

IRC Minutes

Friday, September 25, 2015

1. US Department of Education College Score Card (Sarah Truelsch, OIRA)

- The White House had released an updated college scorecard which rates higher education institutions based on access, affordability, student outcomes, etc. This was seen as a “shot” at private-for profit colleges.
- In June 2015 the Department of Education decided not to rate colleges, but instead create new data tools. In September, IPEDS keyholders were told about the scorecard which was released to the public. The new site is an updated college scorecard with a large technical dataset. ED also released new FAFSA application procedures.
- The lists may be problematic, especially in terms of access. Schools with lots of resources and selective student bodies have better outcomes. The number of students who are low income or receiving Pell Grants is not noted (i.e. Harvard may be inexpensive for the very few students who receive Pell, compared with CUNY schools which have larger percentages of Pell recipients). The best outcomes come from selective institutions with non-commuter students who likely have a low percentage of low income students. Access to the institution and percentage of low income students seems to be ignored in ED’s data.
- Earnings reports are based on students who appear in the national loan database. Fewer CUNY students taken out loans, most receive grants. The data is misleading in that students who take out loans and might not receive FAFSA aid are included in the earnings figures. Therefore the metrics are likely a poor measure for CUNY schools as many of our students are missing (largely middle class students).
- Most of the data on the public site is pulled from IPEDS.
- Metrics are not on the public site, they are in the technical dataset.
- Benchmarks for annual cost, graduation rate and salary after attending are problematic because no one knows how the benchmarks were made, and there is no differentiation between sector, region and 2-year/4-year schools.
- Graduate and annual cost come from IPEDS data, average annual salary come from IRS records based on students who took out loans.
- There is variation among CUNY schools for net costs. This data comes from IPEDS, and 4-year colleges vary in scholarship and institutional aid, and the cost of off-campus living. Costs are weighted on percentage of students living off-campus with family versus off-campus without family.

- Proceed with caution with this new data and website. Because of the limitations of the data, perhaps we should not make any interpretations regarding any particular CUNY institution. It may be best to use this data to look at other college comparisons on a much broader scale.
- College Scorecard presentation can be accessed from the wiki.

2. Questions/discussion about COACHE (All)

- COACHE is designed to gauge faculty experience, doesn't look at staff experience
- Results of COACHE will be made available to HR offices, diversity offices, etc. The biggest issues were pay and workload. Other issues that are not cost related are about lines of communication, governance in general, work-family balance, clarity of tenure standards, etc.
- Central is encouraging campuses to share COACHE data in full with faculty.

Next Council Meeting

October 30, 2015