

Report and Suggestions from IPEDS Technical Review Panel #35, Reintegrating the Academic Libraries Survey into IPEDS

SUMMARY: Based on a review of the current Academic Libraries Survey, the Technical Review Panel suggests that a number of data elements be integrated into IPEDS in order to retain federal data necessary for policy making and analysis, while also improving response rates and reducing reporting burden for institutions. Comments from interested parties are due to Janice Kelly-Reid, IPEDS Project Director at RTI International at ipedsTRPcomment@rti.org by October 18, 2011.

On August 2–3, 2011, RTI International, the contractor for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) web-based data collection system, convened a meeting of the IPEDS Technical Review Panel (TRP) in Washington, DC. Meetings of the IPEDS TRP are conducted by RTI to obtain peer review of IPEDS-related project plans and products, as well as to foster communications with potential users of the data. The purpose of this meeting was to solicit input from the postsecondary education community regarding reintegrating the Academic Libraries Survey (ALS) into IPEDS. The panel consisted of 42 individuals representing the federal government, state governments, institutions, data users, association representatives, and others. Of these, seven individuals represented academic libraries. The TRP examined the current ALS data elements and discussed ways of improving data quality by clarifying definitions and better aligning key elements of the library component with data reported in other IPEDS components.

Overview

The ALS is a voluntary survey collected by NCES, as authorized under Section 153 of the *Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002*, which states:

“(a) GENERAL DUTIES.—The Statistics Center shall collect, report, analyze, and disseminate statistical data related to education in the United States and in other nations, including—

(1) collecting, acquiring, compiling (where appropriate, on a State-by-State basis), and disseminating full and complete statistics (disaggregated by the population characteristics described in paragraph (3)) on the condition and progress of education, at the preschool, elementary, secondary, postsecondary, and adult levels in the United States, including data on—

(O) the existence and use of school libraries

NCES surveyed academic libraries on a 3-year cycle between 1966 and 1988. Between 1988 and 1998, the ALS was a component of IPEDS and was collected on a 2-year cycle. Beginning with fiscal year 2000, the ALS is no longer a component of IPEDS, but it remains on a two-year cycle. Starting in 2013-14, IPEDS will begin to collect ALS data elements, on an annual basis. The TRP was asked to examine the various sections of the ALS and consider whether the level of detail at which the data are currently collected should be maintained, given the amount of reporting burden already faced by institutions. The TRP recognizes that other mechanisms will preserve ALS data elements not suggested for reintegration into IPEDS. Table 1 presents general information about both IPEDS and ALS.

Table 1. IPEDS and ALS general information

	IPEDS	ALS
Universe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All postsecondary institutions in the US and other jurisdictions that participate in federal student aid programs authorized under title IV of Higher Education Act Includes degree-granting and non-degree-granting institutions N = 7,178 (as of 2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses the IPEDS universe as a frame to select eligible institutions in the US Includes degree-granting institutions only N = 3,827 (as of 2008)
Data Collection Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly all IPEDS data are collected annually; some are collected biennially Collected during 3 data collection periods with fixed end dates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biennially Collected during 1 long data collection that opens in the fall and closes in March
Data Collection Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each institution identifies a "keyholder" who enters data Keyholders may key data or upload data Coordinators for some states and for-profit entities review the data before final submission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data are entered by librarians Librarians key data into the system State librarians serve as state coordinators for the survey
Data Collection Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated Help Desk available daily at toll-free number for keyholders Each survey has an NCES staff member assigned to it (7 total survey directors and 2 team leaders) Training for new keyholders, online webinars, and other trainings for keyholders and data users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support is available through Census Bureau One NCES staff member Webinar training available through the American Library Association
Data Collection Cost and Institutional Burden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall burden: 113.9 hours for 9 surveys with up to 15,000 data elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall burden: 8.3 hours for 1 survey with up to 100 data elements
Data Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Center (250,000+ visits per month) College Navigator (1 million+ visits per month) Data Feedback Report (available through IPEDS Data Center) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Comparison Tool (12,000 visits per month)
Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>First Look</i>—3 per year (most recent <i>First Look</i> downloaded 6,300+ times) IPEDS Descriptive Analysis Reports Other NCES publications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistical Analysis Reports Statistics in Brief Web Tables Issue Brief (most recent 2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>First Look</i>—1 per collection (every 2 years; most recent <i>First Look</i> downloaded 3,200+ times since release in December 2009) Other NCES publications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistical Analysis Reports (none since 2001)

Discussion Item #1: Universe

Background

Academic libraries are identified by the degree-granting institution of which they are a part. The ALS defines an academic library and determines eligibility for the survey with the following screening questions:

