

DATA, ACCREDITATION AND EQUITY

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Art Coleman
Managing Partner, Education Counsel
art.coleman@educationcounsel.com
@ArtColemanDC

EducationCounsel
Policy | Strategy | Law | Advocacy

Informing Improvement:

Recommendations for Enhancing Accreditor
Data-Use to Promote Student Success and Equity



A REPORT BY
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AUTHORS:
NATHAN ARNOLD,
MAMIE VOIGHT,
JESSICA MORALES,
KIM DANCY, AND
ART COLEMAN

STUDENT OUTCOME INDICATOR	ABET	ACCJC	ACCSC	ACEN	DEAC	HLC	NECHE	NWCCU ¹	SACSCOC	WSCUC
Total enrollment	●	●	● ²	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Number of completers	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Completion rate			●	●	●		● ³	●	● ⁴	●
Cohort default rate			●		●	●	●	●	●	●
Retention/withdrawal rate			●		●		●	●	●	
Licensure/certification passage rate		●	●	●	●		●			
Transfer-out rate		●	●				●	●	●	
Loan repayment rate							●		●	
Employment rate (for career programs)		●	●	●			●			
Median earnings			●						●	
Credit completion										
Credit accumulation										
Gateway course completion										

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Retention/withdrawal rate			●		●		●	●	●	
Licensure/certification passage rate		●	●	●	●		●			
Transfer-out rate		●	●				●	●	●	
Loan repayment rate							●		●	
Employment rate (for career programs)		●	●	●			●			
Median earnings			●						●	
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● Elements disaggregated by race and Pell status

● Elements disaggregated by race only

● Elements disaggregated by Pell status only

Major Points to Consider

The achievement of institutional excellence requires that all students are served well. In essence, quality cannot be divorced from equity.

Data use and disaggregation is not a silver bullet—but it is a necessary condition of success.

Effective data use can set the stage for better telling your story—contextualizing the picture of student performance in light of mission, students served, etc.

Data Use

All phases of the accreditation process

Initial analysis and ongoing assessment during peer-review and evaluation process

Would allow better targeting and deployment of resources on the front end; more focused questions around visible performance issues


Information incorporated into final decisions regarding IHEs regarding improvement, or other actions

Note here that data are not considered in isolation; they are key factors in a comprehensive assessment

Findings

Accreditors value the collection and use of data.

Accreditors collect some data, though actual use in all cases is not clear.



Collection doesn't
necessarily = use

Accreditors rarely disaggregate data by race, ethnicity and SES.

Findings

Accreditors face real but surmountable barriers to improving data collection and use.

- Diversity of institutions
- First-time, full-time graduation rates
- Lagging outcome metrics
- Lack of institutional and accreditor resources
- Lack of common taxonomies, definitions, and processes
- Fear of reductive, punishing data-use practices



Data can be
“weaponized”

Recommendations

Accreditors should embed data use into routine practice.

- Collect, monitor, and act on multiple measures
- Disaggregate by at least race/ethnicity and income/Pell status
- Prioritize accreditor resources on the basis of outcome data using a risk-informed framework for institutional reviews

Recommendations

Emphasize equity

- Data requirements send a message about accreditor priorities
- Failing to collect disaggregated data can obscure performance issues for specific subgroups—identifying these gaps is the first step for institutions and accreditors to begin to influence change

Recommendations

Improve transparency about data collection and use

- Replicate and routinize the voluntary C-RAC graduation rate exercise, but with national and programmatic accreditors included and looking at additional data elements disaggregated on the basis of race and income
- Build trust and understanding among policymakers and the public by explaining what data is collected, how it is used, and how the data informs decision making