

EXHIBIT A

Proof of Concept Study On Proposed Changes Needed to Improve IPEDS Data*

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PURPOSE OF PROJECT

Through a proof of concept study based on a set of colleges and universities representing a spectrum of higher education institutions, this project will create more accurate and comprehensive measures of student retention, progression and completion among higher education institutions participating in the Federal Student Aid Program (Title IV) than are currently available.

Proposed definitions and formulas include not only first-time, full-time students, but also part-time and incoming transfer students, the “new traditional students,” who are a large and growing share of the American population and who are, for the most part, omitted by federal statistics as currently collected in the United States Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).¹ This study is being conducted in parallel with a Nexus Research and Policy Center study focused on community colleges.

The resulting report will be a platform for identifying changes in IPEDS that will allow the computation and reporting of more comprehensive measures of student retention, progression, and

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completion. We recognize that current laws or regulations will have to be changed to improve existing graduation rate measures and we believe this report will act as a spur for needed reform.

POLICY ISSUE

The need to create accurate comparative performance and productivity measures for institutions of higher education is widely recognized today by policymakers and researchers. Consumers also need better data in order to make wiser choices.

However, the most commonly used measures of comparative performance, undergraduate graduation rates, are plagued by serious limits. Current federal graduation rates cover less than half of all students in higher education and thus cannot accurately gauge institutional performance on this critical outcome measure.

Moreover, current undergraduate graduation rates, available through IPEDS, are not useful for comparing the contributions made by the growing number of 2- and 4-year postsecondary institutions that enroll a wide variety of students, especially transfer and non-traditional students. Consequently, current measures have only limited utility for states and the nation as they strive to keep track of degree completion productivity targets—targets that must be met if the goal set by President Obama for the U.S. to have the world’s highest college graduation rate by 2020 is to be reached.

CURRENT STUDENT-RIGHT-TO-KNOW DEFINITION USED BY IPEDS

The *IPEDS Graduation Rates Survey* (GRS) collects information about student graduation (and, where applicable, outgoing transfer) rates in accordance with the requirements of the Student-Right-To-Know (SRK) and Campus Security Act of 1990 (codified in 20 U.S.C. § 1092; U.S. Public Law 101-542). Today the GRS gathers information from the colleges and universities receiving Title IV funding on graduation rates by gender and race or ethnicity by tracking a cohort of undergraduates entering such institution and completing at 100%, 125%, 150% and just recently 200% of “normal” time. The cohort is made up of full-time, first-time, degree- or certificate-seeking undergraduates who enter the institution either during the fall term or during the 12-month period between September 1 of one year and August 31 of the next year and are enrolled in courses creditable toward a degree, diploma, certificate, or other award.²

As long as IPEDS remains the premier source of data on graduation rates, better comparative measures are needed to promote better policies, improve consumer choice and provide stronger data for evidence based decisions about higher education policies and practices.

THE CURRENT STUDENT-RIGHT-TO-KNOW DEFINITION IS FLAWED

Today the SRK definition used by IPEDS

- accounts for the graduation rate for less than half of all undergraduates enrolled in 4-year public institutions and less than a third of students enrolled in 2-year public institutions;³
- does not include the graduation rate of incoming transfer students who represent more than a third of all undergraduates enrolled in postsecondary institutions;
- does not include the graduation rate of part-time students who represent over one third of undergraduate enrollment;⁴
- ignores progression rates for full-time and part-time undergraduate students;
- has retention rates for full-time or part-time undergraduate students but these do not account for all students at all institutions;
- does not permit meaningful comparisons between undergraduate students attending traditional institutions and those attending non-traditional institutions, whether full-time or part-time, for the most critical measures to institutions and policymakers: retention, progression, graduation.

In short, IPEDS does not meet the needs of the nation as we strive toward a more efficient and more effective system of higher education.

OMITTING GROWING SEGMENTS

Over half of all students at 4-year institutions do not meet the definition that IPEDS must apply and therefore are not included in the nation's reporting of graduation rates.

