

Committee on Measures of Student Success

A Report to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

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Table of Contents

- Acknowledgements..... 3
- Summary 4
- Introduction..... 5
 - Guiding Principles for Making Recommendations..... 9
 - Moving Towards a More Complete Picture of Student Success 11
- Findings and Recommendations 13
 - Broaden the Coverage of Student Graduation Data to Reflect the Diverse Student Populations at Two-Year Institutions 13
 - Improve the Collection of Student Progression and Completion Data..... 18
 - Improve Technical Guidance to Institutions in Meeting Statutory Disclosure Requirements 22
 - Encourage Institutions to Disclose Comparable Data on Employment Outcomes and Provide Incentives for Sharing Promising Practices on Measuring Student Learning 24
- Conclusion 27
- Appendix A..... 28
 - Charter..... 28
- Appendix B 31
 - Committee and Staff Roster and Biographies..... 31
- Appendix C 39
 - Committee Meetings 39

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Summary

Each year, postsecondary education institutions report graduation rates for cohorts of students enrolled at their institution based on methods outlined in federal laws and regulations. However, the current federal graduation rate measure is incomplete and does not adequately convey the wide range of student outcomes at two-year institutions. For example, the student cohort used in calculating federal graduation rates excludes many students who typically enroll at two-year institutions, and the time period for tracking student outcomes is not long enough to capture the success of many students who take longer to graduate. Further, federal graduation rates do not take into account students' college readiness and enrollment in remedial coursework, which may delay their progress toward a degree. Finally, data are not collected on other important outcomes achieved by students at two-year institutions. Although federal graduation rates provide important comparable data across institutional sectors, limitations in the data understate the success of students enrolled at two-year institutions and can be misleading to the public.

The U.S. Department of Education's Committee on Measures of Student Success was authorized by the *Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008* (HEOA) to advise the Secretary of Education in assisting two-year degree-granting institutions of higher education in meeting graduation rate disclosure requirements in the Act. The Committee can also recommend additional or alternative measures of student success that take into account the mission and role of two-year degree-granting institutions.

After more than a year of deliberations, the Committee has developed a series of recommendations for actions that the Department and the higher education community should implement both in the short and long term. We believe that these changes are necessary to ensure that institutions have access to and are able to report data that more accurately describe student success at two-year institutions. Specifically, the Committee recommends that the Department improve the comprehensiveness of graduation rate data by adding other cohorts of students for which data are collected and exploring how these data can be disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender. The Committee also recommends that the Department broaden the federal graduation rate measure by collecting data that could be used to calculate more complete graduation and transfer rates and increase the availability of data on students' transitions in postsecondary education nationally. The Committee also recommends that the Department take steps to improve access to and availability of alternative measures of success, such as making available data on student employment outcomes as gathered in federal gainful employment regulations, providing incentives to improve the availability of state-level earnings data to two-year institutions, and encouraging institutions to develop assessments of student learning and share promising practices.

Introduction

Increasing the number of college graduates in the United States is critical to our nation's economic growth and global competitiveness. Two-year institutions must play a pivotal role in increasing the proportion of American adults with a postsecondary credential. Over the past decade alone, undergraduate student enrollment at two-year institutions has increased by 26 percent, from 5.9 million to 7.5 million.¹ Recognizing the importance of two-year institutions in meeting national goals to increase degree attainment among adults in the United States, President Obama called for five million more community college graduates by the year 2020.² To achieve these ambitious goals, students and families, policymakers, and researchers need more—and better—information about student progression and completion at two-year degree-granting institutions, including community colleges and for-profit colleges.

For more than two decades, policymakers and consumers have relied on institutional graduation rates reported annually by colleges and universities to the federal government. These rates are calculated based on methods outlined in federal laws and regulations. Under the *Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990* (SRK), institutions must disclose, or make available, to current and prospective students the rate at which full-time, first-time degree- or certificate-seeking students complete their academic programs. To help institutions comply with this disclosure requirement, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) at the U.S. Department of Education created the Graduation Rate (GR) component within the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). In IPEDS, institutions report on cohorts of full-time, first-time degree- or certificate-seeking students and the numbers of students in the cohort who complete within 100, 150, and 200 percent of the normal time required.³ Further, those institutions whose mission includes substantial preparation of students for transfer report the number of students from the cohort who transfer to other institutions; institutions without a transfer mission may voluntarily report transfer-out data.

¹ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Condition of Education 2011*, Table A-8-2. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/tables/table-hep-2.asp>.

² Remarks by President Obama at the White House Summit on Community Colleges held October 5, 2010. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/community_college_summit_report.pdf.

³ The IPEDS GR component collects data on students who complete within 100 and 150 percent of the normal time required. The IPEDS Graduation Rates 200 (GR 200) component collects data on students who complete within 200 percent of the normal time required.

Using the current measure, approximately 57 percent of full-time, first-time students at four-year institutions completed a bachelor's degree within six years of beginning their studies.⁴ The graduation rate at two-year institutions is much lower; about 37 percent of full-time, first-time students received a degree or certificate within four years of beginning their studies.⁵ These figures often are cited by policymakers to assess the performance of two-year institutions and to determine funding levels for these institutions or allocate resources within state or local budgets. However, the current federal graduation rate measure is incomplete and does not adequately convey the wide range of student outcomes at two-year institutions.

- **The student cohort used in calculating federal graduation rates excludes many students who typically enroll at two-year institutions.** Limiting the graduation rate cohort to students who begin on a full-time basis excludes the many beginning students at two-year institutions who attend part-time. At public two-year institutions, for example, almost 30 percent of students who enrolled for the first time in 2003-04 attended college mostly part-time over the next six years.⁶
- **The period of time for tracking student outcomes fails to account for many students who may take longer to complete their programs.** According to federal graduation rate calculations, a period of four years is used to determine if a student has successfully completed a two-year associate's degree. This time period is not an accurate reflection of the length of time it typically takes students at two-year institutions to complete their academic programs, particularly for students balancing work, family, and other commitments.
- **There is no information on the academic preparedness of students in the graduation rate cohort.** Many two-year institutions have open admission policies allowing students of varying levels of academic preparation to enroll. As a result, many students are not fully prepared for college-level coursework and subsequently need to enroll in developmental or remedial courses in reading, math, and/or writing. Graduation rates for students who need remedial education are lower than those of students who do not.⁷ Information on the proportion of students in the graduation rate cohort who are not college ready and require remedial coursework would provide important context for interpreting federal graduation rates.

⁴ Knapp, L. G., Kelly-Reid, J. E., and Ginder, S.A. (2010). *Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2008; Graduation Rates, 2002 & 2005 Cohorts; and Financial Statistics, Fiscal Year 2008* (NCES 2010-152). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010152rev.pdf>.

⁵ Knapp, Kelly-Reid, and Ginder (2010).

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Beginning Postsecondary Students* (BPS:2009).

⁷ Bailey, T. (2009). Challenge and Opportunity: Rethinking the Role and Function of Developmental Education in Community College. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, vol. 145, pp. 11-30.

- **There is no information on students who have not graduated, but who may still be on the path to a degree.** Students in the graduation rate cohort who may still be enrolled at the institution or who may have transferred to another two-year institution at the conclusion of the tracking period are counted as non-completers, even though they may still be working towards completing a degree or certificate program.
- **Data are not collected on other important outcomes achieved by students at two-year institutions.** For many students who enroll in two-year institutions, success can mean many things. Because two-year institutions have multiple missions—providing access to college for all students and a pathway to a four-year degree, while also meeting the workforce needs of employers and providing training to those already employed or looking for employment—multiple measures are required to capture the successes of students in this sector.

To address limitations in federal graduation rate measures, state policymakers and institutions have launched voluntary efforts to collect and disclose more student success data across two-year institutions. The American Association of Community College’s Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) is a collaborative effort among community colleges to design alternative success measures for two-year institutions for use by policymakers and other organizations. By 2012, the effort aims to have institutions measure outcomes related to (1) student progress and persistence; (2) workforce, economic, and community development; and (3) student learning. Some of the proposed measures include student progress in reaching a defined threshold of earned credits, the percentage of graduates who passed licensure examinations, or the wage growth of graduates.⁸

In addition, the Complete College America initiative has developed completion, efficiency, and effectiveness indicators to be used by states to measure student success at all postsecondary institutions. Some of the proposed measures include reporting the progress of students in completing remedial coursework and subsequently completing a college level course in the same subject and the average length of time it takes students to complete a degree.⁹ Similarly, the National Governors Association’s Complete to Compete initiative has made recommendations on common college completion metrics that states should collect and report publicly.¹⁰ Finally, accrediting agencies have also taken steps to increase the focus on student outcomes, especially learning outcomes, for institutional accountability.

