Summary of Discussions on Program Health Indicators

Initial Meeting: March 9, 2012
Attendees: Elliott Higa, Steve Shigemoto, Jim Poole, Joy Ann Nagaue, Chulee Grove, Sally Dunan

Followup Meeting: March 19th
Attendees: Elliott Higa, Sally Dunan, Erika Lacro, Steven Shigemoto

Additional Comments received from Sandy Sanpei (3/21/2012), Sharon Ota (3/23/2012), Mike Rota (FSEC Meeting, 3/23/2012)

Discussion Topics

Concerns about Program Health Measures used in the Annual Reports of Program Data (ARPD)

1. Many concerns have been raised about the accuracy of the data provided by EMSI regarding New and Replacement Positions in the County (and State). Many people feel the data reported is inaccurate. This data is provided by an external vendor that is used by many schools nationwide. One comment was that the data provided by the federal Bureau of Labor Standards seems to be better/more accurate for Hawaii than the EMSI data. (3/9/2012)

Update: Discussion with Erika and Steven Shigemoto on March 19th, clarified that the data reported on the ARPD report is automatically prorated based on the number of programs linked to a particular SOC code. When programs on different campuses change their SOC codes, the number of prorated jobs changes. Consequently, the number of jobs reported for each campus can vary significantly from one year to another. Although the individual campuses can get the EMSI data, the campuses have not been able to obtain detailed information regarding how the proration is performed. (3/21/2012)

Update: During FSEC meeting on March 23, 2012, Chancellor Mike Rota also explained that in addition to the federal Department of Labor statistics, the EMSI data also draws data from other entities including the Department of Commerce. Consequently, the job projections provided by EMSI are usually about 20% higher than job projections based on the Department of Labor statistics alone. So, the EMSI data is a more favorable projection regarding job outlook than projections based solely on Department of Labor data. (3/23/2012)

Suggested improvements:

- One suggestion was to NOT use EMSI data as a basis for any of the ARPD measures and determination of Health, Cautionary, or Unhealthy program status. The suggestion is to continue to include the EMSI data as a reference only and to consider other measures that are more concrete, such as class fill rates, as an indication of sustainable demand for a program. (3/9/2012)

- An alternate suggestion is to evaluate the need for the continued use EMSI data in place of the previously used State DOL labor statistics (available to all on the Web). (Sharon Ota, 3/23/2012)

- Update (3/23/2012): based on the Chancellor's explanation regarding the data sources used by EMSI for consolidating data included above, the EMSI data is the best data available for job projections,
and is the most accurate data available. (Also note that job projections are not the same as jobs actually advertised, which can easily be more or less than the projections.)

- Since the EMSI data reported on the ARPD report is automatically prorated, it would be helpful for the annual ARPD reports to include additional information, such as the total number of jobs at the county level, and the calculation used to obtain the prorated job projection, in addition to the final pro rata share for each campus. This would provide complete data regarding the projections for county (and state) levels, which is not clearly evident to the programs now as they currently only see the prorated data. (3/21/2012)

2. The number of Majors indicated in Banner does not accurately reflect the number of students actively enrolled in the courses for that program's major. For example, HCC identifies an individual in Banner as a major based on their indication on their application that they intend to become a major in a particular program. This decision was made at this campus because it allows counselors to track students before they actually start taking courses specified by the program major. However, in terms of program health, it means that the numbers pulled for the annual program review do not accurately reflect the number of students actively enrolled in program courses. Other campuses use the Majors designation in Banner differently, so the data pulled for annual program reviews is not equally useful for all campuses.

Suggested improvements:

- Tailor the query (ies) used to pull program data for the number of majors to extract data based on declared majors AND active enrollment in at least one major course during the year. This is not a simple query, as it requires input from the individual campuses regarding which courses (either by ALPHA and Number or by CRN) count as applicable courses within each major, and presumably this information would need to be reviewed and updated by the MIR representatives from each campus each year. However, this approach would provide the most consistent and the most accurate information about the number of active majors in each program. This method relies solely on how the data is pulled from Banner without making any structural changes to Banner. (3/9/2012)

- Another option is to explore using the "pre-major" status. (Sharon Ota, 3/23/2012) For example, KCC currently uses a pre-nursing program. (Discussion with Erika Lacro on 3/9/2012).