The proportion of first-time, first-year students is decreasing as the proportion of incoming full- and part-time transfer students is increasing—and IPEDS ignores this most fundamental change in student demographics. Although it is difficult to fix the percentage of part-time students, because students often shift from part- to full-time status and vice versa, we know that the proportion of full-time students (those taking loads equivalent to 12 or more credits per term) is decreasing as the proportion of part-time students (those taking fewer than 12 credits per term) is increasing. In 1970 only 28% of postsecondary students were classified as part-time. By 2007 this had grown to 37%.⁵ Growth in part-time enrollment is expected to increase as the percentage of students who have full-time jobs increases.⁶ This trend also helps to explain the growth in adult postsecondary education which grew 26% during the ten years between 1995 and 2005.⁷ Moreover, the proportion of students enrolled in traditional institutions—*those providing 3-4 entry points per year, day time courses and classroom*

instruction—is likewise decreasing as the proportion of students enrolled in non-traditional institutions—*those with continuous enrollment or multiple entry points per year, evening courses and online instruction*—is increasing.⁸

Given that non-traditional institutions tend to have higher enrollments of incoming transfer students as well as higher enrollments of underserved populations, including minorities, part-timers and working adults, the omission of a large percentage of these students by the current definition used by IPEDS represents a problem for measuring and comparing postsecondary institutions today—a problem that will only intensify over time. And this problem is becoming even more severe at precisely the time when more and better information is needed by policymakers to improve the regulations needed to help make effective higher education possible for a growing range of students and by consumers to improve their chances of certificate- or degree-completion success.

IGNORING IMPORTANT MEASURES

Beyond the fact that IPEDS measures graduation rates for a decreasing proportion of postsecondary students, IPEDS, under its present mandate, also fails to measure retention rates that include all students and fails to measure progression at all. These two measures, taken together, provide interim measures that would allow for predicting graduation rates for postsecondary institutions and would allow consumers to better understand the likelihood that the support services they may need to succeed are working in the institutions they are considering.

Given the ambitious degree attainment goal for the nation set by President Obama, and the limitations of the current graduation rate measure used by IPEDS, it is imperative that an improved approach to measuring student success be created and implemented.

PROPOSAL FOR CHANGES NEEDED TO OPTIMIZE THE VALUE OF IPEDS DATA

Arguably, the best way to solve the problems and limitations of the IPEDS graduation rate survey is to replace it altogether with a system relying on the universal use of student unit records. But given that the IPEDS survey is what the nation has today and will likely have into the foreseeable future, the focus here is on increasing its value to policymakers, consumers, and researchers by proposing easily implemented ways to make the data both more comprehensive and more accurate.

Any new set of formulas for measuring the performance of institutions of higher education regarding student success rates should address the failings of the current SRK approach that IPEDS must use, including resolving the lack of intermediary measures of student success such as retention and progression rates for all.

This proof of concept study—based on the application of the new formulas detailed below for calculating retention, progression and graduation rates—will show that we *can* measure the success of all students (full-time and part-time, first-time and transfer, freshman through senior classes) and that we *can* eliminate much of the confusion caused today by comparisons among the various approaches to educational delivery schedules (e.g., semesters, quarters, continuous enrollment).

We recognize that by creating a more encompassing measure, graduation rates in some schools may decline from the flawed and limited IPEDS graduation measures. For that reason, as noted below, we are also asking participating institutions to compute graduation rates separately for transfer students, who usually complete at lower rates than the first-time, full-time beginning students who define the current SRK cohort. For the same reasons part-time students are also to be computed in a separate section as outlined below.

We first propose a series of modifications to IPEDS definitions that make them more encompassing and reflective of general trends in student enrollment patterns focusing on the **overall** student body. In addition, in this first section we propose reporting measures for students who transfer *into* the institution. These simple modifications will greatly improve current IPEDS statistics.

To maximize the comparability to existing IPEDS statistics, *the measures presented below should be calculated only for certificate- or degree-seeking students.*

RETENTION RATES: DEFINITIONS AND FORMULAS

Retention rates provide interim measurement of student persistence from year-to-year during their academic program.

Overall Retention Rate

Because this definition is focused solely on retention (not progression), to be able to capture all degree-seeking students, retention is defined as the percentage of these students who earned at least 3 credit hours in the previous year who went on to complete at least 3 credit hours the following year.⁹ This overall rate will reflect the experience of almost the entire student body at an institution.

The general formula for calculating the overall retention rate is:

$$\text{Retention Rate} = \frac{\text{Students in the denominator who also earned at least 3 credits the following year}}{\text{Students who earned at least 3 credits the previous year}}$$

This approach will help institutions to track the retention rates of the *overall student body*, including full-time, part-time, first-time/first-year and transfer students in a standardized manner and address the differences among semester-based, quarter-based and continuous enrollment approaches that are used by various institutions across the spectrum of higher education.

