Fundamentals and Best Practices for reporting Common Data Set (CDS) Data

Stan Bernstein, Director of Survey Policy, The College Board
Stephen Sauermelch, Director of Operations, Peterson's—A Nelnet Company
Robert Morse, Chief Data Strategist, U.S. News & World Report
Dr. Cathy Lebo, Assistant Provost for Institutional Research
Johns Hopkins University

2015 AIR Forum
Denver, Colorado
May 27, 2015

CDS Session Outline

- The CDS mission

- How we change the CDS annually

- How CDS publishers accept data

- How each CDS publisher uses CDS data

- Projected changes: 2015-2016 CDS

- Status of ongoing work on CDS Financial Aid section with NASFAA

- Q&A

Purpose of CDS

- CDS is a standard, agreed-to way of asking for information that the CDS publishers already request on their surveys.

- CDS items and definitions created with significant input from the academic community

- CDS items are revised as needed

- CDS results in: better data; reduced data burden

100 items - Approximately

- CDS is not a database

- CDS is a template of items and definitions

- Publishers will accept CDS information various ways:
  - CDS from your college's website
  - A printed copy of the CDS
  - CDS data on publisher's own survey

20ᵗʰ year of the initiative

- CDS publishers are open to suggestions and request for CDS changes and new CDS items.

- CDS items are not copyrighted; other publishers and organizations are encouraged to use them – and many do.

Users – at least at one time – of the CDS

- University and College Accountability Network (U-CAN)
- Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)
- Princeton Review
- Wintergreen Orchard House
- HEDS
- State higher education offices and other organizations that monitor higher education
- Hundreds of colleges –many of who are AIR members

CDS: Yearly Update Cycle

- **September-May**

- Monitor CDS listserv

- Document questions and issues raised by listserv subscribers

- Draft changes and additions in early spring

- Ask for college input in April/May

CDS: Yearly Update Cycle

May-June

- Attend annual AIR Forum

- Attend sessions where upcoming IPEDS or other Federally mandated survey changes are discussed at annual AIR Forum

- Hold CDS session at annual AIR Forum including brief presentation and extended Q&A period

- Monitor changes to data reporting methodologies, standards, definitions, taxonomies, and schedules (e.g., Carnegie Classification, IPEDS, NRC, NSF, etc.)

CDS: Yearly Update Cycle

June-July (exact date to be determined)

- Hold CDS Advisory Board meeting to gather feedback from representatives of:
  - American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
  - American Council on Education (ACE)
  - Association for Institutional Research (AIR)
  - The College Board
  - National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)
  - National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO)
  - National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU)
  - National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
  - National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
  - The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)
  - Voluntary System of Accountability partnership of American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the Association of Public And Land-Grant Universities (APLU)

CDS: Yearly Update Cycle

April-August

- Share proposed CDS changes via CDS listserv and Advisory Board members' listservs

- Finalize changes based upon feedback

- Update rtf, xls, pdf, and html CDS templates and summary of changes document

- Post updated files to CommonDataSet.org

- Notify CDS listserv subscribers

Publishers' Data Collection Cycles for College Survey Data

- College Board gathers data October through April; gathers tuition and fees all summer

- Peterson's gathers data December through May; gathers tuition and fees all summer

- U.S. News gathers data March through June; gathers tuition and fees all summer

Year-round CDS activities

- Respond to IPEDS changes as well as educational association requests for changes and clarifications

- Lobby on behalf of the importance of the CDS within our individual organizations

- Assess the CDS relative to changes in higher education trends and policies

- Monitor changes to external standards utilized by the CDS

- Respond to phone and email inquiries from IR, admission, and registrar offices

How the CDS Publishers Accept the CDS

The Common Data Set publishers:

- The College Board

- U.S. News & World Report

- Peterson's

All abide by a series of best practices for accepting Common Data Set submissions and encourage other data collectors to follow suit.

