

Office of Institutional Research and Planning
Lumina | Urban Transfer Research Network

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UTRN Joint Meeting

11/29/2006

1:30 – 3:30 PM

PSU, ED604

Meeting called by:	Juliette Stoering Rowanna Carpenter	Meeting Type:	Data
Facilitator:	Juliette Stoering	Note taker:	Jewls Krentz
Attendees:	R. Carpenter, P. Collier, T. Green, M. Kinnick, J. Stoering.		

Agenda item: Welcome and introductions **Presenter:** Stoering

Discussion:

New Clerical Support

Jewls Krentz is our new clerical support staff member. She is a graduate student in the Masters in counseling program in the School of Education. She will be working on the Lumina/UTRN project half-time. She may be reached at jewls@pdx.edu or 503-725-3428.

Agenda item: Status of dataset and overview of data **Presenter:** Carpenter
tables currently available

Discussion:

Data Review:

Carpenter reviewed preliminary data tables as presented at Joint Committee Meeting.

Income status:

- At this time income status is not included in the tables because we only have financial aid data for 40% of cohort and have not found another good data source.
- See discussion below.

PCC and MHCC data: separate or combined analysis:

- PCC and MHCC data are analyzed together and separately to see if there are any big differences in cohorts. This also provides a validity check.
- PCC has three times as many students as MHCC. PCC data may overwhelm MHCC data suggesting separate analyses for both institutions.
- Kinnick noted how few African American transfer students from MHCC attained a Bachelor's degree (5.4%) as compared to PCC. Twenty-seven percent of African American transfer students from PCC completed a Bachelor's degree, a rate similar to that of Caucasian students. MHCC also seems to have more students completing the applied science Associates degree. These differences may suggest it is too soon to combine data.

Cohort definition:

- A majority of research suggests that approximately 2/3 of transfer students complete the Bachelors degree. However, our data indicates 26% of the transfer students in the cohort have completed the Bachelors degree. Could this variance be related to the definition of a transfer student in our analyses?
- Retention studies define transfer students as those entering PSU with 45 or more credits and attending full-time. Should we define transfer students the same way?
- Collier noted a recent study that found skewed data as a result of following degree completion by institution rather than by individual. Should we use both methods of analyses to get a better picture?

Other issues:

- At this point we do not have data tables for enrollment information such as the amount of college prior to entry, number of credits taken during the first year and part-time vs. full-time status. These would add to the picture.
- We are still using original data offered by MHCC which was selected using different cohort criteria. There are technical difficulties with the transfer of data. Because of this, we should delay comparing PCC and MHCC until we obtain new MHCC data.

Conclusions:

We need more specific definitions for cohort and subgroups in this study.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
✓ Look at PSU retention/transfer definition and apply to our cohort.	Stoering	
✓ Tighten specific definition criteria. (See discussion below).	All	
✓ Input on data coding for pathways.	Data Committee	
✓ Data review and coding.	Carpenter, Stoering, Wright	Preliminary in January

Agenda item: Discussion of how to proceed with analyses. **Presenter:** Stoering
Carpenter

Sub-topic: *Is the current definition of first-time community college students acceptable or does it need further fine-tuning?*

Discussion:

The original data selection was very broad so it could be used address a variety of questions. However, there is a lot of noise that may be reduced by fine-tuning and narrowing selection criteria.

At present data selection does not exclude those students with previous college experience and may include those who already have attained a baccalaureate or higher degree. See handout for further information.

Possible exclusion criteria:

- Students with a previous degree as determined by NSC data.
- Students with previous enrollment elsewhere (i.e. a student enrolled in 1998 at PSU). NSC data could be used as a filter but may miss some students and, thus, create some noise.
- Students with an initial term at community college who do not receive credit in that term and do not show up in later terms at any institution.

Issues related to excluding members from the dataset:

- Collier suggested exclusion in a range based on number of credits taken rather than just attendance. However, he questioned whether we would lose power in the analysis if we narrow the data in this way. In addition, NSC data may not be used to determine number of credits.
- We have a justification for using the NSC data for excluding students in the cohort because the interest of the grant is students attending community college for the first time who transfer to university and complete a Bachelors degree.
- Excluding data based on previous enrollment and degree attainment reduces the dataset by 8000 out of the original 35,000 students. We would continue to keep the original data as a separate set for comparison if there are problems in the analyses.
- We may want to use NSC data to determine if students move from one community college to the other without transferring to PSU. Is this an area of interest? Should we keep these students in the sample?
- We need to determine how to handle members of the cohort with only one or less credits and attending only one term.
- If our interest is in transfer than we could make a case for excluding those students without a minimum number of credits.
- There may be research potential in the dataset of those excluded from the sample. We should run an initial profile of the excluded students to see if they have similar characteristics as the included group.
- Note: enrollment at a community college does not indicate a desire to transfer and obtain a Bachelors degree.

Qualitative study:

- Intention to transfer may be explored in qualitative interviews.
- The last meeting suggested focus on student rather than policy maker interviews. However, details of the qualitative study have not yet been determined.

Conclusion:

We will exclude the following from the dataset:

- Students with a previous degree or previous college attendance
- Students who attended community college for one term, did not receive credit for that term, and did not transfer to another community college or PSU. This excludes 4600. Carpenter will provide a profile of this group.
- Students who attended one term at community college, received some credit for that term, and did not transfer to another community college or PSU. Carpenter will determine the number of students excluded by this criterion.

We will defer the decision about students who attend community college for multiple terms but do not receive credit.

We will continue to think about how to define credit criteria.

