Alert #9 – Update 7

Subject: Redesign of IPEDS Surveys—Update #7

Prepared:September 1999

Summary

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Task Force for IPEDS Redesign has issued its final report http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/ncestfredesign.html. The report lists 11 recommendations that address which institutions should complete IPEDS surveys; structure and timing of collection; collection method (Web-based); content; new race/ethnicity codes; changes to the reporting of data for employees; Web-based peer analysis; improved communication; provision of technical assistance; collaboration with the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) and organizations that survey postsecondary institutions; and continuous improvement. Major content-related proposals include the following: new reporting for race/ethnicity; new reporting for employee counts and faculty salaries; new Voluntary Institutional On-Line Information Network (VIOLIN) to integrate with IPEDS; five new sets of items; and the deletion of 12 check-off items plus the entire survey of Fall Enrollment in Occupationally Specific Programs. Process-related changes are primarily due to Web-based collection and analysis. Feedback about the report is welcome and should be sent to IPEDS@ed.gov.

Current Status

After consulting with IPEDS users, IPEDS providers, and representatives from a number of higher education organizations and holding a series of meetings at various conferences, an NCES Task Force to recommend ways to redesign IPEDS has issued its final report. According to the report, IPEDS redesign is intended to accomplish the following:

*   respond to external data requirements (including Congressional mandates for price and financial aid data, new reporting requirements for race/ethnicity, a new finance form for public institutions, and new CIP codes)
*   improve timeliness of IPEDS data
*   ensure the relevance of data
*   enhance the quality of IPEDS data
*   increase the efficiency of data collection
*   improve the utility of data
*   enhance communication and collaboration

Recommendations. The NCES Task force Force includes the following 11 recommendations:

*   Recommendation 1. *IPEDS shall cover all institutions participating in Title IV (student financial aid) programs and all non-Title IV postsecondary institutions that are open to the general public.* The full set of IPEDS data will be collected only from degree and other award granting Title IV postsecondary education institutions. Non-title IV institutions will be asked to complete the full set and if they do not do so, they will be asked to submit a minimal set of data (described in Recommendation 4d below).

*   Recommendation 2. *IPEDS shall be organized into three waves of collection based on data availability (i.e., when data are expected to be available): October, December, and March Collections. For those non-title IV institutions that do not respond to these collections, a fourth wave of data collection in paper form will be used to collect minimal data.* As with the August 1999 Survey of Institution Prices and Student Financial Aid (IPSFA), the Web-based collection system will not be available after the closing date for each collection period. The system will be available for submission of data between September 1 and October 31 for the October collection, between December 1 and February 7 for the December collection, and between February 16 and April 5 for the March collection. The minimum data collection will begin on April 12 and run until May 15 or until 85% of institutions have either submitted data or refused to do so.

*   Recommendation 3a-b. *In 2000-2001 IPEDS shall use a Web-based system to collect data with built-in edits and other quality checks to process the data when they are entered into the system; and for institutions that do not have the Internet capability, NCES shall provide special administrative assistance to help process their submissions. The current IPEDS coordination system shall be maintained and the Web-based system shall accommodate the current coordination practices.* Institutions will be able to enter data on a Web-based form or alternatively to upload a file containing the data.

*   Recommendation 4a. *The October Collection shall collect the following data elements with a few additions and deletions:*
    Institutional Characteristics (IC), including price information (tuition and fees for the current year).
    Completions -- total count for each award level by 6-digit CIP code, by gender and by race/ethnicity (previous year).

*   Recommendation 4b. *The December Collection shall collect the following data elements with a few additions and deletions:*
        Full-year unduplicated enrollments -- unduplicated headcount for a 12-month period in previous year, by gender and race/ethnicity, and by level of enrollment for prior year if

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applicable.

 Full-year unduplicated headcount of first-time full-time students over a 12-month period for less-than-4-year institutions for prior year.

 Credit/contact hour activity for a 12-month period in previous year.

 Fall enrollment (current year) by gender and race/ethnicity.

 Fall enrollment (current year) by age and by residence status (mandatory in alternating years).

 Fall staff (current year) (a revised classification framework will be adopted, see Recommendation 6).