ALS Survey Eligibility

You are eligible to complete the survey if your institution has its own library, defined as an entity that provides all of the following:

1. Do your total library expenditures exceed \$10,000?
Yes/No
2. Do you have an organized collection of printed materials or other materials or a combination thereof?
Yes/No
3. Do you have paid, trained library staff to provide and interpret library materials to meet the informational, cultural, recreational, or educational needs of clientele?
Yes/No
4. Do you have established hours of operation during which paid, trained staff are available to meet the informational service needs of clientele?
Yes/No
5. Does the library have the physical facilities necessary to support such a collection, staff, and schedule?
Yes/No

To be eligible to complete the survey, a library must meet the ALS definition of an academic library by answering “yes” to all screening questions. The panel was asked to review the ALS screening questions to determine whether they are successfully identifying all libraries that should be included in the survey. Additionally, the panel was tasked with determining whether the library data collection should continue to be for degree-granting institutions only.

Discussion

The panel expressed concern that the eligibility screening questions are too rigid and do not account for a library that is virtual or entirely electronic. An increasing number of degree-granting institutions are exclusively or predominately distance-based, and many of these institutions offer some form of an organized collection of materials to their students. Further, if the intended focus is to collect library data to facilitate research and policy analysis, it is essential to capture data on the most inclusive universe of academic libraries. The panel agreed that in order to capture meaningful data related to academic libraries, it would first be necessary to more clearly define what constitutes an academic library and then develop eligibility questions to accurately define that universe.

However, the panel questioned the value of incorporating non-degree-granting institutions without having a clear idea of the applicability of the library data elements. Panelists were concerned that broadening the universe to include non-degree-granting institutions would increase the institutional burden on a sector with already limited resources. The panel concluded that in the case of non-degree-granting institutions, the value of the library data does not outweigh the additional reporting burden for those institutions. Further, the panel determined that it is unlikely that non-degree-

granting institutions (1) have academic libraries and (2) would be eligible to complete the library data elements after answering the screening questions.

As the panel reviewed the ALS screening questions, they identified redundancies between a number of the eligibility questions. It is expected that a library with paid, trained staff will have total expenditures that exceed \$10,000. Further, if total library expenditures exceed \$10,000, it is likely that the library will meet the remaining eligibility requirements. In addition, the panel was concerned that an “organized collection of printed materials or other materials or a combination thereof” is too ambiguous. Consider the example of a small vocational school with a monthly subscription to a magazine. The institution could consider that subscription to be an organized collection of printed materials, however this would not identify an academic library as intended by the ALS. As a result, the panel noted that the best determinate of an academic library is measured by total expenditures. Because of redundancies in the screening questions, the panel agreed that eliminating all eligibility questions except an expenditure measure will not notably impact the universe.

It was the consensus of the TRP that library data collection eligibility should be determined using a minimum library expenditure threshold and suggested NCES perform analysis to (1) determine the appropriate threshold and (2) specify whether the expenditure refers to an annual amount or to a specific fiscal year. Additionally, the panel suggested that NCES allow for customization as to which library data elements institutions report, based on the minimum threshold of expenditures. While the TRP ultimately suggested that NCES determine the minimum threshold, the group discussed an example approach dividing expenditures into three range categories. If an institution reports zero expenditures, no library data will be collected. Institutions reporting an expenditure of greater than zero but less than a minimum threshold will be asked to report on a fewer library data elements, in less detail. Institutions reporting expenditures exceeding the minimum threshold will report on the full set of library data elements suggested by the TRP. Reducing the level of detail at which the data are collected would reduce the reporting burden for a number of smaller institutions.

In order to more accurately reflect eligibility, the panel suggested that the screening questions be simplified and revised as follows:

New eligibility screening question	
1. What are your annual total library expenditures?	RV
<p><i>Based on the information provided, the institution will subsequently be presented with screens in order to report library data elements:</i></p> <p>If NO library expenses, no library data elements will be displayed</p> <p>If GREATER than 0 but LESS THAN minimum threshold, selected library data elements will be displayed</p> <p>If GREATER than minimum threshold, all reintegrated library data elements will be displayed</p>	

RV indicates an institutionally reported value.

Discussion Item #2: Key Elements to Retain

Background

In addition to identifying and suggesting data elements to retain, the panel was asked to consider potential ways that the data elements could be improved for more effective data collection. NCES is interested in decreasing the reporting burden and retaining federal data necessary for policy making

and analysis, while also improving ALS response rates. The completion of IPEDS is mandatory for all institutions that participate in or are applicants for participation in any federal student financial aid programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. IPEDS response rates are nearly 100 percent both at the component level (99.7–100 percent) and at the individual item level (percentage imputed ranges from 0 to 0.5 percent). The overall response rate among the institutions participating in the ALS is 96.7 percent. Individual item response rates range from 71.8 percent to 86.3 percent.

The ALS questionnaire collects data in nine series of questions, with up to 100 data items.

- 100 Series: Outlets
- 200 Series: Staff
- 300 Series: Library Expenditures
- 400 Series: Library Collections
- 500 Series: Library Services
- 600 Series: Library Services, Typical Week
- 700 Series: Electronic Services
- 800 Series: Information Literacy
- 900 Series: Virtual Reference

The panel reviewed the ALS instructions, definitions, and survey screens and was asked to examine the possibility of streamlining data collection for integration into IPEDS—eliminating or consolidating portions of the ALS that are most appropriately collected outside of IPEDS—in order to reduce the overall institutional burden and improve the overall quality of the data reported.

Discussion

The panel agreed that while there is value in collecting detailed information on academic libraries, IPEDS may not be the appropriate data collection for capturing all data elements from the ALS. Instead, the panel suggested that the library community determine how this information could best be collected—either through internal reporting by the libraries themselves or through another nonfederal survey—and that this topic be addressed by the Academic Library Association advisory group, if necessary. The panel noted that completion of the data items suggested for reintegration (for all series) should be mandatory. To remain consistent with IPEDS reporting, no data items will have an optional response.

The group examined the ALS by series and focused on key elements to retain, as discussed below:

100 Series: Outlets

In examining the 100 series, currently used for reporting on the count of branch and independent libraries in the ALS, the panel noted that there is no specific guidance in the ALS to include or exclude virtual and/or electronic libraries in the count. In recent years, there has been a marked increase in the number of virtual or electronic-based libraries. To best capture these data, the panel suggested reintegrating the 100 series into the IPEDS data collection and clarifying in the instructions to include virtual and/or electronic libraries when counting branch and independent libraries:

Suggested IPEDS Data Element

Outlets	Count
Number of branch and independent libraries—exclude main or central library	RV

RV indicates an institutionally reported value.

200 Series: Staff

Currently, when reporting staff data to the ALS, libraries provide the number of filled or temporarily vacant full-time equivalent (FTE) positions and the corresponding salary and wage data. The panel examined the 200 series and expressed concerns that capturing staff FTE is inconsistent with IPEDS reporting definitions. To address this concern, the panel suggested that instead of collecting FTE, IPEDS should collect a count of part-time and full-time library staff to remain consistent with how data are collected throughout IPEDS.

Further, as required by OMB, all Federal agencies that publish occupational data for statistical purposes are required to use the SOC to increase data comparability across Federal programs. Had the ALS remained a separate data collection, the next OMB review would have required alignment with the 2010 SOC. Beginning with the 2012-13 data collection year, IPEDS will be fully aligned with the 2010 SOC system.

In examining the 2010 SOC occupational categories used for reporting data in the IPEDS Human Resources (HR) component, the panel focused on integrating the most relevant library codes for inclusion in the 2012-13 HR survey. The minor 2010 SOC category 25-4000 defines Librarians, Curators, and Archivists and the hierarchical structure includes detailed occupations. Each level of detail includes a corresponding definition. After reviewing the SOC definitions, the panel agreed that the IPEDS HR component collect a count as follows:

Suggested IPEDS Data Element

Staff	Full-time count	Part-time count
Librarians	RV	RV
Library Technicians	RV	RV
Archivists, Curators, and Museum Technicians	RV	RV

RV indicates an institutionally reported value.

To assist with mapping to the new categories, NCES will include appropriate examples in the instructions. The panel agreed that the suggested categories most closely align with the current ALS occupational categories and are at a broad enough level to impose the least amount of burden.

300 Series: Library Expenditures

The 300 series collects data on funds expended by the library in the most recent fiscal year from its regular budget and from all other sources—for example, research grants, special projects, gifts and endowments, and fees for services. Several data elements in the ALS 300 series are disaggregated into detailed categories. A number of panelists agreed that defining and repurposing the existing categories is problematic because of the lack of clarity surrounding the current definitions and how the elements can be affected by changing technology. The panel noted that the IPEDS Finance component does not capture detailed expenditure data at the level of granularity in the ALS. As a result, data from this series can be gathered from the library budget but cannot be pulled from the institution's general purpose financial statement. Consequently, the panel suggested collapsing detailed categories into aggregate categories.

Removing the detail significantly decreases reporting burden, and the panel agreed that this reporting method preserves ALS trend data on expenditures. While there is value in collecting more detailed

information on expenditures and capturing data to reflect the changing dynamic from the *purchase* of materials to the *leasing* of materials, the panel concluded that IPEDS is not the appropriate instrument for collecting this information.