Sub-topic: *Discussion of how to code or define pathways.*

Discussion:

Initial coding:

Stoering and Carpenter provided initial tables of student pathways. They grouped students by attendance patterns starting with the fall of 1999 (summer included here as well) and continuing out 20 terms. The analysis focused on attendance at cohort institution or PSU and did not include transfer to another community college. Summer terms were also not included in the analysis. This process created 7000 patterns of enrollment which were then grouped into families of patterns based on first year criteria. Gross categories of patterns included attendance at community college:

- Term 1 only
- Terms 1 and 2
- Terms 1 and 3
- Terms 1, 2 and 3

Further discussion:

- Questions to ask about patterns: what is a meaningful pattern? How do we capture: a swirling pattern? A linear path? Consistency of enrollment?
- Potential patterns based on prior research:
 - First year attendance
 - Swirling vs. linear
 - Associates degree or not
 - Block transfers
 - Continuous vs. interrupted enrollment. If using this criterion then we need to define continuous enrollment. Does this mean continuous enrollment in cohort community college alone or does it include transfer to PSU or other community college?
- Should we use large patterns that we already have identified in previous research that has a different focus than the present study? Starting the cohort in the community colleges separates the data from the previous study on the use of community colleges from the university perspective (I AM NOT SURE WHAT THIS STUDY IS SO THIS PART WAS UNCLEAR TO ME)
- We should base pathway codes on policy as it relates to the purpose of this study.
- Note: we can not fully determine the impact of policy on patterns without talking to the students within the patterns.
- Kinnick suggested the following families of patterns:
 - Continuous vs. not continuous enrollment
 - Linear vs. swirling
 - Full-time vs. part-time
 - Length of interruption in attendance
 - Timing/type of transfer (block transfer, Associates degree before transfer, level at transfer, etc.)
- Maybe we do not need a single coding scheme but rather four areas of interest.
- Do patterns change based on majors (i.e., engineering students who do not get a block transfer because it does not provide junior status at transfer)
- We could run the first-year data described

Conclusion:

We will investigate looking at the data using five pathway families and running the first-year data under each of these.

Five pathway families:

1. Continuous vs. interrupted enrollment
2. Linear vs. swirling pattern
3. Full-time vs. part-time
4. Level of transfer (number transfer credits, standing)
5. Degree at transfer

Sub-topic: *Other miscellaneous decision points.*

Discussion:

Definition of transfer in dataset:

Defer decision on this. We may want to consider coding this based on admittance to PSU rather than just attending classes.

Indicators for low-income status (other than financial aid data):

- Note: it is possible that a higher percentage of the students remaining after exclusions will have financial aid data, but there may still be a large portion without income data. Carpenter will re-run financial aid data based on exclusions.
- Financial data is available by zip code through the Census Bureau, but is very noisy. For example, the top five codes contain 80% of the students.
- Are there any subgroups for which we do have complete income information?
- Does studying financial aid data really help determine perceptions of affordability for low-income students?
- It could be that comparing those students for whom we have financial aid data vs. not will show some skewing that could be interesting. It may show who gets and vs. not and help look at how aid programs are promoted.
- We could run a survey to get income data but this is cost-prohibitive.
- Collier noted the Gear-up Program that demonstrated that parents of low-income students did not have and were not receptive to financial aid information while the students were both knowledgeable and receptive.
- In the end we may need to use the financial aid data and write about the limitations in the report suggesting future needs for research.

Definition of Full- / Part-time status:

Questions: How do we categorize full-time and part-time students? How many credits determines full-time? Is this per term or average per year? What about students who are full-time some terms and part-time others? How do we account for students who are not continuously enrolled in a given year?

- Initial categories include: full-time only, part-time only, and a mixture of both full-time and part-time attendance.
- The mixed category has much variability so may need to be defined by a range.
- The part-time category may need to be broken down into multiple groups, such as low and high part-time, as 2/3 of the students at MHCC are part-time.
- Should we analyze based a measure by year and by term?
- Theory base: the assumption is that students who attend full-time without interruption have greater success in obtaining a baccalaureate degree. This project may be useful to demonstrate patterns that work for people who can not do the traditional pathway. This may be a good indicator of policy impact.
- We may want to investigate if there is a threshold that carries greater attrition risk.
- We may also want to align our definitions with policies such as financial aid eligibility.

- Potential methods:
 - Measure for year = number of credits for year / number of terms attended (for example a person taking 16 credits fall term, nothing winter term and 8 credits spring term would be considered full-time: 24 credits total / 2 terms = 12 credits / term).
 - We could separate full-time students into two categories: full-time with continuous enrollment and without.

Classification of students who show up in both the MHCC and PCC datasets:

Discussion deferred to later meeting.

Classification of certificate earners without associate degrees

Discussion deferred to later meeting.

Conclusion:

Further definition is necessary in many areas. Specific discussion on the definition of transfer students, classification for students in both MHCC and PCC datasets, and classification of certificate earners is deferred to a later meeting. We need further exploration of low-income status indicators and full-time vs. part-time definitions based discussion above.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
✓ Determine remaining number of students in dataset after exclusions	Carpenter	
✓ Initial analysis of excluded groups as compared to remaining dataset	Carpenter	
✓ Continue thinking about refining cohort definition	All	
✓ Continue thinking about patterns/families of patterns of interest to this project	All	
✓ Continue coding pathways	Stoering Carpenter	
✓ Re-run financial aid data with cohort after exclusions	Carpenter	
✓ Continue thinking about other indicators of income status	All	
✓ Continue thinking about how to define full-time and part-time status	All	