 Faculty salaries (current year) (a revised classification framework for faculty will be adopted, see Recommendation 6).

*   **Recommendation 4c**. *The March Collection shall collect the following data elements:*

 Student financial aid -- average amount of financial assistance by type, and number of students receiving financial assistance for the previous year plus contextual items. {implemented in 2000-2001}

 Institutional finance (previous year).

 Graduation rates.

*   **Recommendation 4d**. *For the minimal data set, NCES shall simply focus on (1) the directory information such as mission, date established, name, address, phone, e-mail address, Web address, control, level, accreditation status; and (2) basic institutional information such as number of students enrolled (by sex and race/ethnicity), number of awards by program, number of faculty/staff, tuition and fees. {implemented in 2000-2001}*

*   **Recommendation 4e**. *NCES shall continue working with institutions to develop and select new items that are relevant and useful to institutions.*

*   **Recommendation 5**. *Among many possible combinations, we recommend that NCES adopt the 16 race/ethnicity categories recommended by the NPEC/NCES/NSF Policy Panel on Racial/Ethnic Reporting to report aggregated data for the Fall Enrollment Survey, the Completions Survey, the Fall Staff Survey, and the Graduation Rate Survey. {optional in 2000-2001, 2001-2002; required in 2002-2003 for Fall Enrollment; required 2003-2004 for Fall Staff and Completions}* These reporting categories provide one table that represents 10 minimum/lower-bound counts (plus a total unduplicated headcount) and a second table with six maximum/upper-bound counts for each of the six racial/ethnic categories. The report of the policy panel is at http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/pdf/finalracerec.pdf.

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*   Recommendation 6a-b. *NCES shall adopt the framework for reporting institutional employee data recommended by the NPEC Working Group on Faculty. NCES shall continue to explore a measure of instructional activity/work load. {optional in 2001-2002}.* The working group is proposing that all employees be classified on the Fall Staff Survey by full-time/part-time status, occupational/functional categories, and faculty status and that data for employees in medical schools be collected separately. The working group is also developing detailed definitions and instructions for categorizing employees. Salaries for employees in "Instruction/research/public service" categories will be reported on the Faculty Salaries Survey, meaning that the two surveys are integrated. In addition, information about instructional activity (e.g., total credits taught, number of classes taught) may be collected. A forthcoming AIR Alert will summarize the recommendations of the working group.

*   Recommendation 7. *NCES shall develop and maintain a peer analysis system to facilitate comparative analyses of IPEDS data by institutions and other users, a Web page on which consumer information for each institution can be disseminated by NCES to the general public, and a system to select and link data from various components of IPEDS for statistical analyses. These systems shall be accessible to persons with disabilities. {to be implemented in 2000-2001}* A Beta release of this system is available at http://nces.ed.gov/lootreep/ (userid=tes101ter, password=aut202th). Feedback should be sent to IPEDS@ed.gov. Release of a final version is dependent on funding.

*   Recommendation 8. *NCES shall employ multiple approaches to maintain effective communication with institution chief executive officers, institution and state IPEDS data providers, and data users in the postsecondary education community.*

*   Recommendation 9a-e. *During each data collection period, NCES shall provide HELP desk support for respondents. NCES shall provide administrative assistance to institutions that do not have access to the Internet or the capacity to provide data through the Web-based system. NCES shall conduct or support training workshops for institution and state IPEDS coordinators (keyholders) to become fully conversant with the Web-based system for data collection and analysis. NCES shall develop an on-line tutorial program for data providers to get answers or instructions for performing certain tasks with the Web-based system. NCES shall establish the IPEDS Fellows Program.*

*   Recommendation 10a-b. *NCES shall support NPEC's initiative to coordinate and collaborate with other major postsecondary education data developers to reduce the overall response burden to institutions. {to be implemented in 2000-2001 if funds are available} NCES shall support the Voluntary Institution On-Line Information Network (VIOLIN), a voluntary peer*

analysis system, to reduce the overall response burden to institutions and serve as a test platform for IPEDS item development. {to be implemented in 2001-2002 if funds are available}

The VIOLIN system is described in Alert 9, Update 6 (Alert 9 Update 6).