- An alternate suggestion is to explore the feasibility of returning the data extraction and calculations to the campus IR. This would allow for adjustments to be made in the data (e.g. program specific issues, major count, jobs vs majors). (Sharon Ota, 3/23/2012)

- An alternate suggestion is to ADD an additional data item to the ARPD report for the number of Active Majors using a query based on unduplicated student enrollment in at least one program major course during the reporting year. This would allow the system office to continue to report number of Majors using the current method and maintain current trend data, and also allow a duplicate and more accurate calculation of various indicators based on the number of Majors.
Note: the reporting year for the annual review of program data is based on data for each fiscal year, as described below. (3/21/2012)

Update: Chancellor Rota noted during the FSEC meeting on 3/23/2012 that each campus can add additional data items to the ARPD data set. So, adding a new data item (for all programs) for Active Majors that could be used at this campus is achievable without requiring a change to the basic system-wide data items. (3/23/2012)

3. Measures other than the Demand measure that are suspect because they are dependent on the number of Majors or the EMSI data, include:

#3 Efficiency = # Majors / FTE BOR faculty

#4 Effectiveness = # Unduplicated degrees/certificates awarded / # Majors

#5 Effectiveness = # Unduplicated degrees/certificates awarded / # New & Replacement Positions

#6 Effectiveness = Persistence from Fall to Spring = # Majors (Spring) / # Majors (Fall)

Recommendations for improvement:

• Supplement the data element for number of Majors with a new data element for the number of Active Majors, and duplicate all existing calculations based on the number of Majors with a secondary calculation using the number of Active Majors to provide comparative information for annual program review - applies to #3, #4, and #6. (3/26/2012).

• Provide the #5 Effectiveness measure for reference information only, but do not use it to determine overall program health. (3/9/2012)

It is noted that, as the majority of the indicators for determining overall Program Health rely on the number of Majors, a data item that does not accurately represent the active enrollment by program majors at this campus, each program must then explain why their indicators are inaccurate and obtain better, or more realistic, data as a means of more accurately and meaningfully reporting on program health. Consequently, the health indicators, based on the current data are not reliable or useful, as a source of management level information about programs. Also, the time being spent each year to extract the data at the system level and the additional time that each program must subsequently spend to obtain better data and write a report that explains why the system data is not correct, or is not applicable to that program, is an inefficient use of personnel resources. The compelling reason to adopt a better way to report the number of majors is to provide data that is more meaningful and to reduce the time spent obtaining the correct data each year.

Update (3/21/2012): Providing additional data in the ARPD as described above would provide clearer information to programs and reduce the amount of time and effort being spent to collect additional data to include in their annual program review reports, while allowing the system to continue to use data based on the current measures for continuity of tracking trends. It would also allow the creation and use of additional trend information for comparison, or eventual transition to a new system of measures.
4. A third concern was that, especially in regard to the measure for demand, the rationale for the benchmarks being used is not clear - we do not know why these particular ratios were chosen. It is also not clear why the Demand measure is restricted to New and Replacement Positions in the County, since the pool of positions students might consider could go beyond the County.

Suggested improvements:

- Re-examine the benchmarks to explain the rationale and the information they are intended to represent.
- Re-examine the Demand measure and look for a new definition, or possibly inclusion of an additional measure, that is not based on the EMSI data that appears to be so untrusted by HCC programs with respect to projected positions in Hawaii.

5. Erika pointed out during our discussion on March 19th that the System Office is using the data on the annual reports of program data for trend tracking purposes. She noted that this appears to be perceived as a report card to the programs, although it's not being viewed or used in that way at the system level. Steven Shigemoto also noted that there is typically some resistance to changing the data being used, since there are already established trends based on this data over a period of years.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Consider the possibility of renaming the categories used from Healthy, Cautionary, and Unhealthy to different names that might be perceived more as an analysis and less as a grade for programs. Since some indicators include 5 ranges because there are two Cautionary and two Unhealthy ranges in addition to one Healthy range, and other indicators have only 3 ranges, changing the category names might also require adjusting the number of categories to either 3 categories or 5 categories for all indicators.
  - If 5 categories were used for all indicators, a naming scheme such as Very Low, Low, Moderate, High, and Very High might be used.
  - If 3 categories were used for all indicators, a naming scheme such as Low, Moderate, and High might be used.
  - In either of the above category examples, some method of indicating target ranges might be desired.

6. In addition to the above items, I would like to observe that the current ARPD indicators do not include any indicators specifically related to economic conditions. Consequently, there is no ability within the current ARPD to establish trends and correlation between current economic indicators, such as unemployment rates or job growth data, and enrollment. This means that if enrollment increases when the unemployment rate increases, the individual programs must explain the presumed connection between enrollment and unemployment for themselves, instead of relying on data built into the ARPD to support that conclusion.

Suggestion for improvement:
• Add new data elements representing economic performance data such as unemployment and job growth statistics into the ARPD as a means of formally tracking economic performance in correlation with program enrollments.

7. Perkins Core Indicators. The concern was voiced that in some (or many) CTE programs, students don't need to complete a degree or certificate to satisfy their employment objectives, so the 2P1 and 5P2 indicators for completion are difficult to improve. For additional information, Sally explained that the UHCC System Office has proposed a policy for awarding degrees and certificates automatically to students who complete the requirements for the degree or certificate. This would have the effect that students would not need to apply for degrees or certificates (or pay to apply for graduation), but would be charged a matriculation fee upon initial entry that would be used to pay for the administrative costs involved in automatically distributing degrees and certificates to students who have completed the requirements. This would help to improve overall completion rates. Also, defining additional appropriate certificates, such as Certificates of Completion for completing a few courses in a program area that are closely aligned to job-related objectives of students might also help to improve the completion rates. Another discussion point was that even though the goal is always for each program to work toward improvement in the identified category, the use of the Perkins Core Indicators is applied to the system as a whole, not to individual campuses, by the Perkins grant process. So, even though individual programs or individual campuses might have specific weak areas based on the Perkins Core Indicators, the system as a whole, so far, has met the goals for improvement.

6. In regard to HCC Policy 5.202, a question was raised about paragraph 2 Policy, regarding the Content of Program Review, specifically references to "external factors affecting the program" and "required external measures." The question raised was how this information is to be obtained or provided, since the programs do not have funding to track external data.

Suggestion for improvement:

Apply campus level effort to providing the external data needed for the purpose of providing required external data, such as ongoing connection with graduates and tracking student success following completion, or departure, from a campus program.

Update: Discussion with the VCAA on March 19th, provided clarification that "external factors affecting the program" is intended to mean external factors the program is aware of, such as changes in technology or changes in external requirements, such as Cosmetology licensing requirements or training requirements for programs such as auto mechanics. This is not intended to indicate that programs are responsible for tracking graduates of the program after graduation. Tracking student success following completion, or departure, from a campus program is recognized as a campus level responsibility.
Additional Discussion:

1. Sandy Sanpei added the following concern and example regarding the accuracy of data used for the annual ARPD reports (3/20/2012).

I did not see any indication of wrong/incorrect/inconsistent data being a problem. I would like to use a CA example: number of graduates = 9. By my class roster of students in the exiting course, the number should have been 16. I checked with Records and their number also indicated 16. When confronted, Mike Rota said the problem was probably due to a cut off date for the data. Anyway to make a long story short, 2 years later, the data for that particular year was changed to 16. These are the things that make me very hesitant about the data. How can we trust that correct data is being used?

