

## **Report and Suggestions from IPEDS Technical Review Panel IPEDS Data Feedback Reports**

**PROPOSAL SUMMARY: Based on the model implemented during 2004, IPEDS data feedback reports will again be distributed to all institution keyholders (via email) and to all institution Chief Executives. 1) Additional figures will be included this year for purposes of comparison: one for Completions data and one for institution pricing data (three prior years of pricing). 2) One figure will be deleted (figure 3, percent distribution of scholarship and fellowship expenditures). 3) Several existing figures will undergo minor revisions to improve their usability. 4) Institution users will be permitted to define customized comparison groups for the reports. 5) A smaller number of institutions will be included in the default comparison groups being more targeted toward the shared characteristics of the linchpin institution. 6) The Executive Peer Tool (ExPT) will be modified to provide for easier re-creation of data feedback reports, creation of customized comparison groups, and improved data output options (e.g., formulas and logic for calculations).**

The IPEDS Technical Review Panel (TRP) No. 12 met on March 23-24, 2005, in Washington, DC, to discuss the release of the second annual IPEDS Data Feedback Reports (previously the NPEC IPEDS Data Feedback Reports). In order to improve the usability and value of these reports, the panel was charged with suggesting improvements to be incorporated into the reports, including changes in data elements used, organization of the report, and modifications to the affiliated web-based tool, the ExPT. The panel members included 27 individuals representing federal government, state government, institutions, national data users, association representatives, and others. The panel considered numerous changes to the data feedback reports and suggested changes to the contractor tasked with developing the tools underlying the development and distribution of the reports.

### Background:

The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) is a voluntary partnership of representatives from postsecondary institutions, associations, government agencies, states, and other organizations with a major interest in postsecondary education. Established and supported by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), its mission is to promote the quality, comparability, and utility of postsecondary education data and information that support policy development at the federal, state, and institution levels. Toward that end, NPEC and its contractor developed the technical infrastructure necessary for generating comparison reports utilizing IPEDS data.

The resulting NPEC IPEDS Data Feedback Reports included as many as 10 figures showing how individual IPEDS-participating institutions compared to similar institutions on a variety of dimensions, as well as methodological notes and listings of selected comparison institutions. The reports were generated in the summer of 2004, using IPEDS data collected during 2003-2004. The reports were first created as Portable Document Format (.pdf) files and emailed to each institution's IPEDS keyholder, and

subsequently were printed (in color on heavy bond paper) and mailed to each institution's Chief Executive of record. Additionally, a web-based tool, the Executive Peer Tool (ExPT) was deployed as a complementary resource to the reports, allowing users to re-create the comparison data figures using comparison groups of one's own choosing. Both the Data Feedback Report and the ExPT were intended to increase visibility of the uses of IPEDS data, demonstrate uses of IPEDS data for comparison purposes, and underscore the importance of institutions providing accurate and timely data within their IPEDS surveys.

NCES has committed resources and funding toward creating a second annual report to be created and distributed, via the same methods, in the summer of 2005. Based on feedback received after the distribution of the 2004 data feedback reports, NCES will be making changes to the reports to improve their utility.

#### Proposal:

The TRP reviewed the existing data feedback report format and scrutinized each of the figures contained within. Considering the feedback received from report recipients in 2004, the additional data available for use in future reports, and the value of the comparison groups used in creating the first-generation reports, the panel members suggested the following changes:

- Comparison groups should be customizable by institution users so that the final report utilizes a comparison group that is meaningful to the institution.
- A smaller number of institutions should be included in the default comparison groups providing more meaningful reports to the individual institutions. Default comparison groups should range from approximately 15 to 35 institutions.
- Due to the smaller number of institutions in the comparison groups, the preferred measure of central tendency for the comparison group should be the median, rather than the mean, for all figures.
- Figures utilizing student FTE calculations should be clarified, by using explicit titles, footnotes, and methodological notes, to explain that IPEDS collects only credit-based instructional activity, thus student FTE is not a comprehensive measure of instructional activity at all institutions.
- The ExPT should permit users to re-create the data feedback reports in their entirety, for any desired institution, using the default comparison group or a customized comparison group.
- Figure 3, "Percent distribution of scholarship and fellowship expenditures, by type of award, fiscal year 2003," has limited utility and should be deleted in order to make room for a more useful figure.

- Figure 8, “Percent of first-time, full-time and part-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates returning from fall 2002 to fall 2003, and percent of the 1997 cohort who completed a degree/certificate or who transferred out,” should be split into two separate figures in order to enhance significance of the data contained therein, and to minimize comparison between retention rates and graduation rates since the two rates are based on different cohorts.
- A new figure should be included displaying institution price as demonstrated by 3 consecutive years of pricing data, relative to the comparison group, using data supplied in the IPEDS Institutional Characteristics survey.
- A new figure should be included indicating the linchpin institution’s five largest programs (as measured by awards conferred), by award level, relative to the comparison group for each of those programs.

The resulting feedback report, as proposed by the panel, would include up to 12 figures, smaller comparison groups, and detailed methodological notes.

***What are the reporting implications to this proposal?***

There will be no changes to the data reported from the institutions as a result of this proposal. Institutions may, if they choose, upload a UnitID (UID) file within the data collection system, for purposes of specifying their desired comparison group to be used in the creation of the feedback report for their institution.

***When will this be implemented?***

Pending review by NCES and concerned parties, the changes will be implemented in the data feedback reports scheduled to be created using 2004-2005 IPEDS data and delivered to institution keyholders and Chief Executives in October of 2005.

**Comments:**

NCES is concerned about improving the utility and value of the Data Feedback Reports. We encourage interested parties to send any comments or concerns about this proposal to Susan Broyles at [Susan.Broyles@ed.gov](mailto:Susan.Broyles@ed.gov) by June 30, 2005. Please include the following in the email subject line: IPEDS Data Feedback Reports TRP – Proposal Comments.