*   Recommendation 11. *NCES shall adopt a process of continuous improvement for the IPEDS system.*

<u>**Additions to IPEDS.**</u> In addition to the substantive changes represented by the new race/ethnicity codes, the new reporting of employee data, and the VIOLIN system described in Recommendations 5, 6a-b, 10b above, the report proposes the following five sets of additions to IPEDS:

*   Selectivity and freshmen profile data (October collection, optional in 2001-2002, mandatory thereafter). Because of Congressional interest in college selectivity, items relating to the freshman class will be added. A screening item will ask whether the institution has an open admission policy for all or most students. If the institution indicates they have such an open - admission policy, they would not supply data for the other two items. A second item would ask for the number of applications, admissions, and enrolled students for the first-time full-time (GRS) cohort, by gender. A third item would ask for the percentage and the number of students submitting SAT/ACT scores and the 25th and 75th percentile scores for each test. However, if the institution does not require test scores for admission or if fewer than 60% of students in the entering cohort submitted scores for a given test, the percentile scores for that test would not be reported. All data would be for the prior fall's entering class and would include new students admitted the summer prior to that fall.

*   Five sets of check-off items (October collection). One set (optional in 2001-2002, mandatory thereafter) asks whether the institution accepts 1) dual credit (college credits earned while in high school), 2) credit for life experiences, and/or 3) advanced placement credits. The second set (optional in 2001-2002, mandatory thereafter) asks whether the institution offers any of the following: 1) ROTC, 2) study abroad, 3) accelerated programs (e.g., on weekends), and/or 4) distance learning opportunities. A third set (optional in 2001-2002, mandatory thereafter) will cover special curricular offerings for students. A fourth set (optional in 2001-2002, mandatory thereafter) asks about policies for students from non-regionally accredited high schools (e.g., home schools) in yes/no response categories. The fifth set (implemented in 2000-2001) includes new options for item C5 of the IC Survey that asks about the presence of various admission requirements: secondary school GPA, secondary school rank, secondary school record, college-preparatory program in secondary school, recommendations, and formal demonstration of competencies (e.g., portfolios, certificates of mastery, assessment instruments). New response

categories will also be added for this fourth set: 1) required, 2) recommended, 3) neither required nor recommended, and 4) don't know.

*   Data on multiple majors (October collection, optional in 2001-2002, mandatory thereafter). Because of interest, primarily at four-year institutions, in providing more complete information about graduates with multiple majors (e.g., dual or split majors), a new table shall be added to the Completions Survey to provide data by CIP code, gender, and race/ethnicity for additional undergraduate majors not already reported in Part A of the survey. Institutions that do not have multiple majors would not complete the new table.

*   Non-credit activity for two-year institutions (December collection, optional in 2001-2002, mandatory thereafter). In response to requests from two-year institutions to track growing non-credit activity, prior-year data about non-credit courses will be added for two-year institutions for which "non-credit instruction constitutes an important part of the institution's educational offerings (as determined by the institution)." The new item would request the number of non-credit courses and the corresponding contact hours for 1) courses for workforce development and 2) other non-credit courses.

*   Percent of entering class represented by the Graduation Rate Survey cohort (December collection, optional in 2001-2002, mandatory thereafter). In response to requests from a number of institutions for whom the Graduation Rate Survey (GRS) cohort is not representative of their entire entering class, a clarifying question would be added to future Graduation Rate Surveys to indicate the proportion of the entire undergraduate entering class represented by the GRS cohort. To facilitate computing such a percentage, the December collection will include an item that asks for the total (full-time plus part-time) undergraduate entering class (including first-time, transfer, and non-degree students).

Other Changes. Institutional information and price-related items from the IPSFA will be moved to the October collection, and the IPSFA financial aid and student count items will be moved to the March collection. Unduplicated headcounts and credit hour data for the previous 12-month period will be collected in December instead of with IC items. Seven check-off items will be deleted from the IC Survey (C2, C3, C4, C7, 3 of 9 options in C8, F1, F2); five clarifying items will be deleted from the Fall Enrollment Survey (D1, D2, D4, D5, D6); and the entire Fall Enrollment in Occupationally Specific Programs will be deleted. Instructions will be expanded in several areas.