References include:

2009 Annual Program Review Report:


2010 Annual Program Review Report


2011 Annual Program Review Report


Explanation. Steven Shigemoto investigated Sandy's concern about the inconsistency of the data for the AY 2008-2009 report. He determined, based on the data glossary that the graduation data for AY 2008-2009 was actually the data for FY 2008, including the summer 2007, Fall 2007, and Spring 2008 semesters. Up until the 2008-2009 report, this one year time lag in graduation data was the norm because the current year data was not yet available in the ODS system from which the data was pulled for the annual reports. For the AY 2009-2010 report, the current year data was available and was used, but the data for AY 2008-2009 was not updated on that report. For the current 2010-2011 annual report, the graduation data for all three years, AY 2008-2009, AY 2009-2010, and AY 2010-2011, was reported using the graduation data for each respective fiscal year. So, the observed inconsistencies in the data reflected a change in the availability of graduation data for the current year and a corresponding change in the way the data is extracted and used for the annual reports of data. So, everyone can be more confident that the graduation data being reported is now from the same fiscal year as the rest of the data for the reporting year. (3/22/2012)

For accuracy, Steven provided the following clarification of the data used for the annual reports:
To be precise, it is the Fiscal Year that is being pulled for degrees and certificates, not Academic Year. For Honolulu CC, it doesn't make any difference because we don't have summer graduation, but for some other campuses, the summer term is in a different Fiscal Year from the Academic Year. To summarize:

- AY 2008-2009 -> FY 2007-2008 Degrees and Certificates
- AY 2009-2010 -> FY 2009-2010 Degrees and Certificates

2011 Report (due 12/15/2011)
- AY 2008-2009 -> FY 2008-2009 Degrees and Certificates
- AY 2009-2010 -> FY 2009-2010 Degrees and Certificates
- AY 2010-2011 -> FY 2010-2011 Degrees and Certificates

The one highlighted in red is the one shifted back a year in the 2010 and 2009 reports that is made consistent in the 2011 report. (3/22/2012)

2. Steven Shigemoto clarified that the current terminology is Annual Reports of Program Data (ARPD) since 2005. Before that, the annual reports were called the Program Health Indicators. I have replaced the acronym PHI with ARPĐ to reflect this change. (3/21/2012)

3. Sharon Ota provided the following comments and suggestions via email. (3/23/2012)

1. In way of background, the annual comparative program health indicators replaced the 5-year comprehensive program review (which was a major undertaking for tech occ programs) around 1992. The three indicators then were: Centrality (How does the program meet the mission of the college/system?); Effectiveness (course/program enrollment); and Efficiency (Optimal use of resources). The campus' institutional analyst (Mike Young) worked with the programs on the data. These indicators were revised to the current ones: demand, efficiency, and effectiveness. The CC system is now the major data source provider.

2. The three major indicators are sufficient for the annual reviews as they can be applied to all programs. Other data and/or unique situations can be included in the narrative.

3. HSER has articulated the data concerns in its 2011 Annual Assessment Report. They are:

A. Demand is calculated by the number of majors (#3) that is divided by the new and replacement positions (county prorated) (#2) for the SOC code. The program requested an explanation of how the county prorated data is determined. Steve was not able to provide an explanation since the campus does not have access to the actual data or to the methodology used to apportion the county jobs to the various programs. The CC system office through its privately contracted data source, EMSI, provides the data. This lack of access to the actual data by the campus IR and the lack of transparency related to the data source are concerns that need to be addressed.
**Suggestion:** Evaluate the need for the continued use EMSI data in place of the previously used State DOL labor statistics (available to all on the Web).

**B.** Counting majors has been problematic because students are counted as majors even thought they have not taken a major-specific course and there is no "pre-major" category.

**Suggestion:** Active students can be counted as majors when they complete one major-specific course in the Fall or Spring semester as identified by the program. This used to be done for HSER when the data was campus-driven.

Another option is to explore the "pre-major" status.

**C.** Regarding total number of classes taught (#8), non-general funded classes should not be included in the count (e.g. SOCAD).

**D.** Calculating the effectiveness also includes the use of the county prorated new and replacement positions data (see comments in section A.)

**Suggestion:** Same as for Section A.

Additional suggestion: Explore feasibility of returning the data extraction and calculations to the campus IR. This would allow for adjustments to be made in the data (e.g. program specific issues, major count, jobs vs majors).