Student Outcome Data Analysis

Verifying, Benchmarking and Reporting Outcome Data

John Ware, Executive Director
Ohio State Board of Career Colleges and Schools

Primary Types of Outcome Data

- Graduation/Completion/Retention Data

- Placement Data

The data analysis process

- Several steps are involved in
  - Definitions
    - How do you calculate a graduation rate?
  - Collecting the data
  - Verifying the data that has been collected
    - How reliable is self reported data?
  - Benchmarking data
    - What does it really mean?
  - Reporting data
    - How is the information shared with consumers?

Common Definitions:
Graduation/Completion/Retention

- Graduation/Completion rates are typically stated as a percentage of the number of students who start a program who complete the program within a stated timeframe.
- Retention rates are typically calculated as the number of students who began a program who are still enrolled at some future point in the program (Next term, or the halfway point, etc.)

IPEDS Graduation and Completion

- IPEDS: Cohort graduation rates
- A graduation rate is the percentage of students in a given entering cohort (group) who graduated within a specified period of time. The number of students in the entering cohort is the denominator of the rate; the number of students graduating is the numerator of the rate. The entering cohort of an institution includes all full-time, first-time degree- or certificate-seeking undergraduate students who began in the stated cohort year. The time period is 150% of normal time to program completion (for example, for a four-year program, the graduation rate would include students who had graduated within six years of beginning the program).

IPEDS Student Retention

- Retention Rates (IPEDS)
- Retention rates are a measure of educational progression of a group of students from one period of time to the next (in this case, one year later). For four-year institutions, this is the percentage of first-time bachelor's (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduates from the previous fall (2004) who are again enrolled in the current fall (2005). For all other institutions this is the percentage of first-time degree- or certificate-seeking students from the previous fall who either re-enrolled or successfully completed their program by the current fall.

Limitations of Graduation Rate Data Analysis

- IPEDS data counts only full-time first-time students. Does not fully represent students who attend proprietary colleges and schools.
- How do you count students who transfer to another institution or who switch from full-time to part-time status.
- The graduation data "time lag" problem

Common Definitions: Placement Rates

- Placement rates are typically stated as a percentage of the number of students who complete a program who are employed in a related field within a stated timeframe.

Limitations of Placement Rate Data Analysis

- Place related vs. Placed unrelated
- Students who are "not seeking placement"
- How long does a school have to make a successful placement?
- How long must the student remain employed?
- Reporting starting salary information

Data Collection and Verification

- When, how and where of collecting data

- Is the data accurate and reliable?
  - Data Verification Techniques

Benchmarking Data

- What is an acceptable student outcome?
  - Many factors can affect outcome measurements
  - How can you compare different types of institutions and programs
- Benchmarking by using averages and standard deviations for graduation and placement rates.

ACCSCT Standards

- ACCSCT determines a school's graduation and employment rates to be acceptable when:
  - The graduation/employment rate is not less than one standard deviation below the mean for comparable schools or programs

ACCSCT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT STANDARD
Based on 2001 Annual Report Data

Completion Rates

Length in Months	Mean	1 Std. Deviation	Mean Less 1 Standard Deviation
1-6	88%	13%	75%
7-9	72%	15%	57%
10-16	65%	18%	47%
17 and over	56%	22%	34%

Placement Rate

Mean	1 Std. Deviation	Mean Less 1 Standard Deviation
85%	15%	70%

(Based on 3009 programs reported)

Schools that don't meet Benchmarks

- There are a number of common reasons that schools may not meet benchmarks such as:
  - Small data samples, socio-economic status of student population, difficulty of programs, etc.
- Implementing corrective action plans
  - What corrective measures is a school taking to improve its performance?

Communicating the Data

- Are data communication systems effective?

- National Consumer Law Center Report
  - http://www.consumerlaw.org/news/ProprietarySchoolsReport.pdf

Informing potential students and other interested parties

- IPEDS Reporting
  - http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/index.aspx

- State Reporting Tools
  - http://www.eab.state.wi.us/resources/schoolsprograms.asp

Reporting outcome data to potential students

- State requirements
  - Ohio Administrative Code Section 3332-1-09 states that "No applicant will be allowed to sign an enrollment agreement until the school has provided the applicant with placement and graduation rates, by program, for each of the preceding three years."

Recommendations

- States should seek to assure that the data they collect is accurate and verifiable.

- States should establish performance benchmarks for the outcome data that is collected.

- The data should be distributed to potential students and other interested parties in context and as simply as possible.

Recommendations

Example: Require schools to report information to potential students in this manner:

- "The average graduation rate for two-year programs licensed by OSBCCS was 50%. This school's graduation rate has been calculated as 40%."

Questions

2007 NASASPS Annual Conference
Boston, Massachusetts