



Overview

NPEC's mission is to promote the quality, comparability and utility of postsecondary data and information that support policy development at the federal, state, and institution levels.

The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) is a voluntary partnership of postsecondary institutions, associations, government agencies, and organizations. NPEC receives funding from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education.

2006 National Symposium on Postsecondary Student Success

**November 1-3, 2006
Washington, DC**



The NPEC 2006 National Symposium on Postsecondary Student Success is a 3-day forum on what constitutes success and what factors impact the chances of success for different types of students in different types of postsecondary institutions. Symposium objectives include synthesizing what is currently known about student success, adding to that body of knowledge, identifying a research agenda to effectively support policymaking, and fostering future national efforts in this area. The format focuses on panel and participant discussions with and among noted researchers in the field, federal, state, and institution decisionmakers; and legislative policymakers.

Featured speakers will include: Donna Alvarado, Derek Bok, John Braxton, Jim Hearn, Bridget Terry Long, Patricia McGuire, Laura Perna, Piedad Robertson, Scott Thomas, Thomas Bailey, William Demmert, George Kuh, David Longanecker, Michael Nettles, Laura Rendon, John Smart and Vince Tinto.

Student Access

Reports, Publications and Tools:

- How Does Technology Affect Access in Postsecondary Education? What Do We Really Know? (2004)
- Paving the Way to Higher Education: K-12 Intervention Programs for Underrepresented Youth (2001)
- Reconceptualizing Access in Postsecondary Education (1998)

Student Outcomes

Current Activities

Student Success

What is student success? Is it earning a degree, acquiring new knowledge and skills, getting a job after graduation? Students, families, faculty, legislators, trustees, the press and the public all have ideas about what constitutes student success, and their ideas aren't necessarily the same. Understanding student success becomes even more complicated when we consider the diversity of students in postsecondary education. Is success measured the same way for 22 year old full-time college students and for 45 year old part-time students? For students with high test scores and for those who don't yet write and compute at a college-level? Should success be measured the same way for these students? How can decision-makers be better informed about the many ways in which postsecondary student success may be defined and measured?

About This Project

NPEC has initiated a number of activities in the programmatic area of "Student Success" for the purpose of providing better information for decision-making at the federal, state, and institution levels. "Student Success" involves student preparation, student access (including how it is affected by academic preparation and affordability), support provided to students (including effects of the academic environment, and student services), and many other factors. The growth in size and diversity of student populations in times of scarce resources, the shift in the financing of postsecondary education to students and their families, and the increasing demands for accountability that require postsecondary education institutions to demonstrate "Student Success" make this programmatic area timely and important for decision-makers at the federal, state, and institution levels. Activities include a competitive grant program in collaboration with the Association for Institutional Research, data synthesis, commissioned papers, case studies and the development of data tools. These activities will culminate in a National Symposium on Postsecondary Student Success in Washington, DC on November 1-3, 2006.

Student Persistence and Completion Methodologies

What are the ways a graduation rate or persistence rate can be calculated? What are the common definitions of persistence and completion? What are the pros and cons of using these different methodologies and definitions? Which methodology/definition is best for my purposes?

About This Project

This project will catalog the multitude of definitions and concepts associated with persistence and completion data and reporting and will serve as a guide to the various methodologies used in calculating indicators of persistence and completion. This project will also examine ways that differences in language, purpose, and methodology of persistence and completion data and reporting can be better understood and more effectively communicated.

The primary outcome will be a web-based resource that will contain selected sources of persistence and completion data, definitions, various analytic conventions used to calculate persistence and completion rates, and a discussion of technical and policy issues related to the use of different calculation methodologies. Plans include incorporating into the web site brief issue papers that highlight “best practices” and the pros and cons of different analytic conventions.

This resource will help students and parents sort through conflicting information about reported institutional persistence and completion rates, and provide state and federal policy makers and legislators with a platform for discussion. Institutions will find this resource useful in analyzing and communicating differences in methodologies.

*This project is being held in abeyance until further notice by the NPEC Executive Committee.