⁸ Information about the VFA is available at <http://aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/vfa/Pages/default.aspx>.

⁹ Information about Complete College America is available at <http://www.completecollege.org>.

¹⁰ Information about Complete to Compete is available at <http://www.subnet.nga.org/ci/1011>.

Although federal graduation rates provide important and comparable data across institutional sectors, limitations in the data can be misleading to the general public and deleterious to the two-year sector, where most of the students enrolled are not full-time, first-time students. Institutions' voluntary initiatives notwithstanding, federal measures of student success need to be improved to reflect more accurately the populations served by two-year institutions.

The U.S. Department of Education's Committee on Measures of Student Success was authorized by the *Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008* (HEOA) to advise the Secretary of Education in assisting two-year degree-granting institutions in meeting new federal requirements to disclose graduation and completion rates and to explore alternative measures for capturing student success at two-year institutions. Specifically the Committee was charged to:

- Develop recommendations for the Secretary of Education regarding the accurate calculation and reporting of completion or graduation rates of entering certificate- or degree-seeking, full-time, undergraduate students by two-year degree-granting institutions of higher education
- Consider and recommend additional or alternative measures of student success that are comparable alternatives to the completion or graduation rates of entering degree-seeking full-time undergraduate students, taking into account the mission and role of two-year degree-granting higher education institutions

Guiding Principles for Making Recommendations

The Committee recognizes that reframing the conversation about measuring student progress and success at two-year institutions presents challenges. Any recommendation needs to reflect a balance between competing priorities and needs. As a result, the Committee developed guiding principles in considering possible recommendations.

Two-year institutions serve a diverse set of students—students seeking new skills but not pursuing a degree; students working toward an occupationally focused certificate; students seeking to earn an associate’s degree; and students who want to earn credits and transfer to a four-year institution. Community colleges also enroll large numbers of students taking non-credit coursework that lead to specific workforce or industry credentials or that are offered as contract training for specific employers. Varying student characteristics and motivations for attending two-year institutions require federal measures of student success that take into account the different outcomes characteristic of this sector of higher education. Since two-year institutions have multiple missions, the Committee acknowledges the need for multiple outcome measures of an institution’s success. In addition to more refined measures of progression and completion, the Committee considered outcomes related to student learning and employment after leaving the institution.

Guiding Principles

- **Multiple missions:** Two-year institutions have multiple, broad missions that serve diverse student populations.
- **Multiple outcomes:** Given two-year institutions’ broad missions, multiple outcome measures should be used to document student success.
- **Transparency:** Students, families, policymakers, and researchers need more and better information about postsecondary student success.
- **Comparability:** Although the strength of America’s higher education institutions is its diversity, certain data about student success should be disclosed or reported in ways that allow consumers to compare institutions, sectors, and student groups.
- **Costs and benefits:** Increased transparency and consumer information should be weighed against the costs institutions would incur to disclose or report the data.
- **Federal role:** Recommendations should include actions that take advantage of the unique role that the federal government can play.
- **Feasibility:** Recommendations should include actions that can be implemented readily under the Department’s current statutory or regulatory authority.
- **Inclusion:** Student success measures should include more information about traditionally underrepresented populations.
- **Forward thinking:** Recommendations should include actions that, while challenging to implement, would inform national conversations about student learning and success in both the short- and long-term.

Building and improving upon graduation rate data already reported by institutions, as well as developing new and alternative methods for measuring student success, requires finding a balance among the information needs of students and families, policymakers, and researchers. A student trying to decide which institution to attend evaluates information differently from a policymaker who is making funding or policy decisions. Although each group's needs may differ, there are areas where they converge. For example, measures such as graduation or transfer rates are important for students to be able to judge their likelihood of graduation or transfer at an institution, just as they are important to policymakers in assessing whether colleges adequately prepare students to complete their programs. For all audiences, having comparable data about student success is important, and there are many ways to compare measures—nationally or regionally, at institutional or program levels, or based on student characteristics.

Measures of student success need to reflect more accurately the comprehensive mission of two-year institutions and the diverse student population they serve. For example, current graduation rates do not adequately reflect these institutions' multiple missions and diverse populations, so new data could be collected and disseminated to address these deficiencies. The Committee also recognizes the importance of building on current voluntary efforts to collect or disclose data from two-year colleges on alternative measures of student success, such as student learning or employment outcomes. Because many of these initiatives collect data using different metrics and for different student groups, the federal government can play a role in improving the transparency, quality, and comparability of the data.

Although additional or alternative measures may be important in creating a more comprehensive picture of student success at two-year institutions, the need for more information must be balanced with the potential administrative and financial burdens institutions may face in collecting such data. Alternative measures of success should benefit institutions by helping them better convey their students' achievements.

Finally, the Committee challenges the Department to implement change where it can under its current statutory and regulatory authority, but also to influence actions and efforts underway and provide direction for future work to advance the national conversation about student success.

Moving Towards a More Complete Picture of Student Success

Recognizing the value of graduation rates currently reported by institutions to the federal government and noting that these are the primary source of such data for all American postsecondary institutions, the Committee recommends that the Department take actions to improve the comprehensiveness of the graduation rate data collected through IPEDS. Specifically, the Committee recommends that the Department:

- Enhance graduation rate reporting in IPEDS to include information on distinct student cohorts—part-time beginning students; students who are not college ready; and federal financial aid recipients. For each of these student groups, the Department should also explore how these data can be disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender.
- Broaden student progression and completion measures collected in IPEDS by collecting data that could be used to calculate more complete graduation and transfer rates.
- Take actions to increase the availability of data on students' postsecondary enrollment across states and work with states to develop common standards for measuring student transfer.
- Provide increased technical assistance to institutions, including clarifying definitions of terms such as “degree-seeking” and “substantial preparation for transfer” to help them meet disclosure and reporting requirements.

Building on efforts to provide more information about student learning in college and employment success after college, the Committee recommends that the Department take steps to improve access to and availability of alternative measures of success. Specifically, the Committee recommends that the Department:

- Make available data on student employment outcomes as gathered in federal gainful employment regulations.
- Provide incentives to states and institutions to improve the availability of state-level earnings data to two-year institutions.
- Provide incentives to institutions to encourage the development of assessments of student learning and take actions to encourage sharing of promising practices for measuring student learning.

The Department can implement some of these recommendations now under its current statutory and regulatory authority to improve student success data for two-year institutions. The Committee also recognizes that some recommendations would require statutory or regulatory changes or greater investment in cross-state and cross-agency efforts. We believe that such changes are necessary to ensure that institutions have access to and are able to report data that

more accurately reflect student success at two-year institutions in the long-term. In addition, while the recommendations were crafted to address concerns about how student success is measured at two-year institutions, the Committee hopes that the recommendations will be considered and implemented by four-year institutions as well.

We believe that our recommendations represent improvements to federal measures of student success that are long overdue. If implemented by the Department, these recommendations will help us achieve important advances in improving data about student success for students and families, institutions, researchers, and policymakers.

Findings and Recommendations

Broaden the Coverage of Student Graduation Data to Reflect the Diverse Student Populations at Two-Year Institutions

Findings

Institutions currently disclose and report through the Graduation Rate (GR) component in IPEDS a graduation rate defined by the *Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990* (SRK). This graduation rate applies only to full-time, first-time degree- or certificate-seeking students who enrolled in the fall and measures student completion of a degree or program over several time periods. The graduation rate measure as currently implemented in IPEDS was developed almost 20 years ago and represented a consensus among institutions, higher education associations, and U.S. Department of Education officials about the importance of having comparable graduation rates across all sectors. As a result, institutions report data in the same manner, providing a consistent, reliable, and valid measure. These graduation rates were also developed to be clear and simple enough for consumers to understand.

Limitations of the current graduation rate defined by SRK are well documented.¹¹ The graduation rate measures the outcomes only of a minority of students enrolled at most two-year institutions—those who are full-time, first-time degree- or certificate-seeking students. At two-year institutions, more than half of all students typically attend part-time.¹² Moreover, basing the cohort on students who begin in the fall excludes beginning students who enroll at some other point in the year—a particular problem at institutions that enroll students on a continuous basis.

Most two-year institutions have open admission policies allowing students with varying levels of academic preparation to enroll. As a result, many students are not fully prepared for college-level coursework, and they need developmental or remedial courses in math, reading, and/or writing. In 2007–08, about 42 percent of first-year undergraduates at public two-year colleges reported ever taking a remedial course.¹³ Due to variations in state policies on identifying college-ready students and requirements for enrollment in remedial education, the actual percentage of students needing remediation may be higher. Students taking remedial courses are often enrolled in a sequence that results in the student needing to pass one, two, or even three remedial courses before taking a college-level course. Graduation rates for students enrolled in

¹¹ Cook, B., and Pullaro, N. (2010). *College Graduation Rates: Behind the Numbers*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

¹² U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2010, Enrollment component.

¹³ Aud, S., Hussar, W., Kena, G., Bianco, K., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., and Tahan, K. (2011). *The Condition of Education 2011* (NCES 2011-033). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

remedial coursework are much lower than rates for students who are not. Research analyzing data from the National Education Longitudinal Study found that less than 25 percent of community college students who took a remedial course completed a degree or certificate within eight years of enrolling.¹⁴ In comparison, about 40 percent of community college students who did not take remedial courses graduated within eight years. Current graduation rates collected in IPEDS do not include information on the number of students who are not college ready, providing little contextual information on the preparedness of students and how that impacts graduation rates.

Another important cohort of students for which graduation rates are not reported separately to IPEDS is students who received federal student financial aid under Title IV of the HEA. In 2009–10, the federal government awarded about \$29 billion in Pell grants and \$101 billion in loans to students enrolled in postsecondary education.¹⁵ Federal grants and loans are a key policy tool for increasing access to college for students from low-income households. Under HEOA, institutions must make available graduation rates for students who received a Pell grant, received a federal loan but no Pell grant, and those who did not receive either a Pell grant or federal loan; however, institutions are not required to report these data to IPEDS. As a result, there is no comprehensive, national source of graduation rates for federal financial aid recipients at an institutional level. Having graduation data for this cohort of students is necessary to answer policy questions about how federal financial aid recipients are progressing through college. Reporting data for these students, however, may be challenging for some institutions. The Department itself may be a more logical source of such information, through internal data systems used to administer federal student financial aid programs. These data systems thus far have not been tapped for these important purposes.

Over the last two years, NCES has undertaken efforts to improve collection and reporting of graduation rate data. In 2010, for example, a working group of the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) issued several recommendations designed to reduce confusion surrounding reporting graduation rate data.¹⁶ Specifically, the group recommended that NCES clarify instructions and definitions associated with the IPEDS GR component and use IPEDS training to share best practices for creating cohorts; identifying and counting students to exclude from the cohort; and identifying completers. Although these are positive developments, they have not addressed limitations of the current graduation rates for two-year colleges, specifically the exclusion of important student groups. The Committee has identified ways that the

¹⁴ Bailey, T. (2009). Challenge and Opportunity: Rethinking the Role and Function of Developmental Education in Community College. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, vol. 145, pp. 11-30.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid. (2010). *Federal Student Aid: Annual Report*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/2010report/fsa-report.pdf>.

¹⁶ The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative was established by NCES to promote the quality, comparability, and utility of postsecondary data and information that support policy development at the federal, state, and institution levels. The report on suggested improvements to graduation rates is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010832.pdf>.

Department could address these limitations within its statutory and regulatory authority by augmenting existing IPEDS components.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends that the Department enhance graduation rate reporting in IPEDS to include information about three specific cohorts—part-time students, students who are not college ready, and federal financial aid recipients. For each of these student groups, the Department should explore how data can be disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender.

1. The Department should add a part-time, degree-seeking cohort in IPEDS.

Two-year institutions should report graduation rates for beginning, part-time degree-seeking students in IPEDS—a group of students currently excluded from federal graduation rates. As a result, the percentage of students included in federal graduation rates would increase significantly. For all institutions, adding part-time, first-time, degree-seeking students to the graduation rate cohort would increase the percentage of degree- or certificate-seeking students included in IPEDS GR rates from 48 percent to 62 percent. For public two-year institutions, coverage would increase from the current 34 percent to 56 percent.¹⁷

Although it is important to include this group of students in measures of graduation and transfer, institutions will need additional guidance on how best to identify part-time students who are degree-seeking, and alternative timeframes for measuring graduation or transfer need to be considered. The Department should direct NCES to convene a panel of technical experts to consider the best methods for adding a part-time cohort to IPEDS. The panel should consider the minimum number of credits a student must earn to be included in this cohort. The panel should also consider whether there should be a minimum threshold of part-time student enrollment at which institutions should report graduation data for this cohort to reduce the reporting burden for institutions with few part-time students.

To ensure that institutions are tracking comparable cohorts of part-time students who intend to complete a degree or certificate program, the panel should also develop a clear definition of “degree-seeking.” Since the issue of clarifying the definition of degree-seeking is also relevant to the full-time, first-time cohort, the Committee makes a separate recommendation on that issue later in this section.

The panel of technical experts should also consider the appropriate time period for tracking graduation outcomes for part-time students. For example, would the 150 percent tracking period defined by SRK be adequate, or would the 200 percent tracking period required in

¹⁷ Calculations based on U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2010, Enrollment component.

HEOA be more appropriate for part-time students? NCES should use its sample survey data to help experts determine a time-to-degree period that would capture graduates at appropriate timeframes without imposing too great a burden on institutions in tracking several cohorts over many different timeframes.

2. The Department should have institutions identify students who were not college ready in their graduation rate cohorts.

Students who are not prepared for college-level coursework are not identified separately in the graduation rate cohorts reported in IPEDS. While it is important to know which students were not prepared for college, it is difficult to gather and compare such information because institutions do not have common ways to define and address college readiness, and assessments of readiness are still being developed and refined. Moreover, it may difficult for institutions to collect detailed information on students who need remediation and their progress over time. Despite these challenges, data on these students' progression and completion would provide insights into how institutions support students of varying levels of academic preparedness, ultimately better informing K–12 and postsecondary policy conversations at the local, state, and national levels.

The Department should develop a way for institutions to distinguish, in the graduation rate cohorts reported in IPEDS, between students who needed remedial or developmental courses and those who did not. There currently exists some guidance in IPEDS defining remedial coursework. However, given the vast differences across institutions in how students are identified as college ready and the methods for addressing the academic needs of students who are not college ready, additional guidance is necessary to ensure that institutions are reporting comparable data on students not ready for college coursework. The Department should direct NCES to convene a panel of technical experts to address such challenges.

3. The Department should have institutions report graduation rates for students who received federal financial aid.

There are no institution-level data collected on graduation and completion among federal student financial aid recipients across all sectors. The Committee recognizes the challenges institutions may face in reporting such data and encourages the Department to explore using the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) to calculate graduation rates for federal financial aid recipients. NSLDS collects information about enrollment and completion for student loan recipients, but it does not include information about Pell grant recipients. The Department should explore whether NSLDS could be modified to collect enrollment and completion data on all Title IV aid recipients—including Pell grant recipients. This approach would minimize the amount of new data institutions would need to report in IPEDS. If NSLDS cannot accommodate this data collection, then the Department should collect,

through IPEDS, graduation rates for federal financial aid recipients. The Department should direct NCES to convene a panel of technical experts to determine how best to collect such data.

4. The Department should clarify the definition of a degree-seeking student.

The fluid pattern of student enrollment, students' own uncertainty about their educational goals, and innovations in program requirements for degrees and certificates can make identifying a degree-seeking student challenging for institutions. The Department should provide additional guidance on identifying students who intend to complete a degree and therefore should be included in the graduation rate cohort. The Department should direct NCES to convene a panel of technical experts to consider the best methods for identifying a degree-seeking student that can be used by all institutions when reporting graduation rates in IPEDS. Clarifying the definition of a degree-seeking student will be especially important in correctly identifying a part-time cohort.

The panel of technical experts should consider the following:

- What is a degree-seeking student?
- Which of the following, if any, could better define degree-seeking status than what is currently used in IPEDS?
 - For example, intent could be established based on students' collective course-taking patterns over the entire history of their enrollment. Students could be considered degree-seeking if they ever, during their entire academic history at the reporting institution:
 - Received any type of federal financial aid, regardless of what courses they took at any time; or any state or locally-based financial aid with an eligibility requirement that the student be enrolled in a degree, certificate, or transfer-seeking program; or
 - Ever attempted, at any point in their entire academic history, any degree-applicable, transferrable, or remedial math, reading, or writing course (not including ESL); or
 - Ever attempted any course identified as being part of an advanced vocational, occupational, or apprenticeship sequence that leads directly to a degree or certificate; or
 - Were identified by the institution as clearly being enrolled in a program or sequence that leads to a degree, certificate, or transfer to a four-year institution (such as being officially enrolled in or having declared to be in a particular program or major after having received matriculation or advisement services).

The panel should consider how students' in-college behavior may be influenced by an institution's policies and practices if such course-taking patterns are used as an indicator of student goals. In addition, the panel should consider other factors in developing its guidance, since defining what constitutes a degree-seeking student for the purposes of IPEDS may have an impact on students' eligibility for Title IV federal student financial aid.

Improve the Collection of Student Progression and Completion Data

Findings

Statute requires that “a student shall be counted as a completion or graduation if, within 150 percent of the normal time for completion of or graduation from the program, the student has completed or graduated from the program, or enrolled in any program of an eligible institution for which the prior program provides substantial preparation.”¹⁸ For many two-year institutions, preparing students for transfer to a four-year institution is as positive an outcome as awarding a degree or certificate. Under current regulations, institutions report graduation rates and transfer-out rates separately.¹⁹ In IPEDS, graduation rates reflect the percentage of the student cohort who completed their programs during the tracking period; transfer-out rates reflect the percentage of the cohort who transferred to another institution without completing their programs.

Given the multiple missions of many two-year institutions to confer degrees and certificates and to prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions, the current graduation and transfer-out rates reported in IPEDS do not provide a complete picture of student success at these institutions. The current method for reporting graduation rates excludes students who transfer out without having attained a certificate or degree but who were substantially prepared by the institution for transfer to another institution. Similarly, students who transfer to another institution after being awarded a degree or certificate are currently not counted in the transfer-out rate. In addition, students who transfer from a two-year institution to another two-year institution currently may be counted in the transfer-out rate, even though such a lateral transfer may not be considered as high level an outcome as a transfer to a four-year institution.

Furthermore, not all institutions are required to report on students who transfer out. In IPEDS, institutions whose mission includes substantial preparation of students for transfer are required to report a transfer-out rate that measures the percentage of students who transfer separately from the graduation rate. Institutions that do not have substantial preparation for transfer as part of

¹⁸ 20 USC 1092(a)(3)

¹⁹ 34 CFR Part 668.45

their mission have the option to report such students. No clear definition exists of what constitutes “substantial preparation for transfer,” leaving institutions to decide for themselves whether or not this is part of their mission.

Transfer-out rates have been significantly underreported in part because institutions have limited access to the necessary data. To be able to determine if a student has transferred, institutions need data on student enrollment at other institutions. Institutions typically use four data sources to help them report on transfers out: (1) state student unit record databases; (2) system student unit record databases; (3) the National Student Clearinghouse; and (4) institutional surveys, exit interviews, and administrative records. State postsecondary data systems are uneven at best, and institutional capacity to access or use these and other data sources varies greatly, thus leading to underreporting of transfers-out.²⁰ Given this inconsistency, the Department should take actions to increase the availability of data on postsecondary student enrollment and success across states.

It is important for two-year institutions to have a broad outcome measure for graduation and transfer because this combined measure more accurately reflects their mission to confer degrees and certificates and prepare students for transfer. To calculate such a measure, the Department needs to improve the way data on students who complete their programs or who transfer out are reported in IPEDS. The Department should also capture information on other progression outcomes achieved by students at two-year institutions. Given two-year institutions’ broad missions and students’ varied motivations for enrolling, it is also important for two-year institutions to account for students in the graduation rate cohort who were either still enrolled or who transferred to another two-year institution at the end of the tracking period and who may still be on the path to completing their program.

²⁰ Medwick, J. A. (2009). *Transfer-Out Reporting on the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey: A First Look at Trends and Methods*. Tallahassee, FL: Association for Institutional Research and U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Recommendations:

The Committee recommends that the Department broaden student progression and completion measures in IPEDS by collecting data that could be used to calculate a graduation rate that includes an unduplicated count of students who completed their program, transferred, or were substantially prepared for transfer; transfer-out rates that include students who transfer after earning an award; and measures that take into account other transfer outcomes. The Committee also recommends that the Department take actions to increase the availability of data on students' postsecondary enrollment and success across states.

- 1. The Department should have institutions report in IPEDS an unduplicated count of students in the degree- or certificate-seeking cohort who achieved the following outcomes within 100, 150, and 200 percent of normal time to completion:**
 - a. Earned an award; transferred to a four-year institution without an award; or were substantially prepared for transfer**
 - b. Earned an award and did not transfer to a four-year institution**
 - c. Earned an award and transferred to a four-year institution**
 - d. Did not earn an award and transferred to a four-year institution**
 - e. Were substantially prepared for transfer**
 - f. Are still enrolled at the institution in the first term immediately following the tracking period or transferred to another two-year institution within the tracking period**

The Department should calculate an institutional graduation rate that includes both students who graduate and those who subsequently enroll in another institution for which the prior institution provides substantial preparation, in accordance with SRK.²¹ For two-year institutions, earning an award and transferring to a four-year institution are both desired outcomes. A combined, unduplicated “graduation and transfer rate” would present a more complete picture of successful outcomes for two-year institutions.

The Department should also calculate a transfer-out rate that includes students who transferred to a four-year institution or were substantially prepared for transfer during the tracking period, regardless of whether or not they earned an award. The Department should direct NCES to convene a panel of technical experts to clarify how an institution identifies students who were substantially prepared for transfer. A standard definition of “substantial preparation for transfer” should be developed—including a unit threshold—so that data on

²¹ 20 USC 1092(a)(3)

this group of students are valid and comparable across institutions and sectors of higher education.

2. The Department should work with Congress to address the statutory prohibition against a federal student unit record system.

An ideal solution to address the incompleteness of data on student progression, transfer, and completion is a coordinated, public, and privacy-protected student unit record system that includes all institutions that participate in Title IV federal student financial aid programs (such as private institutions) and that covers student enrollment in all states. Such a system, which has been called for and is supported by key stakeholders in the higher education community, would provide students and families, researchers, and policymakers with more accurate and comprehensive data on student progression, transfer, and success than can be obtained through a system of institutional data collection.²² While this may present an additional burden for institutions initially, over time such a system may reduce the burden associated with IPEDS reporting by decreasing the amount of time spent by institutional staff in tracking cohorts of students over many years.

The creation of a student unit record system by the federal government is currently prohibited by the HEOA. While efforts are underway to link state data systems, these efforts are uneven, and progress has been slow. The Department should work with Congress in the next reauthorization of the *Higher Education Act* to address this statutory prohibition.

3. The Department should provide financial incentives to states to create data systems that link student postsecondary data nationally and to develop common standards for measuring transfer.

Until the statutory prohibition against a federal unit record system is addressed, the Department should use current grant programs, such as the State Longitudinal Data Systems Grant Program, to provide funds to states developing data systems linking student enrollment across sectors and states. Although many states have systems that can link student data across institutions, students may transfer to schools in other states. Particularly in metropolitan areas covering multiple states, the ability to create such links would greatly improve institutions' ability to determine whether a student transferred or not. The data in these systems should be readily available and accessible to institutions needing to ascertain student enrollment.

²² Cunningham, A. F., and Milam, J. (2005). *Feasibility of a Student Unit Record System Within the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System* (NCES 2005-160). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

The Department should also work with states and institutions to develop common standards for measuring student transfer from two-year to four-year institutions to ensure comparability of transfer data across state systems.

Improve Technical Guidance to Institutions in Meeting Statutory Disclosure Requirements

Findings

Disclosure of graduation rates of full-time, first-time degree- or certificate-seeking undergraduate students by two-year degree-granting institutions is only one of several disclosures required by HEOA. Disclosure requirements, which often differ from reporting requirements, are information that institutions are required to make available to students, parents, or other groups.²³ There are about 40 disclosures that postsecondary institutions must comply with under federal law, ranging from reporting on campus crime to ensuring that students understand their borrowing rights. In addition, some disclosures must be provided to students, while others must be made available upon request. Navigating the many layers of requirements can be challenging for institutions. The Department plays a critical role in helping institutions meet statutory disclosure requirements by providing technical assistance on how they can calculate and disseminate the required data.

The Department has already developed vehicles for providing such technical assistance. For example, the Department recently released technical guidance to two-year institutions on how to disclose graduation rates while protecting personally identifiable student information. In addition, the Department's Privacy and Technical Assistance Center was established as a "one-stop" resource for education stakeholders to learn about data privacy, confidentiality, and security practices related to student-level longitudinal data systems. The Department has also released a template for institutions to use voluntarily to meet a specific disclosure requirement. The Department's net price calculator template, released in 2009, is a template that institutions can use voluntarily to help them comply with the HEOA disclosure requirement to have a net price calculator on their websites for full-time, first-time undergraduate students. Promoting the voluntary use of disclosure templates developed by the Department could improve the quality of the data and decrease institutional burden associated with disclosures.

