

Report and Suggestions from the IPEDS Technical Review Panels #2, 3 and 5

TRP #2 - Issues and Concerns of Community Colleges

TRP #3 - IPEDS Jeopardy

TRP #5 - Planning for IPEDS: 2004 and Beyond (2 meetings)

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: IPEDS should revise its survey collection instruments to better address current issues of importance to postsecondary institutions.

Background:

During 2003, NCES hosted four separate IPEDS Technical Review Panel (TRP) meetings to address various issues as they relate to the collection of data from postsecondary institutions. The panels consisted of experts from federal and state agencies, postsecondary education associations, and institutions that were interested in the particular topics being addressed. Each meeting had its own agenda and yet the issues raised by each group were reflected in the discussions of each of the other groups.

TRP #2 concentrated on particular issues that community colleges have when responding to the IPEDS surveys including the institutions' ability to respond to some of the data items and combined reporting issues for those community colleges that report to a District office. Particular issues of concern to community colleges included: remediation; distance education; non-credit enrollment and its related activity (should NCES try to measure this?); continuing education enrollments; measures of success other than graduation rates; and online vs. traditional course delivery.

TRP #3 addressed questions that apply more to baccalaureate and higher degree-granting institutions, but also reflected some of the issues from TRP#2. The discussion covered topics such as: remediation (who's doing it and who's counting it); non-credit enrollment; first-professional degree fields (should others be considered?); teacher certification; and additional measures of success.

TRP #5 actually consisted of two meetings during which the panel members continued discussing the issues raised in TRPs #2 and #3 but from a different perspective - how to modify the IPEDS surveys to better address the issues raised. It was evident that, in some cases, minor modifications to the wording of questions or clarifications to instructions could be made to the data collections and it was suggested that these be made for surveys beginning in fall 2004. These modifications included word changes that would clarify the questions being asked, and the elimination of some questions that are no longer relevant to the IPEDS collection. A document summarizing the wording modifications and item changes that are being made to the IPEDS collection for 2004-05 is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/webbase.asp>. In other instances, major changes to the data collection were suggested. The suggestions made by the panels will benefit from input from the postsecondary community as a whole and their implementation (if feasible) would be deferred to future collections. The remainder of this document addresses suggestions made at these meetings that would result in major changes to the current collection. See

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/webbase.asp> for copies of the current survey instruments. NCES appreciates comments from interested parties. Instructions for how to respond with your comments are included at the end of this document.

Summary of suggested changes:

Institutional Characteristics (IC):

The panel suggested major changes to the questions about accreditation. These included merging the two questions on who accredits the institution: does it hold national, state, or regional accreditation? and is it accredited by one or more of the agencies recognized by the Secretary of Education? The change in the structure of these questions will not change the institution's response; however, the panel also suggested that the institution be encouraged to provide additional accrediting information; that is, whether or not it is accredited by other agencies (not recognized by the Secretary). If NCES allows institutions the ability to report other accrediting agencies, there would need to be some control over what is included on COOL or in the Peer Analysis System (PAS). Should institutions be encouraged to pick from another list or should they be allowed to "write in" the name of the agency? If it is a write-in, then how should these be controlled or edited?

Major changes were also suggested for Part C, which covers admissions requirements and services. There were two different approaches to dealing with admission requirements: one was to eliminate the admissions considerations altogether, the other was to distinguish between entrance requirements and those that are part of the application process. Additionally, we were reminded that some requirements are program specific, and this option would need to be addressed.

When collecting the number of applications, the number of students admitted, and the number enrolled, the panel suggested that NCES specify which time period should be covered, rather than allowing institutions to choose the reporting period. The panel suggested that institutions report on the current year. In addition, we were urged to allow institutions to report totals only if the gender breakout was not available (particularly for applicants).

The collection of SAT and ACT scores is currently limited to instances where 60 percent or more incoming students take the test. The panel suggested that the limitation be lifted and that institutions should report for any students enrolled (that fall) who took a particular test.

The remainder of Part C of the Institutional Characteristics component deals with special opportunities and student services; the panel suggested eliminating most of these questions. The only items they suggested keeping include the following:

- Distance learning opportunities (e-learning)
- ROTC
- Study Abroad
- Weekend/evening college
- Teacher certification questions, and
- Library questions

The major change to the IC component would be the addition of a question that would request early counts of full- and part-time enrollment by level of student. Since the enrollment component is not due until the spring, there is a considerable delay before any measure of enrollment is available. The fall data would be clearly identified as "early estimates," so there would be no comparisons made to what is reported the following spring.

Preliminary Early Estimate of Fall Enrollment:

Level of Student	Full Time	Part Time	Total
Undergraduate			CV1
Graduate			CV2
First-professional			CV3
Grand total estimated Fall 2005 enrollment			CV3

CV = calculated value. Totals will be summed from the detail provided by the institution.