How the CDS Publishers Accept the CDS

CDS information accepted in several ways:

1. A paper copy signed and dates by the respondent and mailed directly to the data collector

2. A file (doc, rtf, pdf, xls, html) with an electronic signature emailed directly to the data collector

3. A downloadable file (doc, rtf, pdf, xls, html) posted on the institution's website; college alerts publisher to the Web address via an email featuring an electronic signature

4. An online survey record updated and officially submitted by the respondent into publisher's online data entry system

How the CDS Publishers Accept Non-CDS Items

1. Responses to non-CDS items (i.e., data collectors' proprietary questions) need to be submitted via data collectors' online survey collection process.

2. Each publisher has some non-CDS questions on its surveys and those questions are very important to the products that each publisher produces.

CDS Advisory Board – Seeking New Higher Ed Org. Members

- The development of the CDS has been a collaborative process
- The CDS publishers have worked closely with higher education organizations representing the interests and expertise of their constituencies.
- The CDS Advisory Board plays key role in those collaborative efforts.
- CDS Publishers are seeking new members to the CDS Advisory Board who want to play an active role in developing and evolving the CDS.
- If your higher education group is interested in joining and becoming an active member on the CDS Advisory Board, then contact one of the CDS publishers giving this presentation today.

Tips for getting started on the Common Data Set

- What kinds of information are included?
- Where does this information exist on campus?
- What do you need to know before you start?
- What are the easy and hard parts?
- What do you need to know about your school?
- Where can you get help?

What kinds of information are included in the CDS?

- Admissions
- Enrollment
- Diversity
- Graduation
- Retention
- Academic Offerings
- Degrees Awarded

- Student Charges
- Financial Aid
- Faculty
- Class Size
- Student Activities
- Housing

What kinds of information are included in the CDS?

- Operational data   enrollment
- Policy questions   admissions
- Unstructured info   student activities

- Calculated data:

  Student/faculty ratio
  Student debt

Where does the CDS information exist on campus?

- Student systems

- University data warehouse

- IR extracts and crosswalks

- University web sites

- Administrative offices – admissions, financial aid, registrars, housing, student life

What do you need to know before you start the CDS?

- Your School

- Fundamentals of IR

- Federal reporting (IPEDS, CIP taxonomy)

- National studies (AAUP salaries)

- CDS definitions

   What are the key elements?

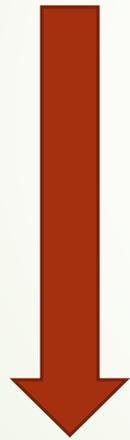   Can you explain the definitions to others?

What do you need to know before you start the CDS?

- How to collect info from sources
- How to track changes
- Establish a method for version control
- Understand data years (AY, FY, cohorts)

- Build an index to CDS topics

- How soon does the CDS need to be completed?

What are the easy parts? What are the hard parts?

→ EASIER

Enrollment
Degrees
Faculty
Graduation and Retention
Admissions
Class Size
Financial Aid

→ HARDER

What do you need to know about your school?

- Who does what?
- Who has the answers?
- How to access and query info systems
- Starting points to reconcile data

- How CDS definition applies to your school
- CDS trend data for your school

- What are the right, wrong answers?

Where can you get help?

- IR experts
- Campus experts
- Administrative offices (Registrar, Admissions, Financial Aid, Student Life)

- Common Data Set list serve
- Data exchange groups
- State and regional IR meetings
- AIR Forum, national meeting

How CDS is used by College Board

- ✓ Free Web college search

- ✓ Directories: College Handbook, Book of Majors, Getting Financial Aid, International Student Handbook

- ✓ Data licensing: researchers, publishers

- ✓ Yearly analysis of college costs

- ✓ College profile provided on student SAT score reports

Web Traffic Metrics for CDS Data on www.collegeboard.org

College Search Application

- April 2015 (10.3 million page views)

- Last 12 Months (142 million page views)

- Averages 1.2 million monthly unique visitors during the school year

College Profiles

- April 2015 (8.4 million page views)

- Last 12 months (119 million page views)

College Board website

- Averages 8 million monthly visitors during the school year. Averages 127 million monthly page views during school year

How CDS is used by Peterson's

College Search Application

- Undergraduate Guides (Four-Year & Two-Year Guides)
- How to Get Money for College Handbook
- Books are distributed to libraries, consumers, schools.

