



UTRN

Urban Transfer Research Network





Mapping the Pathways to Degree Attainment for Transfer Students

Kathi A. Ketcheson

Portland State University

Jan Ignash

University of South Florida

David E. Schwalm

Arizona State University

4th Biennial Conference on Transfer and Articulation
Phoenix, Arizona, July 30, 2007

About UTRN...

- The Urban Transfer Research Network is a collaborative multi-institutional research project focused on underrepresented students who begin their postsecondary careers at community colleges and have a goal of attaining at least the Bachelor's degree.
- By the end of the project, the network will include urban regions from across the U.S. in order to have a broad impact on Bachelor's degree attainment rates by underrepresented students.

Participating Institutions

- Portland State University
- Mt. Hood Community College
- Portland Community College
- University of South Florida
- Hillsborough Community College
- St. Petersburg College
- Arizona State University – University College
- Maricopa Community Colleges

Benefits of Participating in the Network

- Facilitate research agenda aimed at improving students' educational experience
- Coordination of various sources of information about transfer students
- Opportunities for data-sharing among the community colleges and 4-year institutions
- Catalyst for transfer student research

Research Questions

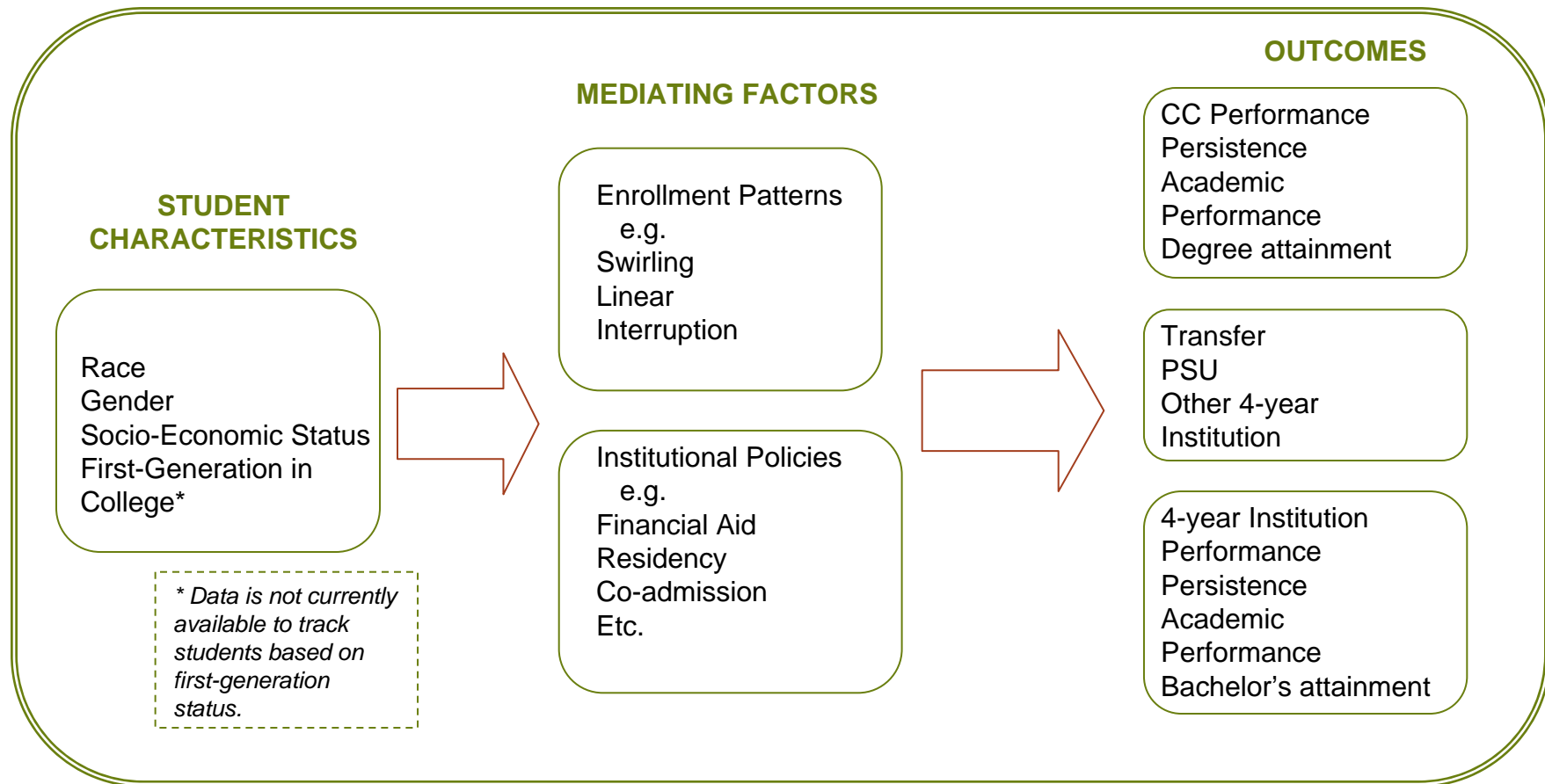
- What are the pathways through higher education that lead to successful BA completion?
- How do transfer patterns and degree attainment rates of various sub-groups differ?
- What are the major contributors to discrepancies in attainment rates?
- What changes in current policy and practice or new policy and programs would increase BA attainment rates?

Research Design and Data

The **UTRN** research design includes two main approaches:

- The first tracks and analyzes community college student cohorts' pathways and success in attaining the Bachelor's degree. This research includes subgroup analysis specific to underrepresented students.
- The second focuses on policy and practice through qualitative research including interviews and focus groups with students, faculty and staff.
- A Data Advisory Committee and a Policy Advisory Committee guide and inform each of the three sites.

Research Design





UTRN Tampa

Presented by

Jan Ignash

Co-Principal Investigator

University of South Florida

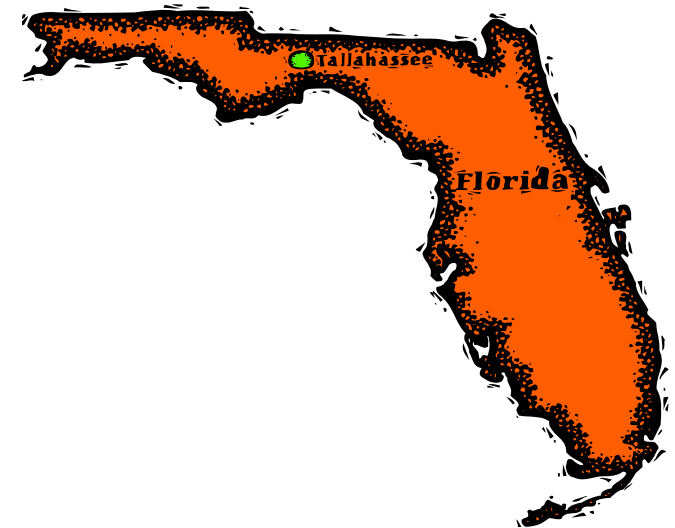
Karen Owens

Project Coordinator

University of South Florida

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4th Biennial Conference on Transfer and Articulation, Phoenix, Arizona, July 30, 2007

The State Context



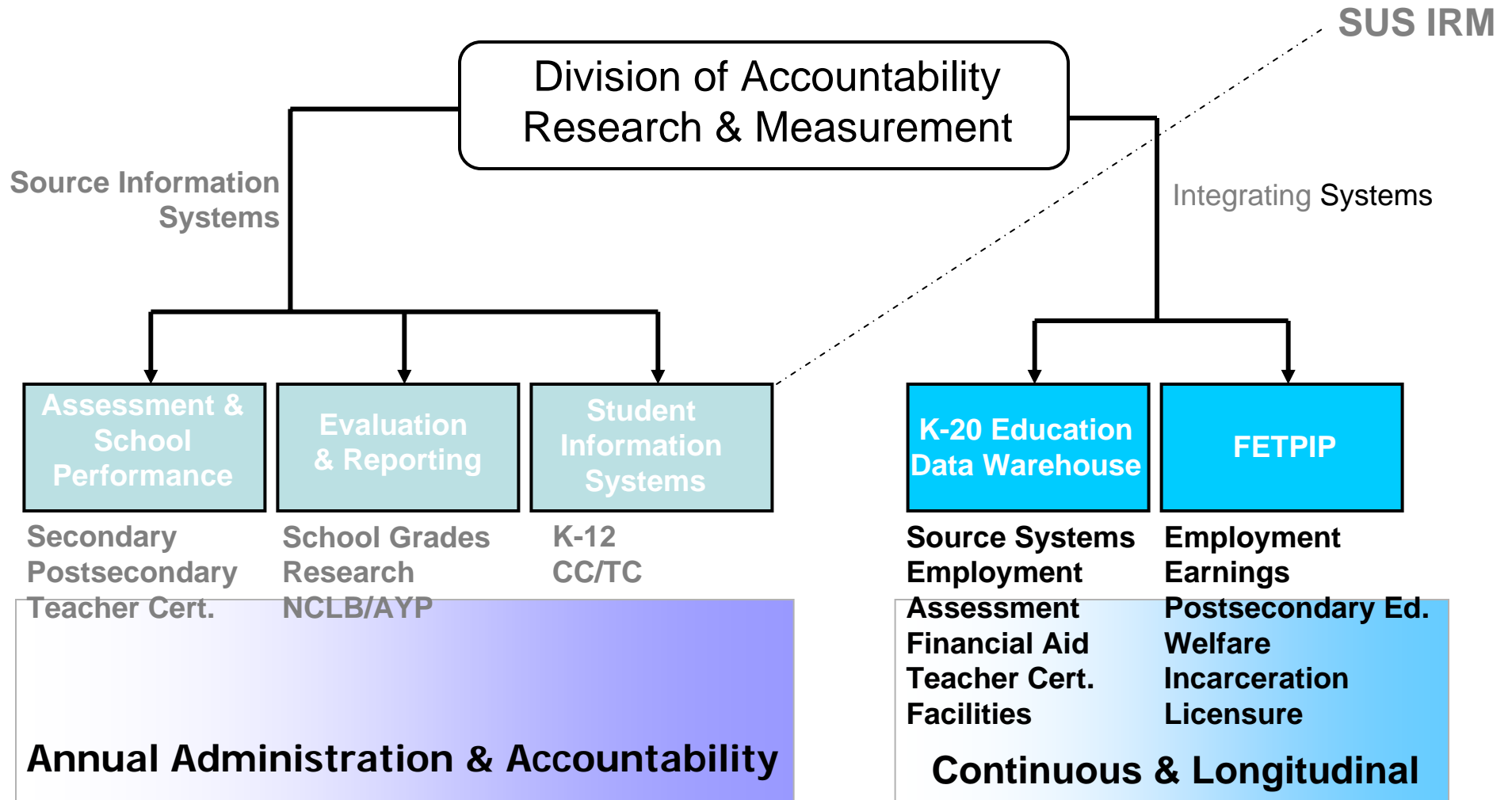
The State Context

- Extensive state-level K-20 education governance re-structuring (2001-2007)
- Increasing access to higher education is a state priority.
 - Enrollment: FL among the lowest in % of high school grads
 - Affordability: Florida at bottom in tuition-aid & provides *no* low-tuition college aid

The State Context

- Expanded role of community colleges (4-year degrees in high-demand majors)
- Transfer-friendly environment
 - Articulation Coordinating Commission
 - 2 + 2 statewide A.A. (not a “matrix”) + 36 hr. general education “package”
 - Common Course Numbering System
- Rich state-level databases
 - FETPIP and K-20 Data Education Warehouse

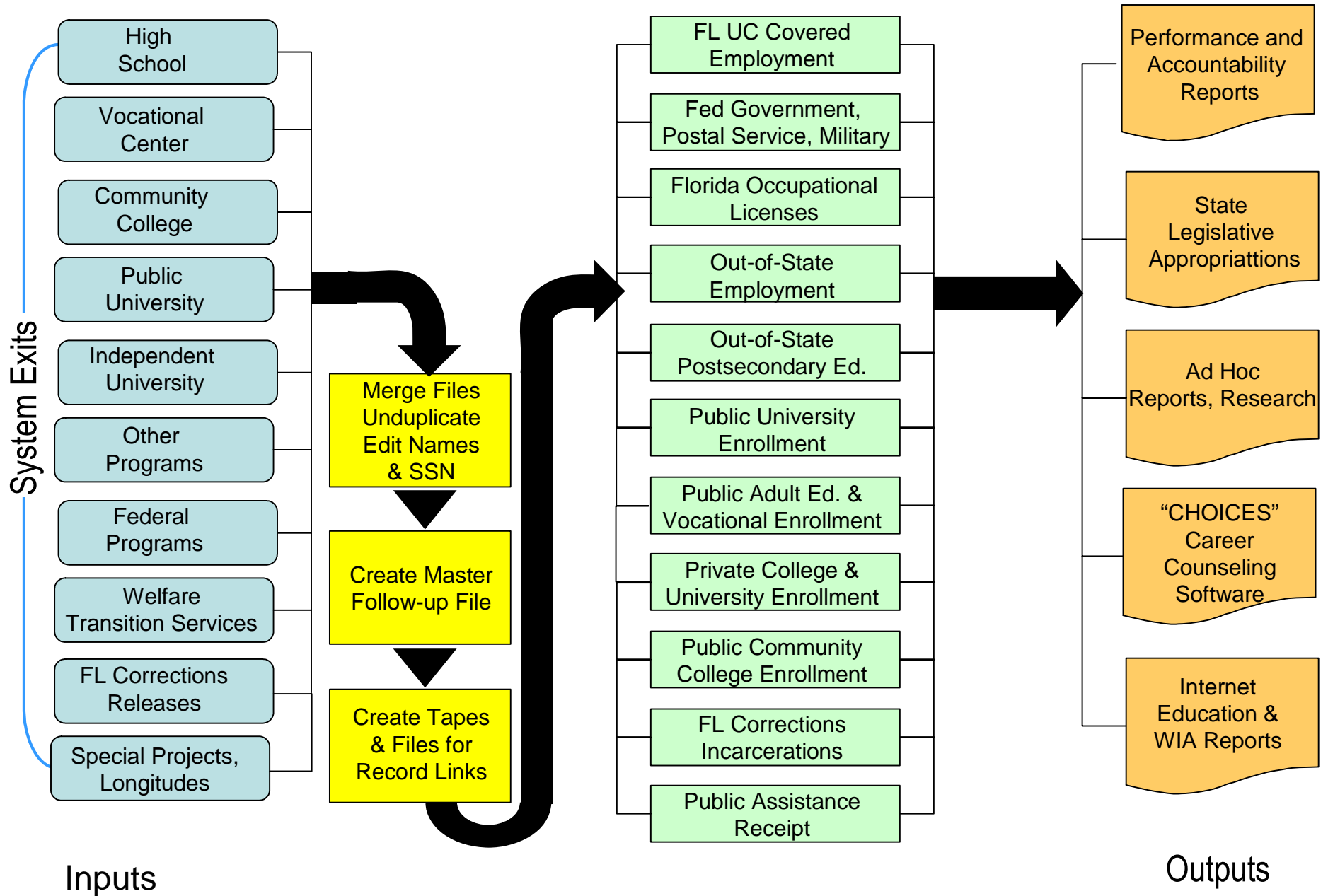
Florida's Primary K-20 Data Resources



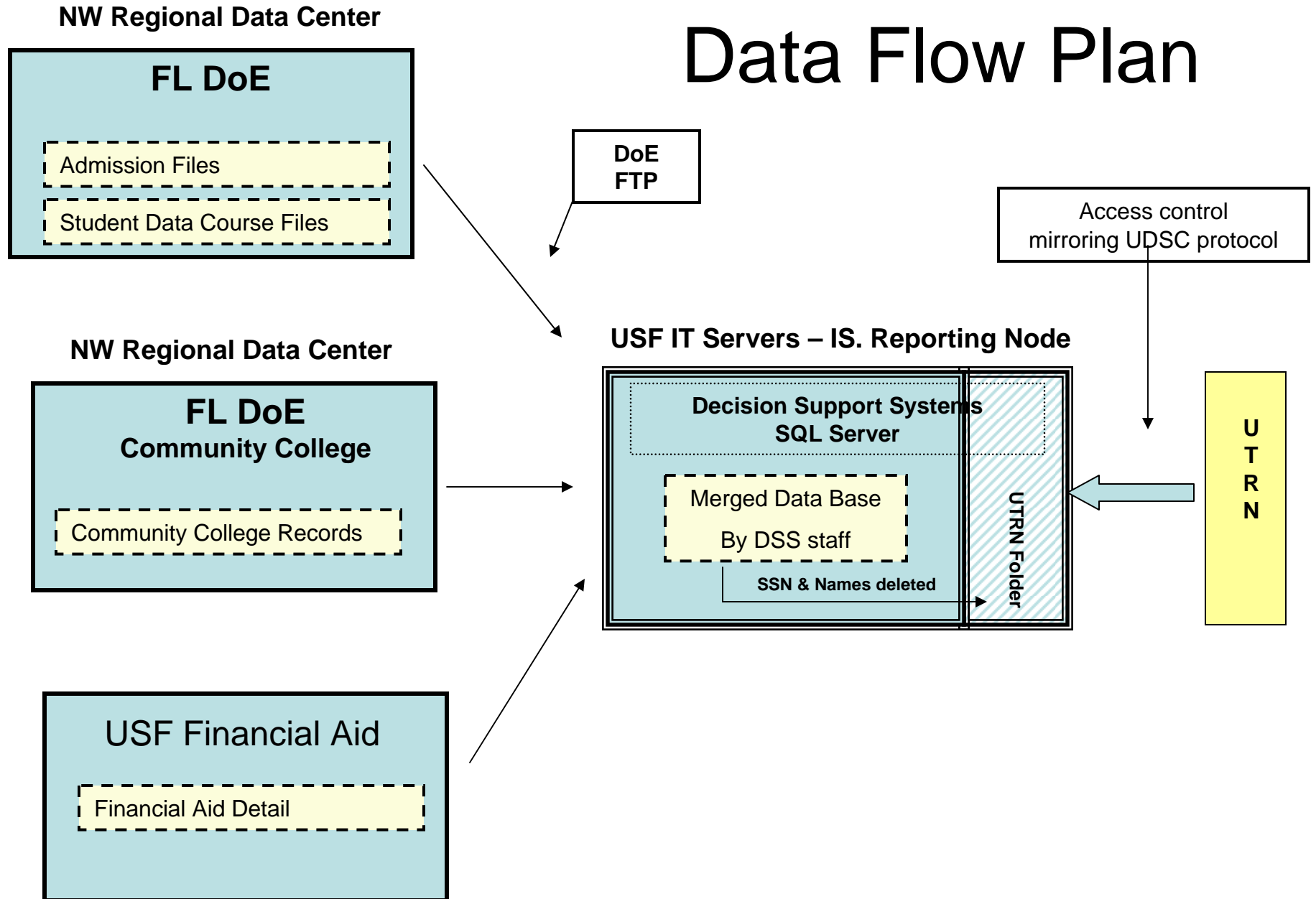
Additional roles include: Department-wide conduit for LMS, LED, Census, BEBR publications

July,
2005

Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) Annual Collection Cycle



Data Flow Plan



Regional Context

- Tampa Bay I-4 Corridor fastest growing region in U.S.
- Tri-county area: Hillsborough (1.1m), Pinellas (1m), Polk Counties (1/2m)
- Educational levels for all 3 counties below the national average
 - 9.3% Hillsborough, 7.6% Pinellas, 2.3% Polk residents have bachelor's or higher
- Needs in Polk County much higher
 - 16% living below the poverty level
 - 1 in 4 have less than a high school diploma

Local Context

- **USF:** 4 campuses
 - Tampa (main), St. Petersburg, Lakeland, and Sarasota
 - Total enrollment 44,000
 - 4,602 transfer students in F06 (80% from HCC & SPC)
- **HCC:** 4 campus locations + 1 in development
 - Total enrollment 42,000
 - 18% black, 16% Hispanic, and 26% FTIC (F05)
- **SPC:** 3 main campus locations + 11 learning sites
 - Total enrollment 35,000 students
 - 11% black, 6% Hispanic, 3% Asian & Native American (F05)
 - SPC also offers 4-yr. programs in a few high demand majors

A Qualitative Pilot Study

(What do community college transfer students perceive as a successful transfer process?)

- Sample:
 - Incoming CC Transfer Students Spring 2007
 - 57 participants (with 60+ transferable credits)
- Setting:
 - Receiving Institution: Large Research University
 - Sending Institutions: 2 Urban Community Colleges (main campuses only; not satellite campuses)
- Process
 - E-Journaling every 2-3 weeks, resulting in 285 journal entries to researcher prompts
 - November 2006-March 2007

Theoretical Framework

Researcher prompts to investigate the following:

- **Descriptive:** What occurred that is significant to you in your transfer adjustment process?
- **Metacognitive:** What were your perceptions and feelings?
- **Analytic:** What do you understand as the reasoning surrounding this issue?
- **Evaluative:** What were the implications for you?
- **Reconstructive:** What changes would you recommend?