The ALS collects salary outlays by occupational category. The panel suggested that instead of collecting salary outlays, IPEDS should collect the expenditure of total salaries and wages. The panel discussed whether Federal Work-Study students should be included in the total salaries and wages expenses, which could possibly generate salary data for the ALS that would be inconsistent with the existing IPEDS Finance survey salary data. However, further guidance from NACUBO has clarified this issue because Federal Work-Study students are counted in the Finance survey salary expenses and thus for consistency, the salaries for these students should be included in the Libraries Total salaries and wages expenditures. The panel also decided that fringe benefit expenditures should be collected as a separate line item if the fringe benefits are paid from the library budget. The panel agreed that capturing benefits paid from outside the library budget significantly increases the reporting burden.

The panel was concerned about collecting detail by operation and maintenance expenditure type because this adds a level of complexity to reporting. Requiring institutions to report on the expenditure detail of library collection acquisitions that are not reflected as a line item in the financial statement presents a level of undue burden.

The panel agreed that the categories suggested for reintegration preserve the most important ALS trend data when possible and also impose the least amount of burden. Based on this, the panel suggested integrating the following expenditure measures into IPEDS:

Suggested IPEDS Data Element

Expenditures	Amount
Total salaries and wages	RV
Are staff fringe benefits paid out of the library budget?	RV (Y/N)
Fringe benefit expenditures if paid by the library budget	RV
Materials/services cost	CV (sum of the three data elements below)
One-time purchases of books, serial backfiles and other materials	RV
Ongoing commitments to subscriptions	RV
Other information resources	RV
Operation and maintenance expenditures	CV (sum of the two data elements below)
Preservation services	RV
All other operations and maintenance expenditures	RV
Total expenditures	CV (sum of all data elements in series)

CV indicates a calculated or prepopulated value, and RV indicates an institutionally reported value.

The panel agreed that not all data items may apply to all libraries and if the library is not involved in a particular activity, the institution should enter a zero for the expenditure amount. The panel also

suggested that NCES automatically edit the total expenditures reported in this series against the expenditure reported in the eligibility screening question in order to prevent institutions from reporting a higher total expenditure than indicated in the screening question.

400 Series: Library Collections

This series collects data on selected types of material but does not cover all materials. The panel was concerned that the ALS does not make a distinction between a physical count of materials and an electronic/digital count of materials. Thus, the panel suggested capturing the allocation of online and physical materials to allow institutions to make peer comparison on the distribution of resources. This also allows for the presentation of key trend data on the redistribution of resources from physical to electronic.

As a result of this discussion, the panel suggested revising the 400 series to include a count of physical and digital/electronic titles in each category of library collection. NCES should provide clear instructions and example scenarios, including how to count materials with two different catalog records. Further, NCES should determine the unit of measure, for example the number of titles. If the library is entirely electronic, only the digital/electronic column should be displayed. This can be accomplished by adding a check box to allow institutions to mark this distinction:

Suggested IPEDS Data Element

Is the library collection entirely electronic? Yes/No
 If YES, display Digital/Electronic column only
 If NO, display both Physical and Digital/Electronic column

Library Collections	Physical	Digital/Electronic
Books	RV	RV
Serial titles	RV	RV
Databases	*	RV
Media	RV	RV
Total (sum of all data elements in series)	CV	CV
Circulation**	RV	RV

CV indicates a calculated or prepopulated value, and RV indicates an institutionally reported value.

*Databases are digital/electronic resources only.

** Discussion is included in the 500 series.

500 Series: Library Services

In examining the 500 series, the panel determined that a number of the data elements present a proxy measure on library workload information and/or productivity measures. To remain consistent with other IPEDS reporting components, the panel agreed that these data elements should not be captured in IPEDS. Most libraries have the ability to internally track productivity and create productivity measures specific to their libraries.

However, the panel agreed that NCES should collect data on the existence and *use* of institutional academic libraries. In order for NCES to report on the use of libraries, the panel agreed that some measure of usage must be integrated into IPEDS. The panel agreed that the amount of circulation

transactions is an indicator of usage as well as an important library service. Further, the panel agreed that there is utility in separating the count of circulation transactions into physical and digit/electronic amounts based on the discussion surrounding the 400 series. As a result, the panel suggested reintegrating the count of circulation into the Library Collections series. (See table above.)