Employees by Assigned Position (EAP)

Salaries (SA)

Fall Staff (S)

The three human resources (employee-related) components are being dealt with as a whole. The panel suggested that these three components be merged into one survey with three main parts. Of course, many institutions do not complete Salaries (which is applicable to degree-granting institutions only) or Fall Staff (applicable to institutions with 15 or more full-time employees), thus the survey would be tailored specifically to each institution. Institutions would still be required to complete screening questions to determine the applicability of the various parts of the new (combined) survey, but this is currently done as part of IC and/or the winter surveys anyway.

In general, the panel suggested that the instructions be reviewed to ensure consistency among all parts of these surveys. Other issues of consistency involved reporting of graduate (research/teaching) assistants, postdoctoral students and faculty in general since each of the surveys treats these differently.

Since the EAP component collects data separately for "medical schools" (defined in the survey as those granting the M.D. degree), the TRP addressed the issue of whether dental, osteopathic, veterinary and other such "medical" schools should also be treated separate from the main institution and reported with the medical schools.

The TRP suggested that NCES expand the Salaries component to include tenure status by rank as it did prior to 2001 (at least for 4-year degree-granting institutions). Two-year degree-granting institutions would continue to use the current version of the form. The TRP also discussed adding a separate piece to the Salaries survey for those institutions that cannot provide Fringe Benefits data as currently requested. Either a caveats box would be added or institutions would be required to provide an explanation to the edit error message.

Enrollment (EF):

The TRP members that represent 4-year institutions expressed a need for additional data on the number of degree or certificate-seeking students who transfer into the institution at the undergraduate level (both full time and part time) by race/ethnicity and gender. There were some concerns regarding availability of these data and their consistency across institutions.

Students by r/e and gender	Degree/certificate-seeking			Non- degree - seeking	Total undergrad students
	First- time	Transfers- in	All other degree - seeking		
			Total	CV1	CV2

CV1 is the sum of first-time + transfers-in + all other degree-seeking students.

CV2 is the sum of total degree-seeking students (CV1) + non-degree-seeking students.

The following suggestions were also made:

- That the age data (Part B) continue to be reported by all institutions;
- That the residence of first-time students data (Part C) be collected only from degree-granting institutions; and
- That Part D, which collects information on the Total Entering Class at the undergraduate level, should only pertain to institutions that use a fall cohort for reporting graduation rates and student financial aid (determined through the IC component).

Two other issues were discussed for which there were no immediate suggestions: the need for more information on both distance education and non-credit enrollment activity. These issues were deferred for future TRP discussions.

Graduation Rates (GRS):

Since most of the GRS data that IPEDS collects is mandated under Student Right-to-Know or is an integral part of the Department of Education's Strategic Plan, there is very little that can currently be changed in GRS. The only major change that the panel suggested is that we no longer collect graduation rates by race/ethnicity and gender from less than 2-year institutions and that the proposed data collection matrix not include transfers out since transfer is not normally part of the mission of these institutions.

Line No.		Total Students
10	Initial cohort (men+women)	
45	Exclusions from the cohort	
10A	Adjusted cohort	CV1
29A	Completers within 150% of normal time	
49	Balance (noncompleters)	CV2

Rate Institutional graduation/completion rate CV3

CV1 = Initial cohort minus any allowable exclusions (line 10 - line 45)

CV2 = Adjusted cohort minus completers (line 10A - line 29A)

CV3 = Completers divided by adjusted cohort (29A/10A)

One additional suggestion was made that would provide context and clarity to the data collected: TRP members wanted a line added to the survey (for all institutions) that would collect the number of students (in the cohort) that were still enrolled as of the status date. This additional information would provide some measure of "academic progression" and was previously collected on the GRS paper form.

Finance (F):

The panel suggested that NCES clarify a few instructions and definitions for the Finance components, primarily the one used by private, for-profit institutions. These will be done for 2004. In addition, they suggested that Parts A and B (Balance Sheet Information and Statement of Changes in Equity) should no longer be required of private for-profit institutions. The only other request was to make the Finance survey available to respondents in the Winter collection AND in the Spring collection (same as Enrollment).

Completions (C):

There were no suggestions for changes or clarifications to the Completions data collection.

Institutional Price (on IC)

Student Financial Aid (SFA)

Although the panel discussed both of these areas in detail, NCES will defer any suggestions for change to the Technical Review Panel later this spring.

Implications for IPEDS:

- 1. Group 1 consists of minor word changes that would clarify questions and/or instructions on the current surveys and the elimination of questions that are no longer relevant to the IPEDS collections. These are summarized at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/whatsnew.asp>; see IPEDS 2004-05 Data Collection Changes and Clarifications.**
- 2. Group 2 are the suggestions included in this document. They have more of an impact on data collection and institutional burden and NCES requests input from the postsecondary education community before making a final decision on their implementation.**
- 3. Group 3 are those that require more study and will be the subject of future TRP meetings.**

Comments:

NCES is concerned about whether or not the changes suggested will have an impact on the postsecondary institutions that respond to IPEDS. We welcome your comments and suggestions on the issues and changes raised in this document. Please address your comments to [Elise Miller](#) by May 20, 2004; your email subject line should read "Comments on TRP Suggestions for Changes to IPEDS".