Source: Mitchell & Coltrinari (2001)

Decision Rules

A theme was included if:

- mentioned by multiple individuals and concurred with previous research,
- a majority of individuals indicated it was significant, or
- key respondents with in-depth e-journal entries responded to the them.

Source: Oliver (2004)

Results

- Concerns before transfer ($n = 27$)
 - Academic Environment ($n = 27$; 100%)
(*"How will it be different?"*)
 - University Culture ($n = 25$; 93%)
(*"How will I fit in?"*)

- Challenges upon initial entry to the university ($n = 57$)
 - Experiencing Feelings of Marginality ($n = 34$; 60%)
 - Struggling with the Need for Guidance vs. Feelings of Entitlement ($n = 52$; 92%)
 - Learning to Navigate the System ($n = 37$; 65%)
(*"There is so much red tape even the easy stuff turns into an ordeal."*)

Results

■ **Supports** ($n = 57$)

- Personal Attention ($n = 54$; 95%)
- Academic Integration ($n = 50$; 88%)
- Social Interaction ($n = 26$; 51%)
- Technology ($n = 38$; 67%)

■ **Barrier** ($n = 57$)

- Communication in and between Academic Institutions
($n = 49$; 86%)
("Hello...is anyone out there?")

Results

- Student Recommendations ($n = 57$)
 - Transfer Advisors ($n = 28$; 49%)
("Needing someone to call my own")
 - Transfer Orientations ($n = 28$; 49%)
 - Transfer Checklist ($n = 15$; 27%)
 - Balance of Academic Rigor and Personal Identity ($n = 20$; 35%)
("College is not a goal; it is a path for me.")

Recommendations for Full Implementation, Fall 07-Spr 08

- Start the process earlier in the semester before students transfer.
- Include both partner community colleges.
- Expand the study to include more students in high transfer majors.
- Encourage greater participation of underrepresented students.
- Consider focus groups and/or interviews to better capture information from students from underrepresented groups.
- Analyze results to test appropriateness of the Mitchell & Coltrinari framework.

Preliminary Implications from the Pilot Study

- Use a “virtual advisor” for common student services necessary for successful transfer (immunization, registration, parking)
- Explore assigning “case managers” to transfer students (*Note:* issues of timing and case load)
- Communicate more clearly to transfer students the “why” behind university policies

Students were able to describe the transfer process (descriptive) and their perceptions and feelings (metacognitive). Some addressed implications (evaluative) and recommended changes (reconstructive). Few, however, were able to articulate the university’s perspective on policies and practices (analytic).



UTRN Arizona

Presented by

David Schwalm
Co-Principal Investigator
Arizona State University

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Higher Education in Arizona

- 3 large public state universities
- 10 public community colleges
- 2 tribal community colleges
- Almost no private non-profit colleges
- Several proprietary for-profit institutions

Articulation History

- 70's-80's Course by course articulation
- 80's-90's General education transfer core
- 90's-00's TATF: Comprehensive plan

AZCAS Current System

- Comprehensive online course equivalency guide.
- Improved Gen Ed Core: AZ Gen Ed Curriculum (AGEC).
- Four “transfer pathway” degrees to ensure efficient transfer for students unsure of major and choice of baccalaureate college.
- Major Guides for students who know their major but are not sure which baccalaureate institution they will attend.
- A powerful web site to provide students access to transfer tools and to support the maintenance of the statewide system.
- A participatory committee structure, including 38 disciplinary ATFs, to maintain agreements.
- A central staff to keep the system operating and moving forward.
- An annual budget of about \$700K, with about equal contributions from the CC, U’s, and legislature.
- BAS.

New Influences

- Hezel Study of AZCAS
- Governor's P-20 Council

Local Arrangements

- ASU/Maricopa Alliance
 - Nursing
 - Education
 - Technology
 - Honors
 - BIS on line



Project Leadership

Principal Investigator and Project Director:

Kathi A. Ketcheson, Ph.D.
Portland State University

Co-Principal Investigators:

Beth J. Pitonzo, Ph.D.
Mt. Hood Community College

Jan M. Ignash, Ph.D.
University of South Florida

Gail Hackett, Ph.D.
Arizona State University - University College

Outside Evaluator:

Nancy B. Shulock, Ph.D.
California State University - Sacramento