

Report and Suggestions from IPEDS Technical Review Panel #28:

Requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act: State Higher Education Spending Chart – Further Discussion

SUMMARY: The Technical Review Panel identified and discussed issues associated with the recommendations made by a former Technical Review Panel regarding the development of the state higher education spending chart. Comments from interested parties are due to Janice Kelly-Reid, IPEDS Project Director at RTI International, at ipedstrpcomment@rti.org by February 15, 2010.

On October 27 and 28, 2009, RTI International, the contractor for the IPEDS web-based data collection system, convened a meeting of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Technical Review Panel (TRP) in Washington, DC. The purpose of this meeting was to examine the draft State Higher Education Spending Chart calculated using data currently collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in IPEDS and to consider a draft state higher education spending chart calculated using other data sources. Both draft charts were calculated using the formulas recommended by the TRP that met in April 2009. The panel was made up of 43 individuals representing the federal government, state governments, institutions, data users, association representatives, and others.

Background

Members of the IPEDS TRP met previously on April 21 and 22, 2009, to discuss the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) requirement that the U.S. Department of Education include a state higher education spending chart on the College Navigator website. The requirement for the state spending chart is found in HEOA section 132, “Transparency in College Tuition for Consumers,” subsection (g). The panel met to provide suggestions on how the three items contained in the state higher education chart could be calculated using data currently collected by NCES in IPEDS.

Following the April 2009 TRP meeting, a summary of the TRP’s suggestions was posted for public comment. Additionally, drafts of the state higher education spending chart were prepared following the TRP’s suggested formulas and using data currently collected by NCES in IPEDS. After considering public comments and examining the draft chart, this subsequent meeting of the IPEDS TRP was convened to investigate other possible data sources before implementing the former TRP’s recommendations. The panel was asked to consider whether IPEDS data or data from another source is most appropriate for calculating the state higher education spending chart.

Technical Discussion

The panel identified and investigated other data sources, calculated additional drafts of the state higher education spending chart, reviewed the HEOA requirements, and discussed the strengths and weaknesses of alternate data sources. Because of weaknesses such as year-to-year data inconsistencies, missing variables, and low response rates relative to IPEDS, the panel suggested using IPEDS data rather than external sources. The panel noted that using data currently collected by NCES in IPEDS will ensure that reliable numbers are posted annually on the College Navigator website.

The panel reviewed the tables that were created for the meeting using IPEDS data and based on the previous TRP’s suggestions. Participants discussed modifying the denominator of the formula for state spending chart item 1. The previous TRP suggested using undergraduate FTE in the

denominator for state spending chart item 1. However, several panelists at the most recent TRP favored using total FTE in the denominator because the numerator includes more than undergraduate support. Most panelists favored using undergraduate FTE. The panel also discussed whether to weight the formula for state spending chart item 2 and agreed that if the measure was weighted, it should be weighted by undergraduate FTE. Otherwise the panel recommended upholding suggestions made by the former TRP.

The panel recommended the following formulas:

State Spending Chart Item 1: Percentage Change in Spending by the State per FTE Student

- 1) *the percentage change in spending by such State per full-time equivalent student at all public institutions of higher education in such State, for each of the five most recent preceding academic years;*

$$\text{state spending per FTE} = \frac{\sum (\text{state appropriations} + \text{local appropriations})}{\sum \text{UG FTE}}$$

State Spending Chart Item 2: Percentage Change in In-State Tuition and Fees

- 2) *the percentage change in tuition and fees for such students for all public institutions of higher education in such State for each of the five most recent preceding academic years;*

$$\text{Tuition and fees} = \frac{\sum (\text{avg tuition for FT,FT resident UG} + \text{required fees for FT,FT resident UG}) * (\text{est. \# FT,FT resident UG})}{\sum \text{UG FTE}}$$

$$\text{Tuition and fees} = \frac{\sum (\text{avg tuition for FT,FT resident UG} + \text{required fees for FT,FT resident UG}) * (\text{est. \# FT,FT resident UG})}{\sum \text{UG FTE}}$$

State Spending Chart Item 3: Percentage Change in the Total Amount of Need-Based Aid and Merit-Based Aid Provided by the State to Full-Time Students

- 3) *the percentage change in the total amount of need-based aid and merit-based aid provided by such State to full-time students enrolled in the public institutions of higher education in the State for each of the five most recent preceding academic years.*

$$\text{Total amount of aid} = \sum (\text{state/local govt grants, avg amt received}) * (\text{\# receiving state/local aid})$$

$$\text{Total amount of aid} = \frac{\sum (\text{state/local govt grants, avg amt received}) * (\# \text{ receiving state/local aid})}{\sum (\# \text{ full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking students})}$$

Additional suggestions were made regarding the display of the state higher education spending chart:

- The chart should be displayed on the main page of College Navigator under “Additional Resources.”
- The chart should be displayed in spreadsheet form with 51 tabs (a summary page and one page for each state).
- All indicators displayed on the chart should have detailed and explicit labels; abbreviations should not be used.
- All IPEDS data items included in the chart should have corresponding definitions located in the IPEDS glossary.

The panel also suggested sending a message via e-mail to all state coordinators before posting the charts on College Navigator to allow coordinators a preview of the state higher education spending chart. This preview will give state coordinators the opportunity to gather contextual information to have available when the charts are published.

Comments

These suggestions will satisfy the requirements necessary to develop the state higher education spending chart. We encourage interested parties to send any comments or concerns about the TRP suggestions to Janice Kelly-Reid, IPEDS Project Director, at ipedsTRPcomment@rti.org.