Quality Data Practices

Reports, Publications and Tools:

- **ANSWERS: A Web-Based Tool**
Accessing National Surveys with Electronic Research Sources (ANSWERS) is a web-based tool that can lead you to sources of data on postsecondary education. ANSWERS provides data element definitions that are used in many postsecondary education surveys and identifies where common data element definitions are used across surveys. ANSWERS can assist a researcher to adopt common definitions, or, preferably to use existing data sources to reduce the data burden on institutions and minimize inconsistencies in published data. In addition to identifying sources of data, ANSWERS includes a matrix of data available in national surveys, a question bank, references for survey developers, specialized features for different audiences and an inventory of national surveys. ANSWERS was initiated in 1999 and funded for 5 years by NPEC. In January 2005, oversight and support of ANSWERS was transferred to Dr. John Milam, Managing Director of HigherEd.Org, Inc. The ANSWERS web-based tool can

now be accessed at <http://highered.org/answers/>. Questions about ANSWERS or comments on the site should be addressed to Dr. Milam at jmilam@highered.org.

- Best Practices for Data Collectors and Data Providers (1999)
- Examination of the Data Requirements of the Workforce Investment Act and the Perkins Act of 1998 (1999)
- Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS): An improved system (1999)
- Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Finance—GASB Institutions Form, Instructions, and Glossary
- Technology and Its Ramifications for Data Systems (1998)
- Unit Record Versus Aggregate Data: Perspectives on Postsecondary Education Data Collection, Retention, and Release (1998)

State and Institution Indicators

Current Activities

Information Center for State-level Indicators

Where can you find indicators for each state on student preparation for postsecondary education? Student participation in postsecondary education? Workforce and employment?

About this Tool

NPEC is providing support to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) for the development of a web-based tool that presents state, and, in some instances, county indicators focusing on the student and the economy. The student-related indicators are now accessible on the web at the NCHEMS' National Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis site free of charge. The Ford Foundation provided initial resources to support the NCHEMS Center, which has indicators in the areas of postsecondary education preparation, participation, affordability, completion and benefits. The information is downloadable and easy-to-use. For example, you can access or download state and county maps and graphs that show the percentage of 18 to 24 year olds with a high school diploma or equivalent. NPEC is continuing its collaboration with NCHEMS by supporting the

development of indicators in other key data areas, including indicators of rate of return on educational investments, for both individuals and the public.

Analysts, policy-makers, and anyone interested in state-level postsecondary education data analysis will find this tool available on the web, free-of-charge, at <http://www.higheredinfo.org>.

Reports, Publications & Tools

NPEC IPEDS Data Feedback Report: 2004

NPEC initiated this data feedback project in 2004 to provide each institution a context for examining the data they submitted to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). In January 2005, oversight and support of the data feedback project was transferred to IPEDS. For more information about the data feedback reports or IPEDS, see <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds>.

NPEC/NACUBO Forum on Institutional Operating Measures
http://nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/NACUBO_proceedings.pdf

History

The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) was authorized by Congress in 1994 to promote the quality, comparability, and utility of postsecondary education data that support policy development at the federal, state, and institution levels. NPEC was established by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 1995 as a voluntary organization that encompasses all sectors of the postsecondary education community including federal agencies, each of the 50 states, postsecondary institutions, associations and any other organization with a major interest in postsecondary education. NPEC receives financial support from NCES.

From its inception, NPEC was guided by a Steering Committee that consisted of representatives of many of NPEC's diverse constituencies. Additional representatives of the postsecondary community were engaged in NPEC's work through participation in the NPEC Council and NPEC's various Working Groups. The Council and especially the Working Groups helped the Steering Committee to identify issues, develop projects and produce reports that were intended to fulfill NPEC's mission.

As a result of a review that was undertaken by the Steering Committee, NPEC's organization and way of doing business changed in 2002. An Executive Committee was established by augmenting the Steering Committee with additional leaders in postsecondary education who produce and/or use postsecondary education data. The charge of the Executive Committee was framed in terms of developing an overall policy direction for NPEC consistent with NPEC's statutory mission.

Also in 2002, an NPEC office was established at the Education Statistics Services Institute (ESSI), 1990 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006.

In addition, NPEC recently established a new membership structure with the identification of NPEC Associates, a group that includes current Executive Committee

members, subcommittee members, working group members, and current NPEC project consultants. NPEC also created the NPEC Network, an electronic community that includes current and past members of the NPEC Council and others who are interested in NPEC's work.