Table 1 shows how the overall and disaggregated student retention rates could be calculated. To avoid artificially depressing the senior class retention rate, if an institution is disaggregating by classes the numerator for this retention rate should also include all students who successfully graduate regardless of number of credits accumulated in the current year.

Table 1 –Retention Rates

Student Classifications	Institution’s Denominator*	Institution’s Numerator*	Institution’s Retention Rates (Numerator/Denominator)
All Students	Students who earned at least 3 credits the previous year	Every student in last year’s denominator who completed at least 3 credit hours in the current academic year at the Institution	Overall Retention Rate
Transfer Students	Students who transferred in at least 3 credits and who earned at least three credits the previous year		Transfer Student Retention Rate

**Note: Existing IPEDS exclusions would apply.*

PROGRESSION RATES: DEFINITIONS AND FORMULAS

Progression rates measure student advancement from year-to-year toward the completion of their academic program.

Overall Progression Rate

Progression in this study is defined as the percentage of students who earned at least 20 credit hours during the 12-month measurement period. The choice of 20 credit hours per 12-month period is based on both the SRK (IPEDS) use of 1.5 times the normal degree completion time and the normal credit hours required for degree completion (120 credits/6 years= 20). The number of credit hours required for degree completion varies among institutions and programs; however, 120 credits—the standard minimum—is used for this study.

All students who completed at least 3 credit hours in the previous 12-month period, including part-time and transfer students, comprise the denominator and all students in the denominator who went on to complete at least 20 credit hours during the next 12-month period comprise the numerator.

The general formula for calculating the *overall* progression rate is:

$$\text{Progression Rate} = \frac{\text{Students in the denominator who also earned at least 20 credits during the current 12-month period}}{\text{Students who earned at least 3 credits the previous 12-month period}}$$

For purposes of maximum comparability, in this formula we have used the SRK (IPEDS) completion window of 6 years for Bachelor’s degrees. If institutions were to measure slower progression rates by replacing the 20 credits in the numerator by the number of credits they considered appropriate to measure their respective progression rates, comparisons among institutions would once again become impossible and less meaningful; therefore, we have not provided for this option. However, transfer and part-time student progression rates compensate in part for the absence of this option. We believe this approach will mitigate the possibility that an incentive system would be set up whereby schools would be hesitant to accept part-time students. It bears noting, however, that current graduation rate measurements provide an incentive system that promotes overly selective admissions policies that come at the expense of underserved and part-time students.

The overall rate encompasses the experience of almost all students on the campus. As with the retention rate measure, in this proof of concept exercise, for analytic purposes we ask for separate transfer and part-time student progression rates. We recognize that these rates can be computed for different “classes” (i.e., sophomores, juniors, and so on), but for the purposes of this study, we are not asking for this finer detail.

Table 2 –Progression Rates

Student Classifications	Institution’s Denominator*	Institution’s Numerator*	Institution’s Progression Rates (Numerator/Denominator)
All Students	Students who earned at least 3 credits the previous year	Students in the denominator who also earned at least 20 credits the following year	Overall Progression Rate
Transfer Students	Students who transferred in at least 3 credits and who earned at least three credits the previous year		Transfer Student Progression Rate

*NOTE: Existing IPEDS exclusions would apply.

DEGREE COMPLETION RATES: DEFINITIONS AND FORMULAS

Degree Completion rates provide the most common measurement of student success in their academic program.

The rationale for the change from “graduation” rate to “degree completion” rate is as follows: “Graduation” has been used by IPEDS to identify first-time/first-year students only and therefore its continued use, especially in this study, might cause confusion. “Degree Completion” refers to earning all the appropriate credits required to complete a specific degree program and is therefore a more accurate descriptor, particularly at the program and college levels. Furthermore, not all students who are “degree complete” graduate because some do not want to leave, continue to take specializations, or are partially degree complete at the doctoral level but have completed a masters degree in the interim.

The *IPEDS Graduation Rates Survey* collects information about Bachelor’s graduation rates by tracking a cohort of undergraduates and their completion status at 100%, 125%, 150% and, recently, 200% of normal time. For this study, we are asking participants to calculate only the “traditional” IPEDS 150% rate and the more recently enacted and 200% rate (i.e., 6 and 8 years), but modified as noted below to reflect the broader student body. Because our cohort encompasses far more students than the SRK definition used in IPEDS, and is therefore a more accurate reflection of the experiences of *all* students on the campus, it may produce lower graduation rates than currently reported by

IPEDS. To compensate for this, we again ask that transfer student rates be reported separately and that part-time students likewise be reported separately as noted below.

The 150% Degree Completion Rate

In order to account for both *first-time and incoming transfer* students as well as part-time students, the 150% Degree Completion Rate in this study is defined as the percentage of students in the cohort who earned at least 3 credit hours at the institution and went on to complete their degree program within 150% of their “personal” expected completion time. The formula for calculating a student’s “personal” expected completion time for first-time and transfer students is shown below.

$$\text{150\% Completion Time} = \frac{\text{Total Program Credits Required} - \text{Minus Personal Expected Applicable Credits Transferred In}}{20 \text{ Credits per year}} = \text{Years + months}$$

For example: If a student transfers in 40 credits and needs 80 credits more to complete the degree, divide the 80 credits needed by 20 credits per year to get a “personal expected time” of 4 years. (The 150% IPEDS time allowance formulation is already built into the formula; i.e., 120 Credits Needed/6 Years=20 Credits per Year.)

It should be noted that all of the relevant numbers needed by this and all the proposed formulas are easily gathered by institutions.

Once again, to maximize comparability the widely used standard of 120 credit minimum for the Bachelor’s degree is used in this study. Institutions that require more credit hours for degree completion would have completion rates that benefit slightly from the use of 20 credit hours per 12-month period.

All first-time, transfer and part-time students in a cohort who completed at least 3 credit hours after being admitted to the institution comprise the denominator. All of those students who went on to complete their degree program within their “personal” expected completion time comprise the numerator.

The general formula for calculating the 150% Degree Completion Rate is:

Students in the denominator who completed their degree program within their “personal” 150% expected completion time

$$150\% \text{ Degree Completion Rate} = \frac{\text{Students in the denominator who completed their degree program within their “personal” 150\% expected completion time}}{\text{Students who earned at least 3 credits after being admitted to the institution}}$$

Table 3 shows how the 150% Degree Completion Rates are calculated for all students, including transfer students, whether in semester-based, quarter-based or continuous enrollment institutions.

Table 3 – Calculation of 150% Degree Completion Rates

Student Classifications	Institution’s Denominator*	Institution’s Numerator*	Institution’s Progression Rates (Numerator/Denominator)
All Students**	Students who earned at least 3 credits the previous year	Every student who completed their degree program within their 150% “personal” expected degree completion time**	Overall 150% Completion rate
Transfer Students	Students who transferred in at least 3 credits and who earned at least 3 credits the previous year		Transfer student 150% Completion rate

* Existing IPEDS exclusions would apply.

** “Personal” expected degree completion time = credit hours remaining to degree completion upon entry at the institution, divided by 20 credit hours = expected years to completion. Note this is a 150% completion rate based on a progression rate of 20 credit hours per year.

The 200% Degree Completion Rate

The 200% Degree Completion Rate in this proposal is defined as the percentage of students who earned at least 3 credit hours at the institution and went on to complete their degree program within 200% of their “personal” expected completion time. In the 200% calculation, we divide the 120 credit target by 8 years to obtain 15 credits per year as the denominator.

$$200\% \text{ Personal Expected Time} = \frac{\text{Total Program Credits Required Minus Applicable Credits Transferred In}}{15 \text{ Credits/Yr.}} = \text{Years} + \text{Months}$$

The general formula for calculating the 200% Degree Completion Rate would be:

$$200\% \text{ Degree Completion Rate} = \frac{\text{Students in the denominator who completed their degree program within their 200\% "personal" expected completion time}}{\text{Students who earned at least 3 credits after being admitted to the institution}}$$

In order to address transfer students as well as first-time students, **Table 4** is provided to show how the 200% Degree Completion Rates would be calculated for first-time/first-year students and for transfer students.

Table 4 – Calculation of 200% Degree Completion Rates

Student Classifications	Institution's Denominator*	Institution's Numerator*	Institution's Progression Rates (Numerator/Denominator)
All Students	Students who earned at least 3 credits the previous year	Every student who completed their degree program within their 200% " <u>personal</u> " expected degree completion time	Overall 200% Completion rate
Transfer Students	Students who transferred in at least 3 credits and who earned at least 3 credits the previous year		Transfer student 200% Completion

* Existing IPEDS exclusions would apply..

Part-Time Students

In many institutions of higher education across the nation, the number of part-time students is large and growing. From recent research, we know that over one third of undergraduates enroll exclusively part time and more than 15% change their enrollment status during the academic year.

These part-time students are more likely than their full-time peers to enroll for only a limited number of courses or in sub-baccalaureate or non-degree/certificate programs and to lack a major field of study.¹⁰ Not surprisingly, tracking the retention, progression and completion of part-time students is a serious concern for a growing number of colleges.

While our measures above track overall student success across the *entire* undergraduate student body, to more fully account for the retention, progression and completion of part-time students, we propose the following measures be calculated and reported separately for them.

For purposes of this study, we are drawing on the IPEDS definition of part-time students. Further, to keep our proposed measures as similar to IPEDS as possible (while still providing much needed information on changing populations of students), *part-time students should be defined by their status when first enrolling in the institution* (this will also help resolve the problem of students changing from part- to full-time status and vice versa in the course of their studies). In short, like other IPEDS graduation rate measures, we are adding a measure of the success of a defined cohort of students—in this case part-time ones.

Next, we need to define the expected time of completion for part-time students. Any expected time for graduation is somewhat arbitrary, but given the research available we have chosen eight years as the “expected time” for a part-time student to complete their bachelor’s degree.¹¹ If we define 8 years as the 100% completion time for part-time students, we can calculate an eight year 100% graduation rate; but we can also define a 150% completion rate based on a 12 year window (for the 150% rate we calculate: $120 \text{ credits} / 12 \text{ years} = 10 \text{ credits per year}$ as the denominator in the formula displayed below). Note, while IPEDS now reports a 200% graduation rate, we do not do so for part-time students because 16 years seems too long a period for tracking students, especially when completion rates are so low over that length of time

Once we set the expected time for completion at 8 years, and taking 120 credits as the standard minimum for a bachelors degree, we divide 120 credits by 8 years= $15 \text{ credits per year}$ as the number of credits needed to be making progress.

Part-Time Student Retention

The part-time student retention rate would be the same as noted above but calculated only for part-time students:

$$\text{PT Retention Rate} = \frac{\text{Part-time students in the denominator who also earned at least 3 credits the following year}}{\text{Part-time students who earned at least 3 credits the previous year}}$$

Part-Time Student Progression and Completion Rates

We do not need to repeat all the logic behind what was detailed above in the development of the more general measures; however, we do repeat each equation with modifications as needed.

Part-Time Student Progression Rates:

The general formula for calculating the overall progression rate of part-time students is:

$$\text{PT Progression Rate} = \frac{\text{PT students in the denominator who also earned at least 15 credits during the following 12-month period}}{\text{PT students who earned at least 3 credits the previous 12-month period}}$$

Degree Completion Rates

We propose two degree completion rates for part-time students, based on an eight year window for completion, one at 100% and the other at 150%. As noted above, the key in defining these graduation rates is calculating the expected completion time, which reflects whether or not a student transferred any credits into the college.

The formula for calculating a student's "personal" expected completion time is shown below.

$$\text{100\% PT Personal Completion Time} = \frac{\text{Total Program Credits Required} - \text{Minus Personal Expected Applicable Credits Transferred In}}{15 \text{ Credits per year}} = \text{Years} + \text{Months}$$

For example: a student who begins as a part-time student has an expected 100% completion time of 8 years. However, if the part-time student transfers 40 credits, the expected completion time is now 80 credits (120 credits required for the degree minus 40 transfer credits) divided by the targeted 15

credits per year = 5 years and 4 months or 64 months. This “personal expected time” to degree becomes the basis for calculating the part-time 100% completion rate:

$$\text{PT 100\% Degree Completion Rate} = \frac{\text{PT students in the denominator who completed their degree program within their “personal” 100\% expected completion time}}{\text{PT students who earned at least 3 credits after being admitted to the institution}}$$

The 150% completion calculations follow directly:

First calculate a student’s appropriate “personal” expected completion time:

$$\text{PT 150\% Personal Completion Time} = \frac{\text{Total Program Credits Required} - \text{Minus Personal Expected Applicable Credits Transferred In}}{10 \text{ Credits per year}} = \text{Years} + \text{Months}$$

The general formula for calculating the part time student 150% Degree Completion Rate is:

PT students in the denominator who completed their degree program within their “personal” 150% expected completion time

**PT 150% Degree Completion Rate = -----
PT students who earned at least 3 credits after being admitted to the institution**

REPORTING COMPLETION RATES FOR SUBGROUPS

As is well known, significant differences exist in the retention, progression and degree completion rates between genders and across the various racial-ethnic and socio-economic groups. Therefore, the measures we propose need to be calculated for at least the following demographic groups: Blacks, Hispanics, non-Hispanic Whites, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Native American/Alaskan, Others/Unknown, females, males and low-income students.

We use Pell grant recipients as a proximate and policy relevant measure of low income. Given the large government investment in Pell grants, calculating the retention, progression and completion of these students is of fundamental public concern.

We recognize that these are not all independent and mutually exclusive categories and that these categories could be “crossed” to create finer levels of detail (e.g., Hispanic women, Hispanic men), because this is a proof of concept report, we do not ask institutions to further disaggregate their data into finer categories, although such disaggregation is both possible and valuable.

Finally, as noted above, we are also asking for these measures to be reported separately for incoming transfer students, and both full-time and part-time students.

*See **Appendix** for the tables broken out by major racial, ethnic and Pell grant status for four subgroups of students.*

Given the goal set by President Obama for the U.S. to have the world’s highest percentage of college graduates by 2020, this study, whose aim is to more accurately measure graduation rates, should attract considerable attention. By applying the proposed formulas to different types of institutions, this study will show that it is possible to increase the comparability and comprehensiveness of graduation rate measures as well as provide useful retention and progression rates as interim measures of value to policymakers, institutions, and consumers.

While at first it may seem that this study increases the complexity of the current (and flawed) graduation rate formula IPEDS must use, it in fact breaks through many of the limitations of that formula by increasing comparability and comprehensiveness, while generating important interim measures on retention and progression ***using only data easily available to all institutions of***

higher education and using only formulas that any student record keeping system can easily populate with the available data.

DATA COLLECTION

For this study we have developed a series of measures and tables that participants will need to populate applying the definitions, formulas and protocols (cohort years, etc.) indicated to the tables in the Appendix.

By way of an initial proof of concept we populated the cells of all tables with data from the University of Phoenix (UOPX), one of the participating institutions. These tables were fully populated using UOPX's data systems, *at a cost of less than \$4,000 of data analyst and research director time (a total of 76 person-hours)*. This is relevant because participants will also be asked to prepare a statement of the costs they incurred in creating these measures, since any request to congress and USDOE to make changes to IPEDS will need to be accompanied by a burden statement.

In order to keep within a reasonable timetable, participating institutions will be asked to populate these tables from their own student record system—using the definitions, formulas and protocols in this document—within a specified number of weeks of signing the MOU we have prepared.

Multi-campus systems will be asked to compute a “system wide” graduation rate for 6 and 8 year completions. Since these will not be IPEDS numbers, we will ask for tables for the three largest campuses in the system for comparison with the latest reported IPEDS rates (the 2008 IPEDS data report has already been released). These will be placed in an appendix along with the official 2008 IPEDS statistics to facilitate comparisons.

THE REPORT

The final report will contain a section presenting and analyzing data collected from four-year baccalaureate institutions and another section from the parallel data collection from two-year colleges. The report will be a product of the Nexus Research and Policy Center and the American Institutes for Research (AIR), with Jorge Klor de Alva and Mark Schneider as authors, joined by Deborah Santiago (Excelencia in Education) for the section on two-year colleges.

Participating institutions will be identified by name, since the purpose of the report is to push for greater transparency as well as accuracy. We believe that an anonymous study would have significantly less weight in our discussions with policymakers, consumer groups and USDOE officials.

In order to assure the timely publication and distribution of the report, participating institutions signing the MOU will not have the option to withdraw from the study. However, once the report is written, it will be circulated among the participants for comments. The authors, of course, will have ultimate responsibility for the content of the report. Once the final version is complete, participating institutions will also be asked for suggestions concerning release strategies, but decisions ultimately will rest with the Nexus Research and Policy Center.

ENDNOTES

¹ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, “Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System,” available at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/> . Institutional graduation rate data is gathered by NCES through a data collection process system (IPEDS) made up of a number of surveys by which institutions receiving Title IV funds provide information about themselves. The survey this proposal is addressing is known as the Graduation Rate Survey (GRS).

² See <http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/uscode/20/28/IV/F/1092> and <http://www.airweb.org/?page=2087> retrieved December 22, 2009.

³ NCES website link accessed on December 23, 2009, has the figure at 66%, see <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001197.pdf>; however, for institutions that report on an academic calendar system, that percentage in the IPEDS GRS Cohort and Total entering class, Fall 2008 results, is estimated at 48.6% for 4-year public institutions and an even lower 32.3% for 2-year public institutions.

⁴ NCES website link accessed December 23, 2009: <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2009/section1/table-hep-2.asp> (See Table A-10-2).

⁵ Retrieved from the website link on January 11, 2010, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2009/section1/table-hep-1.asp> (See Table A-10-1).

⁶ Retrieved from the website link on January 11, 2010, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2009/section5/indicator44.asp#info> (See Indicator 44).

⁷ Retrieved from the website link on January 11, 2010, http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d08/tables/dt08_370.asp (See Table 370).

⁸ Retrieved from the website link on January 11, 2010, http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d08/tables/dt08_188.asp(See Table 188).

⁹ Three credits may seem de minimis and by this rule someone could take 20 years to get a “four-year” degree and still be counted as “retained.” However, someone enrolled every year during that period is, in fact, being retained, and that is why a measure of progression is needed along with a measure of retention.

¹⁰ Retrieved from website link on May 25, 2010, http://nces.ed.gov/das/epubs/pdf/2007165_es.pdf (See pp. iii, v-vi).

¹¹ According to the Beginning Postsecondary Student Survey (BPS) of 1996, after six years 15% of students who began in community colleges had earned their associate degrees (retrieved from website link on May 25, 2010, http://nces.ed.gov/das/epubs/pdf/2007165_es.pdf (See p. ix)). The National Education Longitudinal Survey of 1988 found almost the identical percentage of students earning their AA degree after eight years. Based on these data, we redefine our metrics to reflect an *eight year basis* for expected time to degree for part-time students at both 2- and 4-year institutions.

APPENDIX

Template for Proposed Institution-Level Measures

Table 1 – Summary Measures

	<i>Retention</i>	<i>Progression</i>	<i>150% Completion*</i>	<i>200% Completion**</i>
All Students				
Transfer Students				

* Based on 2002 cohort for Bachelors students

** Based on 2000 cohort for Bachelors students

Table 2: Bachelors Demographic Matrix: All Students

	<i>Retention Rate</i>	<i>Progression Rate</i>	<i>150% Completion*</i>	<i>200% Completion**^o</i>
Males				
Females				
Blacks				
Hispanics				
Whites				
Asian/Pacific Isl.				
Native Am/ Alaskan				
Others/Unknown				
Pell Grant				
No Pell Grant				

* Based on 2002 cohort for Bachelors students

** Based on 2000 cohort for Bachelors students

^o IPEDS does not report details for subgroups in its 200% time to degree, just the overall rate; however, individual institutions can calculate these data their student information systems.

Table 3: Bachelors Demographic Matrix: Transfer Students

	<i>Retention Rate</i>	<i>Progression Rate</i>	<i>150% Completion*</i>	<i>200% Completion**^o</i>
Males				
Females				
Blacks				
Hispanics				
Whites				
Asian/Pacific Isl.				
Native Am/ Alaskan				
Others/Unknown				
Pell Grant				
No Pell Grant				

* Based on 2002 cohort for Bachelors students

** Based on 2000 cohort for Bachelors students

^o IPEDS does not report details for subgroups in its 200% time to degree, just the overall rate; however, individual institutions can calculate these numbers from their student information systems..

Table 4: Bachelors Demographic Matrix: Part-time Students

	<i>Retention Rate</i>	<i>Progression Rate</i>	<i>100% Completion*</i>	<i>150% Completion**</i>
Males				
Females				
Blacks				
Hispanics				
Whites				
Asian/Pacific Isl.				
Native Am/ Alaskan				
Others/Unknown				
Pell Grant				
No Pell Grant				

* Based on 2000 cohort for Bachelors students

** Based on 1996 cohort for Bachelors students

Table 5– Official 2008 IPEDS Completion Rates

	150% Completion Rate (2008)	200% Completion Rate (2008)
Overall		
Males		
Females		
Blacks		
Hispanics		
Whites		
Asian/Pacific Isl.		
Native Am/ Alaskan		
Others/Unknown		