

Making the IPEDS Student Financial Aid Survey Data Meaningful

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National Postsecondary Education Commission

- Established in 1995 to:

“promote the quality, comparability and utility of postsecondary data and information that support policy development at the federal, state, and institutional levels”

- NPEC commissions papers to improve IPEDS and federal surveys
- Charge for this Student Financial Aid (SFA) paper:
 - What are the strengths/limitation of SFA component?
 - What major areas or metrics should be collected?
 - How could SFA be improved?

Recommendations

1. Expand and standardize reporting fields to include part-time, transfer, returning, and graduate students
2. Streamline data collection with other federal sources
3. Expand coverage of non-federal sources of aid
4. Disaggregate aid data by student economic & demographic characteristics
5. Make net price survey more meaningful by separating from SFA

Guiding questions for this webinar:

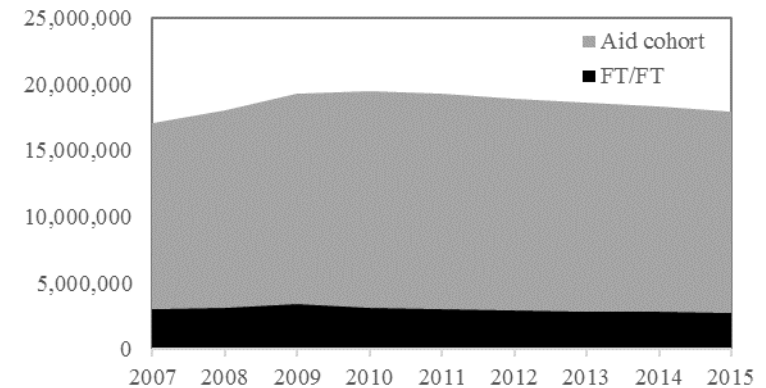
Where do you see various audiences (a) using these data now and (b) using these data if recommendations were adopted?

What other recommendations or changes might be worthwhile?

My approach

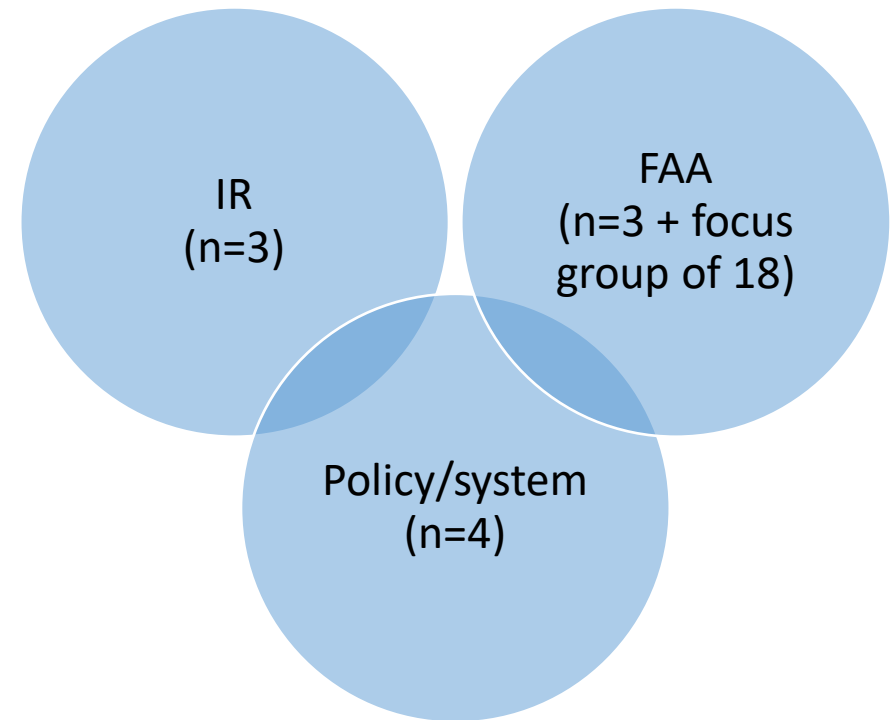
- Data analysis
 - Variable definitions
 - Coverage over time
 - Congressional mandates
- Interviews
 - Institutional researchers
 - Financial aid administrators
 - Policy researchers
- Literature review
 - Academic research
 - Policy research

	All FT/FT	FT/FT any grants	FT/FT any Title IV aid	All undergrads
Number & percentage awarded grants				
Pell	X			X
Total federal	X		X	
State/local	X			
Institutional	X			
Government, institution, or other	X	X	X	X
Total & average grant aid awarded				
Pell	X			X
Total federal	X		X	
State/local	X			
Institutional	X			
Government, institution, or other	X	X	X	X
Number & percentage awarded loans				
Total federal	X		X	X
State/local				
Institutional				
Government, institution, or other	X	X	X	X
Total & average loans awarded				
Total federal	X		X	X
State/local				
Institutional				
Government, institution, or other	X	X	X	X



My approach

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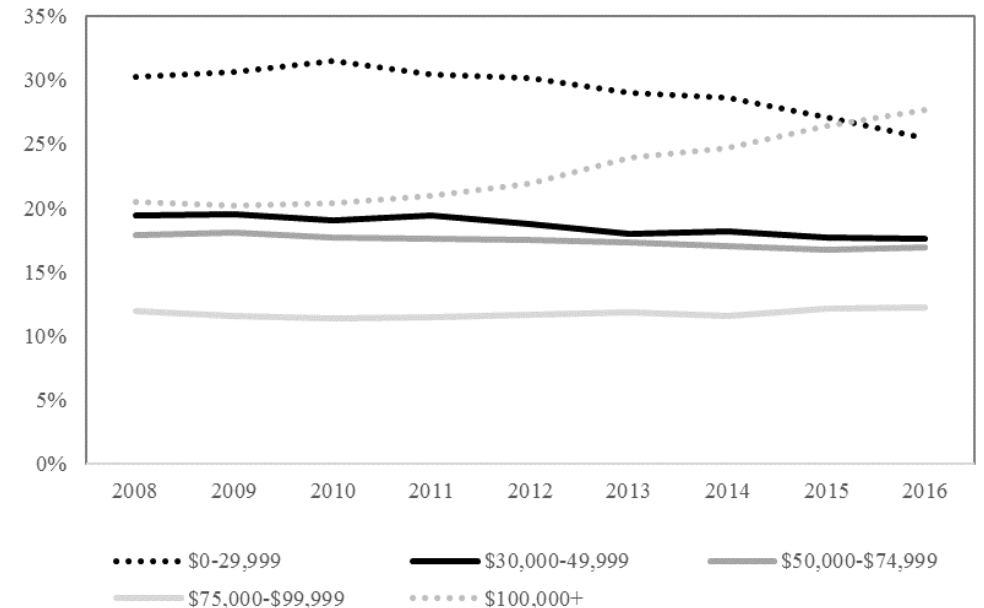
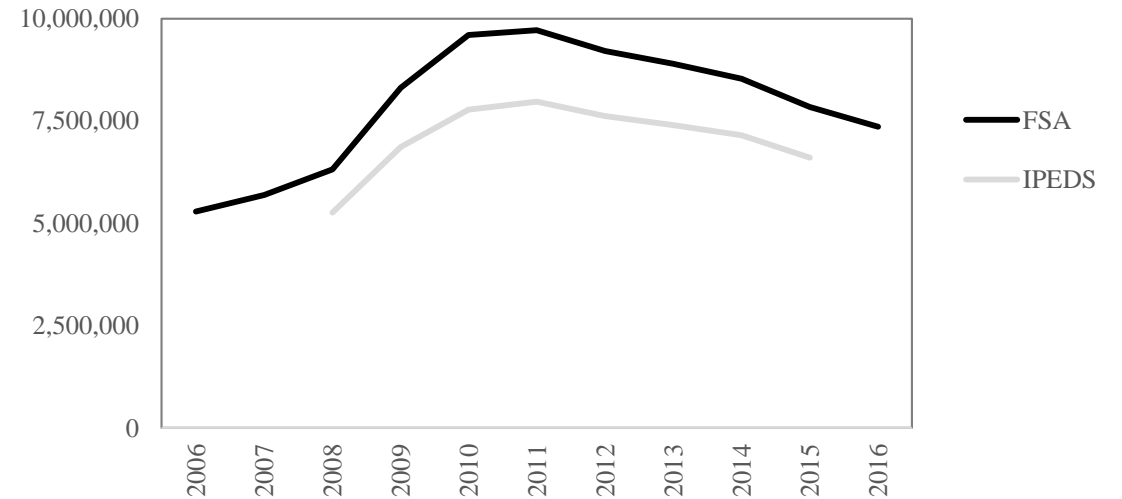
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Main findings

- Four main uses of SFA data:
 - Internal benchmarking
 - External accountability
 - Consumer information
 - Academic research
- Efficacy is hard to assess in each of these domains:
 - How does SFA change organizational strategies?
 - How is SFA data used to improve college outcomes?
 - How do students use SFA data?
 - How does SFA provide the best data for research?

Main findings

- Narrow reporting field coverage
- Inconsistent variable coverage
- Cumulative versus annual awards
- Linking IPEDS with other federal data
- Program Participation Agreement metadata
- Net price coverage



Emerging trends

- Need-based institutional need-based aid
- Graduate student debt
- Servicers and repayment plans
- Emergency grants
- Amount of aid refunded
- FAFSA filing rates and verifications
- “Promise” programs

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