Online

- www.petersons.com (free web search)
- Co-branded sites (Department of Defense)
- Public libraries & schools

Data Licensing

Peterson's Web Traffic – Impact of CDS Data on www.petersons.com

- **Millions of visitors**
  - Over 7 million annual visits to Petersons.com in 2014
- **Traffic sources**
  - Referral traffic from over 13,500 different websites
- **Strong domestic and international footprint**
  - 81% of visitors come from the US and 19% represent international visitors
- **Engaged users**
  - In 2014, the average visit was 2 minutes & 47 seconds. The average visit included 3.12 page views.
- **Traffic by device type for 2014**
  - 67.5% were desktop users
  - 24.1% were mobile users
  - 8.4% were tablet users

How U.S. News uses CDS data

1. Best Colleges annual 300-page newsstand guide

2. One the www.usnews.com site: both in the free and the Compass "pay version" of the Best Colleges section. College data-much from the CDS-is the basis for the whole www.usnews.com Education site.

3. U.S. News University Directory – Joint venture U.S. News and Bisk Education

4. Small amounts of data licensing

5. Academic Insights – a historic U.S. News data/dashboard product sold only to institutions (see booth in exhibit hall)

Impact and Exposure of CDS Data on www.usnews.com

Questions have been raised about the exposure schools get from responding to the publishers' surveys. Exposure on web is significant and free on usnews.com and is at record levels.

- <u>Best Colleges launch</u> (September 9, 2014)
  - 1.47 million unique visitors; 13.6 million pages views to the Education section
  - Traffic up 2x over launch in September 2014

  <u>Full Year 2014</u> the Education section on USNWR.com had generated over 63 Million unique visitors and 460 Million page views

- <u>2015 thru mid-May 2015</u>:
  - Education section of usnews.com: over 28 million unique visitors; 191 million page view
  - Social media uniques have grown 46% YOY.
  - Mobile phone uniques have grown 45% YOY and are the main traffic driver.

Proposed changes for CDS 2015-2016

- Reviewed listserv discussion of items that seemed unclear
- Looked at upcoming mandatory changes in 2015-2016 IPEDS to see how CDS could better align with it
- The CDS intends to implement one change to student debt questions, first proposed by The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS)
- It has been strongly endorsed by National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) + supported by members of the CDS advisory board
- Plus a change to C8-B related to the revised SAT test that will now have an optional "Essay." Added question asks colleges their admission policy relating to the SAT's optional essay for Fall 2017 admission.

Cumulative Student Debt Questions currently on
CDS 2014-2015

Note: These are the graduates and loan types to include and exclude in order to fill out CDS H4 and H5.
Include:

       * 2014 undergraduate class: all students graduated between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014
       who started at your institution as first-time students and received a bachelor's degree between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014.
       * only loans made to students who borrowed while enrolled at your institution.
       * co-signed loans.

 Exclude:

       * those students who transferred in.
       * money borrowed at other institutions.

 H4.   Provide the percentage of the class (defined above) who borrowed at any time through any loan programs (institutional, state, Federal Perkins, Federal Stafford Subsidized and Unsubsidized, private loans that were certified by your institution, etc.; exclude parent loans). Include both Federal Direct Student Loans and Federal Family Education Loans.
 _____%

 H4a. Provide the percentage of the class (defined above) who borrowed at any time through federal loan programs--Federal Perkins, Federal Stafford Subsidized and Unsubsidized. Include both Federal Direct Student Loans and Federal Family Education Loans. NOTE: exclude all institutional, state, private alternative loans and parent loans. _____%

 H5. Report the average per-undergraduate-borrower cumulative principal borrowed of those in line H4. $_____

