

Follow Up to Board Workshop Questions From Trustee Arias

Re: Questions related to Program Review Data

Question:

For the purposes of program review, how is gainful employment data gathered, what is the time line, and how is it provided to the responding units to utilize in evaluation?

Answer:

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) uses its Automated Student and Adult Learning Follow-up System (ASALFS) to conduct a four-step process to track two-year college program completers each year. Step 1 is conducted by the THECB to identify program completers who transfer to other in-state colleges and universities. Step 2 is conducted by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to identify program completers who find gainful employment each year. The TWC matches student records against the State's Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data Base (WRdb) to identify program completers who were employed during the fourth quarter (October, November, December) of the year following program completion. Step 3 is a supplemental follow-up conducted by two-year colleges to track students who were not located in steps 1 or 2. Step 4 is the final gainful employment report generated by the THECB and posted to its website. The THECB is the only source Collin College has for gainful employment data (or any other data that reflects student employment outcomes following program completion).

Limitations of THECB Program Completer Tracking Data

- A. It is extremely limiting to depend on employment during a single quarter of the year following program completion as the sole determinant as to whether students became employed.
- B. Because all the THECB's employment data is aggregated at the program level within institutions, and because no student-level data is available from the TWC due to the MoU with the THECB, it becomes impossible to explore, understand, and analyze student behaviors and employment outcomes.
- C. The data reporting average program earnings in the fourth quarter of the year following program completion provide, at best, an incomplete picture of student earnings.

IRO Data Reporting for Formative Program Review

IRO generates reports on every instructional program every year using the most current data available in the THECB's ASALFS and Gainful Employment reports. Programs that are part of the five-year program review cycle during a given year are then able to access the data on-demand for use in their self-evaluations and reporting on program status and improvements. Programs that are not involved in the five-year program review cycle during a given year still have access to data for their programs that they can use in their

ongoing continuous improvement efforts and to monitor program status. Programs that are part of the five-year program review cycle submit their reports to IRO by the beginning of February each year.

Question:

How do we track transfer students for completion and success and how do we obtain the data?

Answer:

The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) is a national clearinghouse that collects and shares data verifying student enrollment and degree completion for 97% of all post-secondary U.S. students (99% of all post-secondary institutions) and over 94% of all degrees and certificates awarded in the U.S. With the adoption of ZogoTech as Collin College's data warehouse/business intelligence system (DW/BIS), IRO now annually updates and integrates transfer and graduation data from the NSC into its data warehouse for all students who have ever enrolled at Collin College. Thus, for any student or group of students who have enrolled at Collin, it can be determined on-demand how many have transferred to which institutions and how many have completed a degree at the transfer destinations.

IRO regularly uses the NSC data to comply with required federal reporting obligations (Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System or IPEDS) each year. Collin College must report at the institutional level the numbers and proportions of entering first-time-in-college students who completed Collin programs or who transferred to other post-secondary institutions within 100% of normal time-to-completion (typically one year for certificate programs and two-years for associate degree programs), 150% of normal time-to-completion, 200% of normal time-to-completion, and at four, six, and eight years after initial enrollment at Collin.

The THECB generates an annual report using data from their state-wide post-secondary data base that it calls "Academic Performance of 2-Year College Transfer Students at Texas Public Universities." This report is updated and posted to the THECB Web site each year. For each two-year college, the report shows the numbers of students who transferred to the top 20 or so Texas public university transfer destinations in a given year. The report breaks out transfer students based on whether or not they had enrolled in developmental education, completed a field of study award, completed an academic degree (AA, AS, AAT), completed an AAS, completed a certificate, or completed no program. It shows students' first year average GPA after transfer and whether or not they re-enrolled at the transfer destination for the subsequent year following their first year of transfer. There is also a supplemental report showing baccalaureate attainment at the top 20 or so transfer destinations within four years of having transferred.

Limitations of NSC Data

Institutions that share data with the NSC do so voluntarily. If they share transfer and program completion data with the NSC, they are allowed to obtain data from the NSC at no charge, so there is a strong incentive for institutions to participate at some level. While

NSC data covers the vast majority of students who transfer and the institutions to which they transfer, there is wide variation in the comprehensiveness of the data shared with the NSC. For example, some institutions provide a much more complete accounting of program completions than do others. Consequently, there are sometimes gaps in the available graduation data that is shared.

The raw data that is provided by the NSC includes records for each term that a student enrolls at an institution. As a result, some students can have many records from multiple institutions that can be extremely difficult to interpret. There are times when a data user may need IRO assistance to distill what can be an overwhelming amount of data into something that summarizes students' transfer behaviors into something that readily can be interpreted.

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