Data and Higher Education Policy Development

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AIHEC Executive Awareness Session
on Data-Driven Decisionmaking
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Institute for Higher Education Policy

- Non-profit, non-partisan organization whose mission is to foster access and success in postsecondary education
- Established in 1993; ~25 staff
- Key activities include policy reports and studies, seminars and meetings, and capacity building
- Work involves federal, state, and international issues
- Primary audiences of the Institute are those who make or inform decisions about higher education: policymakers, senior institutional leaders, researchers, funders, the media, and private sector leaders
- Facilitator of Alliance for Equity in Higher Education
Why Is Data Important?

• Data influences policymaking.
• You can find out what students think and do while they’re still enrolled.
• You can determine the effectiveness of programs and policies.
• Data can help you prioritize your actions.
• You can create a greater sense of urgency to act with data to support your decisions.
• You can sustain momentum for implementing changes when they are supported with data.
History

✓ 1970s: Evaluation emerges – prove worth of services rendered
✓ 1980s: Reform reports:
  ✓ “A Nation at Risk”
  ✓ “Involvement in Learning”
✓ 1990s: Regional accreditors require evidence of student learning
✓ 2000: National Survey of Student Engagement
✓ 2003: BEAMS
✓ 2004: CCSSE and Achieving the Dream
✓ 2006: HEA Reauthorization, Spellings Commission—data-driven decisionmaking is here to stay
Target audiences

• Who Can You Inform/Influence with Data?
  – Federal, state, tribal policymakers
  – Institutional leaders
  – Accreditors
  – Foundations and other funders
  – Media/public
  – Associations and advocacy organizations
  – Academic researchers
Potential Sources of Untapped Data on Your Campus
Student-Level Data

Entering Student Data + Student Motivation Data + Student Integration Data = Student Success
What Data Are Available in Each Area?

• **Entering student data:** What do you know about your students when they enroll?

• **Student motivation data:** What data do you collect after they enroll?

• **Student integration data:** What data do you collect/compile at the end of each term?
Entering Student Data

Academic history
- GPA by subject matter
- Test scores (ACT/SAT, other)
- Major or academic interests
- Goal(s)

Demographic
- Commuter/resident
- High school/district
- Distance from home
Entering Student Data

Financial aid information
- Number with work plans
- Number receiving no financial aid
- Scholarship recipients
- Dependents

Enrollment factors
- Application date
- Enrollment classification
- Previous enrollments at other institutions
Student Motivation Data

- Participation in orientation
- Orientation survey
- Meetings with advisor
- Freshman survey data
- Academic and social motivation data
- Student engagement data
- English placement test
- Math placement test
- Academic plans
- Use of campus resources
Student Integration Data

- End-of-term grades
- Affiliations with clubs and organizations
- Credit hours attempted
- Credit hours completed
- Academic status (dean’s list, warning, probation, suspension)
- Major
- Pre-registration for next term
Using Existing Data/Resources

• Look for publications (AIHEC, IHEP, Alliance for Equity in HE, other websites)
• Contact organizations and associations
• Use online data
Available Federal Data

• NCES publications and quick facts: http://nces.ed.gov/
• IPEDS Peer Analysis System (PAS): http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas/
• IPEDS COOL: http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/
• NPSAS Data Analysis System: http://nces.ed.gov/das/
Federal Sources (Continued)


• Census Bureau/Current Population Survey and DataFerrett:
  http://www.bls.census.gov/cps/cpsmain.htm

• Economic Diversity of Colleges:
  http://www.economicdiversity.org/
Other Sources of Data

• NACUBO tuition discounting: http://www.nacubo.org/x44.xml
• NSSE student engagement: http://nsse.iub.edu
• ANSWERS: http://www.highered.org/answers/index.asp
• Common Data Set Exchange: http://www.commondataset.org/
• Education Trust College Results Online: http://www.collegeresults.org/
• Postsecondary Education Opportunity: http://www.postsecondary.org/home/default.asp
Concluding Thoughts

- You decide what is valuable to measure
- Carefully decide what to measure and make certain it aligns with institutional mission, values, and desired outcomes
- Contribute to AIMS, and respond to requests from AIHEC
- Dedicate staff to data collection and analysis—it’s no longer a luxury