DOCUMENT RESUME

ABSTRACT
        The purpose of this study was to assess the need for
information about transfer students of both "sending" institutions
(schools from which students transfer) and "receiving" institutions
(schools to which students transfer) and to assess also the
institutions' capacity for and willingness to enter into data-sharing
activities. The survey instrument was distributed to 97 Kentucky
public and private postsecondary KAIR (Kentucky Association for
Institutional Research) member institutions, of which 32 sent usable
responses (a 33% response rate). Study findings, included the
following: (1) "sending institutions overwhelmingly responded that
their needs included specific demographics on transferring students,
where specific students transfer, transferred student grade point
averages (GPA's) at new institutions, degrees earned by transfer
students, specific student persistence information, and the time
required to complete degree programs; (2) much of the information
required by receiving institutions is ordinarily available on student
transcripts (except for an American College Testing program (ACT
score); (3) 72% of the respondents felt that it would be permissible
to share data, although such responses came with qualifying caveats,
including concerns for student confidentiality, student notification
about the release of records, and the need for specific guidelines;
and (4) data-sharing needs are apparently more pressing for two-year
institutions than for four-year institutions. The survey instrument
is included. (MAB)

A Report on the

KAIR Survey of Information Sharing Needs

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A Report On The KAIR Survey of Information Sharing Needs

Background

In response to legislative mandates for documented proof of the effectiveness of postsecondary programs and services, institutional researchers in the state of Kentucky have been both formally and informally approaching one another for information necessary to monitor the progress of Kentucky students across institutions. While cooperation is the norm, there are problems connected with federal legislation that have limited the kinds of information postsecondary institutional researchers may share with one another. Particularly, there are prohibitions on sharing student-specific, identifiable information as opposed to aggregate data. In reality, an institution is, in turn, severely limited in the types of effectiveness questions it can analyze, based on what information can be accessed about its students. This fact is particularly crucial to community college researchers who need to know what happens to their students once they move to four-year institutions. As these issues surfaced, and as Kentucky's Council on Higher Education declined to become involved in the exchange of student-specific information, the Kentucky Association for Institutional Research requested a study of transfer student-specific information needs across institutions and an assessment of the institutions' capacity for and willingness to enter into data sharing activities. Reported here are the results of this study.

Assumptions

The authors undertook the survey because they believe, as do other members
of KAIR, that a legitimate purpose for sharing student-specific information is the
provision of data necessary for institutional research and accountability. Further, the
authors believe that data sharing should be undertaken within the framework of
formative evaluation focusing on institutional improvement. Finally, the authors
believe that the sharing of student-identifiable data, particularly to assess an
institution's transfer and reverse transfer patterns or to assess the success rates of
transfer students, is not only desirable, but necessary. These beliefs support the
Survey of Data Sharing Needs.

Specific assumptions were:

1. institutions involved in data-sharing have legitimate education research
   purposes for sharing student-specific data in response to mandates for
   accountability;

2. data-sharing activities will be/are carried out by institutional representatives
   with legitimate claim and designated responsibility for such data;

3. data-sharing activities will be/are carried out with sensitivity toward
   maintaining reasonable rights of the student to privacy within the framework
   of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (The Buckley
   Amendment), that data exchange between institutions legitimately occurs
   when requesting institutions have documented educational research needs
   and purposes, legitimate exceptions under Buckley; and

4. data-sharing activities are limited to specific cases in which institutions share
   claim to transfer student-specific data.

Method

A committee of KAIR members developed two lists of data elements that may need to be shared between educational institutions. The first list focused on the "needs of sending institutions", and the second list focused on the "needs of receiving institutions." The terms sending and receiving refer to whether students routinely transfer to or from a given institution. The resulting instrument requested respondents to name their institutions and to check the data elements necessary to their research efforts. In addition, respondents indicated their willingness or unwillingness to share information on students with researchers at other institutions.

Authors sent the survey to 97 individuals representing Kentucky public and private postsecondary institutions who were currently or who had been in the past members of KAIR or who, by virtue of their current job descriptions, were on the KAIR mailing list. Of 97 individuals surveyed, 32 completed surveys and returned them to the authors. Thus, the survey response rate was 33%. A summary of survey results follows.

