

**Attention: Information No Longer Current
(Alert archived November 2011)**

Alert #18 – Update 1

Title: Status of Proposed Inclusion of Instruction Expenses per FTE Student on IPEDS COOL

Prepared: April 2004

Summary

In October 2003, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) posted for comment a proposal to add Instruction Expenses per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Student to the IPEDS COOL (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System College Opportunities On-Line) Web site. The NCES does not plan to do this unless required by legislation.

Current Status

The responses to the proposal were overwhelmingly negative. The NCES summarized the responses as follows: Institutions believe that presentation of this "overly simplistic" calculation would be a disservice to parents and students, as well as institutions, and it would provide data that are clearly open to misunderstanding. To truly understand this number would require a thorough knowledge of the institution and its programs, accounting standards, and any other caveats (such as the inclusion of expenses for non-credit activity) - something that is not expected when using IPEDS COOL. While respondents consistently believe in the goals of accountability and informing potential students and their parents, they do not believe that these goals would be achieved by the use of this indicator. See <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/costperfte.asp> for the full statement by NCES.

The NCES has decided not to add this indicator to the IPEDS COOL Web site unless required to do so by legislation. If NCES were required to include this variable on the COOL Web site, NCES would develop a separate page on COOL that would display selected financial statistics. Instruction expenses per FTE would be one such variable. The displayed values could be obtained either by calculation or by asking the institutions to provide it (as they do for Peterson's). If institution reports are collected, NCES would then compare the two values and ask the institutions to verify which is correct. Other items displayed on COOL may include other financial information such as scholarships and fellowships and percent of revenues from various sources.

Implications for Institutions

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No action is required by institutions.

Timeline

October 6, 2003 - Proposal posted on NCES Web site for comment

April 4, 2004 - NCES summary report of responses to proposal

Additional Resources

NCES proposal: <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/web2000/instrucexp.asp>

General information about IPEDS COOL: <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool>

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Federal Student Aid Web site displaying average instructional expenditure per FTE student as reported to Peterson's:
<http://studentaid2.ed.gov/gotocollege/collegefinder> (under Campus Highlights)

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Coordinated by the Higher Education Data Policy Committee. All opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Association for Institutional Research.