

The Urban Transfer Research Network
Joint Meeting of the Policy Advisory and Data Advisory Committees
February 17, 2006, 3:00 – 5:30 PM
PSU Cramer Hall, Room 307

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 3:00 PM

Present:

Kathi Ketcheson,
Lumina UTRN Project Director
Toni Holloway (Minutes)

Janine Allen, Peter Collier, Joan Jagodnik, Mary Kinnick, Craig Kolins, Yves Labissiere, Laura Massey, Jay Peterson, Beth Pitonzo, Terry Rhodes, Michael Smith, Juliette Stoering

Absent: Tim Green

1. Introductions

The Committees' members introduced themselves; Ketcheson discussed history of the UTRN grant, which grew out of work done by the PSU-CRC (Community College Research Consortium) and led by Kinnick. This year, baseline studies of quantitative data and policy/practices will get underway.

2. Discussion of Committee Membership

Committees are composed of members who have direct contact with or knowledge of the subjects and components of the study. Ketcheson asked whether there is anyone with particular expertise missing from these committees and if there are additional groups that should be included in the study. Some ideas were:

- Adding Extended Studies staff
- Membership skewed toward PSU; need more CC involvement.
- More faculty involvement; mention of Pat Wetzel, and other faculty from Mt. Hood and PCC
- Need for recommendations from Mt. Hood, PCC, Clackamas, etc.
- Using Spanish-speaking interviewers to facilitate conversations with parents of first-generation students
- Including international students and recent immigrants, co-admission, ESL and returning adult students, and undocumented students who complete a 2-year degree, but cannot get into a university
- How can committees actually involve the students in research?
- "Clearing up" data sources and definitions may prevent missing some categories of students; can build on prior or current research
- Scope of issues for each campus will be regional, so involvement across research groups may vary

3. Summary of Student Success Conference

The conference covered reports from “the trenches”, brainstorming, and what outcomes the participants would like to see come out of research.

Pathways were discussed, including “swirling” i.e. non-linear routes. Participants stated that students preferred a single system of advising and remarked on the value of students establishing a familiarity with the campus.

Barriers that were identified included:

- Financial and bureaucratic issues
- Transferability issues between 2-2 and 2-4 year; including how coursework is considered
- Family issues; in-state vs. out-of-state tuition, accessibility of faculty
- Efficacy of co-admission policies
- Circumstances surrounding issue/concept of “wasted” unused credit (Kinnick noted that past studies show that not much of this “wasted” credit is coming from bad advising, and that the CCs play a role in helping students to progress by strengthening their weak areas before moving on.)

Other conference points:

- Barriers seemed to be identical for entering 2 year colleges and 4 year colleges
- Need for looking at unsuccessful students (i.e. those who didn’t graduate), as well as successful students
- Combining survey and SIS data
- SSS students tracking
- Interviewing: what made a difference

Rhodes spoke about the Portland Area Higher Education Consortium; this is composed of three groups: Academic Affairs, Student Services, and IT (concerned with how data is collected, shared, and transferred). The Consortium is working together to facilitate student success, focusing on:

- Common application form
- Common financial aid arrangement
- Common course schedule
- Course transferability

The hope is that by Fall, some of these may be available. The UTRN group can help inform the work of the Consortium.

4. Discussion of Data Collection & Analysis Issues

Stoering discussed the data tables representing Mt. Hood CC and PSU cohorts.

Discussion points included:

- Clarification that Data and Policy Committees will not be working with pre-defined categories

- What constitutes a transfer student vs. a direct-entry student
- A broader definition of “under-represented” student is needed
- Ethnic categories are too narrow
- PSU has extensive ethnic codes for self-identity (e.g., Hispanic can include many ethnic groups)
- Lag time in when transfer credit is applied to degree
- What to do with Clark CC?

Sharing data and information between institutions was discussed. Data collection procedures are being reviewed by HSRRC and secure FTP will preserve confidentiality of student information. Co-admissions agreements allow data sharing for educational purposes --these agreements should be in writing between institutions.

Some questions that arose:

- Should Clackamas, Chemeketa, and Clark Colleges be included in the research?
- Financial aid data may be relevant; does the Data Committee need another member with expertise in this specific area?
- How to look at actual cost of education (cost-benefit)?
- Other cost factors: family income, how much is lost by taking longer to obtain a degree?
- Effects of cost as a “threat” to uninterrupted attendance –how does this affect pathways? (past research suggests that continuity, not necessarily speed was most important in obtaining a degree)

Ketcheson noted that there are data implications due to the time limit of the grant. The Project cannot track recently admitted students because the time to graduation is longer than 2-3 years. It is important to remember that PSU students are largely untraditional; they tend to be older, and juggle multiple roles including work, parenting, caregiving of elders, etc.

5. Discussion of Committees’ Research Questions

All research questions (per Lumina Grant) are related to completion of a 4 year degree:

- What types of CC credits are transferred (e.g. Gen Ed, Prof/Tech)?
- What are the sequences/patterns through which credits are earned?
- Comparative analysis of trajectories for different groups by region; comparing groups by demographics, FT/PT, veterans, etc.; comparing policy environments
- Is there a difference in retention/persistence rates each year to completion for target populations? Does it differ by pathways? If so, why?
- Who or what kept a student from going on -or going to another pathway –or dropping out altogether? Was it an experience, a person, an advisor, peer group?
- What are the foundations of student goals, values, purposes?

Some related discussion points included:

- Utilizing Head Start person to look at family relationships among Hispanic demographic?
- Finding existing pathways for existing successes
- What data are possible to collect?
- Policies/Procedures --are students left “out of the loop”? Include them in data collection?
- Comparing “pre-determined” categories to those emerging from data

6. Sketch of work Plan and schedule

Data Group: Year 1

- Clarify definition of “under-represented” groups; who are we studying?
- Develop preliminary picture of persistence/retention to graduation (retro and forward)
- Examine factors from databases affecting this
- Determine what data on student satisfaction we currently have (surveys, etc.)
- Begin to develop definitions of different kinds of success

Discussion points: CC groups determine access to pipeline with career paths/aspirations

Policy Group:

- Inventory of policies and procedures

Rhodes will provide the inventory collected by The Consortium

Ketcheson announced that Nancy Shulock from CSU-Sacramento has been hired as an independent evaluator for the UTRN through June, 2006.

7. Schedule of upcoming meetings

A meeting of the Data Committee was tentatively scheduled for March 17th; a tentative date of April 17th was suggested for a joint meeting of the Data and Policy Committees. Information regarding possible meeting dates/times will be sent out via e-mail.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM