

HEI Advisory Committee
March 3, 2000
DRAFT Meeting Notes
Last Updated April 3, 2000

In Attendance:

Jed Dickhaut, Ohio State University
Darrell Winefordner, Ohio University
Ralph Gutowski, Miami University
Rosemary Jones, Cuyahoga Community College
Joan Patten, Sinclair Community College
Steven Jones, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College
Wynette Barnard, Lakeland Community College
Roberta Sikula, Kent State University
Bob Hallier, Stark State College of Technology
Bill Knight, Bowling Green State University
Jan Neiger, Attorney General's Office
Nancy Zajano, Legislative Office of Education Oversight
Bob Burke, Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio
Cindy McQuade, Inter University Council
Rob Sheehan, Ohio Board of Regents
Chris Doll, Ohio Board of Regents
Toni Newsome, Ohio Board of Regents
Michael Long, Ohio Board of Regents
Beverly Farmer, Ohio Board of Regents
Jay Johnson, Ohio Board of Regents
Andy Lechler, Ohio Board of Regents
Stephanie McCann, Ohio Board of Regents
Harold Horton, Ohio Board of Regents

New Advisory Committee Member

Marie Zeglin from Cleveland State will be a new member. She was not in attendance.

Recognize new HEI Staff

Michael Long is a new analyst in the facilities area.

Review of minutes from last meeting

Joan Patten's title is Research Associate of Office of Planning and Research. Patsy Scott's title is no longer interim. Roberta Sikula is University Registrar while the guest from the last meeting from Kent was the Associate University Registrar

Additions to agenda

Cohort Tracking (CT) File status report
Data quality and use: reporting information that may not be useful

Mobility Tracking

Rob Sheehan shared the presentation he made to the Board last Friday regarding mobility rates in Ohio. A recent article from the Columbus Dispatch cited that since 1983 10% fewer students of an entering class are graduating. Sheehan noted that there has been an increase in the number of students attending multiple campuses by nearly the same percentage. In essence, there may be lower graduation rates at an individual institution but from a state perspective the same percentage of students are graduating—they are merely doing it at different schools. This may be reflected in HEI data over time. From HEI data, we found that nearly 30,000 students had been enrolled at two

or more institutions in just the previous calendar year. We estimate that 120,000 students will do so after we have collected four years worth of data in HEI.

Legality of Disclosing SSN for Transfer Tracking

Harold Horton presented with Jan Neiger, Assistant Attorney General from the Attorney General's office. Horton spoke with David Baime, Director of Government Relations at the American Association of Community Colleges about the FERPA dilemma. Baime is aware of it and working with community college organizations. He has proposed a technical amendment to FERPA that would give access to SSNs for institutions and state higher education organizations for transfer tracking purposes. One committee member noted that this issue was presented to Cleveland's congressional delegation.

Horton noted state higher education organizations that are sharing these data with schools typically have their own state law in place where students sign waivers upon admittance. Neiger mentioned that some states are sharing SSNs based on an interpretation of FERPA which allows disclosure of personally identifiable information in order to improve instruction. Neiger stated that releasing SSNs for improvement of instruction would probably not be acceptable by LeRoy Rooker, Director of the Family Compliance Policy Office in Washington, DC. Neiger noted that the good news is that no school has had their funds eliminated for violation of FERPA. When speaking to other assistant attorney generals, Neiger notes that we continue to get a dead end on this issue.

Sheehan noted we are reluctant to put the campuses at risk by releasing SSNs unless campuses give their consent. Neiger noted he represents the Regents and not the institutions and suggested the following options:

1. Seek an opinion from the Family Policy Compliance Office. Neiger warned us that Rooker would not be able to rule in our favor at this time due to the inflexibility in the law.
2. Get the consent of the student. One member asked if we could incorporate an exemption in the student handbook? Neiger thinks the consent would have to be up front and voluntary and not just in a handbook. It was noted that the institution is not the discloser but HEI is. The handbook could tell students who their non-directory information will be disclosed to and why it is being used. It was also noted that those students who do not consent will affect the total numbers. HEI will receive a patchwork and not the total universe.
3. Using social security number. There is no law saying you can't use it. It is now being used for different reasons than initially thought. K-12 are prohibited from using SSNs as identifiers and instead will use data verification codes. Using a data verification number or other state identifier would require consensus among the public higher education community. This could be used to trace higher education to K-12. More and more using SSN is seen as invasion of privacy. More people will say they won't let you use it.
4. Legislative change. Since the Family Policy Compliance Office will not give the opinion that Ohio and other states desire we should go directly to congress to change the law.
5. Ignore FERPA and proceed and assume the risk.

One member raised two points:

1. These federal prohibitions for disclosing data when a student leaves an institution are relatively new. Neiger noted that they are not prohibitions but rather you need to have exceptions to the FERPA rules.
2. The campuses are being squeezed between two conflicting federal policies. On one hand Student Right to Know (SRTK) requires publishing graduation rates and IPEDS requests transfers-out but on the other hand the campuses cannot receive unit record transfers out information or graduations from other schools from HEI. To do both or neither would be in violation. It was noted that Rooker interpreted the IPEDS transfers-out field in the Graduation Rate Survey not as a requirement but a "shall", and that the section may be left blank. But if your mission focuses on transfer students campuses are encouraged, not required, to submit

the information according to IPEDS. Campuses can obtain IPEDS information on transfers in aggregate through HEI.

Patten was concerned with federal law implications for campuses submitting data to OBR for purposes beyond subsidy (i.e. student tracking). Horton stated that according to FERPA, State and Local authorities have the right to collect data from campuses when there is a legitimate reason.

Cindy McQuade noted that every institution should be talking to legislators.

Full time faculty survey presentation

The full time faculty survey was presented to the board at the February board meeting. It was well received and a subsequent favorable article appeared in the *Columbus Dispatch*. Sheehan noted that the power point presentation on this has a link to a web based query tool available to the public. Ralph Gutowski was presented with a Regents' mug as expression of thanks for editing the document. Stephanie McCann was recognized for her contribution to this report.

The members discussed whether the part-time survey should contain campus identities. One member noted that this information is valuable to the state only and not to campus. Another member noted it will help monitor change in faculty composition over time.

One member noted the concern on his campus of an increase in hiring part time in lieu of full time faculty, and having information from other four-year institutions helps set a context. Another member noted that this information is available in IPEDS.

The definitions in the Faculty Improvement Report need to be refined. These definitions are different from the full time faculty and part-time faculty survey according to Nancy Zajano, and should be made consistent. The consensus was to use the definitions in the survey.

One member questioned why we need this report other than it is legislatively mandated from 12-15 years ago and described sabbatical reporting as unnecessary. Others cited that the percentage of faculty on sabbatical is of interest to legislature, but could be handled in the full-time survey. HEI could collect who is on sabbatical in HEI and then pick up their activity through the survey.

Zajano noted that this report was created at a time when the legislature had less information on faculty and that we now have systematic answers. Sheehan agreed that this should be reconsidered and the staff will report on this at the next meeting.

Selective Service Restriction on Subsidy Eligibility

The requirement that males between the age of 18-26 be registered with selective service before they can be eligible for subsidy was questioned. Two members noted that verifying selective service is a large effort during registration and delays processing time. It was suggested that the Advisory Committee is not the body to address this issue but rather than this be brought up with the Instructional Subsidy Consultation or the Funding Commission. McQuade noted that at least one state senator would oppose the elimination of selective service restriction in subsidy eligibility.

Financial Reporting

Toni Newsome updated the Advisory Committee on the windows of the submission dates for the financial files. Only 12 schools have submitted all financial files. The date for submitting all files was postponed to March 14. Andy Lechler noted that this postponement delays resource analysis, which ultimately affects subsidy determination. There have also been problems with dependencies between financial and faculty files. Rich Petrick will send a letter to fiscal officers helping to resolve this, if problems persist.

Financial Aid

LeAnn Conard and Sheehan presented the OIG Rosters file that can be viewed as web readable or printable document. OBR staff have held workshops on financial aid reporting and expect to hold more. Conard reported that this new format may reduce time to receive funds by 80%.

Before proceeding on the Workforce Development Grant Program OBR must receive administrative rules from other agencies. The grant is given to students enrolled in proprietary schools in programs that meet special requirements. DeVry students will likely be the biggest recipients. This program is more like the Choice Award than the Proficiency Award. Conard cited that we will see time and personnel efficiencies and hope to create an electronic funds transfer that is completely automated that will cut the time to award these programs by 80%.

Cohort Tracking (CT) File

The CT file will allow campuses to determine if students from their campus were enrolled at other public colleges and universities. It will return the information in an aggregate form. Members of the Advisory Committee recommended that this be considered a higher priority among programming efforts at HEI so that accurate IPEDS reporting could occur through the assistance of HEI. OBR staff noted that creating the unit record drill down capability for the web based mobility queries took a long time and then we found that we couldn't share the information with the campuses because of FERPA concerns. The CT file was the staff's response to the constraint on sharing unit record data and was only begun a month ago. We thought that institutions could send in ad hoc requests but now that appears to be blocked by counsel.