Results

Table I

Analysis of Survey Responses

	Institutions	Respondents
11	public community colleges	13
7	private 4-year colleges	9
4	public regional universities	9
1	public doctoral university	1
—		—
23		32

Thus, individuals representing both public and private institutions responded to the survey. Results include responses from two-year, four-year, and doctoral level institutions.

Table II

Perceptions of the Data Needs of "Sending" Institutions

Need Statement	Frequencies			
	Needed		Not Needed	
	#	%	#	%
1. Specific students who transfer/ demographics	28	(88%)	4	(12 %)
2. Where students transfer	28	(88%)	4	(12%)
3. Transfer placement/types of classes	14	(44%)	18	(56%)
4. Non-transferrable courses/ justification	22	(69%)	10	(31%)
5. Student semester average/ cumulative GPA	24	(75%)	8	(25%)
6. Degrees earned by transferred students	24	(75%)	8	(25%)
7. Persistence of transfers to completion	24	(75%)	8	(25%)
8. Faculty assessment of transfer students' preparation for further education	13	(41%)	19	(59%)
9. Transfer students' credit hours attempted	12	(38%)	20	(62%)
10. Transfer students' credit hours earned	14	(44%)	18	(56%)
11. Graduate student enrollment by program	19	(59%)	13	(41%)
12. Other need/comments	5			

    a. comparative data on transfer students from similar institutions
    b. why students transfer - student goals
    c. grades in courses attempted - at least 1st semester
    d. matriculation date

Table II indicates some clear data sharing needs of "sending" institutions. These overwhelming needs include specific demographics on transferring students, where specific students transfer, transferred student GPAs at new institution, any degrees earned by specific transferred students, specific students who persist at the institution to which they transfer, and the time it takes for students to complete programs. The high percentage of individuals who indicated that they needed these data elements clearly demonstrates the need for established processes which expedite student-specific data sharing among postsecondary institutions in the state of Kentucky.

Table III

Perceptions of the Data Needs of "Receiving " Institutions

Need Statement	Frequencies			
	Needed		Not Needed	
	#	%	#	%
1. Transfer students by major and previous degrees earned	13	(41%)	19	(59%)
2. Transfer student cumulative GPA at sending institution	16	(50%)	16	(50%)
3. Transfer student GPA in major	13	(41%)	19	(59%)
4. Transfer student ACT scores	17	(53%)	15	(47%)
5. Identification of appropriate levels of developmental placement /GPAs in development courses if applicable	11	(34%)	21	(66%)
6. Identification of reverse transfer students/ reasons for reverse transfer	11	(34%)	21	(66%)
7. Transfer aptitude and achievement test scores	6	(19%)	26	(81%)
8. Faculty assessment of transfer students' ability	3	(9%)	29	(91%)
9. Intervening educational experiences of transferring students	6	(19%)	26	(81%)
10. Other needs/comments	6			

    a.   why individuals choose to transfer
    b.   student standing
    c.   much of this information is included on student transcripts

Table III indicates that much needed information for "receiving" institutions is ordinarily readily available on student transcripts. A student's ACT score is the one data element the majority of respondents believe they need to share from "sending" institutions. Apparently,, the more pressing needs for shared information are those of the "sending" institutions. If the "sending" institution is to meet demands for accountability of institutional effectiveness, then processes promoting effective, student-specific data sharing must be developed in the state of Kentucky.

Table IV

Responses concerning institutions' willingness to allow the Council on Higher Education to share student -specific data across institutions were as follows:

Response	Frequency
No answer	5 (16%)
Yes, okay to share data	23 (72%)
No, not okay to share data	4 (12%)

Favorable responses were not without qualifying caveats, in spite of their overwhelming number. One respondent indicated that willingness to share data depends upon how information will be used. One respondent suggested the need for the development of specific guidelines for data use. A third respondent said data sharing is desirable if anonymity is protected, students know it is being done, and students grant permission. Finally, a respondent stated that data sharing must be restricted to research office use.

Respondents who did not endorse data sharing explained their positions, as well. One respondent stated, "We are not opposed to data sharing but want to know how, by whom, and for what purpose the data will be used." Others stated that their unwillingness to share data is the result of policies established by their superiors or because of very narrow interpretations of the Federal Educational Right to Privacy Act.