²³ A summary of disclosure requirements in the HEA (as amended by the HEOA) is available in *Information Required to Be Disclosed Under the Higher Education Act of 1965: Suggestions for Dissemination (Updated)*. (NPEC 2010-831v2). (2009). Washington, DC: National Postsecondary Education Cooperative.

Recommendations:

The Committee recommends that the Department provide increased technical assistance to institutions to help them meet statutory disclosure requirements.

1. The Department should provide additional technical guidance to institutions regarding disclosures and student privacy.

Under the HEOA, institutions must disclose completion or graduation rates disaggregated by the following:

- Gender;
- Race/ethnicity;
- Students who received a Pell grant;
- Students who received a FFEL loan (except for unsubsidized Stafford loans), but did not receive a Pell grant; and
- Students who did not receive a Pell grant or a FFEL loan.

As previously mentioned, the Department has already released technical guidance to two-year institutions on how to disclose such data while protecting student privacy.²⁴ The Department should distribute that guidance widely and develop other materials through its Privacy and Technical Assistance Center as necessary.

2. With input from technical experts and institutional representatives, the Department should continue to develop templates that institutions could adopt voluntarily to decrease burden associated with meeting federal disclosure requirements.

A working group of the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) has issued a report with guidance to institutions on how to comply with federal higher education disclosure requirements and how to make the required information more accessible to consumers.²⁵ As part of a full complement of technical assistance to institutions, the Department should also consider releasing additional templates that institutions could adopt voluntarily to meet disclosure requirements.

²⁴ Chen, X., Bersudskaya, V., and Cubarrubia, A. (2011). *Statistical Methods for Protecting Personally Identifiable Information in the Disclosure of Graduation Rates of First-Time, Full-Time Degree- or Certificate-Seeking Undergraduate Students by 2-Year Degree-Granting Institutions of Higher Education* (NCES 2012-151). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012151.pdf>.

²⁵ National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. (2009). *Information Required to Be Disclosed Under the Higher Education Act of 1965: Suggestions for Dissemination* (NPEC 2010-831v2). Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010831rev.pdf>.

Encourage Institutions to Disclose Comparable Data on Employment Outcomes and Provide Incentives for Sharing Promising Practices on Measuring Student Learning

Findings

Given the multiple missions of two-year colleges, federal graduation rates do not provide a comprehensive picture of the many positive outcomes achieved by students at two-year colleges. While there are external efforts underway focused on alternative means for measuring success, there is no consistency in the way data are gathered and reported by each entity. The current graduation rates and the recommendations in this report also focus almost exclusively on students who are seeking degrees or certificates, but many students enroll in two-year institutions to gain specific vocational skills. For example, students enroll in credit and non-credit courses to acquire skills or earn career and technical certificates that result in increased earnings or new career opportunities. These students often enroll in a specific program and may be most interested in knowing the success of students in that program.

Gathering information on the outcomes of these students is another important aspect of the conversation about the impact of two-year colleges on student success. To measure student employment outcomes effectively, two-year institutions would need information on students' employment and wages—data that are not readily accessible or available to institutions. At the state level, earnings data are part of state-specific unemployment insurance (UI) databases that cover employment in one state, and there are privacy concerns about sharing these data. Despite these challenges, there are models of interstate wage and earnings data systems and a federal role in facilitating the sharing of wage data across states. For example, the Department of Labor's Wage Record Interchange System facilitates the sharing of wage data across states to measure the success of participants in state and local workforce training programs.

Recently released federal regulations also provide a framework for measuring the employment outcomes of students who complete postsecondary programs designed to prepare them for gainful employment in a recognized occupation.²⁶ Programs subject to these new gainful employment regulations are (a) certificate programs at any Title IV institution and (b) all programs at for-profit institutions, except bachelor's degree programs in liberal arts. The measures will be calculated for 55,405 programs at all types of institutions, with the vast majority of programs at public two-year institutions. About 5,600 institutions have one or more programs subject to these regulations.

²⁶ 34 CFR 600, 34 CFR 602, 34 CFR 603, 34 CFR 668, 34 CFR 682, 34 CFR 685, 34 CFR 686, 34 CFR 690, 34 CFR 691.

The regulations released in June 2011 include two employment measures using Social Security earnings information in concert with student loan debt data from the Department of Education: (1) debt-to-earnings ratio and (2) repayment rates. The wage and debt information gathered through implementation of the gainful employment regulations would provide useful insights into the employment outcomes of program completers at two-year institutions.

While there is a foundation of data related to student employment outcomes, measures of student learning are not as well developed, and data are not as readily available. The challenges are due in part to the complexities and variations in methods for measuring student learning, and colleges are still identifying and developing assessments to measure student learning. The Department can take steps, however, to help institutions share promising practices in measuring and disclosing information about student learning.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends that the Department make available data on student employment outcomes gathered in federal gainful employment regulations and provide incentives to improve the availability of wage and earnings data to two-year institutions. The Committee also recommends that the Department provide incentives to institutions for developing assessments of student learning and encourage sharing of promising practices for measuring student learning.

1. The Department should make available to the public data disclosed by institutions resulting from the gainful employment disclosure requirements.

The Department should make debt and earnings data associated with programs intended to prepare students for gainful employment readily available through a centralized, easily accessible website, to provide better information to students and families, policymakers, and others on student employment outcomes. Since the regulations require institutions to disclose employment rates for certificate programs, the Department should also examine ways to use data collected under the gainful employment regulations to provide guidance on how institutions could disclose employment rates for associate's degree programs.

2. The Department should take actions that would enable two-year institutions to access data needed to assess employment outcomes more readily.

To report on students' employment after college requires data that institutions may not collect or have the ability to obtain from current sources. The Committee recognizes the challenges that institutions face in gathering data on student employment and earnings from multiple state and federal agencies, particularly the limitations on data sharing between

agencies and concerns about protecting student privacy. To address these challenges, the Department should:

- a. Provide incentives for states and institutions to develop more robust data systems that allow for collection and dissemination of a wider range of outcome measures for two-year institutions, especially given their workforce development missions;
 - b. Provide increased guidance on student record and wage data matching, while addressing requirements of the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), to help institutions disclose employment rates for associate's degree and certificate programs; and
 - c. Provide incentives through its State Longitudinal Data System grant program to fund systems that make employment data easier to access and use and that increase the capacity for interstate sharing of employment or unemployment insurance wage data.
- 3. The Department should provide financial incentives to institutions to collect, disclose, and report results of student learning assessments, including but not limited to those already being reported to accrediting agencies, state higher education agencies, or voluntary accountability initiatives.**

Institutions have begun to collect data and measure student learning for a variety of entities—states, accreditation agencies, and others, but there is much work still to be done.

Assessments of student learning are often program-specific, and there are no agreed-upon measures that are comparable across programs or across institutions. As the measurement of student learning evolves, the Department should provide incentives to institutions to develop comparable measures of student learning and assistance in implementing such assessments. Additionally, the Department should use its grant programs to encourage more research on assessment of student learning outcomes.

- 4. The Department should convene representatives of two-year institutions to share promising practices on measuring and disclosing information about alternative measures of student success, such as student learning and employment.**

Many efforts are underway in institutions, systems, and other organizations to develop alternative measures of student success. Providing an opportunity for these groups to meet and learn how best to measure such outcomes would illuminate innovative activities in this sector. The Department should convene representatives of the higher education community to highlight promising practices in the collection and dissemination of data related to student learning and employment outcomes at two-year institutions.

Conclusion

Two-year institutions play a unique role in America’s higher education landscape. Many do much more than prepare students to earn a postsecondary credential. For many students enrolled at two-year institutions, success may be transferring to a four-year institution or completing a few courses for retraining or career advancement. For the majority of these students, however, full-time enrollment may not be a viable option. And for some, the need for remedial coursework may delay their progress toward a degree.

With broad missions and a wide range of stakeholders, two-year institutions have not been served well by current federal measures of student success. For many years, policymakers and others have relied on federal graduation rate measures designed for traditional four-year institutions—measures that include only full-time, first-time degree- or certificate-seeking students—to make unfair judgments about the quality of two-year institutions. More importantly, these graduation rates may be misleading to consumers—students and families, researchers, and policymakers who are making critical decisions about investments in higher education based on incomplete data.

The Committee has deliberated for more than a year and identified actionable steps that can be taken to provide better data that will more accurately reflect the progress and outcomes of students at two-year institutions. One immediate action is to refine and update current methods for calculating federal graduation rates by measuring progress more broadly and adding student subgroups to reflect the student populations served by two-year institutions. But improving current methods for calculating graduation rates will not fix the problem entirely. The postsecondary education data infrastructure at the institutional, state, and national levels must be improved so that the incompleteness of data on student progression, transfer, and completion can be effectively addressed.