There was debate as to the structure and format of the proposed CT file. The debate focused on the intent of this file and the value of its output reports. One member proposed the following:

1. The CT file contain a record for each cohort member, not just those students for whom the institution has no knowledge.
2. The Year and Term of First Enrollment is held constant in the case of a cohort of students who should all have the same starting point. For example, if the cohort is full time, first time, degree seeking, freshmen in AU 1996 and the institution wants to include students who actually started earlier than AU 1996 (say either in SM 1996 or even earlier as high school students taking college courses) then the Year and Term of First Enrollment would be AU 1996 for each record in the cohort. On the other hand if the cohort represents a group of students who did not necessarily start at the same time, (e.g. all students in Program XYZ, which was a yearly program and ran for three years, 1996, 1997 and 1998) then the Year and Term of First Enrollment would represent the Year and Term that each student actually started in the program.
3. The Status Code would represent the status as of the end of AU term 1997 (i.e. the beginning of HEI), and would be the codes: graduated in four years, five years, six years, still enrolled, unknown. We should probably add graduated in one, two, and three years to accommodate shorter programs.

Then the CT program would update the unknowns as of another year / term that would be input, not with the CT file but with the query. OBR staff promised to submit (by e-mail) a clarification and revision of this file in light of the issues raised during the debate.

Anomalies Report

Campuses were recently provided a chance to respond to the HEI anomalies in a statewide context. This was sent to the liaisons and Advisory Committee members. It would appear that this report was not helpful to the campuses as there was too much information and they weren't told what to look for. Sheehan promised to issue a separate report just addressing data fields with missing data. OBR staff will follow up individually with the campuses that appear to have anomalous data.

GASB 34-35 Alert

Rich Petrick returned from a meeting discussing the new GASB regulations that will need to take place in FY2002 for all public colleges and universities. In the new regulations fund accounting will no longer be required. The intent is to enable institutions to report a single number to show its financial health. Robert Burke of the AICUO noted that independent schools have already gone through this and it was a complex process. A member of the Advisory Committee noted that the new format is not a good management tool and that fund accounting may have to be retained in some form in the future. Four two-year and four four-year representatives as well as state staff will develop a way to implement the new rules. This group will meet in late March.

Audits

Horton showed the enrollment audit software and discussed the enrollment audit processes. He stated that OBR's first enrollment audit using HEI data was very successful and this also reflects the success of HEI. The Advisory Committee expressed great pleasure with both the software and the process.

User's Conference

The HEI User's Conference will be held March 24, 2000, at Central Ohio Technical College. A number of sessions will be offered and all will be well attended. On the 23rd of March we'll host a training session for new and experienced users. We have so many registrations for the March 23rd training that we're holding two concurrent sessions.

Update on meetings

Instructional Subsidy workshops are complete. In these OBR staff guided college and university representatives through the subsidy process. These meetings were well attended the feedback was positive. The Higher Education Funding Commission and the Instructional Subsidy Consultation are in session. The Annual AIR meeting in Cincinnati is fast approaching. We'll need speakers for our two presentations. Non-technical presentations will be about lessons learned and what was done well.

Wage and employment data from the Bureau of Employment Services (BES)

OBR staff are working to gain access to wage and employment data from the BES. We'll need an inter-agency agreement to access these data. We hope to ascertain the income of students both before and after college. One member noted that he has access to some exciting federal wage data and he will share those with the staff. We don't think that this will be a problem to share such data on a unit record basis with campuses.

ACT Data Exchange

We are awaiting examples of agreements that the ACT has with other states to share this with our legal counsel before proceeding.

Governor's Requested Performance Report Consultation

The consultation for the Governor's Performance Report was held on March 2 and was attended by all but one school. HEI data were mentioned repeatedly and will be used in part for the performance report.

HEI Nominated for Excellent State Practice

The form for nominating HEI as an excellent state practice to the Council of State Governments will be circulated for review via e-mail to the Advisory Committee.

OAIRP

One member announced that the OAIRP spring meeting will be held at Embassy Suites in Columbus on March 13, 2000.

Since the last meeting the letter to presidents went out. To date there seems to have been no response from the presidents. Cindy will share it with IUC to give them another chance to respond.

Agenda items for next meeting

- Query Results: Are people getting out of the queries what they expect?
- Do we still need the Aggregated Enrollment (AE) file?

The next meeting will be held May 5, 2000.