



INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP & POLICY

MONTHLY UPDATE

October 2009

New This Month

IHELP's New Reports Address National Priority to Improve Measurement of Student Outcomes

Improving graduation rates in community colleges is becoming a growing national priority. Billions of dollars are being proposed to address the issue and educators, government officials and foundations have begun to recognize that the current means of measuring and accounting for student outcomes are deficient. Since its inception, IHELP has been dedicated to researching and analyzing ways to increase student success and improve accountability in higher education. Most recently, the Institute has published three reports on measuring and improving student outcomes in community colleges. In these reports, featured below, IHELP has looked at traditional and newer systems of measurement to identify, understand, and improve college completion and other student outcomes while recognizing the diverse goals that these students pursue.

Steps to Success: Analyzing Milestone Achievement to Improve Community College Student Outcomes

IHELP's newest report offers a framework, based on the research literature, for guiding educators in using available knowledge and tools to improve student outcomes. Using data from the California Community Colleges, the report illustrates the framework, which consists of milestones, or intermediate educational achievements that students reach along the path to degree completion, and indicators of success, defined as the academic patterns students follow including remediation, gateway courses, and credit accumulation, that predict the achievement of milestones. The report shows how the framework can be used to diagnose where and why students fall off the path to success, to suggest appropriate interventions, and to improve accountability in community colleges. Visit www.csus.edu/ihelp to view the report.

Community College Student Outcomes: Limitations of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and Recommendations for Improvement

IHELP's report on the [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](http://www.csus.edu/ihelp) (IPEDS) analyzes the value and effectiveness of the federal data system for understanding student outcomes in community colleges. The report discusses the system's shortcomings such as the limitation of the graduation rate data to full-time students, the difficulty in discerning student intent in order to report on the appropriate outcomes, and the limitations for using the data to make comparisons across states or colleges. Recommendations are made for improving the data collected and for better use of the data. Visit www.csus.edu/ihelp to view the report.

Student Progress Toward Degree Completion: Lessons from the Literature

IHELP's report reviews the research literature on student success to identify intermediate outcomes, sometimes called "milestones," along the college pathway that give students momentum toward degree completion. It points to academic behaviors and patterns that have been found to predict student progress and success that can, therefore, be tracked to identify where and why student progress stalls and how changes to policies and practices might increase degree completion. The report was prepared as background for the "Steps to Success" report and other analyses of milestone achievement among community college and university students. Visit www.csus.edu/ihelp to view the report.

What's Happening at IHELP

Transfer Report Presented to Intersegmental Groups in California – Earlier this month, Cristy Jensen, faculty affiliate of IHELP, accepted the invitation of two intersegmental groups to present the findings of the recent IHELP report she co-authored, "Crafting a Student-Centered Transfer Process in California." The Northern California Intersegmental Articulation Council (NCIAC) and the Southern California Intersegmental Articulation Council (SCIAC) include articulation officers from the California Community Colleges, the California State University system, the University of California system, and officers from private institutions in the state.

IHELP Presents to University of California – Nancy Shulock, executive director of IHELP, gave a presentation to the University of California Office of the President on Thursday, October 22, titled "California Higher Education: Performance, Policy, and Prognostications." This presentation looks at the current state of California higher education on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Master Plan for Higher Education. To view the presentation, visit www.csus.edu/ihelp.

IHELP Speaks at MESA Board Meeting – Nancy Shulock spoke at the California Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement Board Meeting on Thursday, October 22 in San Ramon. MESA is a nationally recognized academic development program supporting educationally disadvantaged students so they can excel in math and science studies and graduate with degrees in engineering, science and technology. During the meeting, Nancy discussed the prospects for meeting STEM workforce needs within the context of higher education performance in California, providing findings from IHELP's "*The Grades are in – 2008*" report as well as from the more recent IHELP report "Technical Difficulties: Meeting California's Workforce Needs in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Fields." To view the presentation, visit www.csus.edu/ihelp.

Spotlight on...

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, improving college graduation rates and other student outcomes in community colleges has attracted widespread national attention and concern. The Obama Administration and major foundations will be investing large sums in the effort to spur the needed changes. A recent example of the mounting attention to these issues is the new jointly-funded project of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation for Education. The goal of the two-year project is to create a new voluntary accountability system in community colleges. This new system is aimed at helping colleges improve their programs and graduate more students on time and at a lower cost in part by collecting and using new data elements that would enrich the understanding of student progress and success. This project will be initially piloted at eight colleges in the United States (including Laney College in California) and up to 20 community colleges by 2011. For more information on the project, visit www.gatesfoundation.org.



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