
Docket Item:

Student Success and Completion Model (SSCM) Evaluation Update

Summary:

The SSCM Evaluation Workgroup has met monthly, beginning in October 2019. Since then the group has made significant progress. Originally the workgroup had planned to have a final report to present to the Commission in May 2020; however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, institutions have been focused solely on response and supporting their students. As a result, more time is needed to conduct this important work.

With that in mind, the work can be split in to two phases.

Phase 1- Identify components of SSCM that may need to be addressed

Phase 2- Explore potential impacts to institutions based on identified issues

Phase 1 will conclude after the workgroup meets in April. Phase 2 will then begin and last through the summer and possibly into the fall dependent upon schedules. Included in this document is the workgroup charge with summary notes for each item included in italics, as well as a timeline for the remaining workgroup meetings.

Workgroup Charge and Updates:

Cost Weights

The cost weights are an artifact of the Oregon University System's (OUS) Resource Allocation Model (RAM), which was the precursor to the Student Success and Completion Model. Those values were derived from the Delaware Cost Study and have not been updated in over two decades. The cost weights are applied to both the outcomes and activities portions of the formula according to the discipline and degree or student level in which they were earned.

Discussion centered on cost weights used in other states with a comparison to existing weights in the SSCM. Creating and conducting an Oregon specific cost study is considered unfeasible with the amount of work necessary and the ability to support it unclear. However, a general understanding that the cost weights should be updated is clear. With that in mind, members considered models in other states including Nevada, Texas, Ohio, Illinois, and Florida, and are considering using another state's weights or some combination of them.

Mission Differentiation

Mission differentiation recognizes and rewards distinctions between the universities in terms of their institutional mission, research, and size. Mission differentiation is inflated by the lesser of the year-over-year change in the Public University Support Fund or the Consumer Price Index. Funding for mission differentiation is subtracted from the overall PUSF, leaving the remainder to be allocated to outcomes and activities in the formula.

After looking at current Mission Differentiation line items, workgroup members agreed it would not be productive to go through every single line item, but rather that the group should discuss funding based on general principles. Institutions are currently working on looking at their own items and sorting them into categories and will then revisit this topic. Members agree that regional support, mission support and research need to remain components.

Incentive Stacking

The workgroup shall consider if the incentives within the formula are aligned with state priorities and are appropriate relative to the total outcomes-based funding available. The workgroup should consider whether cost weights should continue to be applied to the outcomes portion of the formula given the other bonuses available.

The workgroup is taking a look at how the various weights in the formula interact and whether the magnitude of the incentive aligns with intended policy. Preliminary calculations were shared and discussed, but there was not much reaction other than for institutions to support their own programming. HCM Strategists has offered to put together a review of this issue in other states for the workgroup's consideration.

Transfer Degrees

Currently, a completion is only counted as a transfer degree if the student who earned the degree transferred from an Oregon community college to a public university. A discount is then applied to that completion's overall weight.

Workgroup members agree the transfer discount should be kept as it currently exists, although the magnitude of the discount could be adjusted. More discussion on this needs to occur.

Collaboration

Collaboration is an increasingly important state priority for institutions of higher education. The university capital rubric includes an incentive for collaboration. The workgroup should consider if the SSCM should include collaboration in some way to further incentive that desired behavior.

Workgroup members expressed that the challenge to teaching collaboration is often geography while collaboration is much more common for research activity regardless of geography. The next step will be to look at how other states approach collaboration in a way that aligns incentives with state goals.

Student Affordability

The workgroup may consider how affordable each institution is terms of debt load at graduation and potential earnings after some number of year as part of the formula's outcomes-based funding.

At the March meeting, staff from the Lumina Foundation led a discussion around affordability, and how we could potentially include it in the formula. The presentation and following discussion included a review of definitions, a review of other states' approaches and potential incentive metrics that could be included in the SSCM. No decisions were made at this time, and the workgroup plans to finish the discussion at the April meeting.

Potential Technical Corrections:

- a. Bilingual education – A bilingual endorsement earns an area of study bonus, not unlike the way Science, Technology, and Engineering (STEM) or health disciplines do. The Teacher Standards and

Practices Commission of Oregon (TSPC) changed licensing requirements, allowing bilingual teachers to go without an endorsement to teach English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The workgroup shall consider how bilingual designations earned by teachers should be counted in the formula.

- b. Veterans – Veterans are currently considered underrepresented students in the formula and are eligible for bonus weighting. The workgroup shall consider how to reliably count all veterans while excluding their dependents, who may be using the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill.

At the February meeting, HECC Research and Data presented some technical and definitional potential corrections for the workgroup to consider. This was mainly discussion, and not a lot of decisions were made.

Transfer degrees: Currently, only Community College transfer degrees are being discounted, there was general consensus from the group that all degrees should be discounted the same.

Rural Students (definition): To define rural students we currently rely on a flag set by the high school the student attended. This flag does not exist when a student transfers from another institution. The workgroup discussed alternative ways to collect the data, but none were ideal.

Underrepresented Student (definition): The workgroup discussed the weighting of different categories of underrepresented students. No agreement was reached but the group would like to revisit the topic.

STEM Degree (definition): Discussion around the definition of a STEM degree. We currently use CIP codes to define STEM, and our definition varies slightly from the nationally recognized definition that SHEEO uses. This was discussed but nothing was agreed on.

Veteran (definition): There is not good student-level data regarding veterans. After discussion, members agreed to go back to their institutions and check with financial aid offices as well as veteran offices to determine if there is a better way to count veterans.

Bilingual Education (definition): Bilingual educators are also being undercounted. The Deans of Education across the institutions have been working with TSPC on a better definition, and we hope that this will alleviate the issue.

Currently Scheduled Meetings

April 10, 2020 – Recommendations, Proposals and Final Thoughts. Members will cover any remaining agenda items not covered in previous meetings. We will then discuss phase 2 of the workgroup and decide how to move forward to accomplish this work.

Formula Review Materials

A number of materials are available to help interested stakeholders learn more about the formula in its current iteration, including a two-page reference, an issue brief, and a set of training slides that provide an overview of how the formula calculations work. All are available via the HECC website at:

<https://www.oregon.gov/highered/institutions-programs/postsecondary-finance-capital/Pages/university-funding-model.aspx>.

Staff Recommendation:

For discussion purposes only.