
Docket Item:

Student Success and Completion Model (SSCM) Evaluation Update

Summary:

The SSCM Evaluation Workgroup has met monthly, beginning in October 2019. 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. 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 in February or March. 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 will occur at the February meeting.

Performance Weighting

The formula allocates funding to universities according to the volume, degree and student level, and program mixture of outcomes and activities at each institution, relative to each other. A potential alternative would allocate funding using similar or identical measures but taking into account their year-over-year change within each institution.

Scheduled for April meeting.

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 will consider incorporating the affordability of each institution based on debt load at graduation and the earnings of graduates as part of the formula's outcomes-based funding.

An affordability discussion is scheduled for the March meeting. Staff from the Lumina Foundation have offered to lead the discussion that may include a review of definitions, a review of other states' approaches and potential incentive metrics that could be included in the SSCM.

Potential Technical Corrections:

HECC Research and Data will help with these topics at the February meeting.

- 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 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.

Western Oregon University is working with us on this to coordinate across the five teacher prep programs at the universities; the Deans of those programs have identified a solution and the WOU registrar is going to work with HECC Research and Data on the mechanics.

- 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.

Schedule of Remaining Meetings

February 21, 2020 – Data Day. Deep dive in to the data that feeds into the formula and technical corrections.

March 13, 2020 – Affordability Day. Teri Taylor, from the Lumina Foundation, will facilitate a discussion on student affordability, and how other states are addressing the topic in their funding formulas.

April 10, 2020 – Recommendations, Proposals and Final Thoughts. Members will cover any remaining agenda items not covered in previous meetings, including Performance Improvement Weighting. They will take some of the proposed changes, and run them through the current SSCM to analyze the results of any such changes. Lastly, they will recap and make recommendations to HECC staff.

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:

This is an informational and discussion item only.