Alternative Options. Funding does not currently exist to implement these recommendations, so the NCES Task Force has included some alternative ways to address issues related to IPEDS.

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Implications for Institutions

Because the NCES Task Force recommendations would affect the content and methodology for reporting IPEDS data starting as early as next fall, individuals who supply IPEDS data should read the task force report carefully and provide feedback, especially if they have a concern or question. Responses should be sent via e-mail to IPEDS@ed.gov.

Relevant individuals at institutions should be aware of new items, especially those relating to the soon-to-be-released new reporting formats for staff/salary, the requirement from the Office of Management and Budget to allow students and employees to indicate multiple race/ethnic categories and the new reporting categories for these data, and VIOLIN. These items should be discussed with the institution's information technology (IT) staff in order to decide how they and existing IPEDS data will be submitted using the Web-based system. If the university's enterprise databases are supported by vendor software, the vendor should be encouraged to discuss with NCES IPEDS redesign and the implications for their software. Currently five vendors are scheduled to attend a September 16 meeting: Datatel, SCT, CARS, Oracle, and Computer Management & Development Systems. EPOS, Quodata, ACCESS Group, and SAP America declined the NCES invitation to attend.

Individuals who supply staff and/or faculty salary data should watch for a forthcoming AIR Alert that describes the recommendations of the NPEC working group on faculty and plan to provide feedback once the new proposals are made available for comment. In particular, if more than one office fills out these forms, they should decide how data for the two forms will be coordinated in the future since numbers are cross-referenced across the two forms.

A final set of recommendations from NCES on racial/ethnic reporting will be made available later this fall. Those who supply fall enrollments, completions, staff, and GRS data should monitor the final proposals from that panel and discuss upcoming changes with their institution's IT staff.

Any Title IV institutions that did not submit data to the Web-based IPSFA Survey this summer should make arrangements to submit the data next year when these data will be a mandatory part of the October and March collections (for price and financial aid data, respectively).

Timeline

May 1999 - College Opportunities On-Line (COOL) system made available to the public

May 1999 - Letter mailed to CEOs asking them to designate IPEDS keyholder for IPSFA Survey

July 1- August 16, 1999 - Collection window for Web-based IPSFA Survey

Summer/Fall 1999 - Pilot version of VIOLIN to be developed

August 31, 1999 - Final recommendations on IPEDS Redesign

October 1999 - New IPEDS reporting categories for race/ethnicity finalized by NCES

2000-2001 - Web-based software implemented for all IPEDS surveys

2000-2001 - Institutions may use the new racial/ethnic categories for reporting IPEDS data (**optional)**

2001-2002 - New items implemented (most optional until 2002-2003)

2002-2003 - New finance form for public institution data for FY 2002

2002-2003 - Mandatory reporting by new racial/ethnic categories for Fall Enrollment (old categories dropped); old codes should be stored for future GRS cohorts

2003-2004 - New CIP codes used for reporting 2002-2003 Completions

2003-2004 - Mandatory reporting by new racial/ethnic categories for Completions (for the prior academic year) and Staff (old categories dropped)

Additional Resources

* Final Report of NCES Task Force for IPEDS Redesign: available at:
http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/ncestfredesign.html

* IPEDS site with notice of latest updates: http://nces.ed.gov/Ipeds/whatsnew.html

* College Opportunities On-Line Site: http://nces.ed.gov/Ipeds/cool/

* Beta-analysis system: http://nces.ed.gov/lootreep/ (userid=tes101ter, password=aut202th)

* Summary of March 1999 meeting of Policy Panel on Racial/Ethnic Data:
http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/pdf/finalracerec.pdf

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* AIR Alert #9 describing IPEDS Redesign: Alert 9

* First update to AIR Alert #9: Alert 9 Update 1

* Second update to AIR Alert #9: Alert 9 Update 2

* Third update to AIR Alert #9: Alert 9 Update 3

* Fourth update to AIR Alert #9: Alert 9 Update 4

* Fifth update to AIR Alert #9: Alert 9 Update 5

* Sixth update to AIR Alert #9, which describes VIOLIN: Alert 9 Update 6

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