In addition to addressing the limitations of data infrastructures with respect to student progression and graduation, information will be needed on other student outcomes at two-year institutions. There are some outcomes, such as employment and earnings, that have a strong base to support data collection and, with improvements, can be used to make comparisons across institutions. Other outcomes, such as those related to student learning, are not as well developed and need more funding and attention to develop comparable and valid measures.

Implementing the recommendations of the Committee will require sustained focus and attention from policymakers at all levels of government, institutions, and others. Taking the actions outlined by the Committee will vastly improve the quality of postsecondary data and ultimately provide a more complete and accurate picture of student success at two-year institutions.

Appendix A

Charter

AUTHORITY

The Committee on Measures of Student Success (Committee) is authorized by Section 485(a)(7)(B) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) (20 U.S.C. 1092(a)(7)(B)). The Committee is governed by the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (P.L. 92-463; as amended, 5 U.S.C.A. Appendix 2), which sets forth the standards for the formation and use of advisory committees.

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

The Committee is established in order to advise the Secretary of Education in assisting two-year degree-granting institutions of higher education in meeting the completion or graduation rate disclosure requirements outlined in section 485 of the Higher Education Act of 2008.

DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES

The Committee on Measures of Student Success will develop recommendations for the Secretary of Education regarding the accurate calculation and reporting of completion or graduation rates of entering certificate- or degree-seeking, full-time, undergraduate students by two-year degree-granting institutions of higher education. The Committee may also recommend additional or alternative measures of student success that are comparable alternatives to the completion or graduation rates of entering degree-seeking full-time undergraduate students, taking into account the mission and role of two-year degree-granting higher education institutions. These recommendations shall be provided to the Secretary no later than 18 months after the first meeting of the Committee.

The Department may establish up to two working groups to assist the Committee in carrying out its duties. The working groups shall be composed of five members, a majority of whom shall be voting members of the Committee, whose expertise is needed for the functioning of the working groups. In addition, membership of the working groups may include outside experts or Federal employees. These working groups shall operate under the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, as amended, and shall provide their recommendations to the Committee for full deliberation and discussion.

OFFICIAL TO WHOM THE COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committee shall report to the Secretary of Education no later than 18 months from the date of the first meeting of the Committee.

SUPPORT

The Institute for Education Sciences (IES), through the National Center for Education Statistics, shall provide the financial and administrative support for the performance of the Committee's functions.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST

It is estimated that the annual operating costs to include travel costs and contract support for this Committee will be \$125,000. The annual personnel cost to the Department of Education will be .5 staff years.

DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICIAL (DFO)

A Designated Federal Official (DFO) shall be appointed by the Director of IES. The Committee shall meet at the call of the DFO in consultation with the Chairperson. The DFO will prepare and approve all committee meeting agendas, attend all committee meetings, chair meetings in the absence of the Chairperson, adjourn a meeting if he or she deems it necessary in the interest of the public, and prepare and post committee meeting minutes for public inspection.

MEETINGS

The estimated number of meetings is 4 over the duration of the Committee. As required by FACA, meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public unless determined otherwise by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of the General Counsel.

DURATION/TERMINATION

The duration of the Committee, within the meaning of Section 14(a) of FACA, is authorized through the date that the Committee issues its recommendations to the Secretary.

MEMBERSHIP AND DESIGNATION

The Committee shall consist of 15 members, including individuals from diverse higher education institutions, experts in the field of higher education policy, state higher education officials,

students, and other stakeholders from the higher education community. The members shall be appointed by the Secretary of Education in consultation with the Commissioner for Education Statistics. The Committee Chairperson shall be appointed by the Secretary of Education. The members shall serve as special government employees (SGEs). As SGEs, the members are chosen for their individual expertise, qualifications, and experience. The members will provide advice and make recommendations based on their own independent judgment and will not be speaking for or representing the views of any nongovernmental organization or recognizable group of persons. Notwithstanding their status as SGEs, the members will not be paid for their services other than the payment of travel expenses and a per diem allowance.

SUBCOMMITTEES

The Committee will not have subcommittees.

RECORDKEEPING

The records of the Committee will be handled in accordance with the General Records Schedule 26, Item 2. The records shall be made available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

FILING DATE

The Committee is hereby chartered in accordance with Section 14(b) of FACA. This charter expires two years from the date of filing.

/s/ Arne Duncan
Secretary

August 21, 2009
Date

Establishment Date:
August 21, 2009

Filing Date:
August 31, 2009

Appendix B

Committee and Staff Roster and Biographies

Members

Dr. Thomas R. Bailey, Chair

George and Abby O'Neill Professor of Economics and Education
Director, Community College Research Center
Teachers College, Columbia University

Dr. Thomas R. Bailey is the George and Abby O'Neill Professor of Economics and Education in the Department of International and Transcultural Studies at Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Bailey is an economist, with specialties in education, labor economics, and econometrics. In 1996, with support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Dr. Bailey established the Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Teachers College, which conducts a large portfolio of qualitative and quantitative research based on fieldwork at community colleges and analysis of national- and state-level datasets. The research focuses on access and student success at community college, with a particular focus on the experiences low income and minority students. Dr. Bailey is also Director of two National Centers, one being the National Center for Postsecondary Research (NCPR), established in 2006, and the second being the Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment (CAPSEE), established in 2011. Both centers are funded by grants from the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. Since 1992, Dr. Bailey has also been the Director of the Institute on Education and the Economy (IEE) at Teachers College. His articles have appeared in a wide variety of education, policy-oriented and academic journals, and he authored or co-authored several books on the employment and training of immigrants and the extent and effects of on-the-job training. His most recent book, co-edited with Vanessa Morest, is *Defending the Community College Equity Agenda* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006). Other books include *Working Knowledge: Work-Based Learning and Education Reform* (Routledge, 2004), co-authored with Katherine Hughes and David Moore; *Manufacturing Advantage* (Cornell University Press, 2000), written with Eileen Appelbaum, Peter Berg, and Arne Kalleberg; and *The Double Helix of Education and the Economy* (IEE, 1992), co-authored with Sue Berryman. Dr. Bailey holds a Ph.D. in labor economics from MIT.

Dr. Margarita Benítez

Senior Associate, Excelencia in Education

Dr. Margarita Benítez is an independent consultant and a Senior Associate with Excelencia in Education. She brings with her substantial experience and a particular focus on minority-serving institutions, gained from her years as a college president (1985-94), as a member of the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (1990-1996), as a senior official in the Office of Postsecondary Education in the U.S. Department of Education (1998-2003), as an advisor to the President of the University of Puerto Rico system (2003-2009), and a senior associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (2004-2007). She was director of higher education for The Education Trust (2007-2010) and coordinator of the Access to Success Initiative, a partnership of 23 state university systems designed

to improve student success and to close by at least half the gaps in both college-going and college completion that separate low income and underrepresented minority students from other students.

Dr. Wayne M. Burton

President, North Shore Community College

Dr. Wayne M. Burton is president of North Shore Community College with campuses in Danvers, Lynn, and Beverly, Massachusetts. Dr. Burton served in several capacities at the University of New Hampshire, his last fourteen as Assistant Dean and Director of Accreditation for the Whittemore School of Business and Economics. From 1993 to 2000 he served as Dean of the School of Business at Salem State College. Dr. Burton was appointed president of North Shore Community College in 2000. He served on Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick's Transition Committee in November 2006 and continues to advise the Governor through his membership on the Governor's Small Business Roundtable. He was recently appointed to the Massachusetts Commission on the Study of In-State Tuition, and is one of fifteen appointees to the U.S. Department of Education Committee on Measures of Student Success. Dr. Burton is a founding member and co-chair of the Community College Consortium on Autism and Intellectual Disabilities. He serves on many community affiliations, i.e. N.S. Chamber of Commerce (past chair) and founder of the North Shore Alliance for Economic Development. Dr. Burton is a New Hampshire resident and served two terms in the New Hampshire House of Representatives. He currently serves as a member of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission in Southern New Hampshire. Born and raised in Belmont, MA, he earned his A.B. from Bowdoin College and after serving as a Captain in the U.S Army in Germany and Vietnam, an M.B.A. from the University of New Hampshire and an Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership from Vanderbilt University.