 H5a. Report the average per-undergraduate-borrower cumulative principal borrowed, of those in H4a, through federal loan programs--Federal Perkins, Federal Stafford Subsidized and Unsubsidized. Include both Federal Direct Student Loans and Federal Family Education Loans. These are listed in line H4a. NOTE: exclude all institutional, state, private alternative loans and exclude parent loans.$ _____

Key points in CDS 2015-16 Proposed Changes to Cumulative Debt Questions

Section H Cumulative Debt at Graduation Questions currently H4 and H5:

Add the following questions:

- Number in graduating class and number of graduates who borrowed each type of student loan

- Add detailed questions on three types of non-federal loans: state, institutional, private

Why this data is currently available:

Colleges are already instructed to define these groups and report non-federal borrowing for the existing CDS questions. So assuming colleges are answering the questions correctly and comprehensively and accurately the data will be available to report externally

CDS 2015-16 Proposed Changes to Cumulative Debt Questions

Note: These are the graduates and loan types to include and exclude in order to fill out CDS H4 and H5.

Include:

* 2015 undergraduate class: all students who started at your institution as first-time students and received a bachelor's degree between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015.
* only loans made to students who borrowed while enrolled at your institution.
* co-signed loans.

Exclude:

* students who transferred in.
* money borrowed at other institutions.
* parent loans
* students who did not graduate or who graduated with another degree or certificate (but no bachelor's degree.

H4. Provide the number of students in the 2015 undergraduate class who started at your institution as first-time students and received a bachelor's degree between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015. Exclude students who transferred into your institution. _____

H5. Number and percent of students in class (defined in H4 above) borrowing from federal, non-federal, and any loan sources, and the average (or mean) amount borrowed.

	Number in the class (defined in H4 above) who borrowed	Percent of the class (defined above) who borrowed (nearest 1%)	Average per-undergraduate-borrower cumulative principal borrowed, of those in the first column (nearest $1)
a) Any loan program: Federal Perkins, Federal Stafford Subsidized and Unsubsidized, institutional, state, private loans that your institution is aware of, etc. Include both Federal Direct Student Loans and Federal Family Education Loans.		%	$
b) Federal loan programs: Federal Perkins, Federal Stafford Subsidized and Unsubsidized. Include both Federal Direct Student Loans and Federal Family Education Loans.		%	$
c) Institutional loan programs.		%	$
d) State loan programs.		%	$
e) Private alternative loans made by a bank or lender.		%	$

Revised SAT will have
an "optional" Essay component

C8-B.

If your institution will make use of the ACT in admission decisions for first-time, first-year, degree-seeking applicants for Fall 2017 please indicate which ONE of the following applies (regardless of whether the writing score will be used in the admissions process):

___ ACT with Writing component required
___ ACT with Writing component recommended
___ ACT with or without Writing component accepted

If your institution will make use of the SAT in admission decisions for first-time, first-year, degree-seeking applicants for Fall 2017 please indicate which ONE of the following applies (regardless of whether the writing score will be used in the admissions process):

___ SAT with Essay component required
___ SAT with ESSAY component recommended
___ SAT with or without ESSAY component accepted

CDS and NASFAA – Status of Proposed Changes to CDS Financial Aid Section

- The Common Data Set publishers and representatives from NASFAA continued their dialogue regarding Section H in 2014 and 2015.

- The purpose remains to update the CDS financial aid Section H.

CDS and NASFAA – Status of Making Additional Changes to CDS Financial Aid Section

- The upcoming 2015-2016 Common Data Set will not reflect any or additional other changes in the financial aid section besides H4 and H5 and the revised SAT optional Essay policy question .

- At the very earliest any additional changes in the financial aid section could not be made until the release of 2016-17 CDS – available one year from this coming fall.

- Work on the CDS H. Financial Aid section will continue.

- CDS H. Financial Aid section areas under consideration for revision are:

        * Clarifying some of the definitions used in the "Financial Definitions" section and in H2

What is Ahead?

You tell us: What are your suggestions?

Listserv and Website

www.commondataset.org

You can join the listserv from our website.