheless, the trend is notable toward greater participation beyond publics in a growing number of states.

- **Historical Data.** The vast majority of current state SUR databases have been in place long enough to enable meaningful longitudinal analyses of student progress and degree completion to be conducted. Nine of the 47 databases date back to the 1970s and fourteen were established in the 1980s. Only eight of the remainder are less than ten years old. The date of formal establishment for an SUR usually predates by a couple of years the point at which meaningful data can be collected from institutions, so all but these eight have a sufficient history to be capable of tracking several longitudinal cohorts over the federally-established Graduation Rate Survey (GRS) follow-up period of six years for four-year institutions.
- **Data Detail and Periodicity.** All of the SUR databases examined contain the standard student descriptors needed to complete federal IPEDS reports including gender, race/ethnicity, enrollment, degrees granted, and program major.⁷ All but eight of 47 contain annualized information about credits completed and about half of them track grades or grade point average. Twenty-three collect data at the transcript level—that is, a record is maintained for every student enrollment in every course, and a growing number of states express interest in moving to this level of detail. The vast majority of data in these systems is for credit-bearing work although twelve of the systems examined contained at least some data about non-credit activity.⁸ All but five of the databases examined contained at least some data on financial aid and twenty-five contain considerable financial aid detail.

With regard to periodicity, all but two SUR databases capture enrollment data on a term-by-term basis, although a majority gathers degree-completion data on an annual basis. In some cases, these data are gathered retrospectively—that is, there is only one annual data capture for institutions, but it includes term level detail for the prior year. All but eighteen employ at least two capture points per term (“census date” and end of term) and a few have many more.

- **Record Identification.** All SUR databases require a unique identifier to match student records from term to term or to add new information to an established student record. Historically, this identifier has been the Social Security Number (SSN) but this is beginning to change for a number of reasons. First, concerns about identity theft and a

⁷ Section 3 of this report provides a more in-depth look at data element coverage.

⁸ These data elements were chiefly concerned with ESL, ABE, and GED activity.

number of high-profile examples of security breaches in colleges and universities have led a growing number of institutions to abandon use of the SSN as the primary identifier in their registration and student records systems. At the same time, the new SURs for elementary/secondary education being developed by all states under NCLB are being designed around unique identifiers not related to the SSN, and a number of SURs in higher education report plans to eventually adopt these identifiers. But states must maintain student SSNs in order to link student records to external databases like employment and military records and institutions must continue to collect them in order to report student tuition payments to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

In 2002, virtually all the state SUR databases examined used the SSN as a key link. In the current inventory, eleven of the 47 databases examined have stopped using the SSN as the major key link and a dozen more encrypt the SSN before manipulating the data. Two states report that they plan to stop using the SSN as a key link next year and ten more report eventual plans to discontinue its use. Despite the growing visibility of state efforts to create a new student identifier in K-12 education, only four states explicitly mentioned that they were planning to use (or even carry) this number in their SURs for higher education.⁹

- **Linking to Other Databases.** About half the states with SUR databases have at least some experience of linking unit record data with external databases such as high school and employment data. Twenty-three of the databases examined report linkages with state Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records to determine field of employment and earnings, and most of them do so regularly through a match on the SSN. Three additional states report plans to do this. Most of the states that make such linkages rely on the agency responsible for the UI records to do the match but several have brought the matching function back into the state higher education agency because of the perceived need to control student records more closely under FERPA. Meanwhile, despite the growing salience of state-level longitudinal databases in K-12, only eleven states have linked college student data with high school records. This will likely change quickly, though, as sixteen additional states report that planning for such linkages is under way. Nineteen states have at least occasionally linked student records in higher education with other state unit-record databases including military records, federal employment records, drivers license records, and state records on public assistance and incarceration—though only a handful have tapped more than one of these. Finally, only five states have partnered with neighboring states to share data about student cross-border mobility. Florida, Missouri, Kentucky, Ohio and Washington have some experience with this, and a five-state data exchange demonstration coordinated by NCHEMS is currently in the planning stages.

Taken together, these results do not show much change in the number of states with SUR data resources in higher education since 2002, but they do indicate significant changes in institutional coverage and sophistication. The growing number of states that include all independent institutions and those that now include proprietary institutions is especially striking in the light of vigorous opposition to establishing a federal unit record system by private college associations.

⁹ The survey did not explicitly ask this question however.

At the same time, many states are enhancing their SUR data systems by adding new data elements or additional data capture points. And despite the brake on such efforts currently supplied by FERPA, a significant number of states are finding ways to link their data with external databases. The only substantial area in which little progress has yet been made is sharing data across state lines.

Data Definition and Coverage

As in 2002, the NCHEMS inventory allowed direct investigation of the content and structure of the 47 state-level SURs identified because state data contacts were asked to provide full documentation of their systems. This enabled us to examine each database against a limited set of 33 data elements that are sufficient to meet most longitudinal tracking and reporting needs (Paulson 2002). We first examined the documentation for each database to determine whether each of these data elements was present. If a given data element was present, we sought further information about how it was coded and defined. We then looked for important combinations of data elements that would have to be simultaneously present and consistently defined in order to undertake particular kinds of analyses.

Basic Data Element Coverage. Table 2 provides a breakdown of overall data element coverage by reporting the number and percentage of SUR databases (N=47) that contain one or more of the 33 key data elements, together with corresponding statistics for all states (N=50) and states with SUR databases (N=40).¹⁰ Data elements are reported as present in this analysis under the strictest definition possible. That is, if there was any doubt about whether a particular data element was present in a particular database, that element was counted as not present. This means that the statistics presented in Table 2 represent *minimum* estimates of coverage for each of the 33 key data elements.

A number of conclusions are apparent from this display. First, all current state-level SURs contain sufficient information to track student enrollment on an annual basis through degree completion broken down by a number of important demographic variables, full-time/part-time status, and program of study. All but two can do this on a more detailed term-to-term basis to monitor more detailed patterns of stop out and within-state inter-institutional migration. Looking at academic performance longitudinally, databases in 33 states can report on accumulated credits and grade performance, with 22 of these being able to report credits and 19 able to report grades on a term-by-term basis.

Second, most state-level SURs can provide some information about student academic background, with databases in 25 states able to generate admissions test scores and in 34 states able to identify the high school a student attended and in 38 states when she or he graduated from high school. Beyond these elements, however, data on academic background is more limited. Only about half these databases contain data on high school performance, with about three-quarters recording prior colleges attended. Only about a third contain detailed data about student remediation status or placement test scores. But the proportion of state-level SURs that do

¹⁰ For states with multiple databases, the state was counted as maintaining a given data element only if all databases within that state maintain that data element.

maintain these academic background data elements has increased notably since the 2002 inventory.

Third, there has been substantial progress in the number of state-level SURs collecting other kinds of data important for planning. Reflecting considerable growth in these areas, more than half now include data on high school concurrent enrollment and more than half also include data on student participation in distance or mediated instruction (up from only about 15% in 2002). Almost ninety percent include at least some information on student financial aid, with just over half containing considerable financial aid detail.

Coverage for Combinations of Data Elements. A salient question in assessing SUR data capacity goes beyond whether or not particular data elements are maintained to the extent to which designated *combinations* of data elements are present—combinations that can enable specific types of reports to be generated. Table 3 provides results for five important combinations of data elements, with coverage statistics calculated in the same manner as those in Table 2. These combinations are organized in terms of expanding inclusiveness with respect to particular types of data elements, beginning with the least common denominator across states. Each successive combination adds some new elements to the cluster that precedes it, while three clusters are additionally disaggregated by whether or not they include data on student grades. Table 4 displays results broken down by individual database, presented on a state by state basis. An “X” entry in a given column in Table 4 indicates that all members of the particular data element cluster are present. Once again, it is important to note that the most conservative approach was applied to determining whether a given data element was present in a given database, so the statistics presented represent minimum estimates of the actual coverage of each data element cluster.

The “core” combination consists of gender, race/ethnicity, date of birth, current enrollment, program/major, and degree awarded. This combination of data element allows calculation of annual student progression and degree progression rates across institutions by academic program and for a range of important demographic subpopulations. All existing SUR databases contain this combination, representing forty states. Coverage for additional data element clusters is as follows:

- Set 1 adds geographic origin and full-time/part-time status to the core, allowing additional disaggregation by region and additional reporting distinctions based on pattern of enrollment. All but three SURs in all but two states that have databases contain this cluster.
- Set 2 adds basic term-level performance information in the form of credits attempted and credits earned. This allows estimates of course completion rates, even in the absence of transcript-level detail, as well as overall credit-completion ratios. It also allows more precise breakdowns of persistence and completion rates by enrollment intensity. The presence of term-to-term statistics on these additional data elements also allows patterns of stop-out behavior to be examined for different student populations, although the fact that different states and systems use different term structures (e.g. semesters and quarters) means that only annualized performance statistics can be used to compare performance.

Set 2a adds grade information to this mix. Four in five databases contain the data elements in these sets, representing about sixty percent of the states.

- Set 3 adds high school information to Set 2, allowing the production of detailed feedback reports to high schools on student persistence and course completion in college. Set 3a adds grade information, allowing such performance reports to include GPA. About two thirds of current SURs in about half the states contain this particular combination.
- Finally, Set 4 adds financial aid information to Set 3, allowing studies of the effectiveness of aid investments with respect to promoting student success for various types of students. Set 4a includes grade information, enabling such reports to include GPA. A bit fewer than half of current SURs in about a third of the states contain this particular combination.

Data Element Definitions. The range of data element coverage reported in Table 2 provides a solid foundation for most states with SUR databases to undertake a range of detailed longitudinal studies of student progression within their own borders. Comparative analysis or multi-state data sharing efforts, however, will depend a great deal upon the consistency with which data elements are defined across states. Accordingly, Table 5 presents a definitional review of the 33 data elements contained in Table 2. The first column in Table 5 classifies the current state of definitional consistency across SURs into three levels. The second column provides the basis for this classification. The highest level of commonality is assigned to a given data element if a) definitions and code structures are identical across the databases examined or, b) if definitions are identical and code structures are sufficiently compatible that an identical entry could be constructed through concatenation or recode. A moderate level is assigned if there is basic definitional consistency across databases but a) different code sets are used by different SURs or, b) different but compatible objects are referenced by the same data element. In such cases, definitional consistency can in principle be achieved by establishing an equivalency table for each code set or list of entities in current use. Finally, a low level is assigned if substantially different definitions are used in different SURs or, as is more frequently the case, the actual definitions applied are unknown or institutionally maintained.

A review of Table 5 suggests that there is basic compatibility across state SURs for most of the 33 data elements examined, but that some effort would be required to create complete equivalency. And the degree of compatibility present differs for different kinds of data elements.

- Demographics. Definitional commonality is the highest for this set of data elements. All either have an IPEDS definition in place that states are using or states use the same basic definition for the data element in question although they may employ a slightly different coding structure. For example, date of birth is most commonly presented in DD/MM/YY format but some SURs use a reverse order or only record year of birth. Similarly, most systems record home county in geographic origin for in-state students and state or country of origin for out-of-state students, but some only record state of origin. These minor inconsistencies can all be addressed through concatenation or recode.

- Academic Background. Definitional commonality is moderate for this set of data elements for a variety of reasons. Some data elements—for example high school attended—refer to the same entity but use entirely different code sets (e.g. IPEDS Unit ID vs. CEEB code). Others—for example admissions and placement test scores—refer to similar but different entities (e.g. SAT vs. ACT scores or as many as a dozen different placement tests). Achieving full definitional consistency under these circumstances would require the establishment of equivalency tables that include all entities and code sets currently in use.
- Enrollment Status. For basic enrollment factors like degree-seeking status and full-time/part-time attendance, there is a high degree of compatibility across data elements in this category. For enrollment situations such as concurrent enrollment or distance education, on the other hand, there are no established national definitions or conventions, even though coding structures may be identical across databases. Finally, financial aid information is carried at widely varying degrees of detail in different SURs. Equivalency tables, as above, could handle the majority of these situations but others would require the establishment and application of common national definitions.
- Academic Activity and Attainment. The main challenge to compatibility among this set of data elements is the fact that different states and systems have different term structures. While the majority use standard 16-week semesters, some use quarters and virtually all differ somewhat in the way they handle summer terms. Consequently, unless they are aggregated to yield annual totals, these entries are incompatible. At the aggregate annual level, however, they can be made equivalent so long as the credit values are adjusted. For SURs that maintain cumulative credits earned and GPAs, these entries are compatible across databases so long as similar adjustments in credit and grade calculations are made. Degree awards vary in the level of detail carried, but can be aggregated to standard IPEDS categories.

Overall, it is apparent that working equivalencies can be established to enable the vast majority of data elements to be compared across state contexts and aggregated to yield multi-state totals. The principal challenges involved in widening comparative efforts lie in institutional coverage and data element contents.

Data Use and Reporting

States and systems use data contained in SUR systems for a wide variety of reporting although many of them are also constrained by resource shortages from making as much use of these data as they would like. And with the increasing salience of the web, most of these reports are publicly available through SHEEO and system web pages. Among the most common regular reports and analyses undertaken using SUR data resources are the following.

- **Graduation and Retention**. By far the most commonly reported use of SUR data resources by states and systems is to calculate graduation rates. Forty-four of the 47 states or systems with SUR databases report graduation rates, although two of these do

not use data from their SURs to do so.¹¹ All use a method consistent with the federal Graduation Rate Survey (GRS) to calculate six-year rates for four-year institutions and three-year rates for two-year institutions. Twenty-one use the GRS method essentially without alteration, but many of these allow additional years to complete and/or include part-time students as a separate cohort. Eighteen more calculate a parallel set of completion statistics based on completion at any institution within the state. Forty-one calculate first-year retention according to GRS conventions and the same eighteen report students as retained if they are enrolled at any institution in the state. All of these statistics are reported for individual institutions. Only three disaggregate these data further by gender and race/ethnicity.

- **Transfer and Multiple Enrollments.** Thirty-four of the states or systems with SUR databases calculate and report transfer rates from public two-year colleges to public four-year colleges, although only about a third of these report on academic performance after transfer. Eight examine wider patterns of inter-institutional migration among all institutions in the state for which they have data. Six have arranged to obtain additional transfer information from the National Student Clearinghouse.
- **Job Placement/Workforce Development.** Seventeen states or systems generate regular reports on student employment and/or earnings after program completion. Most of these are directed at employment within the field for which a degree of certificate was granted and all but two are based on record matching with UI wage record files.¹² Five additional states have undertaken more in-depth studies of workforce development including the role of non-credit vocational training.
- **High School Feedback.** Ten of the states or systems with SUR databases construct detailed high school feedback reports that provide a number of indicators of student success in higher education for former students from each of the state's high school districts. The most common indicators used in these reports are students needing remediation (by field), credits attempted and earned, grade-point average, and first-year persistence. One additional state provides a feedback report that only reports the proportion of students needing remediation. Two states regularly monitor and report on high school concurrent enrollment for college students.
- **Developmental/Remedial Education.** Ten states or systems generate regular reports on the proportion of students at each institution in need of remediation (for the most part by field). Seven of these track remedial students into college-level work and report on the results. Respondents also reported several recent in-depth studies of remediation that investigated such matters as the effectiveness of current placement policies, appropriate cut scores on different placement tests, as well as studies of the relative effectiveness of different ways of delivering developmental education.

¹¹ Instead, institutions are asked to submit their locally-calculated rates consistent with the GRS.

¹² Two states use alumni follow-up surveys to gather this information.

- **Distance Education.** Finally, eight states or systems generate regular statistics on the extent of participation in distance education programs. Definitions of what constitutes “participation,” however, range from enrollment in a complete on-line degree program to simply taking a class on line in a given academic year.

Beyond the particular topics addressed, states and systems engage in a number of common reporting practices. Among the most prominent are:

- **Performance Indicators.** Twenty-five states or systems use SUR data to construct one or more performance indicators to track progress and discharge accountability. The most common are graduation and retention rate statistics, but many include course completion rates, job placement, and remediation rates and success in remediation. About ten indicators are usually calculated, but some states compile many more. Performance indicators are generally posted prominently on the agency website and array institutional performance comparatively, but two are compiled only for the system as a whole.
- **Institutional Profiles.** Although all 47 of the states and systems examined compile basic statistics on enrollments for public institutions, thirteen states or systems compile readily-accessible “institutional profiles” that provide about a dozen key statistics about institutional enrollments, programs, retention/completion, and other characteristics. These profiles are frequently portrayed graphically and appear consciously intended as “consumer guides” for potential students and interested stakeholders.
- **User Access.** Finally, six states or systems include a utility on their websites that enables users to actively manipulate SUR data to generate customized reports about enrollments and other topics. Only two of these allow direct access to unit records themselves, while the remaining four are based on pre-built tables or data cubes that can be manipulated to create customized reports. In the two cases where direct access is possible, identifiers have been stripped from the record and the report generator employs a minimum cell-size convention to protect confidentiality. Despite the relative infrequency of direct user access at this point, states are clearly moving in this direction as a number of respondent noted that developing such a capability is in the planning stages.

In addition to regularly-produced standard reports, most states and systems note that about half their activity in using SUR databases lies in the realm of *ad hoc* queries to answer particular questions. Not surprisingly, most of these are posed by legislators, the governor’s office, or board members. Less frequently, the data are tapped in support of a major research effort centered on a particular issue—for example, the performance of teacher training programs or workforce education.

Cross-Cutting Issues and Challenges

Finally, respondents to the inventory reported a number of common issues and challenges in the establishment and operations of SUR data systems. Among the most prominent of these were:

- **Data Quality.** In the light of the NCES proposal to create a national student unit record system for higher education, it is notable how many states or systems mentioned the unceasing effort involved in obtaining consistent and reliable unit record data from institutions. More than half of those responding noted this problem. Many reported that institutional responsiveness was uneven and that obtaining data with adequate integrity required substantial diplomacy and a good deal of “hand holding.” Part of the problem is staff turnover at both agencies and institutions, requiring constant re-training. At several agencies, moreover, a decision has been made to decrease the frequency of reporting with the hope of getting better quality data. Whatever the approach, moreover, states and systems invest considerably in data cleaning and verification processes which are costly in staff time and extend the lead time needed to prepare reports and analyses.
- **Personnel Shortages.** A substantial majority of state and system respondents report that the second biggest challenge they face with SURs is understaffing—especially among the critical programming staff needed to keep these databases operational. Staff turnover in such positions is high and state salaries not competitive. In addition, budget cuts in many states have fallen disproportionately on technical positions because these positions are deemed less essential than operational positions. As a result, systems are not maintained as they should be and, in some cases, data collection and updating has been temporarily suspended. As one respondent put it, “I would like to say we are just barely keeping our heads above water, but I am not sure we have our heads above water.”
- **Reporting and Analysis.** In addition to these more general personnel challenges, most state and system respondents noted that there was little time or staff available to perform analyses using their increasingly sizeable and rich stores of SUR data. The following comment was typical: “there is more we can and could do if we had the resources...currently we limp along, knowing what is possible and could do, but simply can’t at this point.” Others noted that they have only a few staff dedicated to analysis and therefore few colleagues or opportunities for professional exchange and development. As a result, they are often undertaking analyses on their own with few examples or models to draw upon. Finally, many respondents noted the challenges associated with educating their “customers”—the many governmental and public stakeholders who are looking for information on higher education. Frequently, such requests reflect significant misunderstandings of what particular statistics mean or their range of applicability.
- **FERPA and Privacy Issues.** Issues associated with FERPA and records confidentiality have become much more salient in the past four years. While few actual security breaches have occurred in higher education (and none in SHEEO agencies), the “perception of FERPA” has clearly had a chilling effect on state and system use of SUR data. This has been particularly the case in the realm of record matching—either across higher education databases or between them and K-12 or UI wage records. Linking individually-identified records outside the direct control of the agency is increasingly being cited as a form of “re-disclosure” which is prohibited by FERPA. This has led a number of states to bring all data matching procedures entirely in house where the link can be accomplished by agency personnel under tightly controlled conditions.

Unfortunately, it has more commonly led some states and systems to stop doing valuable things to track students that they previously had done freely.

It is interesting to note that technical issues were *not* on most respondents' list of significant challenges. Although a few states reported that they were in the middle of major system conversions that were consuming substantial amounts of staff time and a few more noted that they were evolving from flat files to a more integrated warehouse database architecture, technical challenges reported were far outnumbered by comments centered on the four issues noted above.

Implications and Recommendations

Results of the current inventory suggest a number of conclusions and next steps for the development and exploitation of state SUR data resources in higher education. Some of these support and extend the conclusions of the 2002 study that it is feasible to further harness the contents of these databases to create a national capability to track student progress. But some have acquired greater salience through the Secretary's Commission on the Future of Higher Education, the proposal to create a federal student unit record system, and the growing importance of state unit record databases in elementary and secondary education. In the light of these developments, the following recommendations for further action appear appropriate.

- **Establish a Common Core of Data Elements.** Results of the inventory suggest that the nation is already quite close to establishing a consistent "common core" of data elements to populate SUR systems. In some cases, standard definitions of these data elements are in place through IPEDS of the Common Dataset, but in the majority of cases such definitions vary somewhat from state to state. If more collective use is to be made of these substantial data resources on a national basis, efforts to standardize a limited set of key data elements across state and system contexts should be undertaken. The 33 data elements analyzed in this study provide a good place to begin delineating this "common core," but collective action and deliberation across states should be undertaken to determine whether additional types of data should be included. Once the contents of a common core are determined, there might be two ways to proceed. The most straightforward, though operationally more challenging because of the need to actually change reporting conventions in many states, would be to establish a common set of definitions and codes. Probably the more practical approach would be to develop an inclusive set of crosswalk tables, concatenations, and recodes to convert the many different approaches now in place to a compatible standard.
- **Identify and Disseminate "Best Practice" Analysis and Reporting.** State SUR resources are currently underexploited as strategic information resources, given their growing extent and coverage. This is largely due to two factors. First, increasingly stretched state agency staffs simply lack the time and people to undertake more than simple accountability reporting. Second, because they are professionally and geographically isolated from one another, state analytical staffs lack good models for the kinds of reports and practices that can successfully influence policy. On the one hand, this suggests a common research and development effort to identify and share current best practices with respect to SUR database analysis and reporting. A next step, once

such reporting conventions are established, might be common benchmarking and more standardized subpopulation analysis. At the same time, this suggests more systematic attention to professional development for state agency analytical staffs to share best practice approaches and encourage exchange and experimentation. Finally, growing experience with allowing academic researchers access to SUR data in states like Florida, with appropriate privacy and security safeguards in place, suggests that stretched state agency staffs can be usefully supplemented to expand current analytical capacity.

- **Create a “Third-Party” Data Matching Utility.** Although many states and systems have undertaken efforts to link their SUR data with other state-level databases like the UI wage record and high school records, doing so remains a challenge. And once again, states have been forced to undertake these efforts on their own and in isolation. Meanwhile, growing legal questions about re-disclosure further cloud these undertakings and have led some states to simply abandon data linking because it is too troublesome and costly. In the light of this situation, it would be extremely beneficial if a national capacity to link unit record data quickly and securely were created. Technology currently exists to accomplish this task and the efficiency of creating a single such utility to handle the needs of many potential users is apparent. While it could be argued that the eventual establishment of a federal unit record capability would obviate the need for such an entity, it will be several years before one can be created and states will still require linking capacity in order to tap their own and one another’s data resources. Furthermore, such a utility would be most effective if it were managed as a service by a third party non-governmental organization established by an interstate compact or as an independent nonprofit agency.
- **Better Align and Link K-12 and Higher Education Data Resources.** Because of the requirements of NCLB, most states are quickly developing SURs for their elementary and secondary education systems. But it is apparent that there has as yet been little coordination between these efforts and existing higher education SUR resources in the majority of states. Linking K-12 longitudinal data to higher education is one of the “ten essential elements” for data systems being promoted by the national Data Quality Campaign, but beyond this general directive, there has been little detailed development work undertaken to map how this should be accomplished, what data elements should be defined in common, and how the actual linkage should be made. Of particular importance here is the establishment of consistent unique identifiers. All states developing K-12 SURs are creating their own unique identifiers without much coordination amongst one another or with higher education authorities. Several state SURs in higher education report that they plan to carry these numbers once they are developed, but institutions of higher education draw students from many states so compatibility and consistency in these identifiers will pose increasing challenges. Meanwhile, most state and system SUR administrators would like to move away from the SSN as a unique identifier and some are already creating their own key links in isolation to what their counterparts in elementary and secondary education are doing. This situation implies a compelling need to convene a national conversation on aligning and linking K-12 and postsecondary data resources, perhaps under the auspices of the DQC.

- **Clarify and Re-Regulate FERPA.** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was never intended to impede legitimate educational research. Indeed, the law specifically exempts efforts by authorized agencies to undertake research designed to improve the effectiveness of education and such research increasingly requires the assembly of longitudinal data files from multiple institutions and other sources. State higher education agencies have a long history as responsible custodians of such records and have experienced no breaches of security. Yet they are increasingly restricted by inconsistent interpretations of the law based on the principle that inaction is the safest course to follow. Particularly troublesome is the current interpretation of “re-disclosure” to mean any attempt to use uniquely identified educational records in conjunction with similar records held by another responsible entity (state agency or institution). Such a prohibition does not exist anywhere else in state or federal operations and would be unheard of in the private sector, where record matching of personally-identified data is routine. The DQC has noted this as a salient obstacle to developing state information capacity and some progress is being made. Nevertheless, there should be a concerted multi-state effort on the part of higher education agencies to press the Department of Education for a re-regulation of FERPA that reflects state and federal interests in developing more effective evidence-based educational practices.

In sum, state level SUR data resources in higher education are becoming steadily more inclusive and sophisticated. They now represent a considerable national asset that can and should be exploited more fully. The existence and use of such data resources are a necessary condition for achieving the widely-held current policy goal of increasing the numbers of citizens flowing through the “educational pipeline” to attain the postsecondary credentials needed for both individual prosperity and national economic competitiveness. And these resources are now at a point where greater collective attention to coordination and development across states would be a very wise investment.

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TABLE 1
Student Unit Record (SUR) Database by State in 2006

State	Agency Responsible	Date SUR Established
Alabama	SHEEO Agency	1998
Alaska	State University System	1997
Arizona	SHEEO Agency	1998
Arkansas	SHEEO Agency	1993
California	Community College System	1992
	University of California System	1980
	State University System	1970
Colorado	SHEEO Agency	1987
Connecticut	SHEEO Agency	1988
Delaware	[None]	
Florida	K-20 Accountability Office	1985
Georgia	SHEEO Agency	1983
Hawaii	SHEEO Agency	1995
Idaho	[none]	
Illinois	SHEEO Agency	1983
Indiana	SHEEO Agency	1979
Iowa	[None]	
Kansas	SHEEO Agency	2002
Kentucky	SHEEO Agency	1980
Louisiana	SHEEO Agency	1977
Maine	SHEEO Agency	[Unknown]
Maryland	SHEEO Agency	1977
Massachusetts	SHEEO Agency	1985
Michigan	[None]	
Minnesota	SHEEO Agency	1983
Mississippi	SHEEO Agency	1984
Missouri	SHEEO Agency	1988
Montana	[None]	
Nebraska	[None]	
Nevada	SHEEO Agency	2000
New Hampshire	[None]	
New Jersey	SHEEO Agency	1985
New Mexico	SHEEO Agency	1994
New York	State University System (SUNY)	1988
	City University System (CUNY)	[Unknown]
North Carolina	Community College System	1980
	State University System	1978
North Dakota	SHEEO Agency	[Unknown]
Ohio	SHEEO Agency	1998
Oklahoma	SHEEO Agency	1977
Oregon	Community College System	1995
	State University System	1990
Pennsylvania	[None]	
Rhode Island	[None]	
South Carolina	SHEEO Agency	1993
South Dakota	SHEEO Agency	1998
Tennessee	SHEEO Agency	1991
Texas	SHEEO Agency	1973
Utah	SHEEO Agency	1999
Vermont	[None]	
Virginia	SHEEO Agency	1992

State	Agency Responsible	Date SUR Established
Washington	State University System	2000
	Community and Technical College System	1994
West Virginia	SHEEO Agency	[Unknown]
Wisconsin	State University System	1973
Wyoming	SHEEO Agency (University)	[Unknown]
Wyoming	Community College System	2000

TABLE 2
SUR Database Coverage of Key Data Elements

Data Element	UR Databases		All States		States with Databases	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Demographics						
Sex	47	100.0%	40	80.0%	40	100.0%
Race/Ethnicity	47	100.0%	40	80.0%	40	100.0%
Date of Birth	47	100.0%	40	80.0%	40	100.0%
Citizenship	46	97.9%	39	78.0%	39	97.5%
Geographic Origin	46	97.9%	39	78.0%	39	97.5%
Disability Status	17	36.2%	11	22.0%	11	27.5%
Academic Background						
Admissions Test Scores	31	66.0%	25	50.0%	25	62.5%
High School Attended	38	80.9%	34	68.0%	34	85.0%
High School Class Size	6	12.8%	5	10.0%	5	12.5%
High School Rank	15	31.9%	13	26.0%	13	32.5%
High School GPA	26	55.3%	21	42.0%	21	52.5%
High School Graduation Date	39	83.0%	38	76.0%	38	95.0%
Prior College Attended	37	78.7%	35	70.0%	35	87.5%
Transfer Credit	29	61.7%	26	52.0%	26	65.0%
Remedial Status/Flag	15	29.8%	10	20.0%	10	25.0%
Placement Test Scores	16	34.0%	11	22.0%	11	27.5%
Enrollment Status						
Degree Seeking Status	44	93.6%	37	74.0%	26	92.5%
First Term of Academic History	29	61.7%	22	44.0%	22	55.0%
Full-time/Part-time	47	100.0%	40	80.0%	40	100.0%
Program/Major	47	100.0%	40	80.0%	40	100.0%
High School Concurrent Flag	24	51.1%	20	40.0%	20	50.0%
Joint Enrollment Flag	14	29.8%	11	22.0%	11	27.5%
Distance Ed/Technology Flag	24	51.1%	20	49.0%	20	50.0%
Financial Aid Flag	30	63.8%	25	50.0%	25	62.5%
Financial Aid Detail	25	53.2%	20	40.0%	20	50.0%
Academic Activity						
Term Data Collected	45	95.7%	38	76.0%	38	95.0%
Term GPA	25	53.2%	19	38.0%	19	47.5%
Term SCH Attempted	45	95.7%	38	76.0%	38	95.0%
Term SCH Earned	28	59.6%	22	44.0%	22	55.0%
Academic Attainment						
Cumulative GPA	39	83.0%	32	64.0%	32	80.0%
Cumulative SCH Earned	40	85.1%	33	66.0%	33	82.5%
Degree Awarded	47	100.0%	40	80.0%	40	100.0%
Total	47	100.0%	40	80.0%	40	100.0%

TABLE 3
UR Database Coverage of Important Combinations of Key Data Elements

Data Elements	UR Databases		All States		States with UR Databases	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Core	47	100.0%	40	80.0%	40	100.0%
Set 1	44	93.6%	37	74.0%	37	92.5%
Set 2	38	80.9%	31	62.0%	31	77.5%
Set 2a	36	77.0%	29	58.0%	29	72.5%
Set 3	31	66.0%	24	48.0%	24	60.0%
Set 3a	30	63.8%	23	46.0%	23	57.5%
Set 4	22	46.8%	17	34.0%	17	42.5%
Set 4a	20	42.6%	14	28.0%	14	35.0%

Core =Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Program/Major, Degree Awarded

Set 1 =Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, Program/Major, Full-Time/Part-time Status, Degree Awarded

Set 2 =Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, Program/Major, Full-time/Part-time Status, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned, Degree Awarded

Set 2a =Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, Program/Major, Full-time/Part-time Status, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned, Cumulative GPA, Degree Awarded

Set 3 =Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, High School Attended, High School Graduation Date, Program/Major, Full-time/Part-time Status, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned, Degree Awarded

Set 3a =Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, High School Attended, High School Graduation Date, Program/Major, Full-time/Part-time Status, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned, Cumulative GPA, Degree Awarded

Set 4 =Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, High School Attended, High School Graduation Date, Program/Major, Financial Aid, Full-time/Part-time Status, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned, Degree Awarded

Set 4a =Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, High School Attended, High School Graduation Date, Program/Major, Financial Aid, Full-time/Part-time Status, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned, Cumulative GPA, Degree Awarded

TABLE 4
Coverage of Important Combinations of Key Data Elements by UR Database

State Name	Agency Responsible	Set:	Core	1	2	2a	3	3a	4	4a
Alabama	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alaska	State University System		X	X	X	X				
Arizona	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Arkansas	SHEEO Agency		X	X						
California	Community College System		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	University of California System		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	State University System		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Colorado	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Connecticut	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X			
Delaware	[None]									
Florida	Statewide K-20 Authority		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Georgia	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X			
Hawaii	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Idaho	[None]									
Illinois	SHEEO Agency		X							
Indiana	SHEEO Agency		X	X						
Iowa	[None]									
Kansas	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kentucky	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Louisiana	SHEEO Agency		X	X						
Maine	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X		X		X	
Maryland	SHEEO Agency		X							
Massachusetts	SHEEO Agency		X	X						
Michigan	[None]									
Minnesota	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X				
Mississippi	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X			
Missouri	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Montana	[None]									
Nebraska	[None]									
Nevada	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X		
New Hampshire	[None]									
New Jersey	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X		
New Mexico	SHEEO Agency		X	X						
New York	State University System (SUNY)		X	X	X	X	X	X		
	City University System (CUNY)		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
North Carolina	Community College System		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	State University System		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
North Dakota	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ohio	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma	SHEEO Agency		X							
Oregon	Community College System		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	State University System		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pennsylvania	[None]									
Rhode Island	[None]									
South Carolina	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
South Dakota	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tennessee	SHEEO Agency		X		X	X	X	X	X	X

State Name	Agency Responsible	Set:	Core	1	2	2a	3	3a	4	4a
Texas	SHEEO Agency		X							
Utah	SHEEO Agency		X		X	X				
Vermont	[None]									
Virginia	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X					
Washington	State University System		X	X	X	X				
	Community College System		X	X	X	X	X	X		
West Virginia	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wisconsin	SHEEO Agency		X	X	X	X				
Wyoming	University of Wyoming		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Community College System		X	X	X	X	X	X		

- Core = Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Program/Major, Degree Awarded
- Set 1 = Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, Program/Major, Full-Time/Part-time Status, Degree Awarded
- Set 2 = Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, Program/Major, Full-time/Part-time Status, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned, Degree Awarded
- Set 2 = Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, Program/Major, Full-time/Part-time Status, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned, Cumulative GPA, Degree Awarded
- Set 3 = Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, High School Attended, High School Graduation Date, Program/Major, Full-time/Part-time Status, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned, Degree Awarded
- Set 3a = Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, High School Attended, High School Graduation Date, Program/Major, Full-time/Part-time Status, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned, Cumulative GPA, Degree Awarded
- Set 4 = Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, High School Attended, High School Graduation Date, Program/Major, Financial Aid, Full-time/Part-time Status, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned, Degree Awarded
- Set 4a = Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Date of Birth, Geographic Origin, High School Attended, High School Graduation Date, Program/Major, Financial Aid, Full-time/Part-time Status, Credits Attempted, Credits Earned, Cumulative GPA, Degree Awarded

**Table 5
Data Element Definition**

Data Elements	Commonality	Definition(s)
Demographics		
Sex	High	IPEDS
Race/Ethnicity	High	IPEDS/Census
Date of Birth	High	Detail Varies
Citizenship	High	Detail Varies
Geographic Origin	High	Detail Varies
Disability Status	High	Detail Varies
Academic Background		
Admissions Test Scores	Moderate	Multiple Entities
High School Attended	Moderate	Multiple Code Sets
High School Class Size	High	Common Data Set
High School Rank	High	Common Data Set
High School GPA	Moderate	Multiple Code Sets
High School Graduation Date	High	Detail Varies
Prior College Attended	Moderate	Multiple Code Sets
Transfer Credit	Moderate	Multiple Code Sets
Remedial Status/Flag	Moderate	Flag
Placement Test Scores	Low	Multiple Entities
Enrollment Status		
Degree Seeking Status	High	Detail Varies
First Term of Academic History	Moderate	Multiple Code Sets
Full-time/Part-time	High	IPEDS
Program/Major	High	Detail Varies
High School Concurrent Flag	Moderate	Flag
Joint Enrollment Flag	Moderate	Flag
Distance Ed/Technology Flag	Low	Multiple Entities
Financial Aid Flag	High	Detail Varies
Financial Aid Detail	Low	Multiple Entities
Academic Activity		
Term Data Collected	High	Y/N
Term GPA	Moderate	Multiple Code Sets
Term SCH Attempted	Moderate	Multiple Entities
Term SCH Earned	Moderate	Multiple Entities
Academic Attainment		
Cumulative GPA	Moderate	Multiple Code Sets
Cumulative SCH Earned	Moderate	Multiple Entities
Degree Awarded	High	Detail Varies

Appendix A
Initial Contact Letter



National Center for Higher Education Management Systems
P.O. Box 9752 • Boulder, Colorado 80301-9752 • (303) 497-0301
Fax: (303) 497-0338 • Website: <http://www.nchems.org>

January 6, 2006

[Contact Address]

Dear ***

In the spring of 2002, NCHEMS conducted a national study of state database capacity in higher education focused on Student Unit Record (SUR) systems. This study was underwritten by support from the Lumina Foundation for Education. The principal reason behind the study was to determine if there was sufficient commonality across states and systems to develop a more comprehensive national approach to looking at student mobility across states. The results of the study were published by the Lumina Foundation in April 2003 in a report entitled *Following the Mobile Student* (this can be found at <http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/researchreports/NCHEMS.pdf>). Since that time, our findings on state SUR capacity have been cited by many actors, including the recently-concluded Feasibility Study for a national student unit record system undertaken for NCES (<http://www.dmi.uiuc.edu/ur/unitrecordproposal.pdf>). But our findings are getting old.

We have since been funded by Lumina to update our study on a periodic basis to provide a permanent resource about the ability of states to conduct longitudinal studies of student mobility and achievement. This is coming at a time when similar efforts are being made to inventory state database capacity in K-12 education under the auspices of the Data Quality Campaign (<http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/>), which NCHEMS and SHEEO have both formally endorsed. I am therefore writing to seek your assistance in updating what we know about the contents and capacity of your state's current SUR resources.

I am enclosing the write-up on your state or system's SUR database that we included in *Following the Mobile Student* as a basis for updating us on what has happened since (or what we got wrong in the first place!). In addition, we would like to update our documentation of your state or system's existing database system including:

- Descriptions of the system.
- Data Element Dictionaries or other sources of data element definitions.

- File layouts.
- Instructions to campus coordinators on how to collect/load the data.
- Sample reports or indicators generated through the SUR system.
- Any other documents that will help us gain a better understanding of your SUR database resources in terms of content, capabilities, and institutional coverage.

My colleague at NCHEMS Marianne Boeke will be calling or emailing you in the next few weeks to discuss this request and to set up a time for an in-depth interview. We obtained a considerable amount of documentation in the 2002 survey and it is possible that we already have reasonably up-to-date information. Much of the documentation requested may also be web-available (e.g. user instructions, examples of reports, etc.) and all that we would need is one-time access so that we can download it. Marianne will be able to discuss with you how best to proceed.

Thanks in advance for your help with this.

Best regards.

Peter T. Ewell
Vice-President

Appendix B
Interview Protocol

SUR Database Interview Protocol

As background, review the state summary in *Following the Mobile Student* that will have been sent to each contact, and inventory what is in the file for this state or system.

History and Recent Events

1. Review *Tracking the Mobile Student* description of origins of the system and check if there are updates or corrections. Use this as guide to how deeply to cover additional questions.
2. Update on events affecting the SUR database since 2002. Probe for things like use of different technology, use of web for data submission by institutions, significant legal developments, anything that the respondent thinks is significant that we ought to know.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in the SUR system. We presume that the basic coverage is public institutions including four-years, community colleges, and technical colleges; if any of these are in separate systems *not* covered by the state SUR, find this out together with contact information for those responsible for this separate system.
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?
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?

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 [get Data Element Dictionary if available and or contact information for person responsible if the person interviewed does not know much about it]?

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions? When was the last time a data element was changed? Can you explain the reason and process?
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?
3. Can campuses access datasets themselves? If yes, who has access and how is this managed?
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 [get copies]? 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?
5. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases (e.g. high school records, UI Wage records, other higher education system databases such as community college, university system, technical college systems, driver's license records, etc.)? If so, please explain the process further. In each case where such a linkage is made, who is responsible for the match and what restrictions apply to using the resulting data?

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

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.)?
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)? Do you do any public reporting on need for remediation and student placement based on unit record data.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources (get a few examples together with URLs or print copies)?
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting (e.g. data configuration/structure, lack of programming personnel time, staff resources for analysis, etc.)?

Overview

1. Can you give me a quick update on events affecting the SUR database since 2002? Have there been any significant developments in regards to SUR (like use of different technology, use of web for data submission by institutions, legal issues)?

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

THANK YOU!

Appendix C

Individual SUR Database Descriptions

Alabama
Diane Sherman

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
1996.
2. By whom?
Alabama Legislature.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
High school tracking, retention, graduation, and tuition/residency.

Coverage

7. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
2-year and 4-year public institutions.
8. 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?
Independent institutions have been encouraged to participate; however, none have done so.
9. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
We will continue to encourage Independent institutions to participate.
10. 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 gathered each term. Completions data is gathered once a year.
11. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
Not at this time.
12. 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 non-credit enrollment.

Data Management and Manipulation

7. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?

Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) Executive Director in consultation with a committee of institutional representatives (Higher Education Information Advisory Group).

8. 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 use a student ID which is an encrypted SSN for those students who have a SSN. No plans at this time to discontinue use of the SSN.

9. 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 -- the campuses may request ad-hoc summary reports.

10. 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 handle FERPA issues very carefully... We only release summary reports -- we don't release any unit records.

11. 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 FERPA or privacy issues have come up recently in our state.

12. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?

We link to high school graduates and 2-year public colleges. We do the matches in our office and only produce summary reports.

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

No.

Reporting and Use of Data

5. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?

Main source of information:

<http://www.ache.state.al.us/InstResearch/InstUsers.htm>

Various reports found on the web at:

www.ache.state.al.us/Abstract0405/Student%20Database/Index.htm

We also produced Institutional Student Profiles which can be found at:

www.ache.state.al.us/Profiles/Index.htm

Student Source Survey Reports which can be found at:

www.ache.state.al.us/Information/StatisticalInfo/SSSFall2004/Index.htm

6. 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 haven't published graduation rates yet. Retention data is reported (Fall to Fall report that includes both full-time and part-time cohort).

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

We are working on an accountability project with the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education to provide transfer data to them that will show them how their transfer students performed at 4-year institutions. That report is in its final stages, but has not yet been released.

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

The biggest challenge is getting the data from all of the institutions by the published deadlines. We spend a tremendous amount of time holding their hands and encouraging them to submit the data. We currently have a lack of programming personnel – which wouldn't be as significant a problem if I could release my analyst from the follow-up mentioned above.

Overview

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

Last year we gave all of the institutions an executable program (visual basic) that they can run at their institutions to edit their data before it is sent to us. We accept only one submission from each institution each term. This process has cut down on our workload tremendously and the institutions also like the fact that they get immediate feedback and know where problems exist without waiting for us to receive and edit the data.

Alaska (University System)
Ian Olsen

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
1997.
2. By whom?
Statewide Institutional Research.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Internal and external reporting are compiled from the database, including IPEDS and other surveys, retention and graduation rates, fact books and ad hoc queries.

Coverage

13. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
This is a system wide structure with 3 campuses (community colleges are part of the system as they are part of the three campuses).
14. 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.
15. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
No.
16. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Student data are collected approximately three weeks after classes have begun each fall and spring semester and approximately four weeks after those semesters have concluded. In addition, summer semester data is collected approximately four weeks after the summer semester has ended.
17. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
No.
18. 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?
Yes, we collect in the same database 1) CEU or continuing education units; 2) remedial courses; and 3) ESL courses.

Data Management and Manipulation

14. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?

Depends on what is changing. Mostly we meet by committee (a Banner User Group) and decide what changes. If it is something that the feds want, then we can change that here in my office – the Office of Planning, Analysis & Institutional Research.

15. 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?

No – three years ago we made a break from SSNs to a unique student ID number. These numbers are generated through our Banner System (all campuses use Banner) and the number generated stays with you throughout your educational career – even if you switch colleges. We do NOT collect SSNs from students on a compulsory basis. We do not require SSN reporting since we moved over to our new system of student ID numbers. If a student wishes to volunteer the information, we do take it. This policy may change back to a compulsory requirement due to tax purposes in the near future.

16. 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?

Yes, every campus has a research group (IR) that has access through a series of online secure log-ins. They can access all cleaned unit record data. Because of staffing issues, we do a lot of reports for various campuses though.

17. 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 do not carry an official FERPA statement. We do have a legal opinion from our General Counsel regarding FERPA. Basically, this policy dictates that we are not to violate FERPA. My group, UAF Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research, does carry a statement in its website at: <http://www.uaf.edu/pair/about.html>

"IR staff members carry out their work with the guidance of the Association for Institutional Researchers Code of Ethics, UAFs guidelines for research involving human subjects, and Federal FERPA policy." I should point out that whenever we are unclear, and the issue is pressed, that we do defer to our General Counsel for a legal ruling. I have done this in the past.

18. 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.

19. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?

We try. We do work with the department of labor and in the past we worked with the department of education. We tried to work with K-12 and may try again. Our office

works with a pre-determined schedule and puts together the match and sends out the information.

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

No. We do share summary data with Washington state higher education board and the University of Wyoming (sort of a comparison of tuition, FTEs, etc.). We do not transfer student unit record data with these agencies.

Reporting and Use of Data

2. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
Regular reports can be found on the Web site: <http://www.alaska.edu/oir/>. These included an annual fact book, IPEDS surveys, campus profiles, vocational education reporting with the state department of labor, opening semester reports and others.
3. 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 generate graduation and retention statistics for institutions and for the state as a whole. We use the IPEDS graduation Rate Survey method and occasionally use our own method – depending on what we need.
4. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
Research on money and how it is spent;
Projections;
Looking at distance education;
On-line performance based budget:
a. Tracking measures of student performance
b. Tracking measures of faculty performance
c. Researching development education
5. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Our biggest challenge is our data – our rural campuses have a chronic problem with entering data late. I am not sure if it is a staffing issue or an environmental issue, but whatever the reason, the data is always late or incomplete. However, by the end of the term the data is there and complete – but this is after I want to run reports.

Overview

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

We have added a field that tracks military service or relation to military – in this way we can track the effect of closing a military base in Alaska (this issue came up a few years ago and we were caught off guard, now we can talk about this issue intelligently).

Start dates for each campus is different – we are working on this and by the fall of 2007 all start dates will be the same.

2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
How important it is to understand the data and how much time our office staff takes in helping people (government, institutional, public) understand what the data really means...

**Arizona
Melinda Gebel**

History

1. When was the student unit record (SUR) system established?
In 1998 (although a statewide community college unit record database was already in place before that).
2. By whom?
The Arizona State Legislature, as recommended by the Transfer Articulation Task Force.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
To assess the effectiveness of a new transfer model and to track students across institutions.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public institutions (4 year and 2 year).
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 independent or proprietary institutions are included.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
We would like to add the colleges on our Indian Reservations – as soon as they have the ability to collect the necessary information, we would like them to participate.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Collected each term for universities and annually for community colleges.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
Yes, we would like to start collecting more data more frequently from the community colleges – but we have not done this as of yet.
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 steering committee (representatives from each institution and from our office).
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 used as one of the key links – however institutions are starting to move away from the SSN and as they do, we will have to work around the SSN. The state is proposing (thinking about) an educational student number.
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?
Only their student data – through the secure web server. We get the data, clean it and put it on the server.
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 a security plan (see web site)
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?
No.
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?
IPEDS, GRS, Carl Perkins report, university system persistence/graduation rates, miscellaneous enrollment and transfer reports (mostly for community colleges). See web site at www.asu.edu/assist.
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... each institution runs their own report and then we put together the statewide report. We do use IPEDS Graduation Rate Method.

3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
We just worked on a report for the community college – projections.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
 - o We have enormous amount of data and it takes time to organize it (clean it) and understand it... we also struggle with helping other people understand what we are capable of doing with the data.
 - o Integrity of data – we are starting to move away from SSN and this makes it more difficult to be accurate.

Overview:

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
No.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.

**Arkansas
Ron Harrell**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
During the 1992-93 academic year.
2. By whom?
Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE).
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
All of the examples listed above, as well as institutional coordination (our State Board is a coordinating board); to provide legislatively mandated information to the General Assembly concerning enrollments, SSCH, athletics, state-supported scholarship programs, etc., and other reporting purposes such as Perkins, SREB, and similar activities.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public (four year and two year) and to a certain extent private 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?
Yes, we have 11 institutions – but these submit data in the fall and limited information on graduates.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
We are just now starting to collect "transcript" level data from our institutions and we are talking about incorporating into the SUR the private for profit intuitions.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
We collect 8 times per year – twice per term (fall, spring, summer 1 and summer 2). We use the census date for on-schedule courses (those that have start dates that coincide with the beginning of the term) and those courses that start after the census date we collect in the second cycle of the term. Again, we are now starting to collect transcript level data (grades for courses).
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?

Yes, we collect workforce oriented courses (ESL, GED, and ABE) in the same database. However we do not collect at the same level of detail – we know how many people took certain courses but we do not ID those students. So, we know how much training was done in terms of contact hours, how many students were served, and which institutions were responsible for the training, but we do not have student unit record data associated with the information.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
ADHE/Planning and Accountability – we collaborate within the agency and with a group of representatives from each institution (private and public).
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, and there are no plan 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, not at this point.
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?
Yes we do have a statement and we follow FERPA.
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 are working with K-12 (we will be able to share data through a “black box identifier”) and UI wage so that we can consistently share data – but it is still a few months away.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
Not yet, but we would like to (particularly with Texas, Louisiana, and Tennessee).

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
Annual report for Perkins data, graduation rates, and retention rates (see web site). We are also starting to track through our SUR the career pathways project – which is a project designed to help poor adults find, take, and pay for workforce training (this can be ESL, GED, ABE, workforce training or for credit course).
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 don't do this directly – we collect data for IPEDS reporting and send data back to institutions so that they can generate statistics – it would be better if we did it, but right now we do not.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
The last two years we have started to work with state agencies to do ad hoc reports such as the percentage of recent post secondary graduates who are employed in the state of Arkansas. We have also started working on tracking students into employment through their major.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Staffing – we need to hire more people, I would like to do more reporting, more comparisons, more data analysis, but there is not enough time or staff to do it – so even though we are collecting more data, I feel that we are not using it to the full advantage.
Salary – we need to pay more, we have quite a bit of turnover because of salary. Also, the folks may have the technical skills (or these skills can be learned) but we still have the problem staff understanding higher education issues.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
Nothing that I haven't covered above.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.

**California (Community College System)
Myrna Huffman**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
It was established in the late 1980's, but full implementation statewide didn't occur until 1990. We generally regard 1992 data as being the first that are useable for research purposes.
2. By whom?
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
All of the above listed are correct, as well as research, program evaluation and statewide accountability.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
109 community colleges.
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?
Same as 2002 – you can check out the web site, we list the timeline for all data.
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?
Ye we include non-credit in the same database.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, but we do have a group that represents all parties. This group gets together pretty regularly – this keeps everyone in the loop. If we have a change from the Feds we just do that and let the group know.

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 it is part of the link. We have no plans to change this as we need it to link with other state agencies.
3. Can campuses access datasets themselves? If yes, who has access and how is this managed?
Yes, after we process and clean the data it is available through our web site (it is pass word protected).
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?
This is not really an issue. We have worked this is out in the past – we are very cautious about our data.
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 FERPA issues at the moment.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
Yes, we link with California State University (CSU), University of California (UC), UI wage, military, department of social services, and the national student clearinghouse. We do not link with high schools.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
No, not other than the national student clearinghouse

Reporting and Use of Data

5. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
Mostly IPEDS – state reporting. We can obtain copies from the web site. We do some other regular reporting for programs, collective bargaining, etc. We also have the DATA MART online this is a free and open database that houses most of our frequently asked for datasets. The idea is give this to the public (legislators, newspaper folks, and policy people) so that our staff is not constantly running reports.
6. 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 Graduation Rate Survey method.

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

We are always asked to do this! Our big one right now is the ARCC Project (accountability reporting for community colleges). There is more about this project on our web site.

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

A little bit of everything. The biggest is encouraging data quality and still meeting a timeline. This is tough. We just started DEQUAT team – this is a team of 10 people who are responsible for about 10 college campuses each. It is their job to make sure our data is in on time and clean. So they will be making a lot of phone calls to ensure the objective.

Overview

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

Our big new thing is we are changing platforms – we are moving to a sequel server by March 2007 and this will keep us busy!

**California (State Universities – CSU)
Philip Garcia**

History

1. When was the student unit record (SUR) system established?
Sometime in the 1970s.
2. By whom?
The California State University (CSU) system, Chancellor's office.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Regular term reports, IPEDS, tracking student retention/graduation, state budget requests and accountability.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
23 campuses – all CSU sites.
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.
No, only if we add another CSU campus.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Census data – Every campus sends us data 2 weeks (for trimester and quarter campuses) and 3 weeks (for semester campuses) after term the starts. We have a mixed system, so we receive data quite often.
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?
Yes, we count pre-collegiate courses (these are courses that count for student status, but not for graduation). In essence, these are remedial courses. This is in the same database.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
My office makes the change based on discussions with the Chancellor of the system. We also attempt to get buy in from all campus presidents. However, if the change is mandated from the Federal government or from the State government – we pretty much just do it and let people know what is happening. If the change comes from the Board, then we do try and get the buy in.
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, it is the major part of the link (which includes other items like campus number, etc.). We have no plan to discontinue the use of SSN.
3. Can campuses access datasets themselves? If yes, who has access and how is this managed?
Well, not really. Each campus sends us the data and if they want aggregate data or help with a report we do that from our end and send it back to the campus.
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?
Security is handled by the CSU corporate information and technology services. FERPA issues are handled by academic affairs (academic research and student academic support coordinators), with legal advice provided by the office of general counsel. We maintain a firewall and encryption – we make a good effort in maintaining confidentiality. This is a constant battle.
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 new FERPA issues lately.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
No, not really. We do have several M.U. (memorandum of understanding) with both the University of California (UC) system and the Community College (CC) system. The High School (HS) system is working on putting together an electronic transcript for each student with a new unique identifier – but this is not finished yet. I anticipate having a MU with the HS when they are ready. We have also talked about linking with employment records, but the security would have to be similar and it currently is not.
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?
We have quite a bit of reports generated regularly using SUR data – please see our web site at: <http://www.asd.calstate.edu/>
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 use IPEDS graduation rate methods. However, we go way beyond reporting just for IPEDS, we generate quite a bit of information for both the state as a whole and for individual institutions (see web site).
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
Mostly we do projections (action research or policy research).
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
 - a. People think that we are big brother – particularly politicians and their staff. We do not keep individual record data, just aggregate data. We are constantly asked questions that we can not and should not answer. People want to know about an individual's student record (e.g., tell me about Marianne Boeke's grades, advisor, classes, etc.) and we do not have that.
 - b. Collecting data is becoming burdensome for the campuses – we have 85 elements for 400,000 people.
 - c. Data integrity – as we ask for more data (and data is not original, it flows from the individual campuses) we need to think about the quality of our data.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
Not really, we have a staff of eight that focus just on this issue – the amount of data we collect and the number of reports required is becoming difficult to keep up with. I think it would be very hard for other states to do this level of reporting without a significant budget and staff. Furthermore, we need to educate our politicians and public about the realities of collecting data – this is aggregate data, not individual. People have a misconception about what we really know and about what we can report.

**California (University System)
Dominique Pfaff**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
1980.
2. By whom?
The University of California (UC) Office of the President.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Management, analytical and operational reporting.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
Only the 10 UC Campus (Merced was just added).
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, only as we add another CA/UC campus – which is unlikely in the near future.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, ends of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
At a minimum 2 times per quarter (census data), but most send data throughout the term from various offices.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
No, in fact we just changed our data collection to a less frequent cycle – we found that the campuses were sending data late and we were a bit worried about the quality, so after much debate we decided to collect less and hope for better quality and a more timely response. For example, we ask now that undergraduate admission data come to us every other month, in the past we had asked for this data monthly.
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?
This is a complex question. We have the authority to propose a change, but we really want buy in from each sector (graduate, undergraduate, financial aid, and registration). We want to be collaborative, so we propose, consult, and get consensus.
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?
No, but we do have them in the majority of our records. We use the campus generated (unique and arbitrary) ID. The problem is that when a student moves from one institution to another, a new ID is generated – we then have to try and match records through the SSN# and other identifiers, but as the SSN# is not required, this is difficult. The campuses initiated this switch (not our office) and as of last year, all campuses have eliminated the use and mandatory collection of the SS#.
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.
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 restrict access; have password protection, a firewall, and a secure server. No, we don't have an explicit privacy policy governing the use of SUR.
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, FERPA issues have not come up recently in our state – we dealt with this earlier or if it is an issue, I don't know about it.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
No online links, but we do have agreements with four entities (community college system of California; California State University (CSU) system; California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC); and department of finance).
We have a schedule for each of the four entities and our office downloads the data onto a secure server once per year and the entity then goes to this site and downloads the data.
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?

Besides IPEDS we do the following three:

Statistical Summary of Students and Staff – annually for fall term:

<http://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/uwnews/stat/welcome.html>

Student Data Warehouse:

<http://www.ucop.edu/irc/dd/css/sdw/studentwarehouse.html>

Information Digest – annually:

<http://www.ucop.edu/sas/infodigest>

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 don't do this – instead we generate the data and on our web site and folks can do “on demand” reports such as graduation and retention statistics. We provide the tools, not the reports.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
Ongoing – see web site.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
We have continued issues with timeliness and quality of data. Campuses are busy and they view the collection of data as burdensome and they don't always see the importance or value of data collection. Quality is an issue as well – we receive the data, clean it, but we can not check the data against the original source.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
 - o tried to make web site more user friendly – so that campuses can see the added value
 - o less reporting from the campuses – so that campuses will report on time
 - o effort to increase quality of data
 - o campuses discontinued the use of SSN#
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
There is a constant tug-of-war between privacy issues and the need to track students.

Colorado
Julie Carnahan

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
1987.
2. By whom?
Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE).
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
IPEDS uploads, tracking student retention/graduation and tracking students across institutions.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
27 public institutions and two private institutions for Undergraduate Applicant, Enrollment, and Degree files. 27 public and 72 private for Financial Aid File. 48 pre-collegiate programs for pre-collegiate file. An assortment of the above in remedial, Teacher Education files.
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?
Two private institutions that participate in Colorado Opportunity Fund ((COF) higher education funding structure) participate in all relevant Student Unit Record Data System (SURDS) files. Some requested data is not applicable for private institutions...72 private and proprietary institutions submit the Financial Aid file. The private and proprietary information is slightly different with regard to issues like funding and residency.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
During the 2004-2005 legislative session, HB05-1057 passed requiring all pre-collegiate programs in the State to submit unit record data on students enrolled in their programs. We are in our first collection cycle with these programs.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
We collect Undergraduate Applicant, Enrollment, Degree, and Teacher Education on a semester basis (including summer). Financial Aid and Pre-Collegiate information is collected annually.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
We are planning to maintain the current collection cycle.

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?

We collect enrollment information on Dual Credit/Postsecondary Education Option (PSEO) students at Community Colleges who attempt college classes. (Not technically what you are inquiring about because the courses are credit bearing, the student just doesn't get any and we still track the activity).

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?

The Director of Research & Information Management has the authority but does not change data elements or definitions without consulting with the Surds Advisory Committee (SAC) and discussing with the Data Advisory Group (DAG). Both groups are made up of Institutional Research staff from institutions in the State.

The Financial Aid Director works with the Financial Aid Advisory Committee (FAC) on changes to data elements or definitions in that file. Those changes are then sent to the Director of Research & Information Management for review before implementing.

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...there are numerous external changes putting pressure on us to come with alternative methods to track unit record data. Proposed legislation will require higher education institutions to add the K-12 state ID, called the SASID by 2009. HB03-1175 required institutions to move away from using SSN's as a primary identifier. We (SURDS) still require SSN's because it is the only way to track students across the state. Even after 2009, we will still have to use SSN's to track out of state students, and students attending private institutions...we use the SSN's in our database but no SSN's are used in reporting...all reports are aggregate.

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 only access reports generated from their submitted data. These reports are automatically generated after the file is clean. Campuses have individuals who are assigned user ID's and Passwords and the web site is available 24-7.

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 a privacy policy up on our web site...we use data perturbation, and suppression on the public web site for many of our reports. The Director of Research & Information Management is continually educating staff on privacy and security issues with data.

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?
Recent losses of hard drives and laptops and hacking incidences which in all cases contained personally identifiable information has raised the bar significantly on this issue. Proposed legislation will require an Information Technology Security Plan for all higher education institutions by July 2007. The CIOs of the public higher education institutions will be meeting monthly to discuss IT security issues. The CISO for the State has been asked to administer a survey addressing privacy issues which will be completed by all state agencies and higher education institutions. The objective of the privacy survey is to establish a baseline of where the State of Colorado is in terms of protecting the privacy of its Citizens.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
On our web site we provide a link to the CDE web site for information on school codes so that users can have access to that particular information. The user is responsible for the match and there are no restrictions to the data. However, if the user attempts to use incorrect school code information on a SURDS file, an error will be recorded. We have had limited conversations about sharing data with the Colorado Department of Education. Nothing has come of it.
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?
Check out our web site for a sample: www.state.co.us/cche/I&r/index.html
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 the IPEDS method....and historically with QIS we have used a derivation when comparing across institutions...to accommodate for differences in size, proportion of full time/part time students, high school GPA, etc. We allow transfer students who are completers to be considered as part of the graduation rate....we don't reduce the cohort based on transfer outs with this method...
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
See the web site at: www.state.co.us/cche/I&r/index.html
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Lack of time to do analysis...and lack of reliability of some institutions data.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
All SURDS files are submitted to a web site....available 24-7 to users. The process of getting a clean file is almost totally a user driven process...
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
Legislation is currently addressing the use of (or not using) SSN.

Connecticut
Mary K. Johnson

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
The first phase of data collection began in 1983
2. By whom?
The Department of Higher Education on behalf of the Board of Governors.
3. For what purpose?
To create a management information system and for resource allocation and funding formula purposes.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public Institutions - The University of Connecticut, Connecticut State University and Community Colleges (Technical Colleges were in the system as well, but were merged with the Community Colleges in the early 1990s).
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.
The independent institutions were included in discussions of the system and could submit data but have chosen not to. No discussions in this regard have taken place in recent years, although the independent institutions are part of our Performance Measures Task Force, but have chosen not to provide any data.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Used to be in the fall and spring after the start of the semester. Now some schools are only submitting fall data.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
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, except for non-credit remedial/developmental courses.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
The Department of Higher Education (DHE) in consultation with the constituent units. (The Board of Governors has a statutory mandated to develop and maintain a higher education information system). There used to be a committee with DHE staff and representatives from the institutions to discuss the data elements. This committee has not met in several years, however, as a result of staffing reductions in the department. When changes were desired or required the committee would give input on the affect on their systems of new data elements and whether they could supply the new data, thus it has been a collegial approach.
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 as a 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, not directly.
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?
While we do not have an explicit privacy policy governing the use of SUR data, we do not permit outside (third party) access to our SUR data system which is housed internally. We consider our SUR system as being covered under the “educational research” exemption under FERPA.
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?
Not with our SUR.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
Program completer (graduation) records have been provided to the Connecticut Department of Labor for UI linkage directly by each constituent unit for the last five years under an agreement brokered by DHE. DHE could not provide the link directly from our system because we do not capture consistent degree completion information (although the design to include that information is in place). Through a one-time agreement with DOL, certain DHE employees were given access to these linked records to do a pilot study on employer satisfaction.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
In another pilot study called “First Steps” students who took the 10th grade CAP test (CT

Department of Education) were followed through college, with more detailed matching on course enrollment (including developmental education) and completion made on students who then entered the Connecticut State University system.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
Although collection of SUR data is continuing, cleaning and analysis of the data has largely been dormant and/or very ad hoc for the last 4 or so years, as a result of staffing reductions.
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 do not have completion data in our database at this time.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
A number of years ago we did studies on student migration within the system. We also have responded to a number of ad hoc data requests with the system. (For example, numbers of students by town was provided as part of a larger town by town fact sheet on state service provision compiled by the governor's budget office. Also, student enrollment by campus by town was analyzed as part of our tuition policy review in 2002 (institutional market analysis).
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
All three of the cited factors mentioned above are challenges for us.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
As already noted, the system has been semi-dormant for several years. Database conversion to Access was completed several years ago. Data files are now sent to us via e-mail.

**Florida
Jay Pfeiffer**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
Late 1970s.
2. By whom?
Board of Regents MIS Office.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
All of the above, as well as state reporting.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
The K-12 system, community and technical colleges, and all universities.
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, all private institutions (there are 28) send information on a voluntary basis – mostly for financial aid purposes. We are working on getting the private-for profits in the system and we are also working on expanding the coverage for the private-not-for-profits.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
No, only our work to include more private institutions (both in total number and in depth of coverage).
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
We do collect transcript level data. We collect data at the beginning and end of term.
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?
Yes – we collect information on two levels. The first is adult education (community college and K-12) this includes adult literacy (what courses the students are taking and their progress) and GED progress. The second level is clock hours for vocational programs.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
This is a collaborative process – we meet with representatives from the institutions and discuss and then my department implements change.
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 an element in the reporting systems. We use a student ID as the key link – this ID is institutional assigned.
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?
Yes and no. We are currently working on this, but right now they have access to their 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?
Yes we have a privacy policy. We comply fully with FERPA.
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?
Yes, we have all sorts of connections (UI wage report, welfare, prisons, enrollment with other types of institutions, federal government, etc.). We continuously update reports with other agencies and most are done by schedule.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
No. We tried it through the National Student Clearing House – but this is not as big an issue for us as other states.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
This is on our web site – we are trying to get away from Fact Books, and move toward reports and tables that the user can build at the website using data.

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 this for both institutions and the state as a whole and we do use IPEDS graduation rate survey method.

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

Right now we have 25 requests from external researchers including PhD candidates; university researchers, foundation researchers, and others for a variety of research topics. These are requests that are pending – this means that some are under further review prior to approval, some have been approved but have been assigned a relatively low priority, or some have been met – but upon reflection researchers have requested additional information. Here is a sampling of requests that we have responded to in the past six months:

- a. Harvard University College of Education: The impact of third grade retention policies
 - b. Manhattan Institute: Evaluation of Florida’s implementation of School Choice options in K12; evaluation of choice options
 - c. Florida State University: Correlates of quality teachers; evaluation of K12 Charter Schools
 - d. Florida State University: Evaluation of Mentoring Initiatives
 - e. University of Wisconsin: Student post school employment
 - f. University of Michigan – Teacher Effectiveness
 - g. Mathematica – Performance Measure adjustments for Workforce Investment Act Programs
 - h. U.S. Census Bureau – Participating and founding state in the Longitudinal Employer Dynamics Project
 - i. Department of Children and Families – Provide data to agency management dashboard
 - j. Lumina- Achieving the Dream – Data as well as systems information
 - k. Sunshine Connections – Business Intelligence for Decision makers at all levels
 - l. Upjohn Institute – Employment research for Workforce Investment Act programs
 - m. University of Baltimore – labor market research using administrative data resources from multiple states
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?

I think that I would point to staff efficiencies rather than lack of resources or time. We are in a world right now where there are incredibly powerful tools designed for big multi-source data bases like data warehouses that we need to learn to exploit. We are engaged in three tracks right now to evaluate these tools with a “proof of concept” due by July 1.

Overview

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

Data quality concerns are always present. My response to number 3 reflects a big one.

We have long had a culture of accountability in Florida that means that legislators, their staffs, executive leadership and others know they can ask very complex, detailed questions and get answers quickly. The fact that we respond completely and quickly means that they know when we make a budget request that it has direct meaning to them. Our data warehouse is a prime example; it has been in existence now for about 4 years. Each year, we have struggled to justify funding. This year the Chairman of the Senate Education Appropriations was applauded when he announced the research we have supported along with the fact that much of this research was funded by foundations, the federal government and other conduits based on the fact that the researchers had been granted access to the data- meaning that the efforts pay for themselves (more or less).

A second thing is that I am very big on “quid pro quo” – I’ll provide you something, if I get something in return. Researchers get access to certain data for research that is needed to inform policy.

Georgia
Cathie Mayes Hudson

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
The unit-record data system for the University System of Georgia Board of Regents was established in 1983.
2. By whom?
Created by the system office.
3. For what purpose?
The original purpose was to improve efficiency in responding to federal reporting requirements; however, data are now used for many purposes, including federal, regional, and System reporting, policy development and analysis, monitoring of policy implementation, providing System-level feedback to institutions (for example, for System-wide retention and graduation-rate reporting), and primarily for research to improve education.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
The 35 institutions in the University System of Georgia (USG) are included; thus, all public higher education institutions in Georgia (research universities, state universities, and two-year colleges). Private institutions' data are not included. Technical college data are not included.
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?

Type of Data	Reporting Cycle
Student data	Semester census date Lagged elements such as cumulative GPA or hours earned are collected in the following semester. Beginning this Summer 2006, data

	will be collected in a data warehouse with mid-term census date data (same as now) and cumulative data collected at the end of the term
Course-level data	Semester census date
Financial aid data	Fall collection only; census date (for previous year)
Continuing education—aggregate level only	Once each CE quarter (not unit level)
Faculty data	Linked to courses; will be linked to students in warehouse—frozen snapshot December 1 of each year

5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
Yes—beginning in summer 2006, data will be extracted into a data warehouse. The cumulative data elements will be reported at the end of the term, rather than in the subsequent term.
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?
Unit-level data on CE courses or students are not collected by the University System. Institutions roll up data and report the aggregate numbers of participants and courses. The aggregate data collection is in a separate data base.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
Roles for data management are formally defined, and in this area there are three major roles. For student data, the Office of Strategic Research and Analysis has the authority to change data elements and definitions. It seeks input from a committee of registrars, directors of admissions, and others, and the recommendations go through a formal change review process managed by the Office of Information and Instructional Technology. The Office of Student Affairs defines System-wide “business practices” that should be shared by all institutions to result in accurate data. All except one institution in the USG use the same institutional student information system (SCT Banner); however, there was no common implementation of the software. Establishing common business practices was fundamental to improving data accuracy. The third role is that of the Office of Information and Instructional Technology. They extract the data from the institutions and ensure that data are extracted as defined, and they organize data into the warehouse structure.
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. Institutions store and use an alternate student identification number for functional purposes, but the SSN (or Tax ID) is used for linking records over time and across institutions. There are processes in place to record SSN changes (corrections). The student ID is also collected.

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?

Institutions can access their own data. In current form, they can have a duplicate copy of the data for their institution after editing. Beginning this summer, they can access their unedited and edited data in the warehouse.

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 explicit practices on privacy and FERPA, and we have a data policy use document (but it is in draft form and under review). We do not share data with a third party, except for a few well-defined projects that are governed by legal agreements that meet FERPA requirements, with educational agencies. For example, we provide feedback data to the high schools that sign confidentiality agreements. We have data-sharing agreements with the governing board office for technical colleges in Georgia (DTAE) and with the State Department of Education (DOE).

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?

There are currently no issues, but there is increasing concern over privacy and identity theft. Several years ago, there was discussion of having a non-educational state agency collect student-level data from state agencies, and there were concerns over that project. The plan was not implemented.

6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?

There are several data-sharing agreements in Georgia. An agreement with DOE allows for the USG to receive student-level data on high school graduates. A separate agreement with the Georgia Department of Labor allows for the USG System Office to receive UI Wage data. There is an agreement with the Department of Technical and Adult Education to exchange data on students who leave one system and enroll in the other. With each agency, we have agreed to not share the data with institutions and to have the agency review reports from the data before they are made public. The data-sharing agreements have worked very well in Georgia.

As for who is responsible for the match, the Office of Strategic Research and Analysis is responsible for the agreement and the exchange; the Office of Information and Instructional Technology actually merge the files.

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

See above—cooperated with DTAE and DOE.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
There are over 1,000 existing reports from student data, called the Student Information Reporting System (SIRS) in Georgia. Many of the reports are available under the student tab at: <http://www.usg.edu/sra/>

A portal that allows for user-defined (with limited parameters) reports on enrollment, retention, graduation rates, and degrees conferred is available at:

https://dss.usg.edu:3377/portal/page?_pageid=903,1,903_53317&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

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)?
The USG uses the IPEDS method. Definitions specific to our data systems are at: http://www.usg.edu/sra/students/grad_ret/definitions.phtml
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
The focus of research this past year has been on retention and graduation. Many of these reports are not yet on the web. One new report on graduation rates (a graduation rate matrix for cohorts and years) is attached.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
The current structure of the data system, essentially one large table, was becoming unwieldy for programming, especially for longitudinal analysis. The warehouse should make data extraction more efficient.

The largest challenge though is lack of resources for programmers and research analysts. This means that reports that should take a short time to program instead take days. Analysts are dependent upon the programmers.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
The USG Data Warehouse has been developed since 2002.

Hawaii
Sharyn Nakamoto

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
Under development from 1995 to the present, with data beginning in 1997 for selected campuses.
2. By whom?
University of Hawaii system Institutional Research Office.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Planning, policy making and decision support.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All 10 campuses of the University of Hawaii.
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 independent or proprietary institutions are included.
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?
Term, semester (combined & unduplicated term data)) for census, end of term, fiscal year.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
Yes. Daily, during the beginning of instruction.
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?
University of Hawaii, Institutional Research Office.

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?
No, SSNs not used as key link. System-generated unique ID is used.
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?
Yes, they can access value added unit record data after it has been cleaned. Individual access is granted according to FERPA, and is managed by UH-IRO.
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 are in the process of updating our FERPA policy.
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?
Not to my knowledge.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
In the planning process of a P-20 system linking high school and post secondary systems (public only).
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? How can we access or obtain copies?
Please see our web site at: <http://www.hawaii.edu/iro/> click on MAPS report link
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, IPEDS GRS method.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
Please see our web site at: <http://www.hawaii.edu/iro/>

4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Lack of staff resources, especially to develop a standard system wide reporting system.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
Migration to Sungard SCT Banner system forced us to put our (now) legacy SUR and reporting system to rest and develop and new data warehouse on a new platform.

Illinois
Mike Baumgartner

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
In 1983.
2. By whom?
Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the public universities and the Illinois Community College Board.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Monitor student progress, retention, transfer and degree completion.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All four year public institutions (4 year and 2 year) and 2 private 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?
We currently have 2 private not-for-profit institutions participating – they report the same data and on the same schedule. We do not have any proprietary institutions.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
Yes, we would like to have more private for-profits and private not-for-profits participate in the system.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Data are collected once a year and include data from all semesters of the previous fiscal year.
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, we do not collect transcript level data.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
We do this by committee – specifically the steering committee (which includes representation from all public schools and members of the board). We must have consensus to change/add/delete data elements and definitions.
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, although we will probably be moving away from using the SSN in the next few years.
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. Although, campuses can and do receive data on their own students, which can include tracking previously enrolled students.
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 limit access to the data (and all reports and data uses must be approved by the steering committee). I don't think we have an explicit privacy policy, as data is kept very secure and any use has to be approved.
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?
Not yet, we are talking about this with the high schools.
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?
We do not generate statistics and reports regularly for any institution nor for statewide purposes – all reports are ad hoc.
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)?
No, we do not generate graduation and retention statistics other than IPEDS reports. We do use IPEDS graduation rate survey method.

3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
We do projection projects (for example, nursing) and a project with ACT. We typically work on 3-4 projects per year.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
The data we collect is very limited in scope. We would like to collect data from more privates, although this would raise some issues in terms of personnel and resources.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
Adding additional data elements is under consideration and linking with the High School data is also being talked about (but this might be hard, given that the high schools use an educational number and not the SSN).
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.

Indiana
Jennifer Seabaugh

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
In 1978.
2. By whom?
The Indiana General Assembly established the Commission for Higher Education in 1971, but the Student Information System (SIS), as a unit record database, begins with Fiscal Year 1978-79.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
The Student Information System was established in order to carry out the directive of the Indiana General Assembly as put forth in IC 20-12-0.5-8(6): "To make, or cause to be made, studies of the needs for various types of postsecondary education and to make recommendations to the general assembly and the governor concerning the organization of these programs. The commission shall make or cause to be made studies of the needs for various types of postsecondary vocational education and shall submit to the commission on vocational and technical education within the department of workforce development its findings in this regard."

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public 2 year and 4 year 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?
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?
We collect transcript level data – once per year on September 15th.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
Yes, we are working on collecting data more frequently – once per term.

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?

Yes, we do collect this information (remedial and GED) and we do store this information in the same database.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
Indiana Commission for Higher Education.
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, we are talking about using something other than SSN, but we are only in the discussion stages.
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?
Only in aggregate form. We hope to have data online soon for institutions to utilize.
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?
Yes, we do have a security policy (online) that is distributed to all institutions.
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, but not in our office but at a private institution.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
No, we are having conversations with the high schools. We are working to some extent with the private institutions and we do share information with UI wage record.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
No. We would be interested and have had some preliminary discussions with the folks from Ohio, Kentucky, and Illinois.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
We do an annual report (very basic) and we are just now starting to think about what we can do in terms of reports and statistics that would be helpful. We are also working on putting everything online.

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 generate graduation and retention statistics for institutions and for the system as a whole and we do use the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey method. We are also thinking about generating graduation rates based on a 10 year method.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
We are moving toward this – we would like to do more with the needs of industry and economic development for our state through the support of higher education.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Lack of time and staff. We would like to do more with the data we do collect (reports, statistics, etc.) but it is hard with our small office.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
No.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.

Kansas
Dawn Ressel

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
2001.
2. By whom?
Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR).
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
To provide consistent data across all institutions (and sectors) as well as being able to track students across institutions. It is also our goal, although it wasn't legislatively mandated, to be able to produce IPEDS.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in the SUR system?
Starting in 2001, the Kansas Board of Regents started working with all public institutions in the state, State Universities, Municipal University, Community Colleges, and Technical Colleges/Schools ... 36 institutions in all. We do not work with Haskell Indian Nations University which is a public institution but it is also a federal school and does not receive state support.
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 of these institutions appear in the Kansas SUR (called Kansas Postsecondary Database (KSPSD)).
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
There have been some minor discussions about bringing in private and independent institutions but the discussions have never been very serious. The main focus right now is to get KSPSD fully up and running for the public schools and then link this database to the K-12 unit record database at our department of education.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
A complete reference manual is available to the public on our website www.kspds.org. Our unit is responsible for collecting data for numerous projects. In order to find the reference manual for our SUR, hover your mouse over the projects link on the upper left hand side of the screen and choose KSPSD. The page that loads should have the reference manual you are interested in.

5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
We do not have plans to collect the current data more frequently or on different cycles but we do plan to phase in some other data collection pieces ... possibly course and registration information, faculty and staff counts, etc.
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 collect ABE and ESL data but it technically is not part of our SUR. Within the agency, we do have plans to track students who complete ABE and ESL training to see how they do in our public institutions but that is currently not happening. Also, at some point in the future, GED will probably come into our system in the same fashion as the ABE (called Pablo) system. Note a reference manual for Pablo can also be found online by clicking the Pablo – ABE project.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
The Institutional Research unit at KBOR has the authority to change elements and definitions with advice from an institutional advisory committee. Since the database is so new review and modifications are an on-going process. Some modifications have been driven by changes in KBOR policy while others are because of a misunderstanding on our part in terms of what the institution can provide us.
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?
Currently it can be said that the SSN is used as a preliminary link. We have a rather completed algorithm that takes SSN, Name, and some demographic information to look for a student and then a KBOR ID is assigned. However, we are starting discussion to use an ID assigned in the K-12 database. This number would provide us with a kind of educational ID number for the state. Out of state students who enter postsecondary education would probably be assigned a number like this by KBOR. However, all of these discussions are VERY preliminary.
3. Can campuses access datasets themselves? If yes, who has access and how is this managed?
Institutions do have access to the data. Aggregate reports will be available to the public. Institution representatives who have been given access to the system can see their unit record information and some aggregate information on other institutions. Online query tools should be coming online this summer making accessing the data much easier for the institutional representatives.

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?

In terms of data collection, our legal counsel has said since we are the governing or coordinating authority of these institutions, we have the right to collect the data on all students, even those with FERPA holds.

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?

As for releasing the data back to the institutions, we have had an interpretation request into OMB for close to 4 years now. We call every few months to see how the interpretation is going but we still have not received a ruling. So, our legal counsel will not allow us to give back any unit record information to an institution for things like transfer tracking. This has been a major disappointment to the institutions and something that everyone in Kansas Higher Education has been working on!

6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?

Currently we do have MOUs (memorandum of understanding) with the Department of Labor to provide employment tracking for our federal grant programs like ABE and Perkins. The intention is to expand this service to all the graduates from a public postsecondary school but that will not happen for another few years. We already have a MOU to share data with K-12 education, but this is the first year of their data collection so we have not shared any data yet. As I mentioned earlier, we are working very hard to create a K-20 database but specific details are not available yet.

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?

Our construction of the database might be slightly backwards but we concentrated on getting the data in first and do not have “standard” reports that we produce. In the next year or two, we will be putting a lot of attention into creating these kinds of things. Once they are created, if the report is aggregate, it will be available to the public on the website. If the report is student specific, it will only be available to an authorized user.

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)?

Again we do not have standard reports but the kind of ad hoc things we have done follow the IPEDS definitions. As for remediation, we are working on a study this spring and summer about it.

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

Just the remediation study mentioned above and a very preliminary transfer migration study. No official results or reports have been published.

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

I would say we have two major challenges. First, our staff is WAY too small. We have 5 full-time individuals for the development; web deployment and maintenance, training and institutional help desk, basic reporting to institutions, handling requests for information, and performing much needed studies for 7 very involved databases. I would like to say we are just barely keeping our head above water but I am not sure we have our heads above water. Very few of the functions I have listed above are getting the amount of attention that they really need. Our second challenge is the quality of the data. Before 2001, Community Colleges and Technical Institutions reported to our Department of Education. Although they follow standard higher education practices, no one has really monitored whether or not they all follow them consistently. It has been our position to not release information unless we feel that it is accurate. This has made our database development slow and is very difficult for non-data people to understand.

Overview

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

Everything we have done on the SUR has happened since 2002. It has been created and continues to evolve.

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

Not that I can think of but feel free to contact me if you have questions about my response or anything else.

Kentucky
Charles McGrew

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
1980.
2. By whom?
Kentucky Legislature, KRS 164.020, 164.095 and KRS 61.870-61.884.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
To determine participation rates, track student enrollments, track campus compliance with equal educational opportunity goals, determine space needs.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public colleges and universities, including community and technical colleges of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS).
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?
All of the private institutions that constitute the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities (AIKCU) report data. An additional independent institution that is not a member of AIKCU, but is licensed by the council, also provides data. Independent institutions provide similar enrollment files (fall semester only), freshmen student performance files and degrees awarded files. Independents do not provide financial or physical facilities reports.

The independents who supply data are now sending limited unit records for spring enrollments in addition to what they do for the fall terms.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
We would like better participation from the private institutions. They have a difficult time submitting one of our files used for tracking first-time freshmen and we would like to improve that.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Same but grades are now being collected 6-weeks after the end of the term.
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 response.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
Information and Research Office.
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. Evaluating possibility of using another created ID as key but we still intend to collect SSNs.
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, datasets are not available to campuses.
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 an explicit data access policy.
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. The issue postponed the collection of grades for several years.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
The information and research staff is responsible for the match (we supervise it) thought it may be conducted off-site with UI wage records or the driver's license database. We occasionally (every 5 years or so) match data with these other offices to collect variables from their data system to help us understand student migration issues for alumni.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
We participated in a pilot with Ohio in a previous NCHEMS project.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
Please see our web site at: <http://www.cpe.ky.gov/research>

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 rate plus we add in those we can tell who successfully transfer or graduate from other institutions that we have SURs for.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
We recently completed a high school feedback report, a mandatory placement report, and an affordability study last year. They are available at our main web page.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
We need a data warehouse.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
No response.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No response.

Louisiana Gene Fields

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
In the 1970s.
2. By whom?
The Board of Regents.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
The BoR SUR Systems (SSPS, Completers, FADS) were developed over the past 30 years to collect, analyze and maintain student enrollment and program completion information and migration/enrollment patterns across the state. In the current incarnations, the systems have been utilized to support three Master Plans, identify student transfer patterns across the state, estimate institutional and statewide retention and graduation rates, and provide student enrollment/program completion information for policy, planning, and research.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public 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?
No.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
We do have a long range plan to incorporate the private institutions – we are trying to sell them on the idea as opposed to mandating it through the legislature. We believe there is a real added value to our system, and we are in discussions with the private institutions. We currently have two private institutions piloting an abridged version of the system – if they input the data; we will submit the state and national reports.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
We use census date for each institution, but completed data is due by January 15, March 15, June 15th -- for other dates please see web site at:
<http://www.regents.state.la.us/Reports/require.htm>
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?
No.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
[The Board of Regents – we do have a committee made up of participating institutions and this committee usually is on board with any 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?
[Yes SSN are the key link. No plans to discontinue.](#)
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?
[Yes directory information, otherwise our office would run a special report for them.](#)
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 do have a policy in place.](#)
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 do link with High School and UI wage. We submit the data \(cohorts\) once per year to their system and receive aggregate measures back.](#)
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?
 - [2000 Accountability Report - Trends and Statistics, Louisiana Public Postsecondary Education](#)
 - [Louisiana Public University Minimum Admissions Criteria \(Effective Fall 2005\) and TOPS Core Curricula](#)
 - [Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education: 2001](#)

- [A Study of the Governance Structure of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System \(LCTCS\)](#)
 - High School feedback reports (working with ACT to formalize)
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 generate graduation and retention statistics for institutions and for the state as a whole. We use our own method (systemic rates for 2 year, 4 year, technical).
 3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
 - [TOPS Reporting System](#)
 - [Student Transcript System \(STS\)](#)
 - [Classification of Instructional Programs: 2000 Edition](#)
 - [CIP Code Conversion for BoR Reporting Systems \(Timeline\)](#)
 - [New Federal Guidelines for Ethnicity Reporting](#)
 - [Noel Levitz Enrollment Project](#)
 - [Noel Levitz System wide Strategic Enrollment Analysis, Report of Findings and Recommendations and the Noel Levitz Executive Summary](#)
 4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
We have a solid database and we produce a lot of reports and statistics, but we still have issues surrounding turnover at the individual campuses (therefore it can be, at times, difficult to get clean and timely data) and educating the public about what our data represents and how to use it accordingly.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR since 2002?
Well, we have implemented our financial aid database – we collect data on the academic year.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
Hurricane Katrina of 2005 was a difficult time for all of us in Louisiana and the South. With the loss of students and staff, it has been hard for schools to report data on their students accurately, so even though we have been going back and trying to fill in the gaps (in terms of data for Fall 05 and Spring 06), it has been tough.

The Board of Regents has initiated an 8.5 million “return to learn” scholarship fund. If you are a former student who was enrolled in a Louisiana college or university when you were displaced by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita, a displaced Louisiana resident who would like to enroll in college, or a displaced Louisiana high school student set to graduate in 2006, Louisiana invites you to come back home this fall to further your education.

Maryland Charles Benil

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
1977.
2. By whom?
Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC).
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
IPEDS, tracking student retention/graduation, tracking students across institutions, enrollment projections and program review.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
Public and only Maryland residents at most independent colleges.
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?
Approximately 16 independent colleges and universities participate. This is 60% of all independents – however, these represent the largest independents. Some data is public but it is reported only for Maryland residents at those colleges.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
Not at this time.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Enrollment information system – census (fall semester) (SIS)
Degree information system – annual (DIS)
Financial aid information system – annual (FAIS)
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
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 or continuing education within the student unit record collection.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
MHEC with multi-segment advice.
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, no plans to discontinue.
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 – files (edited versions) are returned to campus upon request.
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?
Commission policy on release of FERPA data includes both legal and statewide review.
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?
K-12 segment developing unit record which will not use SSN, but have its own unique student identifiers. MHEC is working with K-12 system on this issue to ensure K-16 linkages are possible.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
We link with UI wage record – on a special project basis to extract wage information. UI staff responsible for the match and data is restricted to project intent. SAT/ACT – for high school data as part of graduate performance feedback report. SAT data match is done by the College Board and data is restricted to the feedback report. We also share enrollment and degree information with the K-12 agency for Perkins reporting and accountability needs of community colleges.
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?
We regularly compile enrollment, graduation/retention, and transfer reports, which can be obtained by contacting the Research and Policy Analysis Division.

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)?
Both can be done on any period from one to seven years. State graduation rates are framed upon system level calculations not IPEDS.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
Enrollment, graduation/retention and transfer reports can be obtained by contacting the Research and Policy Analysis Division at:

www.mhec.state.md.us/publications.research.index.asp
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Staff resources limitations (both IT and research).

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR since 2002?
We now use the Web for data file submissions.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.

**Massachusetts
Meg Rowan**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
1985.
2. By whom?
Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (BHE).
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
System research and planning.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?

Berkshire Community College	Bridgewater State College
Bristol Community College	Fitchburg State College
Bunker Hill Community College	Framingham State College
Cape Cod Community College	Massachusetts College of Art
Greenfield Community College	Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Holyoke Community College	Massachusetts Maritime Academy
Mass Bay Community College	Salem State College
Massasoit Community College	Westfield State College
Middlesex Community College	Worcester State College
Mt. Wachusett Community College	University of Massachusetts
North Shore Community College	Amherst
Northern Essex Community College	University of Massachusetts Boston
Quinsigamond Community College	University of Massachusetts
Roxbury Community College	Dartmouth
Springfield Technical Community College	University of Massachusetts Lowell
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?

The following independent and proprietary schools are newly included in our student unit record system. They are ONLY included for the financial aid data collection which we recently initiated. No enrollment, admissions or degree information is collected for the following schools. They are on the same schedule as the public colleges for the financial aid data collection. In some limited cases, the difference in this collection between the

independent and public institutions is that not all independent institutions supply student unit data for institutional financial aid awards.

Ailano School of Cosmetology	Gordon College
American International College	Hallmark Institute of Photography
Amherst College	Hampshire College
Anna Maria College	Harvard College
Assabet Valley Reg. Vocational Sch.	Harvard Extension School
Assumption College	Hebrew College
Atlantic Union College	Henri`s School Of Hair Design
Babson College	Holy Cross College
Bay Path College	Jolie Hair and Beauty Academy
Bay State Junior College	Katharine Gibbs School
Bay State School of Technology	Kay Harvey Hairdressing School
Becker College/Worcester	Labaron Hair Academy
Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology	Laboure College
Bentley College	Lasell College
Berklee College of Music	Lawrence Memorial Hospital
Blaine The Beauty Career Sch-Lowell	Lesley College
Blaine The Beauty Career Schools-Malden	Longy School Of Music
Boston Arch Center	Mansfield Beauty-Quincy
Boston Baptist College	Mansfield Beauty-Springfield
Boston College	Marian Court Junior College
Boston Conservatory of Music	Massachusetts School of Barbering
Boston University	Massachusetts College of Pharmacy
Brandeis University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Brockton Hospital	Merrimack College
Bryman Institute	Montachusett Reg Vocational Tech
Butera School Art	Montserrat College of Art
Cambridge College	Mount Holyoke College
Career Education Institute	Mount Ida College
Catherine Hinds Institute	Museum Fine Arts Sch
Clark University	N.Brkshre Mccann Tec
College Of Our Lady of Elms	New England Hair Academy
Curry College	New England Inst. Of Art & Comm
Dean College	New England School of Photography
Diman Regional Technical Institute	Newbury College
Eastern Nazarene College	Nichols College
Emerson College	North Bennet Street School
Emmanuel College	Northeastern University
Endicott College	Pine Manor College
Fisher College	Porter and Chester Institute
Funeral Institute of the North East	Quincy College
	R E T S
	Regis College

Rob Roy Academy-Fall River
Campus
Rob Roy Academy-New Bedford
Rob Roy Academy-Taunton Campus
Rob Roy Beauty-Worcester
Shawsheen Valley Technical
Institute
Simmons College
Simons Rock
Smith College
Southeastern Regional Technical Inst
Springfield College
Stonehill College
Suffolk University
The New England Conservatory
The Salter School
Tufts University
Urban College Of Boston
Wellesley College
Wentworth Institute
Western New England College
Wheaton College
Wheelock College
Williams College
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Wyo Tech

3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
Not at this time.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Fall Data (Enrollment, Admissions, Course) collected in December as of the institution's freeze date (typically within 2 weeks of add/drop).
Annual Data (Enrollment, Course) collected in August as of the end of term (fiscal year collection).
Degree/Completions Data collected in October as of the end of the fiscal year.
Financial Aid Data collected in September/October as of the end of the fiscal year.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
Currently, there are only some initial plans to possibly collect an additional spring file as of the institution's freeze date. We are only in the initial phases of discussion regarding this possibility.
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 course enrollment data is collected in our Annual File collection which takes place in August of each year. There are a few non-credit course data elements that are included in our overall data dictionary. They include:

Course Type – required field for all courses

1. Credit
2. Non-Credit
3. CEU/PDP, etc. (courses offering Continuing Education Units or Professional Development Points)

Non-Credit Course Type – Required for all non-credit courses (Course Type = 2)

1. Personal Growth/Enrichment/Recreation/Leisure
2. Workforce Development (Job Skills-related, Licensure, Technical, etc.)
3. Not Applicable (University and State Colleges only)

Definition: Personal growth/enrichment/recreation/leisure not-for-credit courses address the personal and leisure interests of students. A not-for-credit Workforce Development/Job Skills Training course is a college-sponsored job/occupational skills related training activity under the leadership of a qualified instructor **for which the college maintains a record of participation.** Examples would be:

CISCO Licensure, Oracle Licensure, Workplace Literacy, Computer Applications courses, etc.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
BHE Research and Planning, specifically Meg Rowan, Director of Data Systems in conjunction with Jonathan Keller, Associate Vice Chancellor of Research and Planning have authority to make changes. Changes to data elements and definitions are made with input from the BHE Database Manager and Database Administrator. Changes are also typically made after consulting with the Institutional Research user group, consisting of institutional researchers on the campuses.
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?
Random identification codes are assigned to each student; however SSNs are currently used to identify a student from one year to another and from one college to another. SSN will continue to be an important identifier since we match student data from the National Student Clearinghouse by 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, colleges cannot access unit record data themselves.
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 privacy and FERPA issues very seriously. Any request for student unit record data is treated individually. Our legal counsel is always involved in these situations.
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?
We are currently working with the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) to determine ways to institute a data-sharing agreement that will be in strict compliance with FERPA.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
As mentioned above, we are in the process of determining ways to link DOE data with BHE data.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.

Not yet.

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?

Many, many reports and analyses are completed by the research and planning office for both internal and external use. An annual performance measurement report is produced by our office, using SUR data, as well as outside data. A link the report is given below. In addition, an annual Degrees Conferred report is produced using SUR data, as well as a Year-End summary, System At-a-Glance Linear Trend Reports. Statistics and reports are produced from our student record system for various task forces and board meetings throughout the year. Many of these are on an ad-hoc basis.

2004 Performance Measurement Report:

http://www.mass.edu/p_p/includes/ir/2004PerformanceMeasurement.pdf

2005 Performance Measurement Report:

http://www.mass.edu/p_p/home.asp?id=3&iid=3.20

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)?

Graduation Rate reports are currently produced from the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey. Retention rates are calculated from our system using the IPEDS method, as described on the IPEDS website.

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

The BHE has most recently been involved in research related to student financial aid and community college retention and graduation rates. The recent research is currently intended for internal policy purposes and has not yet been published.

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

A frequent challenge we face is staff resource and lack of available time for all the analysis which we would ideally be able to do. The data configuration and staff skills are there while the time, unfortunately, is not always.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR since 2002?
We redesigned our database in 2002, so, since then, we have not run into too many issues. We added the financial aid file data submission in 2004 and added the independent institutions' data to the database in 2005. Most of those issues had to do with definitions and processes. Prior to 2002, the BHE had an agreement with the Division of Employment and Training to match student records with UI wage records. After the database redesign and the concurrent end of an agency that used to assist with that matching, the BHE has had difficulty re-establishing processes to facilitate UI wage record matching. Part of that has to do with clarifications in FERPA law since 2002. We hope to resolve these issues in the future so that UI wage records can again be part of our database and analyses.

2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
We are in the process of updating our data element dictionary – we will send it to you at a later date... this summer 2006

Minnesota
Alexandra Djurovich

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
1983.
2. By whom?
Minnesota Legislature.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Enrollment and degree databases facilitate: analyzing current and future higher education needs, comparing enrollment or graduation patterns among Minnesota institutions and others, describing student characteristics, producing degree awards, and allocating campus-based financial aid.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public institutions in the state. All private institutions which are eligible to participate in any Minnesota student financial aid program. This includes all private degree granting 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?
Private proprietary institutions that participate in Minnesota financial aid are included. This is about 75 institutions. Total student enrollment captured is about 40,000 students, which includes two large online institutions located in Minnesota, Capella and Walden.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
No expansion is planned. Last year our state made the reporting mandatory if an institution is eligible to participate in a Minnesota financial aid program.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Data are collected only for fall term.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
No plans to expand, although the system is designed to include other terms if there is an expansion in the future.

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 only request enrollment for students in credit-based courses.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
The Minnesota Office of Higher Education.
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 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.
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 a nondisclosure agreement. (Copy of agreement is included in the Manual).
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?
No. However, there is a preliminary proposal to link higher education data with the K-12 student data, but this is just a proposal.
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?

This is the only fact book that is prepared:
<http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?PageID=427>

Otherwise, the data is posted on our Web site under various categories:
<http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=409>

We also have a search function so users can retrieve their own cross tab tables:
<http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPagesOHE/SERDB5.cfm>

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)?

None generated.

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

We prepare e-newsletters with a single focus. See:

http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=480&1534-D83A_1933715A=692cbb1d56f97903

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

Nothing significant.

Overview

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

This summer we will implement a system where institutions can submit data using an encrypted Web site.

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

No.

**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.

Missouri
John R. Wittstruck

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
The first academic year we started collecting unit-record data was 1987-1988.
2. By whom?
The Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
For a variety of purposes, including the above.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All Missouri public two- and four-year 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?
No.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
There are discussions but no action plans.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Data are collected annually from institutions during the period from September to November.
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.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?

The Board in consultations with the State Data Advisory Committee, which consists of representatives from selected 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?
Yes the SSN is used as the key link – there are no plans to discontinue.
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?
For cross-institutional data, they do not have direct 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?
Only aggregate data are distributed.

We use a non-disclosure statement and an agreement regarding the use of the data when a third party, including our institutions, want access to the data base. Attached is a typical agreement we have with the Missouri Department of Elementary Secondary Education. This agreement applies to some research we are doing related to students graduating from high school eligible for an A+ scholarship (student meet certain requirements while in high school receive a scholarship to attend a Missouri two-year community college or area vocational technical school). Also attached is a copy of the statement used with the University of Missouri-Columbia faculty working with us who have to get approval from their IRB board to do research related to human subjects. I will need to locate a non-disclosure statement and send it to you separately.

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 pilot tested linking our higher education unit record system to the elementary/secondary education unit record system for the purpose of assigning elementary/secondary MOSIS Student Identifiers to our higher education records for Missouri high school graduates. It went well and we will continue doing this.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
Not student-level data involving SSNs. FERPA does not allow that.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
Quite a few. Two major ones are the Missouri Higher Education Progress Report and the Missouri High School Graduates' College Performance Report.
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)?
Three-year for community colleges and six-year for four-year institutions.

We use both the IPEDS Graduation Rate method to assist the schools in completing the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey plus we calculate graduation rates of native students graduating from their home institution and from any public institution in the state. The numerator is the number that graduated; the denominator is the cohort of first-time, full-time, degree seeking freshmen. For retention, the numerator is the number that completed the first semester, the second semester, or returned the following fall. The denominator is the cohort of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen.

3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
Performance-based funding; institutional mission review; ad hoc research.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Having sufficient personnel and financial resources is the biggest challenge and obstacle. There is more we can and could do if we had the resources. Currently, we limp along, knowing what is possible and could do, but simply can't at this point.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR since 2002?
The biggest and only new development has been to develop a linkage with elementary/secondary education data to begin building a K-20 data base and warehouse.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
Part of the reason we are moving to begin using the elementary/secondary education student identifier for Missouri high school graduates is the emerging resistance on some campuses to use the SSN as their campus student identifier.

**Nevada
Tyler Trevor**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
The Nevada System of Higher Education's (NSHE) student unit-record database (student data warehouse) was developed in 2000.
2. By whom?
The project was completed by System Administration in conjunction with System Computing Services.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
The primary purpose of the database is to support system wide institutional research efforts.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All institutions in the NSHE are included: University of Nevada – Las Vegas (UNLV), University of Nevada – Reno (UNR), Nevada State College (NSC), Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN), Western Nevada Community College (WNCC), and Great Basin College (GBC).
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?
Mid-semester Census and End-of-Semester.
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.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
System Administration and System Computing Services.
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, however a warehouse person ID is also assigned to each record.
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.
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?
System attorneys have developed a position in which we follow.
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?
Currently we do not, however inter-local agreements have been developed with both K-12 and the state's labor department to establish links with both high school and UI wage records.
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?
The warehouse is used to produce a variety of reports including, enrollment distributions by student demographics, as well as student success measures.
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 rely on IPEDS for our official retention and graduation rate data; however these measures can be replicated in the warehouse.

3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
[Transfer study and graduation rates for Millennium Scholars.](#)
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
[Data quality for some key variables, such as new student codes.](#)

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
[We are in the process of a system wide ERP. This will dramatically change not only the administrative software used throughout the System, but also nature of our warehouse. In general, this project will place a greater focus on the System's use of a data warehouse, increasing data administration and quality assurance.](#)
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
[No.](#)

**New Jersey
Kris Krishnan**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
1985.
2. By whom?
New Jersey Department of Higher Education (The predecessor agency to the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education).
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
IPEDS reporting, tracking retention, attrition, etc.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
Our New Jersey Student Unit Record Enrollment (SURE) System includes all public institutions and 9 independent (not-for-profit) 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?
Yes, 9 independent (not-for-profit) institutions, no for-profit institutions.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
Yes, we would like to have all independent institutions included.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
We collect data each term and we collect completion of degrees annually. We do not collect transcript level data.
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.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
[The New Jersey Commission on Higher Education](#)
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 and we have no plans to discontinue the use of SSN 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?
[Not directly – the institution would request data/reports from our office.](#)
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 do not have a formal privacy policy, but our unwritten policy is to not share student level data with any agency.](#)
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 do share information with the Department of Labor and they in turn share information with the UI Wage Office. We also share information with the Student Grant Record \(financial aid\).](#)
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
[No, but we are just now beginning conversations with Pennsylvania as some of our institutions would like to share information across states.](#)

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
[We do lots of reporting and statistics – please see our web site.](#)
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 generate graduation and retentions statistics for institutions and the system as a whole – we do use the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey method.](#)

3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
We have been working on the Long Range Plan for higher education and the Peer Analysis report (please see our web site for more information).
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Staff resources and programming personnel time. We constantly need to do more with less.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
We have had some minor tweaking of the system in the last few years – specifically we have added more data elements (e.g., SAT Scores).
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.

**New Mexico
Paul Landrum**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
New Mexico Commission of Higher Education (NMCHE) assumed responsibility in 1994.
2. By whom?
New Mexico Commission of Higher Education (NMCHE).
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Funding Formula.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public postsecondary and limited private 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?
Some.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
We are working on incorporating the tribal colleges in the state.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
All of the above. Student and course by census date and end-of-term for every semester, annual grads, financial aid.
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.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?

Our office works with the institutions in an advisory group – we work toward consensus.

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 and we have no plans to discontinue the use of 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?
Limited access – they can access their own data only.
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 detailed data-sharing agreements. We support the concept of individual privacy and the letter and spirit of the FERPA rules. However, FERPA was never intended to prevent research that would improve higher education systems. Specific research exceptions are included in the body of the legislation and are observed by NMCHE, as well as every precaution in safeguarding the privacy of individuals. Detailed data-sharing agreements are in place for specific projects; these agreements outline acceptable uses and safeguards for data.
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?
Yes we link with UI Wage Records and the office of education – we are working on linking with the K-12 public school system. We have had these linkages in place for some time and have a set schedule as to when and how the data is shared.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
We would like to, but we do not at this time.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
Dozens of reports — graduation rates, enrollment, etc. (please see our web site).
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 generate these statistics and we use the IPEDS Graduate Rate Survey method.

3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
It varies, student success and economic impact of education are two that come to mind (please see our web site for more examples).
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Unrealistic alignment between staff (resources) and the work wanted. Staff turnover is another issue – we are constantly training.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
Well, our office has been working on putting together a feasibility report to link our database with other databases. We are looking at linking with the K-12 system, other in-state agencies and other state SUR databases. We are trying to find ways to do this with limited staff, limited budget, and determine the added value. One of our issues is that to link to the National Clearinghouse is just too costly.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.

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

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.

New York (SUNY)
John Porter

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
The SUNY Student Data File (SDF) was initiated by the System Office of Institutional Research in 1978, but not all campuses were on the file initially. Within five years (Fall 1983), we had approximately 50 percent participation and roughly 90 percent participation within 10 years (Fall 1988). The last six or seven campuses were difficult to get on board, but we finally got 100 percent (all 64 institutions) in fall 2001. The SUNY Statutory Colleges (Cornell Statutory, Ceramics at Alfred) are not considered private institutions, although they are closely affiliated with privates (Cornell Endowed and Alfred University).
2. By whom?
System Office of Institutional Research.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
The purpose of the file includes all of those mentioned above. Enrollment planning, academic planning, budget/resource allocation, internal reporting and analysis, external reporting (IPEDS and NYS Education Department), student tracking — both attrition/retention/grad rate, as well as tracking transfer students across the system or using National Student Clearinghouse data into non-SUNY institutions.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All of the sixty one institutions in the State University of New York (SUNY): 29 campuses operated by the State of New York, 2 private colleges with contracts to provide education to the citizens of the State of New York (Cornell and Alfred University), and 30 community colleges.
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?
2 independent colleges. 30 community colleges. The community colleges do not participate in data collections leading to calculating the cost per credit hour.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
Yes. We are completing the third year of five year project to replace all of the SUR systems. Also, we have completed an enrollment data warehouse and are in the process of implementing a degree warehouse.

4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
The new system captures instructional activity during the entire academic year, regardless of term. The current system captures instructional information on various census dates.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
See answers to #4.
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?
We capture aggregate non-credit instructional activity, registrations, total contact hours, type of instruction, on an annual basis. Non-credit instruction approved for state support, e.g., remedial instruction leading to college-level courses work, on a unit record basis.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
Most data elements and their definitions are maintained by the office of institutional research. However, our practice is to consult with campuses before changes are implemented. A few data elements are grounded in System policy and/or legislation. These elements may not be changed without higher approval.
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?
Currently, yes. In the new system, no. The new system assigns a unique identifier to a student based on a matching algorithm that includes various data elements identifying the student. Campuses are required to store the System ID in the student's record and use the ID when reporting information concerning the student to the System.
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?
Each campus currently receives a unit record file of their students. We are discussing the possibility of making unit record data, without student identifying information, available to all campuses. Whether or not this happens depends on support issues.
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 do not make unit record available to third parties unless System attorneys approve the release.

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?
Not so far. We are very strict in following FERPA, which probably why these issues have not surfaced in the past.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
No. It is the position of System attorneys that such linking activities violate FERPA, unless required by legislation, or with the specific provisions of FERPA concerning such disclosures.
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?
Student enrollment and characteristics, retention and graduation rates mostly.
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 GRS.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
No response.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting (e.g. data configuration/structure, lack of programming personnel time, staff resources for analysis, etc.)?
FERPA exclusions need to be updated to facilitate the dynamic nature of today's higher education students, e.g., today's students are mobile and tend to attend multiple institutions in completing their higher education goals.

Overview

1. Can you give me a quick update on events affecting the SUR database since 2002? Have there been any significant developments in regards to SUR (like use of different technology, use of web for data submission by institutions, legal issues)?
Our five year project will greatly improve the quality of SUNY's SUR information and the integration of the data within SUNY.

2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No response.

**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:
 - Earnings gains of basic skills students who complete the GED or Adult High School Diploma.
 - Percent of students who transition from basic skills to a curriculum program
 - 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.

**North Carolina (University System)
Diana Haywood/Scott Jenkins**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
In 1980.
2. By whom?
University of North Carolina (UNC) General Administration.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
All of the above.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All 16 UNC institutions are included.
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?
Two private senior institutions are included in fall enrollment data. All data elements are not reported by these institutions. Reporting is voluntary and schedules typically differ from UNC collection dates.
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?
Data are collected each fall, spring and summer term for: on-campus and distance education enrollments, student course data, course description data. Data are collected once annually for student financial aid. Data are collected at the end of the term for student grades.
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.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
Data elements and definitions may be changed by staff at UNC General Administration in collaboration with campus Directors of Institutional Research (DIRs) or other affected campus personnel.
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 used. Because of the need to link to other databases, no plans have been made to discontinue use of SSNs.
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?
DIRs have access to their own data with SSNs, but only to other campus data without SSNs.
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?
Third parties must sign an agreement for using data which is consistent with FERPA guidelines. Additionally, unless necessary, SSNs are not provided. Lawyers typically prepare special data sharing agreements.
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?
Data are regularly linked with community college data. The community college system office provides data to the university system for linking with university system data. Enrollment statistics, performance measures and retention reports are generated and reported to the community college system.

By state requirement, data are annually provided to the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee SOICC for linking with employment data and reporting. For other special projects, data may be linked with wage records, in which case data are provided to the Employment Securities Commission, linked and returned.
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?
An annual statistical abstract is generated. Additionally IPEDS reports, annual surveys, reports to the governing board for the system, annual reports and many ad hoc reports are generated. Please see web site at:

<http://www.northcarolina.edu/content.php/assessment/reports/reports.htm>

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)?

Up to 10 years of retention, graduation and persistence reporting is done. Follow-up reports include “within institution” and “within system” tracking. Rates calculated include retention, graduation and persistence for all first-time full-time freshmen. Rates are also calculated for key subgroups (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, age, residence status, etc.).

3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources (can we have a copy or the URL)?
Data from the SUR for UNC and NC Community College System were used by consultants to look at needs for academic programs in light of NC’s changing economy.

<http://intranet.northcarolina.edu/docs/aa/reports/economy/StepAhead.pdf>

Data from SUR are used to look at retention and graduation trends to help focus on improving student success.

<http://www.northcarolina.edu/content.php/aa/planning/retention/retention.htm>

Data are also used for enrollment models and workforce projection models used to determine the role of university to solve workforce issues such as the teacher and nursing shortages.

4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
One challenge is the need for staff resources to do analysis.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
The web is used for data cleansing and reporting.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.

North Dakota Grant Crawford

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
1998.
2. By whom?
No response.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
No response.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?

The North Dakota University System campuses:
Bismarck State College
Dickinson State University
Lake Region State College
Mayville State University
Minot State University
Minot State University – Bottineau Campus
North Dakota State University
North Dakota State College of Science
University of North Dakota
Valley City State University
Williston State College
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?
Enrollment (students, courses, majors, demographics): third week (census date), end of semester, annually
Programs Offered/Programs Completed: annually

Faculty Appointments: annually
Vocational / Technical Data (students, courses, demographic): annually
IPEDS Reports: as required
Admissions Exemption Report: annually
FISAP – Annually
Common Data Set – Annually
Homeland Security Information - Annually

5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
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?
Non-Credit enrollment data is captured in separate databases on each campus and then compiled to produce an annual NDUS report. This annual report is aggregate data non-identifiable.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
End-User Community in conjunction with University System personnel.
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 use EMPLID as the primary key in the NDUS student administration system. However, SS # is a stored value and is populated whenever possible (when the student is willing to provide). The annual reporting, which unduplicates, uses SS # (where available) to accomplish this unduplication.
3. Can campuses access datasets themselves? If yes, who has access and how is this managed?
The current NDUS student administration system is relatively new and data access at the present time is either non-existent or very limited. However, we plan to provide query and report instances where end-users can retrieve data for review, analysis, and reporting. A data warehouse concept is also being review and considered for implementation as dollars become available to do so.
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 comply with all aspects of FERPA legislation. We do not have any additional privacy policies.

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?
We have had no FERPA privacy issues that we know about. Professionalism in North Dakota finds us erring on the side of FERPA compliance perhaps even more than the law intended.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
Yes. Higher education and other government agencies have established a separate government agency (FINDET-Follow-up Information on North Dakota Education and Training). Once the FINDET Office has received the data, they match SS number to wage files to determine if students have remained in ND. Data is reported in aggregate format with a suppress feature if the number is less than five.
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?
Most reports and/or statistics are available under **REPORTS AND INFORMATION** on the North Dakota University System website at: www.ndus.nodak.edu
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)?
[The IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey method.](#)
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
[Remedial Course and Enrollment Report \(not available on line\).](#)
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
a) Staff resources; b) Our data system (which happens to be PeopleSoft and which is effective-date driven for nearly all data values); and c) Campuses are not inclined to always enter and maintain data consistently.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
[The new administrative data system has been installed since 2002. It is a web-based system which allows data entry and modification via web.](#)

Ohio
Darrell E. Glenn

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
Higher Education Information (HEI) System went live in the winter of 1998.
2. By whom?
It was a collective effort of Ohio's state colleges and universities and the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR).
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Resource allocation; student tracking across campuses; student retention/graduation; IPEDS facilitation; and general performance reporting.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
Ohio has comprehensive data on all public colleges and universities (2-year and 4-year). Limited data are collected for students attending full-time at private institutions (have data on state financial aid program recipients).
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?
The data collected on private institutions is much more limited than what is collected for public institutions. Student-level data for private schools exists only for state financial aid program recipients. All Ohio resident students attending full-time at an Ohio not-for-profit college or university receive a "Choice Grant" amounting to about \$1,000 per academic year. Some students attending private for-profit schools receive workforce development grants. All students who qualify on the financial needs criteria are eligible for the state's need-based financial aid program, regardless of the type of degree-granting postsecondary institution attended.
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?
Student enrollment and course data are collected on a term basis, at the end of the term. Degree completion data are collected annually, although the specific term of completion is included as a field in the degree completion file.

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?
Data element dictionary for the Board of Regents noncredit workforce development course activity files is located on our website at:

<http://www.regents.state.oh.us/hei/noncredit/>

These noncredit course data files are collected for the purpose of distributing funds from the Higher Skills Incentive Grant component of Job Challenge. The funds are distributed in proportion to each campus' share of the total statewide revenues generated through noncredit, job-related instruction and training activities, as annually reported to the Board of Regents.

ABE, ESL, and GED programs are administered by the Ohio Department of Education.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
Board of Regents staff, in consultation with campus 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?
The SSN is used as the key link. We have no plans to discontinue the use of the SSN, although we have talked about the possibility of future legal difficulties associated with its use. Although we use the SSN, and authorized personnel have access to it, we also have an alternative internal identifier called the OBRID. SSNs are mapped to OBRIDs through a confidential process.
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 aggregated results through our on-line query system. Unit-record data is generally not available to campuses. Campuses do, however, have access to data on their graduates' post graduation earnings. Special releases must be signed for this 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?

Board of Regents general data access policy is located on our website at:
<http://www.regents.state.oh.us/hei/Policy.PDF>

Board of Regents confidentiality agreement for use of wage record data:
<http://www.regents.state.oh.us/hei/ODJFSagreement.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 issues have come up in Ohio.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
 - Ohio links to UI wage records through agreements with ODJFS (Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services).
 - We have no direct link to K-12 student data, but we have a data exchange with Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) and Adult Workforce Education (AWE) (within the Ohio Department of Education), whereby those groups may determine the postsecondary enrollments of their students. We also have agreements with ACT and College Board to receive annual unit-record test score data for each year's high school graduating class. The student data questionnaire responses provide a source of data on students' high school course-taking patterns.
 - We have an agreement with the National Student Clearinghouse whereby a college may find enrollments of students that left that school.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
The Board of Regents is the only state higher education agency in Ohio. We have participated in the NCHEMS project with Peter Ewell and from that we worked with Kentucky.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data? Statewide "Performance Reports," High School to College Transition reports, ad hoc research reports, please see our web site at:
<http://www.regents.state.oh.us/perfrpt/index.html>
Standard statistical reports: <http://www.regents.state.oh.us/hei/reports.html>
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)?
For four-year universities, we use the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey method to calculate the "within-institution" graduation rate. We also calculate and report a

graduation rate that includes graduates who have transferred and earned degrees at institutions other than where they started.

For two-year institutions, we report three-year “success rates” for first-time full-time degree seeking students. Graduation, continued third-year enrollment at same institution, and continued third-year enrollment at different institution are separately reported. The sum of these three outcomes is the three-year success rate.

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

See “Special Reports” at: <http://www.regents.state.oh.us/perfrpt/index.html>

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

We are fortunate in Ohio to have sufficient data and personnel resources to do most of the research that we need to do for policy development and evaluation purposes.

The single biggest gap in our data resources is the lack of unit-record financial aid data. Our discussions about affordability are plagued by the lack of student-level information on all the pieces of the affordability “puzzle”: sticker price tuition, grants received, net tuition, and expected family contribution.

Overview:

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

The collection of noncredit data was implemented in 2005.

OBR collaborated with the Ohio Learning Network (OLN) to capture enrollments in distance learning courses in 2003. The courses captured in the collaborative are posted to the OLN website for students and instructors to view.

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

No.

**Oklahoma
Marion Dilbeck**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
1977.
2. By whom?
Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Resource allocation, academic program productivity and tracking students.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public and private 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?
All (100%) not-for-profit private institutions and zero for-profit private institutions.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
We may extend an invitation to the for-profit-private institutions in the future. This is under discussion.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Student and courses data are collected at the end of term (each semester and end of summer). Faculty and staff data are collected annually.
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?
Yes, we collect this data (all transcript level data is collected, however final grades are optional for private schools). No, it is not in a separate database.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
We are a coordinating board – we want institutions to buy into the data gathering and reporting structure, so we try to be as collegial as possible. In the end, we make the change.
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, this is extremely key. No, we will not 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?
We are working on this – we now do the reports for each campus, but we would like to put most of this online for campuses. We actually had a FERPA issue with this, we originally were going to put all data online (secured and password protected) and asked FERPA to respond to the legality of this request. The response was that individual data could not be put online – but we could put aggregate data online – so this is what we are doing. We can put cohort information up, but we wanted to be able to do more online.
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 worked through these a while ago. Yes, we have a privacy policy (please see our web site for a copy).
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?
UI wage records and ACT. We do not link with High Schools, although students in the state will all have an educational ID soon (they are working on this) and eventually we will be able to link to the High Schools through this ID.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
We thought about this years ago – didn't do it.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
This is on the web site, but some examples would be the state fact book, IPEDS reporting, accountability reports, etc.

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 use the IPEDS method. We also generate stats for the state system.

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

Workforce economic reports (health care workers), projections, and graduation rate projections.

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

Compliance from some institutions – timely and quality of data. Each institution has different software package, this makes it difficult for them to get us what we need in the format we need it. Because each institution has a different system, we really can not be experts on each one, so we can only offer limited help in terms of how to generate the data to get it to us.

Collecting the data is sort of a challenge...

Overview

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

We have revised an old report called the facilities report – we are now in the second year of collection – this was challenging to start again (work on the campus part).

We are also in the middle of a server conversion from our legacy system to our new system (which has online capabilities) – this is a staffing challenge while we are making the transition.

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

No.

**Oregon (Community College System)
Marilyn Kolodziejczyk**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
In 1994-95.
2. By whom?
State Office of Community Colleges Services.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Funding, advocacy, course/program approval, workforce strategies, education reform strategies, diversity, system accountability.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public community colleges.
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?
We collect transcript level data – we collect each quarter, five times a year for enrollment data. Once per year for degrees data.
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?
Yes, we collect this type of data (remedial, ESL, GED, ABE, adult high school diploma, high school completion courses, and hobby/recreation courses). Some of our courses have credit and others don't – we collect them all.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
Oversight committee that makes recommendations to commissioner. This is a collaborative process.
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. We talk about discontinuing the use of SSNs, but we are using it still. K-12 uses an ID that we are working on incorporating into our system.
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 are working towards this.
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 [can we have a copy]?
We follow federal guidelines pretty strictly. We also get legal approval before any data is shared and yes, we do have a statement (please see our web site).
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?
UI wage record and high school records – they send us information (SSN) and we put this together with our records and send back.
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?
Annual enrollment reports and annual fact book.
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 generate graduation and retention rates for institutions and the state as a whole; we do use the IPEDS method (for the most part).

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

Projections, student success, retention, transfers and ad hoc impact reports on community colleges and the economic.

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

We need more staff – the turnover of college staff who submits is the real problem. We have to go back to square one with the staff as to why it is important, why we need the data by the deadline, etc. Data quality is reduced because of these issues.

Overview

1. Can you give me a quick update on events affecting the SUR database since 2002? Have there been any significant developments in regards to SUR (like use of different technology, use of web for data submission by institutions, legal issues)?

The Database is used quite a bit by the State legislature – a large percentage of my time is spent on questions, background information, organizing data, and reports for the legislature based on the information found in the database.

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

No.

Oregon (University System)
Student Centralized Administrative Reporting File (SCARF)
Bob Kieran

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
SCARF is 16 years old, but we have data for the last 30 years.
2. By whom?
Oregon University System (OUS).
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
IPEDS reporting, State Board of Higher Education Reporting, and OUS planning and policy (e.g., curriculum planning, enrollment studies).

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All OUS 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?
No.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
No. We currently have a data exchange with Oregon community colleges. We would not report on their data, but we expect to integrate it into a Web-interface database with reports and some limited access to unit record level data. We also could integrate summary data for analysis from NCES or other sources.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Each quarter, five times a year for enrollment data.
Once per year for degrees data.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
Not currently.
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 is not collected on a unit record basis. We do ask for a written report to publish in our Fact Book every other year, but when we tried to classify the nature of non-credit, it became unwieldy and subject to interpretation.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
The Office of Institutional Research, the chancellor and the board.
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 — but, internally, students are matched with a unique personal identification number.

Yes, to the extent reasonable. The Oregon Dept. of Education (ODE) has been using a single internally-generated identifier that follows an Oregon P-12 student throughout their educational life in Oregon. Transferring schools does not create a new identifier. We will begin collecting this number on our application in 2007. And when a student is admitted to an OUS school, they get an internally generated number that we use for most of our data work. However, this number is not system wide, so if a student transfers from UO to OSU, they get a different ID number. So we need to collect SSN and use it to find inter-OUS transfers. Also, a few of our schools did not implement their data systems well, and they have created one identifier in Student, and a different identifier in Human Resources, so when a faculty member is listed as a teacher of a section in Student and we want to tie them together with their HR records to calculate cost of instruction, we need to use 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?
Not yet, but it is planned. Three levels of access: public (already created reports), OUS parties with passwords (point-and-click selection of cohort for boilerplate reports), trusted OUS users (unit record at table level access, SQL*Plus, etc., to create new reports).
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?
Follow federal guidelines pretty strictly. Get legal approval before any data is shared. We have a boilerplate agreement but I have not used it recently. The state agencies that share data do so by legislative decree, and so there is no other formal document other than our agreement to participate in the system.
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?

Our legislators are currently looking at changing current policy – the driving factor was stolen bank records with personal identifiers (I believe it was one of the largest data losses ever reported). The legislation may well affect OUS. We also are moving forward with a data sharing plan and are seeking legal opinions ourselves.

6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
Participating in Oregon Shared Information System of 10 state agencies contributing to common database (e.g., corrections, military, employment, etc.). We can generate reports, but participating agencies cannot directly access unit-record data from other agencies. We participate as a state system in the National Student Clearinghouse. We provide some data directly to other Oregon agencies for required state and federal reporting. We will pilot test a virtual P-20 data warehouse structure during 2007-09 linking P-12, community college, and OUS data.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
With the success of the National Student Clearinghouse, we no longer need to share with neighboring states.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
Annual enrollment reports; annual fact book (e.g., student demographics, academic preparation and performance; annual institutional profiles; annual retention and graduation studies; cost of instruction reports, and faculty salary reports.)
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)?
Six years is the OUS standard, but we can tell from these reports how many graduated in two, three, four, five and six years. We also do freshman-sophomore retention annually.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
Policy analysis and development; performance measuring; board requests; central IPEDS reporting; accountability; academic performance reporting and sharing with other state agencies via an eleven-agency shared database.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?

Biggest challenges: with a major Board change the Chancellor's Office was reduced roughly by half. It doesn't appear any expectations were cut by that amount, however. We were well into moving ahead into some great areas for data use, collaboration, assessment, feedback to high schools, alignment of curriculum studies, etc. We are still headed there, but more slowly. They also moved all our IT to one campus, which has resulted in technological changes that we must deal with.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
Since 2002 we have changed our data submission format back to flat files, though we still use secure FTP we have automated our data validity checks, generate error reports automatically, give campuses a possibility to commit or resubmit the data. Our Data Dictionary is online, and very useable.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
We are starting to reach the point at the national level where everyone has their own numbers: SHEEO and SHEFO, Grapevine, IPEDS, HigherEd.org, Educational Trust, etc. I know there will never be one great source, but part of the redundancy could be eliminated if data were available in a more timely fashion and more consistently.

**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 public 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.

**South Dakota
Monte R. Kramer**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
South Dakota has been using the current Colleague (Datatel) database since fall 1998. Before that, South Dakota used SCT's ISIS database, beginning in 1987.
2. By whom?
The South Dakota Board of Regents (BOR), Regents Information Systems (RIS).
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
South Dakota uses the database for all record keeping, tracking and reporting purposes related to public higher education in the state, including all the purposes you mention above.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All six public universities: Black Hills State University, Dakota State University, Northern State University, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, South Dakota State University and the University of South Dakota.
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 private colleges/universities are included.
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?
The database is "live" since we collect data daily in the form of new prospects, applicants, students, course registrations and so on. We extract data from the database on the BOR identified census date in fall and spring semesters, at the midterm of each fall semester (for IPEDS reporting), and at the end of each semester (fall, spring, and summer). The field definitions that we delivered to you represent the information included in these extracts.
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?

Non-credit activity is not tracked.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
A statewide committee with at least one representative from each university has regulated change in data elements and definitions based on BOR reporting needs. The oversight agency is the Board's Regents Information Systems staff. The ultimate authority lies with the Board's councils and the Board.
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 often used to link records between the student and finance systems and of course are necessary for financial aid purposes. A student ID is the primary identifier of a student for the student information system.
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?
Each university has access to its own extracts (and, obviously, to its own live data). A Colleague Security Coordinator at each university regulates and grants access to specific portions of the 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?
The only use of individual student record information is for administrative and management purposes of the institutions and not shared with third parties or researchers.

Where research is sanctioned within the system, general student data is shared with researchers. We have also shared data with associated third parties to conduct studies and research sanctioned by the system. The Colleague Security Coordinator at each university considers privacy and data integrity issues in making decisions about who requires access to each portion of the data. Colleague software allows South Dakota to regulate distribution of each student's information based on the student's instructions.

Registrars and other campus officials regulate all distribution of student information.

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 currently do not. We are working on a project to import high school transcripts into our student data base. We do link information in the Student database to separate financial and personnel systems.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
We of course provide student record information as necessary for transfers and other necessary student needs. We currently do not share data with other state higher education agencies.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
South Dakota produces many standard reports and ad hoc reports in response to BOR needs.
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)?
The retention calculations simply look at student cohorts over a five year period and determine if students are retained at the same university or within the system.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
We recently completed a retention study.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Because we operate out of a single system the data structure is not a problem. Staff resources and programming personnel are the biggest constraints.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
We converted from six different databases to a single STUDENT database. Students within the public university system today have a single record regardless of how many of the six public universities they are taking courses from.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No response.

**Tennessee
Chris Brewer**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
Around 1991– rebuilt in 2004.
2. By whom?
Tennessee Higher Education Commission staff.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
The state funding formula is run off of the student information system. It is also used to answer legislative questions and track lottery scholarship recipients.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public 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?
No, not really. We do collect very limited information from private institutions regarding the Lottery Scholarship recipients (started this in 2004).
3. Are there plans to expand the system’s coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
We would like to, but the private institutions have their own private state association and at this time do not want to collaborate with us.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
We collect term data, not course level data and we do this 3 times per year – at the start of every term.
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?
Yes, we do collect this data (credit, non-credit, and remedial) and it is stored in the same database.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
Tennessee System Office (my office).
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 collect SSN to use for matching students who transfer – but it is not 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 – we have a reporting system and they have online access to about 150 reports, but if they want something more detailed (or specific) they need to contact my office.
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 do have a form that folks can fill out if they want to use data for appropriate educational research purposes – but only two people have access to the data.
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?
Not a physical link. We do have a contract with a professor that links our data with UI Wage and we are beginning to work with High Schools (they are in the process of building a database and in determining if SSN or a TN educational ID will be used –but either way, we will link with them).
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
Yes with Peter Ewell and his projects – we continue to link data with Kentucky and Mississippi.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
We have the Reporting site on the web – so over 150 reports are generated every year (demographics, projections, scholarship, etc.). We also do Feedback reports to high schools and community colleges.

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 do generate graduation and retention statistics and we use IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey Method.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
Other than the ones we post on the Reporting site – we do ad hoc reports for the governor’s office, the legislature, and of course we have been doing quite a bit on the Lottery Scholarships.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
The number one issue is getting clean data from the institutions – some campuses do a great job and others struggle. I have been trying to get to each campus more, do some training, etc., but it remains an issue.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
In 2004 we completely rebuilt the system – it used to be a flat file, text based system and now it is Sequel, relational database. We also created the Reporting site and the upload and error check online system, which is a system for institutions to send in and check their data.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.

Texas
Kenneth Dalley

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
Universities and academic components of community colleges in 1973. Health-related institutions in 1978 and the vocational-technical components of community colleges in 1985.
2. By whom?
Texas Education Code. Subchapter C. 61.051 Powers and Duties of Board.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
T.E.C. Subchapter C. 61.051 Powers and Duties of Board.
 - (a) The board shall establish and maintain a management information system that includes the presentation of uniform statistical information that is appropriate to planning, financing, and decision-making rather than regulation.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in the SUR system?
Universities and academic components of community colleges in 1973. Health-Related institutions in 1978 and the vocational-technical components of community colleges in 1985. Independent colleges and universities began reporting student data in fall 2002 and degree data in fall 2003. Career Schools that offer associate degrees were required to report annual student and degree report in fall 2004.
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?
Independent colleges and universities began reporting student data in fall 2002 and degree data in fall 2003. They do not submit a summer report and the fall and spring data is limited. Career Schools that offer associate degrees were required to report an annual student and degree report in fall 2004.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
We are evaluating whether to collect student level student and degree data on "Extension Programs" at public universities. Extension programs are defined as ones that do not get state funding.

4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
Public institutions is by Term—effective census date.
Independent institutions are for fall and Spring Terms —effective census date.
Career Schools that offer associate degrees are annual
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?
Public community colleges are allowed to report continuing education (CEU) students (CBM00A) and classes (CBM00C) by quarter. The following link will get one to the reporting requirements.
<http://www.txhighereddata.org/ReportingManuals.cfm>

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
There is an internal Data Committee.
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; we have no plans to discontinue the use of SSNs.
3. Can campuses access datasets themselves? If yes, who has access and how is this managed?
No.
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?
Privacy and FERPA issues -- As a state educational authority, we are not permitted to re-disclose personally identifiable student information without the consent of the student.
All SUR data that is disclosed to researchers must be encrypted in a manner that will not permit the identification of any student. Disclosure of SUR data to institutions of higher education is done in accordance with a policy that requires our institutions to designate certain data as “directory information” or to have the specific consent of the student for such disclosure.
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?
A P-16 data warehouse began being developed in 2001 with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the State Board of Education Certification. (matched at TEA). UI Wage records (matched internally) have been matched for community, state, and technical college students over the last 9 years and released back to the college if they have signed a confidentiality form.
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?
Enrollment and graduation reports, university accountability reports, and Community College Data Profiles can be found at our web site:
<http://www.txhighereddata.org/>
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)?
Based on the IPEDS definition of Graduation Rate Survey- 6-yrs for universities and 3-yrs for community and technical colleges.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
University Accountability
(<http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/Accountability/>)

High school to College
(<http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/HSCollLink.cfm>)

1992 cohort of 7th graders through higher education
<http://www.txhighereddata.org/Topics.cfm#SpecInterest>

First-time undergraduate application, acceptance, enrollment
<http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/AppAccEnr.cfm>
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Staff resources for analysis; FERPA limitation of small cell counts that might disclose a student's identity; internal workload to match external reports like UI Wage records due to FERPA which had been done by the Workforce Commission.

Overview

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

Detail edit procedures changed from mainframe to server applications; edit 6 times a day rather than once a day; working on a more user friendly server-based display of historical data versus the mainframe version called PREP; high school to college linkage is live at the CB website at <http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/HSCollLink.cfm>; and at TEA's website at <http://www.texaseducationinfo.org/tpeir/Index.asp>

Utah
Debbie Brennan

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
We have data from 1998-1999. We also have some earlier data, but I'm not sure of the accuracy. We also have several cohorts that have been collected over time.
2. By whom?
The SUR was created by the Commissioner's office by establishing the Statewide Data Committee.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
For all of the above reasons, including enrollment reporting.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
University of Utah, Utah State University, Weber State University, Southern Utah University, Utah Valley State College, Dixie State College, Snow College, College of Eastern Utah and Salt Lake Community College. We also collect data for the Utah College of Applied Technology (UCAT).
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. We currently only collect data for our public institutions.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
There are no plans to expand the system coverage.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
We collect our enrollment extracts summer end of term, fall third week, fall end of term, spring third week and spring end of term. For UCAT, we collect data at the end of September, December, March and June. Graduation and UCAT Completer data is collected annually.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
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?

UCAT is the bulk of our non-credit enrollment. UCAT is comprised of the former Area Technical Colleges in the state of Utah. We separate the data from the other nine institutions from the UCAT data, but have the ability to generate reports for tracking purposes. We do collect some non-credit enrollment data from the other nine institutions. There is a separate data dictionary in place for UCAT. Our UCAT system is currently developing software for the student information system.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
We have a state wide Information Management Committee (IMC) that meets twice a year to discuss changes in the data elements and definitions. We attempt to keep our definitions in line with the federal guidelines. We have a similar committee for UCAT.
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?
Currently we use SSN but are in the process of creating a separate identifier. This has been placed on hold since the State Board of Education has decided to issue an education number for all public education students beginning with kindergarten. Higher Education will attempt to utilize this number. However, where we are not able to utilize the number we will generate a number.
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?
Not yet. This is planned for the production warehouse. Access will be via a secure log in utilizing secure socket layer (SSL).
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 provide only summarized data to outside entities. If third parties require more detailed information we refer them to the institution in question.
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?
Not to my knowledge.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
Since we are the central office for both the technical college system (UCAT) and the other higher education systems, we provide links between that data.

However, we do not currently allow any access or linkage to our databases from outside entities. We do not have the staff to complete these tasks.

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?
Annually we produce a Data Book which contains enrollment, graduation, financial, etc. data. This Data Book can be accessed electronically at: <http://www.utahsbr.edu/finance/finance.htm>
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 Rate Survey method.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
We are currently doing a study regarding concurrent enrollment and do these concurrent enrollment students graduate earlier than their non-concurrent enrollment counterparts. This study is in its beginning phase and is not available for review.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Our biggest challenge would have to be data configuration/structure due to our institutions being able to provide the correct ID number and tracking that number throughout our system.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
Things are basically the same. We do not have the staff to make large improvements in our data collection procedures.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.

**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.

Washington (Community and Technical Colleges)
Lorretta Seppanen

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
The State Board Data Warehouse was established in 1994. An earlier version of unit records for the system has existed since 1972.
2. By whom?
Washington Community and Technical Colleges.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
For the purpose of policy management (research, analysis, state/federal reporting requirements, and resource allocation).

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public community and technical colleges in the state.
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?
Enrollment and personal data are collected quarterly.
Financial aid data is collected monthly.
Asset data is collected annually.
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?
Yes, everything is collected. We collect transcript level data on all courses (non-credit and credit) and keep it in the same database.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
The state board has the authority, but it is a very collegial process. Each unit (registrars, financial aid, and personnel) meets quarterly to discuss issues.
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?
No it is not. The key link is a made up ID number – however, we do collect the SSN and use it for some of our links with outside agencies.
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?
Yes, sort of. The institutions have access to their own data. The data is collected and cleaned and then sent back to the institution.
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?
Yes we have a policy and we have state laws that govern the process.
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?
Yes, we have linked with the UI Wage Record since 1989 and also with the public four-year institutions and just recently the National Clearinghouse. We also are working with K-12 to begin linking with them.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
Yes, we link consistently with Oregon and quite often with Idaho and Alaska. In all of these cases we are linking with their 4 year public system and their community college system. We have a standard matching agreement and share data annually.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
We have an academic year report (annual) and an enrollment and staffing report (annual).
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 this, but we began with our system prior to IPEDS determining their method, so we came up with a methodology that took student progress into account – we use the Student Progress Indicator. Basically this is a way in which to calculate graduation and retention statistics by taking a cohort of students and tracking them over 7 quarters.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
We do lots of research! We have been working on research around dislocated workers; low income workers; and how students transition from K-12 to college.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Because we have had a SUR database system for a long time and it was designed for policy work, we have quite a bit of data to work with – however the biggest challenge is perhaps with narrowing our data sets. We tend to look at large aggregate data, and this is important but increasingly we have been asked to look at just 18 year olds or just those who receive welfare and we have certain challenges to doing this minute type of data analysis.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
I think the two most important events in the last several years are 1) an attempt to link our data with the K-12 system and 2) a project with Columbia University. We are just completing our first data link and with the K-12 system beginning to collect more transcript level data this linkage will prove important. We also are working on a project with Columbia University to determine if we are serving, under-serving, or over-serving certain populations. We are working with census data addresses, the project has come up with 140 units based on census address and we are using this as the base in which to determine how well we are serving certain groups.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
I think we covered it.

Washington (Universities)
Andi Smith

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
2000. Beta testing started in 1999.
2. By whom?
The Public Centralized Higher Education Enrollment Statistics (PCHEES) database was established by the six public baccalaureate institutions.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
In order to track enrollment statistics at the public baccalaureate institutions in the state.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
Six public baccalaureate institutions: University of Washington, Washington State University, Central Washington University, Eastern Wash University, Western Washington University, and The Evergreen State College. This system also captures data for the branch campuses of the University of Washington (Bothell and Tacoma campuses) and Washington State University (Vancouver, Tri Cities).
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 independents and no proprietary institutions.
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?
Data are reported to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) roughly one week after the 10th day of each new quarter (fall, winter, spring, summer). Under contract with the six public baccalaureate institutions and OFM, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) receives an electronic copy of the entire database each quarter, after OFM has added the new institutional data and made corrections/revisions to previous quarters.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?

There are no planned changes to the frequency and/or cycle of reporting. However, beginning some time in the fall of 2006 to January 2007 period, outcome data including credits attempted/earned and degrees awarded will begin to be reported by the institutions.

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?
ABE, ESL, and other non-credit programs are predominantly offered by the state's community and technical colleges. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) tracks these enrollments and completed this survey under different cover, submitting it separately.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
An oversight committee made up of representatives from OFM, the HECB, the public baccalaureate institutions, and the Council of Presidents (a group representing the presidents of the baccalaureate institutions) meets quarterly to review data definitions, evaluate the need to change/add data elements, and implement changes. The Council of Presidents role is solely to facilitate effective communications with the baccalaureate 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?
Yes, the PCHEES database does contain SSNs and they are used as one part of establishing links or matches to other data. However, reporting social security numbers to institutions of higher education is not mandatory, thus using this data element exclusively to link does not provide a comprehensive approach. Therefore, first name, last name, and birth date are used in conjunction with SSN to establish links. This is especially relevant if/when linkages are established with the K-12 system unit record database maintained by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). OSPI does not use SSNs; rather, they assign students a unique identifier. Thus, matching to this database would have to be accomplished in a different manner (typically first name, last name, birth date, school attended).
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 access the unit-record portion of PCHEES. They can access standard reports and can ask staff from the OFM to run ad hoc queries, but they are not granted access to the unit-record 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?
Since the HECB has only recently received the PCHEES unit-record database, we are still in the process of developing these policies and procedures. We are currently developing a policy based on U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, Statistical Standards Program. Only HECB staff is allowed access to the data. Each staff person who has access to the PCHEES database must sign an affidavit of non-disclosure and abide by the interagency agreements between the public baccalaureate institutions, OFM, COP, and the HECB. A draft copy of the NDA is attached to this email. Currently, neither the HECB nor OFM is able to share data with other parties unless permission is explicitly granted by the baccalaureate institutions through appropriate data sharing and research agreements.
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 privacy or FERPA issues have come up.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
The HECB does not currently link data. However, there is a significant interest in doing so. The HECB must convene the Data Advisory Group which oversees linkages across systems. Membership of the group includes representatives from the HECB, OFM, COP, SBCTC, and public and private baccalaureate institutions. Once this group agrees that the linkages should take place, they are also responsible for facilitating the process of making it happen, typically through assigning responsible staff at each of their institutions/agencies. Any such linkages would require data sharing and research agreements with the baccalaureate institutions which would need to be consistent with FERPA requirements.
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?
The Higher Education Enrollment Report (HEER) is the standard report produced by the Office of Financial Management from PCHEES. The report can be accessed at: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/hied/heer/2005/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)?

The PCHEES database does not currently contain outcomes. This data will begin to be reported by institutions in fall 2006 to January 2007 period. .

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

The HECB has not completed any research projects based on PCHEES, given the short amount of time we've had access to the unit record data. However, OFM completes the Application Match Study which can be accessed at <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/hied/appmat/default.asp>

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

Staff resources for analysis: The HECB made a supplemental budget request for IT and research analyst FTEs in the most recent legislative session. The request failed, so our agency is left to conduct the analysis with existing resources.

Data configuration/structure: The HECB gets an electronic copy of the PCHEES database from OFM, which gets the raw data from institutions. If the HECB detects errors we must work through OFM which would work with the institutions to revise the data. Corrections to the data are not incorporated until the next quarter.

Linking data across systems: The HECB does not currently link data with any other unit-record database in the state. Gaining agreement among system offices and various state-level departments, designing linkages, and implementing changes is time consuming and potentially difficult

Coordination with institutions: According to our data sharing agreements with OFM and the institutions, the HECB must send any reporting out to the institutions for their review. If errors are detected, the HECB must work through OFM to update their database and then have OFM transmit the corrected database (in its entirety) to the HECB.

Overview

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

The most significant change is that the HECB now has access to unit record enrollment data. As was mentioned early, OFM receives data from the institutions under data sharing and research agreements to create the PCHEES database. In February of 2006 the HECB was granted access to an electronic copy of the PCHEES database which we now store in-house. Previous to establishing these agreements, the HECB worked with OFM to conduct research and analysis. The addition of outcome data to the PCHEES database in the near future is also a significant development. No new formats for data submission and/or reporting of

outcome data have been adopted. In 2002, the coding of race data was changed to conform to Census 2000 definitions.

2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.

**West Virginia
Jim Barton**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
Unit level data has been collected by West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission dating back to 1979, but our current system and general file composition dates back to 1998. We undertook a massive database upgrade several years ago, and only retained records from 1998 on.
2. By whom?
By the prior iterations of our current SHEEO Agency. I believe it was the WV Board of Regents at the time, then the State College and University System, then the WV Higher Education Policy Commission.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Primary reasons for unit-level data collection included policy analysis and accountability reporting in most of the above-mentioned areas. Uses of these data evolved over time, as cross-institutional tracking and financial aid recipient performance (among other things) emerged as areas of interest.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
Our SUR contains ALL public institutions, both 2-year and 4-year.
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 change in terms of the unit-level database. Some limited information about PROMISE scholars who are graduating from private institutions is currently being negotiated for collection.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
The data for the SUR database is collected each term (semester).
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
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?

Summary information of this type of enrollment is collected through our Community and Technical College System central office.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
Changes are coordinated through the Director of Research and Technology as prescribed by system chancellors, vice chancellor for administration, or legislators.
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. There are no long-term plans to discontinue SSN usage, as our state performs several matching reports that require that element as an identifier. Accountability for transfers among 2-year and 4-year schools, as well as post-graduation retention for needs-based and merit aid programs are key examples.
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?
Not at this time. We are currently implementing the SAS Business Intelligence architecture to facilitate pro forma reports and limited "build your own" reporting capabilities.
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 generally refer to FERPA and GLBA language as our guidance on privacy matters. SUR data is restricted to authorized personnel in-house, and only summary (perturbed) data are produced as general output. In-house personnel generally produce ad hoc requests for researchers and external organizations. Exceptions (such as discrete data exchanges) are handled through case-by-case usage agreements, which we can produce if desired.
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?
Some institutions have begun probing the discontinuance of SSNs as key fields. West Virginia mandates by law accountability that relies on SSN matches, deferring the arguments in at least the short term.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
The two primary external data matches are with the State Department of Education to obtain grade information for state-level aid applicants, as well as a

Bureau of Employment Programs match to report on the number of postsecondary graduates that have remained to work in the State. High school grades are generally used for the sole purpose of verifying qualification for aid programs. The BEP data exchange is governed by an extensive usage agreement.

7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
No such activity in the recent past. With the exception of independent colleges and universities, virtually all in-state higher education data collection falls within our collection umbrella.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
We have a standard battery of reports displayed at:
<http://www.hepc.wvnet.edu/reports>
Ad hoc reports to support focused policy issues for council, commission, legislative, and institutional requestors are frequently generated.
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 start with the IPEDS graduation rate calculation, but utilize our added capacity to show transfers among institutions. Our most liberal measure accounts for the completion of any form of degree at any of our institutions within the specified timeframe. The CTC system has also begun requesting 5-year and 6-year CTC graduation rates to account for the substantial non-traditional populations at those institutions.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
I am attaching to this message a copy of a recent retention report generated for a recent conference. Otherwise, our standard battery of reports represents the thrust of our efforts.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Lack of programming time, lack of staff resources, complexity in defining and collecting data files on an annual basis.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
No.

2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
[Not at this time.](#)

**Wisconsin
Sue Michalek**

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
1973.
2. By whom?
Mandated by the Board of Regents (BOR), implemented by this office (Office of Policy Analysis and Research).
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
All of the above. To provide data to assist the BOR and University of Wisconsin (UW) System officers better manage the system. In the 1970s and '80s, it was used as the base of the funding formula.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All institutions in the UW System: two doctoral/research universities, 11 four-year comprehensive universities and 13 two-year freshman/sophomore colleges.
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?
Each semester, including summer term.
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.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
System Administration's Office of Policy Analysis and Research, working in concert with campuses.
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?
A student identification number is used; that number may be, but need not be, the SSN. No, there are no plans to discontinue the use of SSNs.
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?
Yes, campuses determine who has access to their 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?
Via restricted use/access.
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?
Yes, through data sharing agreements. Aggregate reporting only and where cell size is sufficiently large.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
On a limited, specific project basis, shared/obtained data with other public higher education sectors, unemployment insurance and drivers license records via data sharing agreements.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
Fall enrollment by institution, accountability reports, IPEDS, Fact Book and several other standard reports can be found on our Web site: www.uwsa.edu/opar.
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)?
Standard is six years, though we also calculate it for four and five years.

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

No response.

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

Balancing requests for access to the database with maintaining privacy.

Overview

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

None.

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

No.

Wyoming (Community College Commission)
Nicole Novotny

History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
April 2000.
2. By whom?
Following legislative mandate, the WCCC staff established the database.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
It is a statutory requirement to allow for state-level review and reporting.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
Casper College, Central Wyoming College, Eastern Wyoming College, Laramie County Community College, Northwest College, Sheridan College, and Western Wyoming College.

The Wyoming Community College Commission Policy Analyst also serves as the IPEDS State Coordinator. The Policy Analyst is responsible for the aforementioned colleges and the University of Wyoming as they enter information into the IPEDS database.
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?
Semester and Annual.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
No. Data collections are mandated and organized by the MIS process.

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/community service contact hours are collected by each community college (not including the University of Wyoming) and are reported to the Wyoming Community College Commission every semester.

The Wyoming Community College Commission does not currently collect ABE/GED contact hours because the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services monitors ABE/GED programs. However, on July 1, 2006, the Commission will acquire administrative responsibility for ABE/GED programs.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
The Wyoming Community College Commission can approve changes to data elements and definitions upon recommendation from appropriate 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?
SSNs are not used as key links on the Commission level of data collection and reporting. The community colleges might individually use social security numbers to track student progress, identify students, run queries, etc. The commission steers clear of any of this information; instead, when a report is due the colleges each send us aggregate information from their institution. For example, when we do the enrollment, the colleges track it and then send us the data:
 - a. CC - Reports 1,000 full time students
 - b. LCCC - Reports 1,500 full time students
3. Can campuses access datasets themselves? If yes, who has access and how is this managed?
Yes. Each community college maintains individual datasets. Institutional programmers and researchers have access to datasets for queries and reports. Staff members follow predetermined processes (i.e. MIS Handbook) to modify datasets.
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?
The Wyoming Community College Commission does not deal explicitly with privacy issues relating to FERPA. Each community college has adopted appropriate measures for meeting privacy needs; thus, any information sent to the Commission on a regular basis is FERPA compliant. Special information

requests that contain student information are organized through an MOU that engage FERPA regulations.

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 data?
No. There are no direct links between the databases. Information can be shared among databases but none are physically linked together.
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?
All of the reporting conducted by the Wyoming Community College Commission contains aggregate data. Our agency never requests or receives SUR data. All reports created by the Commission are available via the website:
<http://communitycolleges.wy.edu/>
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)?
Persistence and Graduation rates are calculated with information from each institution and information from the IPEDS database. Simple averages are used to create an aggregate average for the state as a whole.
3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
The Wyoming Community College Commission has not conducted any additional projects.
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Staffing issues are always an issue of concern since each college only has one institutional researcher and sometimes workloads can be a bit heavy for that one individual.

Overview

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

Nothing to report.

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

No.

Wyoming (University)
Sue Koller

History – missing data, sent email

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
The unit record system is just for the University of Wyoming – we had a computer system beginning in the 1970s which had unit record data.
2. By whom?
It was established by the University of Wyoming.
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
The purpose of the system was business reporting – admissions, grades, degrees, IPEDS, and retention/graduations.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
Just the University of Wyoming
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?
Once per term (3 times per year). We do collect transcript level data.
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 – we only collect academic (credit based) courses.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?

This is a collaborative process between the IR office and the registrar's office.

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, but we are the process of moving toward an alternative ID by fall of 2006. We are switching to the Banner system and with our new system we sill still collect the social security number, but it will no longer be 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?
N/A
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?
Yes we do have a privacy policy (please see our web site). We take FERPA very seriously and use the guidelines outlined in FERPA.
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 do link with the National Clearinghouse and to some extent the Community Colleges and High School records – but we do this with matching names, not with IDs. In reality we are checking our records against what the other agencies send us to give feedback to the high schools and community colleges in terms of who has left their institutions and come to ours.
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?
We do all sorts of reports and generate statistics, see our web site for a full list.
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 generate graduation and retention statistics for the University of Wyoming and we do use the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey Method.

3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
Recently we have been working on the Hathaway Scholarship Program (we have run projections, reporting level of funding, etc.).
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Well, concerns for security and privacy are always a concern – also switching to Banner has been a real challenge (lots of work).

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
In the last few years we have started to think about sharing more data with the high schools and the community colleges – this is still in the works, but it looks as if we will start doing more once we switch over to Banner.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.