Mr. Kevin Carey

Policy Director, Education Sector

Mr. Kevin Carey is the policy director of Education Sector, an independent think tank. He manages the organization's policy team and oversees policy development in K–12 and higher education. Mr. Carey has published articles in magazines including *Washington Monthly*, *The New Republic*, *The American Prospect*, *Democracy*, and *Newsweek*. He writes a monthly column for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and serves as guest editor of *Washington Monthly's* annual college issue. His writing was anthologized in Best American Legal Writing 2009. Mr. Carey's research at Education Sector includes higher education reform, improving college graduation rates, college rankings, community colleges, and NCLB. He regularly contributes to The Quick and the ED and Brainstorm blogs and provides expert commentary for media outlets including CNN, C-SPAN, PBS Frontline, and National Public Radio. He also teaches education policy at Johns Hopkins University. Previously, Mr. Carey was director of policy research for The Education Trust and a policy analyst at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. From 1999 to 2001, Mr. Carey served as Indiana's Assistant State Budget Director for education, where he advised the governor on finance and policy issues in K–12 and higher education. He also served as a senior analyst for the Indiana Senate Finance Committee. Mr. Carey holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Binghamton University and a master of public administration from the Ohio State University. He lives with his wife and daughter in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Alisa F. Cunningham

Vice President of Research and Programs, Institute for Higher Education Policy

Ms. Alisa Federico Cunningham is vice president of research at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization located in Washington, D.C. that focuses on access to and success in postsecondary education. She oversees the organization's research studies and project evaluations. In addition, Ms. Cunningham conducts her own research related to disadvantaged populations around the world. Since joining IHEP in 1997, Ms. Cunningham's work has addressed a broad array of topics, including higher education financing, student financial aid, minority-serving institutions, student persistence and attainment, and opportunities for student access and success. Her experience in policy research and analysis includes both domestic and international fields, and during her tenure at the organization, she has been involved in several cutting-edge national studies on college costs and prices as well as measurements of student persistence. In addition to research presentations at numerous conferences and articles published in various journals and magazines, Ms. Cunningham is the author or co-author of many of IHEP's publications. Most recently, she co-authored a chapter in "Recognizing and serving low income students in postsecondary education" and a report on student loan delinquencies. She also was awarded the 2010 Robert P. Huff Golden Quill Award for her contributions to literature on student financial aid.

Mr. Jacob Fraire

Assistant Vice President for Student and Institutional Success, Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation

Mr. Jacob Fraire worked as an education lobbyist in Washington, DC, representing institutions, non-profit organizations, and corporations in the secondary and higher education sectors. He provided federal relations representation to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), National Association of Student Employment Administrators, National Association for Migrant Education, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, and guaranty agencies participating in the federal student loan programs. He served as director of legislation and policy analysis for HACU and later as senior legislative coordinator for the law firm of Jorden, Burt, Berenson, & Johnson, LLP, where he represented research universities and institutes. His areas of expertise extend to elementary and secondary education and higher education authorization statutes and the budget and appropriations processes. Since 1998, Mr. Fraire has served as assistant vice president at the non-profit Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation (TG), leading the company's philanthropic and community service department. He oversees TG's national and state efforts in pre-collegiate outreach, financial literacy, community college policy and practice, enrollment management services, philanthropy, and an academic journal. He designed and leads TG's Public Benefit Program, which provides grant funding to advance college access and success, need-based grant aid, and education research. Since 2005, TG's Public Benefit program has awarded a combined \$37 million in competitive grants to non-profit organizations and direct grant aid to college students. The son of migrant farm-workers, Mr. Fraire was raised in El Paso, Texas. He earned a bachelor's degree from St. Edward's University in Austin and a master's degree in public affairs from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. Jacob is married to Dr. Virginia Murillo Fraire; they have five children.

Ms. Isabel Friedman

Student, University of Pennsylvania

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Woods Hole, Massachusetts, Ms. Isabel Friedman has made her mark as a youth leader, champion for girls and women, and political activist. She co-developed and conducted in-school Basic Breast Health Assembly programs, reaching over 5,000 middle and high school girls and their mothers. Following, she co-authored the book, *Taking Care of Your 'Girls: A Breast Health Guide for Girls, Teens, and In-Betweens*, published by Random House in September of 2008. During her gap year before starting college at University of Pennsylvania, she worked as a Field Organizer on Barack Obama's Presidential Campaign in Philadelphia and studied Hindi, textile design and volunteered in India for a semester. She served as an intern in the U.S. Department of Commerce in the Office of Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. At Penn, Ms. Friedman served on the board of Penn Democrats as President, plays an active role at the Penn Women's Center, and was selected to be a mentor for Big Brothers Big Sisters in West Philadelphia. In 2011 she returned to India to work in a maternal health center with Karuna Trust, an Indian NGO that partners with the government to deliver health care to underserved rural communities. In her Junior year at Penn, she was elected Chair of Penn Political Coalition, an umbrella organization for student clubs with political missions, which she also helped co-found. She is majoring in Health and Societies with a concentration in International Health and a minor in French.

Dr. Mildred Garcia

President, California State University, Dominguez Hills

Dr. Mildred García is president of California State University (CSU), Dominguez Hills, a comprehensive university in Los Angeles County. She arrived in 2007, after serving as President of Berkeley College in New York and New Jersey. Dr. García began her career as faculty and is a tenured professor in Graduate Education at CSU Dominguez Hills. She has taught at numerous community colleges, comprehensive institutions and research universities, and is a scholar of higher education. Her research concentrates on equity in higher education and its impact on policy and practice, and has written and published more than thirty books, articles, book reviews and commissioned reports. Dr. García serves on President Obama's Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, was selected by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to the U.S. Committee on Measures of Student Success, charged with developing recommendations to improve student success at two-year degree-granting institutions and serves as a member of the Board of Visitors for Air University at the request of the Secretary of Defense. She also serves on the Boards of Directors for the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education and the Association of American Colleges and Universities. She serves on the Advisory Board of *Higher Education Abstracts*; the Editorial Advisory Board of *Peer Review*, Association of American Colleges and Universities; the Advisory Board for *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*; the National Advisory Panel of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment; and is a founding board member of the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships. She is also a member of the 2060 Blue Ribbon Committee, charged by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to identify long-range strategies to foster water reliability and environmental stewardship in the region.

Dr. García received an Ed.D. and M.A. in higher education administration from Teachers College, Columbia University; M.A. in business education/higher education from New York University; B.S. in business education from Bernard Baruch College, CUNY; and an A.A.S. in legal secretarial sciences in business from New York City Community College, CUNY.

Dr. Sharon Kristovich

Higher Education Consultant

Dr. Sharon Kristovich has had more than 20 years experience in research and statistical support. The last twelve of these years were in community college institutional research; most of the time in leadership positions. She is presently self-employed as a higher educational consultant, specializing in program and institutional evaluation, federal and state accountability, retention/persistence, student success, student engagement, enrollment trends, assessment methods, program evaluation, data warehousing and management, statistical analyses, and human subjects review (you name it, she can do it!). Dr. Kristovich has authored or co-authored five papers and over 30 presentations (some of them award-winning) in community college institutional research. Dr. Kristovich's educational background includes a B.A. in Psychology from Cook College, Rutgers University in 1985. She has a master's degree (1988) and a Ph.D. (1995) in Cognitive/Academic Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Mr. Harold Levy

Managing Director, Palm Ventures, LLC

Harold Levy is Managing Director at Palm Ventures LLC, where he leads the education practice and also focuses on regulated industries and allied fields. Mr. Levy was formerly the New York City Schools Chancellor, Executive Vice President of Kaplan, Inc., Director of Global Compliance of Citigroup, Inc., Head of Litigation of Salomon Brothers Inc., and Managing Director of Plainfield Asset Management LLC. He holds a B.S. and J.D. from Cornell and a M.A. (PPE) from Oxford. Mr. Levy is a member of numerous boards, including the National Dropout Prevention Center, the Roosevelt Institute, Pace University and a member of the Presidential Advisory Committee of Teachers College, Columbia University.

Hon. Geri D. Palast

Managing Director, Israel Action Network

Prior to her current role at the Israel Action Network, the Honorable Geri D. Palast was the Executive Director of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE). During her tenure, CFE successfully completed litigation and legislation that established the right to a sound basic education in the New York State Constitution and reformed the state school finance and accountability laws. CFE now oversees the implementation of the settlement, and co-leads the statewide education advocacy coalition that addresses ongoing funding, policy, and public education efforts to ensure a quality education for every public school student. Previously, Palast was the founder and executive director of the Justice at Stake Campaign, the national organization working to ensure fair and impartial courts, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs under President Clinton, and national Political and Legislative Director of Service Employees International Union. She is an attorney, a Root-Tilden

Public Service Law Scholar from NYU School of Law, and an honors graduate of Stanford University. She is admitted to practice in the District of Columbia and California.

Mr. Patrick Perry

Vice Chancellor of Technology, Research, and Information Systems, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

As the appointed Vice Chancellor of Technology, Research, and Information Systems for the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, Mr. Patrick Perry oversees both the collection of all unitary student records for California's 112-campus system and the Institutional Research function responsible for all system accountability reporting. In this capacity, he has negotiated data matching agreements and leveraged the systems' educational data warehouse to fully capture student progress, transfer movement, institutional peer grouping, and wage outcomes to create a comprehensive reporting and accountability framework for two-year institutions and their student populations. He has worked for over a decade on capturing the complexities of measuring student intent in a community college environment and translating this to appropriate success rate and output volume measurements. Mr. Perry is a regular contributor at IPEDS Technical Review Panels, is a former member of the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC), and currently serves as an advisor to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) in the development of their Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA).

Dr. Lashawn Richburg-Hayes

Senior Research Associate and Deputy Director for Young Adults and Postsecondary Education, MDRC

Dr. Lashawn Richburg-Hayes is a Senior Research Associate and the Deputy Director of the Young Adults Postsecondary Education policy area within MDRC. Dr. Richburg-Hayes' current research focuses on measuring various effects of new forms of financial aid, enhanced student services, and curricular and instructional innovations on community college retention and credit accumulation, as well as nonexperimental methods of data analysis. Dr. Richburg-Hayes was a lead investigator of MDRC's Opening Doors Project, a demonstration that is designed to help nontraditional students—at-risk youth, low-wage working parents, and unemployed individuals—earn college credentials on the pathway to better jobs with higher pay. She is a lead investigator of Achieving the Dream, a comprehensive initiative being led by the Lumina Foundation that targets students of color and low-income students, aiming to boost academic achievement and “close the gap” between these and other community college enrollees. Dr. Richburg-Hayes earned a bachelor's degree from the Industrial and Labor Relations School of Cornell University. She received her master's degree and Ph.D. in Economics from Princeton University.

Dr. Linda M. Thor

Chancellor, Foothill-De Anza Community College District

Dr. Linda M. Thor is chancellor of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District in California's Silicon Valley. A nationally recognized innovator in education, she joined Foothill-De Anza in 2010 after serving for nearly 20 years as president of Rio Salado College in Tempe, Arizona, a college known for educating working adults through online education and worksite training. Prior to becoming Rio Salado's president in 1990, Dr. Thor was president of West Los Angeles College (WLAC) in Culver City,

California. That appointment followed a successful tenure as senior director of occupational and technical education and director of communications for the Los Angeles Community College District.

Active at the national level, Dr. Thor serves on the board of the League for Innovation in the Community College; the executive council of the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET); and the board of the Community College Baccalaureate Association. She is a member of the advisory board of StudentMentor.org; the editorial board of the SOURCE on Community College Issues, Trends and Strategies; and the Capella University Community College Advisory Council. Dr. Thor holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Pepperdine University, a master of public administration degree from California State University–Los Angeles, and a doctor of education degree in community college administration from Pepperdine University.

Dr. Belle S. Wheelan

President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

Dr. Belle S. Wheelan currently serves as President of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and is the first African American and the first woman to serve in this capacity. Her career spans over 30 years and includes the roles of faculty member, chief student services officer, campus provost, college president, and Secretary of Education. In several of those roles she was the first African American and/or woman to serve in those capacities. Dr. Wheelan received her bachelor's degree from Trinity University in Texas (1972) with a double major in Psychology and Sociology; her master's degree from Louisiana State University (1974) in Developmental Educational Psychology; and her doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin (1984) in Educational Administration with a special concentration in community college leadership.

Staff

Dr. Archie P. Cubarrubia

Designated Federal Official

Dr. Archie P. Cubarrubia is an Education Statistician at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education. He serves as the Designated Federal Official for the Department's Committee on Measures of Student Success and as the Survey Director for the Student Financial Aid component of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Before joining NCES, he served as special assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Higher Education Programs in the Office of Postsecondary Education and coordinated program oversight and monitoring activities for the Department's postsecondary grant programs. He has previously served as senior analyst for the Office of the Under Secretary and was part of the team responsible for implementing the Department's higher education transformation agenda to increase the accessibility, affordability, and accountability of America's colleges and universities. Specifically, he was responsible for the Department's activities around promoting higher education accountability and transparency in student learning outcomes, transfer of credit, and accreditation. In addition, Dr. Cubarrubia served as senior analyst for former Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings' Commission on the Future of Higher Education. Prior to joining the U.S. Department of Education, he coordinated

first-year student success programs at the University of Rhode Island, Northern Arizona University, and Boston University. Dr. Cubarrubia earned his bachelor's degree in health studies and his master's degree in higher education administration from Boston University. He received his doctorate in higher education administration from The George Washington University.

Ms. Andrea Sykes

Consultant

Ms. Andrea Sykes is president of Laurium Evaluation Group, a research and evaluation company based in Washington, DC. The company is committed to helping its clients understand how to better use data to develop program interventions and policies to improve K–12 student achievement, postsecondary access and retention and labor market outcomes after college. Ms. Sykes leads a multi-year study evaluating the effectiveness of federally-funded afterschool programs in a Maryland public school district. She also conducts research and provides technical assistance on ways to enhance the collection of data in three NCES surveys of students during and after college. Ms. Sykes has also provided research and guidance to a number of IPEDS technical review panels on how best to collect data on net price, student completions, faculty staffing and salaries, and students' labor market outcomes. Prior to founding Laurium Evaluation Group, Ms. Sykes worked as an assistant director with the U.S. Government Accountability Office where she directed studies examining the effectiveness of federal education, workforce, and human services programs. Ms. Sykes earned a master's degree in public policy from the University of Maryland at College Park and a bachelor's degree in political science from McDaniel College.

Ms. Kristan Cilente-Skendall

Program Support Assistant

Ms. Kristan Cilente-Skendall is a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park. Ms. Cilente-Skendall is studying the relationship between alternative spring break participation and student leadership capacities. Ms. Cilente-Skendall works as the Assistant Director for Career Services and Strategic Partnerships at ACPA-College Student Educators International, an association for student affairs educators around the globe. Previously, she worked at the University of Maryland, Georgetown University, and the University of Arizona, where she also completed her master's degree in higher education administration.

Mr. John E. Fink

Program Support Assistant

Mr. John E. Fink is pursuing his master's degree in college student personnel at the University of Maryland, College Park. Mr. Fink is interested in teaching and learning in higher education, social justice education, and the college student experience across a variety of institutional types, including community colleges. Originally from Wisconsin, Mr. Fink graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a B.A. in Psychology, Sociology, and Integrated Liberal Studies.

Appendix C

Committee Meetings

October 20, 2010

Washington, DC

Presenters:

- Dr. Thomas Bailey, Chair, Committee on Measures of Student Success
- Dr. Eduardo Ochoa, Assistant Secretary, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education
- Dr. Thomas Weko, Associate Commissioner, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education

Defining the Issues

- Ms. Andrea Sykes, Consultant, Committee on Measures of Student Success

Surveying the Landscape

- Mr. Kent Phillippe, Associate Vice President, Research & Student Success, American Association of Community Colleges
- Mr. Dane Linn, Director, Center for Best Practices, National Governors Association

February 9–10, 2011

Washington, DC

Presenters:

- Dr. Thomas Bailey, Chair, Committee on Measures of Student Success
- Dr. Jack Buckley, Commissioner, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education

Alternative Measures Working Group Report and Discussion

- Dr. Sharon Kristovich, Working Group Lead

Challenges and Implications of Implementing Alternative Measures of Student Success

- Dr. T. Dary Erwin, Professor of Leadership Studies and Psychology, James Madison University
- Dr. Jeff Strohl, Director of Research, Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University

Progression and Completion Measures Working Group Report and Discussion

- Mr. Patrick Perry, Working Group Lead

Context and Challenges of Implementing Progression and Completion Measures

- Dr. Carol Fuller, Higher Education Consultant
- Mr. Tod Massa, Policy Research and Data Warehousing Director, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

June 2–3, 2011

Washington, DC

Presenters:

- Dr. Thomas Bailey, Chair, Committee on Measures of Student Success

Alternative Measures Working Group Report and Discussion

- Mr. Kevin Carey, Working Group Lead

Progression and Completion Measures Working Group Report and Discussion

- Mr. Patrick Perry, Working Group Lead

September 7, 2011

Washington, DC

Presenter:

- Dr. Thomas Bailey, Chair, Committee on Measures of Student Success

November 29, 2011

Washington, DC

Presenters:

- Dr. Thomas Bailey, Chair, Committee on Measures of Student Success
- Dr. Archie Cubarrubia, Designated Federal Official, Committee on Measures of Student Success