

Data and Higher Education Policy Development

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**AIHEC Executive Awareness Session
on Data-Driven Decisionmaking**

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Institute for Higher Education Policy

- Non-profit, non-partisan organization whose mission is to foster access and success in postsecondary education
- Established in 1993; ~25 staff
- Key activities include policy reports and studies, seminars and meetings, and capacity building
- Work involves federal, state, and international issues
- Primary audiences of the Institute are those who make or inform decisions about higher education: policymakers, senior institutional leaders, researchers, funders, the media, and private sector leaders
- Facilitator of Alliance for Equity in Higher Education

Why Is Data Important?

- Data influences policymaking.
- You can find out what students think and do while they're still enrolled.
- You can determine the effectiveness of programs and policies.
- Data can help you prioritize your actions.
- You can create a greater sense of urgency to act with data to support your decisions.
- You can sustain momentum for implementing changes when they are supported with data.

History

- ✓ 1970s: Evaluation emerges – prove worth of services rendered
- ✓ 1980s: Reform reports:
 - ✓ “A Nation at Risk”
 - ✓ “Involvement in Learning”
- ✓ 1990s: Regional accreditors require evidence of student learning
- ✓ 2000: National Survey of Student Engagement
- ✓ 2003: BEAMS
- ✓ 2004: CCSSE and Achieving the Dream
- ✓ 2006: HEA Reauthorization, Spellings Commission—
data-driven decisionmaking is here to stay

Target audiences

- Who Can You Inform/Influence with Data?
 - Federal, state, tribal policymakers
 - Institutional leaders
 - Accreditors
 - Foundations and other funders
 - Media/public
 - Associations and advocacy organizations
 - Academic researchers

Potential Sources of Untapped Data on Your Campus



Student-Level Data

Entering Student Data + Student Motivation Data + Student Integration Data = **Student Success**

What Data Are Available in Each Area?

- **Entering student data:** What do you know about your students when they enroll?
- **Student motivation data:** What data do you collect after they enroll?
- **Student integration data:** What data do you collect/compile at the end of each term?

Entering Student Data

Academic history

- GPA by subject matter
- Test scores (ACT/SAT, other)
- Major or academic interests
- Goal(s)

Demographic

- Commuter/resident
- High school/district
- Distance from home

Entering Student Data

Financial aid information

- Number with work plans
- Number receiving no financial aid
- Scholarship recipients
- Dependents

Enrollment factors

- Application date
- Enrollment classification
- Previous enrollments at other institutions

Student Motivation Data

- Participation in orientation
- Orientation survey
- Meetings with advisor
- Freshman survey data
- Academic and social motivation data
- Student engagement data
- English placement test
- Math placement test
- Academic plans
- Use of campus resources

Student Integration Data

- End-of-term grades
- Affiliations with clubs and organizations
- Credit hours attempted
- Credit hours completed
- Academic status (dean's list, warning, probation, suspension)
- Major
- Pre-registration for next term

Using Existing Data/Resources

- Look for publications (AIHEC, IHEP, Alliance for Equity in HE, other websites)
- Contact organizations and associations
- Use online data

Available Federal Data

- NCES publications and quick facts:
<http://nces.ed.gov/>
- IPEDS Peer Analysis System (PAS):
<http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas/>
- IPEDS COOL:
<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/>
- NPSAS Data Analysis System:
<http://nces.ed.gov/das/>

Federal Sources (Continued)

- IRS: <http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/index.html>
- Census Bureau/Current Population Survey and DataFerrett:
<http://www.bls.census.gov/cps/cpsmain.htm>
- Economic Diversity of Colleges:
<http://www.economicdiversity.org/>

Other Sources of Data

- NACUBO tuition discounting:
<http://www.nacubo.org/x44.xml>
- NSSE student engagement: <http://nsse.iub.edu>
- ANSWERS:
<http://www.highered.org/answers/index.asp>
- Common Data Set Exchange:
<http://www.commondataset.org/>
- Education Trust College Results Online:
<http://www.collegeresults.org/>
- *Postsecondary Education Opportunity*:
<http://www.postsecondary.org/home/default.asp>

Concluding Thoughts

- You decide what is valuable to measure
- Carefully decide what to measure and make certain it aligns with institutional mission, values, and desired outcomes
- Contribute to AIMS, and respond to requests from AIHEC
- Dedicate staff to data collection and analysis—it's no longer a luxury