As a final point of survey analysis , researchers categorized respondents by job title and examined the data by job title to determine if job title had any effects on responses.

Table V

Job Categories of Survey Respondents

Title	#	%
Academic administrators	9	(28%)
Institutional research officers	15	(47%)
Budget/planning officers	2	(6%)
Student Services administrators	5	(16%)
Other	1	(3%)

Job categories of respondents appear to have an effect on responses to the question concerning individuals' and institutions' willingness to share data. Institutional research and planning officers (nearly half of the respondents were, primarily, institutional researchers) were most likely to be willing to share information while Student Services administrators were least likely to agree to data sharing.

Discussion/Conclusion

The information collected in this survey indicate that data-sharing needs are more pressing for two-year institutions then for four-year institutions. Most individuals who responded believe that data sharing is necessary and are willing to provide needed information. However, institutional researchers in Kentucky need to work cooperatively to develop specific guidelines for what data is to be shared, how shared data will be reported, who will have access to shared data, and how student confidentiality will be protected. While these issues have yet to be fully addressed in the state of Kentucky and processes for effective data sharing have yet to be established, the survey has indeed opened the door for the necessary dialogue to take place and for appropriate guidelines and procedures to be established.

APPENDIX

KENTUCKY ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
SURVEY OF INFORMATION - SHARING NEEDS

Dear Respondent:

For the past year the Kentucky Association of Institutional Researchers (KAIR) has been addressing the complicated questions of data sharing across institutions of higher education for purposes of effectiveness research. The organization formed a committee to address these issues more forthrightly, and the survey below is one result of this committee's work. Please respond to the questions below as fully as possible. Your responses will be used only to guide KAIR's efforts to make effectiveness research less complicated and to facilitate access for institutional researchers to the Council on Higher Education database. Return this questionnaire, by April 1, 1992, to:

Sheree P. Koppel
Curriculum Development, Externally Funded Programs,
and Institutional Research
Jefferson Community College
109 E. Broadway
Louisville, Kentucky 40202

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND YOUR COOPERATION.

KENTUCKY ASSOCIATION OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHERS

Survey of Information - Sharing Needs

Name of Respondent _____

Title _____

Institution _____

The KAIR committee on data sharing understands the necessity of sharing information between institutions of higher education for purposes of institutional research and accountability assessment.

The committee believes that data sharing should be undertaken within a framework of formative evaluation focusing on institutional improvement.

The committee further believes that data-sharing issues should be addressed by the Council on Higher Education Strategic Plan.

Finally, the committee recognizes the necessity of sharing student-indentifiable data, particularly to assess an institution's transfer and reverse transfer patterns.

With these statements as guiding principles, the committee developed two lists of data elements that need to be shared. Please review the lists and check each item that reflects an information need at your institution.

NEEDS OF INSTITUTIONS "SENDING" STUDENTS

__1. who transfers/demographics

__2. where students transfer

__3. placement levels of transferring students at receiving institutions-student classifications

__4. any courses that did not transfer-why these courses did not transfer

__5. performance of students after transfer; semester and cumulative GPA, overall and in major

__6. degrees earned by transferring students

__7. persistence of transferring students to goal completion - completion of degree

__8. faculty assessment of student preparation for transfer

__9. credit hours attempted by transferring students

__10. credit hours earned by transferring students

__11. graduate student enrollment: which schools attract students to which programs?

__12. other

please identify:

_____

_____

NEEDS OF INSTITUTIONS "RECEIVING" STUDENTS

__1. transferring students by major and any previous degrees earned

__2. past grades/GPAs

__3. students' performance in major

__4. ACT scores

__5. developmental placement and performance history

__6. students who "reverse transfer" and reasons for movement

__7. aptitude/achievement test scores, portfolios, capstone course performance

__8. teacher assessments of student abilities

__9. students' intervening educational experiences

__10. other

Please identify:

_____

_____

Would your institution be willing to give permission to the Council on Higher Education to release student-specific information from your institution to institutional research offices of other colleges and universities?

Yes_____ No_____

If no, what prevents you from doing so?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Also, if no, what information would you be willing to share between institutions?

_____
_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU!