

IRP@FHDA

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From: Lourdes Del Rio-Parent, PhD, Sr. Research Analyst/Data Warehouse Coordinator FHDA

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Re: Specifications for reporting education plan development in MIS SS09

This document provides a review of the specifications for reporting education plan development, as stated in the MIS data dictionary (MIS SS09¹), and shows headcount figures for plans developed by students using Degree Works² between summer 2014 and winter 2015 at De Anza College and Foothill College. In specific, the report provides headcount figures segregated by approval status (i.e., approved, pending approval, rejected, or not approved by a counselor or academic advisor) and type of plan (i.e., comprehensive or abbreviated) by taking into account student characteristics that would impact related state allocations (e.g., active admission application, major, enrollment status, state residency).³ The information presented is intended to help stakeholders at both colleges to decide whether the colleges should report in MIS SS09 any student who developed an education plan in Degree Works during a term, regardless of whether the plan was approved by a counselor. As stated by representatives from the CCCCOC (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office), education plans reported in MIS SS09 do not need to be approved by a counselor.⁴ Another important issue is whether the approval (or locking) of education plans, which would entail counselors actively involved in reviewing the education plans, should be considered a key component of the strategies used by the colleges at the District to promote the development of education plan by all applicants or students. If this is not the case, what are some of the possible unintended consequences of such approach?

¹ MIS SS09 is the data field in the Student Success report that identifies students who developed an education plan during the term at the college, and the type of plan reported: abbreviated, comprehensive, or both.
http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/TRIS/MIS/Left_Nav/DED/Data_Elements/SS/SS09.pdf

² Ellucian Degree Works is degree audit system implemented at the FHDA CCD to facilitate development and documentation of student education plan.

³ For funds or allocation headcounts, only California residents who were not special admits during the reporting term are included.

⁴ Communication through email with Debra Sheldon (Specialist, Student Success and Support Program, Chancellor's Office, CA Community Colleges on May 8th).

The questions to be addressed here include:

- (1) What are the data specifications in the MIS data element dictionary for SS09, Education Plan Development?*
- (2) To what extent student headcount figures for SS09 would increase if all education plans developed by students in Degree Works were included, instead of just approved education plans?*
- (3) What are some of the possible unintended consequences when the review and approval by a counselor of student education plans is not considered a key component in related activities?*

Methods/Procedures

Student headcount figures presented here are based on Degree Works data for education plans developed or modified between July 1 of 2014 and March 31 of 2015. Student IDs were extracted and linked to related data in Banner⁵ to identify students' status regarding having an active admissions application, declared major, California state residency, and enrollment for credit (at least one credit course) at the college during the term the plan was developed or modified, as required by MIS.⁶ Degree Works data prior to July 1 of 2014 was used to identify prior education plans developed by the students in this system. This information was used to classify the Degree Works activity as the development of an initial plan or a modification to a plan previously developed. Classification of education plan (abbreviate or comprehensive) was based on the number of terms covered by the plan (abbreviated, 1 or 2 terms; comprehensive, 3 or more).

⁵ Higher Education ERP system currently used at the FHDA CCD.

⁶ Different requirements, such as declared major, apply to abbreviated and comprehensive plans.

Findings

(1) *What are the data specifications in the MIS data element dictionary for SS09, Education Plan Development?*

The MIS data element dictionary (DED) states, "This element indicates whether the student developed an education plan at the college in the term reported." Four values are provided to indicate the type of plan activity, including:

- A: Student developed an abbreviated plan (mainly for entering students or with a short term goal),
- C: Student developed a comprehensive one (at least two terms, and "should reflect the number of terms required to achieve the student's declared course of study"),
- B: Student developed both type of plans (abbreviated and comprehensive), and
- N: The Student did not develop an education plan.

Although the MIS DED does not address whether the plan should have the approval of a counselor or academic advisor, it states that, "SS09 is intended to capture information on education plans as defined in Title 5, Section 55524." Title 5 definitions for abbreviated and comprehensive plans are:

Abbreviated student education plans are one to two terms in length designed to meet the immediate needs of students for whom a comprehensive plan is not appropriate.

Comprehensive student education plans take into account a student's interests, skills, career and education goals, major, potential transfer institutions, and the steps the student needs to take on their educational path to complete their identified course of study. The comprehensive plan helps the student achieve their course of study. The comprehensive plan includes, but is not limited to, addressing the education goal and course of study requirements, such as the requirements for the major, transfer, certificate, program, applicable course prerequisites or co-requisites, the need for basic skills, assessment for placement results, and the need for referral to other support and instructional services as appropriate. The comprehensive student education plan is tailored to meet the individual needs and interests of the student and may include other elements to satisfy participation requirements for programs such as EOPS, DSPS, CalWORKs, veteran education benefits, athletics, and others.

The only constraint the MIS DED places on SS09 is that all records with a value of C (comprehensive) or B (abbreviated and comprehensive) need to also include a major or course study (not undeclared or undecided major), otherwise the student record will be rejected.

2. To what extent student headcount figures for SS09 would increase if all education plans developed by students in Degree Works were included, instead of just approved education plans?

Headcount figures in Exhibit 1 for De Anza College show that if all initial (i.e., first time at the college) education plans developed in Degree Works during the term were included in MIS SS09, instead of only approved ones, student headcount figures for these three terms (summer to winter) would increase by 33% (637) and 21% (388) for abbreviated and comprehensive plans, respectively. For Foothill College, the increase in headcount for abbreviate would be 411 (37%) and for comprehensive, 219 (15%).

3. What are some of the possible unintended consequences when the review and approval by a counselor of student education plans is not considered a key component in related activities?

Preliminary results based on analyses of student demographics seem to suggest that counseling or orientation activities, which usually involve a counselor, may play a significant role in promoting education plan development. The data here does not address the quality of the plan or what impact approval status may have on the student academic progress, or the advantages or disadvantages of having the education plan be approved by a counselor or an academic advisor. What the data suggest is that certain students may be significantly more likely to develop an education plan than others because of the counseling or orientations activities in which they participate. These students may be required to develop an education plan or have a major incentive to develop one. When comparing figures for California residency status in Exhibits 2 and Exhibit 3 (originally intended as preliminary figures on student demographics for this report), the data show that non-California residents, especially foreign students, are significantly more likely to use Degree Works for educational plan development than California residents (higher percentage for the group in Degree Works when compared to related figures for their respective colleges; lower number of students per education plan ratios). The higher likelihood of foreign students to have Degree Works activity may be related to the fact that these students are admitted to the college through a formal orientation process (e.g., counseling courses, orientation activities) that include working with a counselor or advisor to develop an education plan. In other words, there is someone actively encouraging or making sure that students develop an education

plan. Thus, if colleges no longer require the approval of education plans by a counselor this may have the unintended consequence of downplaying the role they or counseling related activities have in this process. If counselors do not see education plan development as a major component of their work when interacting with students (either in special group activities or individually), this may reduce the number for education plan developed and reported, especially for students not participating in special programs.

Exhibit 1

Student Headcount for Degree Works Education Plan Development, SS09, by College and Education Plan Type, Summer 2014 to Winter 2015

Education Plan Type				
De Anza College	Abbreviated		Comprehensive	
	Headcount	Percent	Headcount	Percent
Approved	1,949	75%	1,868	83%
Not approved	477	18%	374	17%
Pending	14	1%	30	1%
Rejected	488	19%	283	13%
Total Headcount	2,586	100%	2,256	100%

Education Plan Type				
Foothill College	Abbreviated		Comprehensive	
	Headcount	Percent	Headcount	Percent
Approved	1,115	73%	1,445	87%
Not approved	336	22%	284	17%
Pending	4	0%	5	0%
Rejected	174	11%	208	13%
Total Headcount	1,526	100%	1,664	100%

Notes

Degree Works data between summer 2014 and winter 2015.

Only includes California residents, first time education plan (i.e., first time abbreviated or first time comprehensive).

Abbreviated plan covers less than 3 quarters; comprehensive, at least 3 quarters.

For abbreviated plan, students must have an active application for the term; for comprehensive, the student record was included if they had an active admission application, enrolled in at least one credit course when the plan was developed, and had a declared major. These specifications are not necessarily those currently used in MIS reporting.

Headcount are not mutually exclusive for students may have plans at different stages of approval during the term.

Exhibit 2

Student Headcount by College, Residency Status, and Type of Education Plan for Initial and Follow-up Plan Degree Works Activity

California Residency Status	College Headcount	College Percent	Abbrev Ed Plan Head-count	Abbrev Ed Plan Percent	Compreh Ed Plan Head-count	Compreh Ed Plan Percent
De Anza						
Resident	28,339	90%	3,104	79%	2,647	86%
Non-Resident	3,284	10%	841	21%	421	14%
Non-Resident, Foreign	2,517	8%	628	16%	336	11%
Total	31,499	100%	3,940	100%	3,065	100%
Foothill						
Resident	23,073	91%	1,632	81%	2,361	79%
Non-Resident	2,389	9%	383	19%	615	21%
Non-Resident, Foreign	1,534	6%	283	14%	506	17%
Total	25,412	100%	2,014	100%	2,976	100%

Notes

Data relates to Degree Works activity between summer 2014 and winter 2015, including approved and non-approved education plans; initial or follow-up.

Initial plan is the first education plan developed at the college, taking account type of plan (first abbreviated, first comprehensive). Follow-up plans are modifications to a plan previously developed.

College Headcount: Student with at least one enrollment record with apportionment in a credit course, first section census date.

Abbrev Ed Plan: Abbreviated plans are those with at one or two terms.

Compreh Ed Plan: Comprehensive plan, at least 3 terms.

For abbreviated plan, students must have an active application for the term; for comprehensive, the student record was included if they had an active admission application, enrolled in at least one credit course when the plan was developed, and had a declared major. These specifications are not necessarily those currently used in MIS reporting.

Does not included plans developed through categorical programs: EOPS, DSPS, CalWORKs.

Exhibit 3

Ratio of Number of Students per Education Plan by Residency Status and Type of Plan

California Residency Status	College Headcount	Abbrev Ed Plan Headcount	Ratio of Student Headcount per Abbrev Ed Plan	Compreh Ed Plan Headcount	Ratio of Student Headcount per Compreh Ed Plan
De Anza					
Resident	28,339	3,104	9 : 1	2,647	11 : 1
Non-Resident	3,284	841	4 : 1	421	8 : 1
Non-Resident, Foreign	2,517	628	4 : 1	336	7 : 1
Total	31,499	3,940	8 : 1	3,065	10 : 1
Foothill					
Resident	23,073	1,632	14 : 1	2,361	10 : 1
Non-Resident	2,389	383	6 : 1	615	4 : 1
Non-Resident, Foreign	1,534	283	5 : 1	506	3 : 1
Total	25,412	2,014	13 : 1	2,976	9 : 1

Notes

Ratio figures represent the number of students for every education plan developed or modified.

Data relates to Degree Works activity between summer 2014 and winter 2015, including approved and non-approved education plans; initial or follow-up.

Initial plan is the first education plan developed at the college, taking account type of plan (first abbreviated, first comprehensive). Follow-up plans are modifications to a plan previously developed.

College Headcount: Student with at least one enrollment record with apportionment in a credit course, first section census date.

Abbrev Ed Plan: Abbreviated plans are those with at one or two terms.

Compreh Ed Plan: Comprehensive plan, at least 3 terms.

For abbreviated plan, students must have an active application for the term; for comprehensive, the student record was included if they had an active admission application, enrolled in at least one credit course when the plan was developed, and had a declared major. These specifications are not necessarily those currently used in MIS reporting.

Does not included plans developed through categorical programs: EOPS, DSPS, CalWORKs.

Conclusions/Recommendations

1. Given that education plans do not need approval by a counselor to be submitted in the MIS SS report, data for these should be included in this report for otherwise the annual headcount for students who developed an education plan will be significantly reduced, which would place Foothill College and De Anza College at a disadvantage for SSSP allocation. The California State allocates SSSP funds based on the proportion of students served at the college in relation to the total submitted by all community colleges in the State. It is expected that most colleges will try to submit the maximum number of education plans developed, independently of approval status. Thus, the funds allocated to our colleges could be significantly reduced if an unnecessary constraint is used in the report that would significantly reduce the number of education plans submitted, ultimately resulting in a significant reduction of funds needed to provide core SSSP services.
2. Title 5 states that education plans, abbreviate or comprehensive, should be designed to meet the student education goals. Specific to a comprehensive plan, this should address *“the need for basic skills, assessment for placement results, and the need for referral to other support and instructional services as appropriate.”* For most nonexempt (less than associate degree) students, designing an education plan that meets these requirements would be a significant challenge, at best. Any community that has a serious commitment towards student success should establish a policy in which all nonexempt students are required to develop at least one comprehensive plan during their first term with the guidance of a counselor or academic advisor, which could include an instructor in the student’s declared major.
3. Colleges should be mindful of not downplaying the role of counselors in the development of student education plans for this could be tantamount to “killing the goose of the golden eggs.” So far, data tends to show that most students would not be intrinsically motivated to use Degree Works for only about 10% of California residents developed a comprehensive education plan during these three terms. So far, it seems that most students would likely need someone to motivate them to develop an education plan using technology such as Degree Works, which is still not widely used at the colleges. As shown by the figures here, the large majority of plans in Degree Works were approved by a counselor; meaning, in most cases there was a counselor involved in the process.