

CIE UPDATE

The Center for Institutional Effectiveness

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A Method to Bergen IR's Madness

Numbers and words often feel like polar opposites. The former is associated with logic and order while the latter is linked to creativity and free expression. Even in pop culture, analytical people are referred to as being "left-brained" while artistic people are called "right-brained". There are not many people out there who feel as at home in a statistics class as they do in a literature class. That is why it shouldn't be a surprise that when institutional researchers write or talk about a college's data something often gets lost in translation.

Numbers need context, but the context needs to be understandable in order for the numbers to be successfully communicated. A common statistic at Bergen is the 10th Day unduplicated enrollment number. For Fall 2017, it was 14,062. In order to understand that number though, a person would have to know what is meant by "10th Day," "unduplicated," and even "enrollment". Without this context, the number could be misinterpreted, or even worse, completely ignored.

It is important to have standard definitions and meanings for numbers and it is even more important to share those definitions with data consumers. With that in mind, below is a list of five terms Institutional Research uses to present data about Bergen and a brief explanation of each that even "right-brainers" at the College can use.

Unduplicated

This is often used in reference to enrollment, but can also be used for faculty or graduates. Unduplicated means that each person included in the number quoted is counted only once in that calculation. By contrast, duplicated enrollment looks at each individual course enrollment instead of each individual student. This is an important distinction to make.

Unduplicated enrollment in Fall 2017 as stated above was 14,062. There were 14,062 students taking at least one course in Fall 2017. Duplicated enrollment, however, was upwards of 50,000. If a student was taking five different courses in Fall 2017, that student was only counted once in the unduplicated number, but five times in the duplicated enrollment, which led to the large difference between the two.

10th Day

Every semester a snapshot is taken the morning after the 10th day of the term. This is also referred to as the census day and the terms are often used interchangeably. If a student is registered for at least one course as of the 10th day, s/he will be included on the 10th day enrollment snapshot. Even if the course has not started yet, as long as the student is registered

for it on the 10th day, s/he will be included on the report. If the student will later drop out of college that semester, s/he will still be included on the 10th day report. It is an imperfect system, but it is the best way to standardize consistent reporting from one semester to another.

Registration Status

Unlike a four-year institution, Bergen rarely uses the standard freshman, sophomore, junior, senior scale to track and report its students. Instead, Bergen uses registration status to classify students as either first-time, transfer, stop-out, or returning. First-time students are new to college. Generally, they have no prior higher education experience. Transfer students are new to the institution, but have studied at an institution of higher learning before enrolling at Bergen. Stop-out students have previously enrolled at Bergen, but not in the semester directly preceding the semester under consideration. This means that a stop-out student in Fall 2017 might have been at the College in Fall 2016, but was not at the College in Spring 2017. A returning student is continuing on a semester-to-semester basis at the College. A student enrolled in Spring 2017 that returns for Fall 2017 is a returning student. These statuses do not take into account any enrollment in Summer or Winter terms. It is strictly based on Fall and Spring terms.

Graduation Rate and Transfer Rate

Graduation and transfer rates are the top two outcomes measures tracked and reported by Institutional Research, but they are often among the most misinterpreted statistics. The most important thing to remember about graduation and transfer rates at Bergen is that they are always based on a cohort of students. The standard graduation rate shows how many first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students who started in a given semester graduated in three years. The standard transfer rate shows how many first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students who started in a given semester transferred without graduating in three years. These measures are consistent with the federal graduation and transfer rates requirements.

The best way to illustrate these numbers is with an example. In Fall 2013, there were 2,559 first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students. This means that these students were new to higher education, were taking 12 or more credits, and had a declared major in Fall 2013. The calculation of the graduation rate for this cohort would indicate how many of the 2,559 students graduated from Bergen by August 31st, 2016 or three years from when they started here. By August 31st, 2016, 560 of this cohort had earned a degree or certificate from Bergen putting the graduation rate at 21.9% (560/2,559). Similarly, the calculation of the transfer rate for this cohort would then be how many of the 2,559 students transferred elsewhere

without graduating from Bergen by August 31st, 2016. By this date, 420 students transferred from Bergen without graduating for a transfer rate of 16.4% (420/2,559).

The cohorts can change. For instance, part-time students can be added to full-time students. Timeframes can change as well. Instead of three years for the Fall 2013 cohort (by August 31st, 2016), it can be changed to two years (by August 31st, 2015) or six years (by August 31st, 2019). The important point to remember about graduation and transfer rates is that these always start with a cohort of students. If a person is just looking for how many students graduated in a given time period, s/he is simply asking for graduation numbers, not graduation rates. ■

Conference Presentations

Assessment Fellows: Joanna Campbell, Maureen Ellis-Davis, Amarjit Kaur, Melissa Krieger and Jill Rivera, Interim Dean of Assessment Gail Fernandez, and Vice President Yun Kim presented *Mission Impossible and Other Assessment Tales* at Drexel University's Annual Conference on Teaching & Learning Assessment on September 15th, 2017.

Melissa Krieger presented *Assessment Tools for Experiential Learning and Other Highly Impactful Practices* at Drexel University's Annual Conference on Teaching & Learning Assessment on September 13th, 2017.

Gail Fernandez presented *Assessing the Assessment Plan: Conducting a Meta-Analysis* and Melissa Krieger presented *The Value of Experiential Learning: Assessing Service Learning Projects* at the Assessment Institute in Indianapolis on October 23rd, 2017.

Managing Director of Institutional Research, Dr. Tonia McKoy and Research Analyst Jesse Jacondin presented *The Student's Journey: IR's Role as Story-tellers* at the 44th Annual NEAIR Conference in Jersey City, New Jersey on November 20th, 2017. ■

2015 – 2017 Exemplary Assessment Reports

AES Units:	Academic Programs:
Cerullo Learning Assistance Center	Surgical Technology
Sidney Silverman Library	Economics
Office of Student Conduct	Information Technology

Fourth Annual Conference on Teaching & Student Learning

The 4th Annual Conference on Assessment of Teaching and Student Learning was held in September at Drexel University in downtown Philadelphia. The three-day event entitled "Facilitating Conversations that Matter," consisted of thematically connected activities and built on the tremendous success of the previous three conferences. This event is designed to provide opportunities for individuals interested in outcomes assessment to share their ideas and programs as well as network. This gathering of institutions enriches all and strengthens the quality and effectiveness of higher education.

The plenary sessions examined topics of great importance to assessment of teaching and student learning. Sylvia Jenkins, President of Moraine Valley

Community College, addressed *Creating a College Culture Where Assessment is a Pathway to Student Success*. Natasha Jankowski, Director of the National Institute on Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), spoke on *Reclaiming Assessment: Unpacking the Dialogues of our Work*. In addition to the plenary addresses, there were more than 55 interactive workshops, presentations, and snapshot session blocks.

Also included was a special panel discussion featuring the presidents of three regional accrediting bodies: the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools Commission on Colleges, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. This was a rare opportunity for participants to engage in dialogue with three regional accreditation leaders on the future of peer review and the increased federal role among other issues.

This conference brings together over 400 higher education faculty and administrators from throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, the nation, and abroad. This conference provides educators with an opportunity to restate our commitment to educational quality, and acknowledge that the quality of the student experience must be the driver behind all assessment and accreditation activities. ■

Assessment Resources

University of San Diego
<http://www.sandiego.edu/outcomes/student-learning/learning-and-assessment/learning-outcomes/>

Southern Connecticut State University
<http://southernct.edu/assessment-and-planning/assessment-process.html>

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