Panelists cautioned against using circulation as the sole measure of library usage. In order to provide context and maintain trend data, the panel suggested capturing the count of total interlibrary loans and documents. Further, the panel suggested revising the series heading to “interlibrary services” because this measure is not inclusive of all services provided by libraries. Based on this discussion, the TRP suggested reintegrating the following data elements:

Suggested IPEDS Data Element

Interlibrary Services	Number
Total interlibrary loans and documents provided to other libraries	RV
Total interlibrary loans and documents received	RV

RV indicates an institutionally reported value.

600 Series: Library Services, Typical Week

The 600 series collects data on weekly public service hours, gate counts and reference transactions during a typical week. IPEDS typically collects data on reporting periods of full academic years, fall ranges, or census dates. The panel noted that determining a typical week is a subjective measure prone to variation across institutions and expressed concern with the integrity of data elements measured using this type of reporting period. The panel agreed that while service hour measures and library accessibility are important library services, data in this series are better tracked by the institution via the facilities department or through an academic affairs survey. As a result, the TRP did not suggest any items from the 600 series be integrated into the IPEDS data collection.

700 Series: Electronic Services

This section requests information about the electronic services provided by the library. The panel understands that most, if not all, libraries provide each of the electronic services in this series and since this is implied, the TRP did not suggest any of the 700 series be integrated integration into the IPEDS data collection.

800 Series: Information Literacy

In examining the 800 series, the panel noted that while enhancing information literacy skills is important, IPEDS is not the most appropriate data collection to capture this outcome because IPEDS does not request information about discipline-based standards. As a result, the panel did not suggest any of the 800 series be integrated into the IPEDS data collection.

900 Series: Virtual Reference

The panel was hesitant to include detailed virtual reference interaction items into IPEDS because of the likelihood of changes to technology in coming years. The panel agreed that there is no way to predict whether the virtual reference detail will be relevant in future years, nor is there a way for NCES to anticipate the changing scope of virtual reference interactions. Therefore, the panel suggested reintegrating the following data element to allow institutions to indicate whether their library supports virtual reference services:

Suggested IPEDS Data Element

Virtual Reference

Does your library support virtual reference services? Yes/No

It is the expectation of the TRP that a very small percentage of institutions will indicate that their library does not support virtual reference services. The TRP recommends that NCES analyze the responses 1 year after implementation and, if the overwhelming majority of institutions support virtual reference services, NCES should remove this data element from the IPEDS collection.

Discussion Item #3: Should ALS Remain a Separate Component or Should the Data Elements Be Allocated to Existing IPEDS Components?

Background

IPEDS data are collected during three data collection periods with fixed end dates, as shown below:

Collection Period and Components	Collection Opens	Collection Closes to Keyholders
Fall collection Institutional Characteristics Completions 12-month Enrollment	Early September	Late October
Winter collection Human Resources Student Financial Aid	Early December	Early February
Spring collection Finance Enrollment Graduation Rates 200% Graduation Rates	Early December	Early April

Nearly all IPEDS data are collected annually; some are collected biennially.

Discussion

The panel came to the consensus that reintegrating the ALS data elements into IPEDS does not substantially increase burden because academic libraries already track all this information to report to the ALS. However, the panel agreed that the *method* by which the data elements are collected in IPEDS affects burden. In light of this, the panel was tasked with determining the most appropriate place to collect the data in IPEDS.

The panel first examined allocating the suggested library expenditure data elements into the existing IPEDS Finance component but discovered that accounting standards prevent integration of the detailed expenditure items in this component. In light of this, the panel explored integrating the expenditure data elements into the IPEDS Institutional Characteristics component. From a timing standpoint, an institution's ability to report expenditure data in the fall is entirely dependent upon the institution's fiscal year. A fall deadline presents a significant change from the ALS's March deadline.

Additionally, in order for an institution to report expenditure data, the IPEDS keyholder will likely need to work with the library to gather data. IPEDS keyholders often rely on staff from various institutional offices to complete or assist in completing data. Given the amount of effort that the keyholder would likely spend gathering expenditure data from the library staff and/or business office, the TRP suggested that expenditure data be collected separately as an additional, separate component.

Further, the panel determined that since *expenditure* data require an additional, separate component, NCES should develop an additional component in IPEDS to collect annually *all library data elements* suggested for reintegration into IPEDS, with the exception of staff data (200 series), which will be collected in IPEDS HR. When IPEDS aligns with the 2010 SOC, NCES should include the three library staff categories as data collection items in the HR survey. Collecting this data in HR will ensure consistent reporting and avoid duplication of data. Institutions' personnel offices already track this information, so keyholders will not need to rely on the library department to gather data.

The panel determined that the Winter collection is the most appropriate time to collect the new library component because (1) there is already a high institutional burden associated with the Spring data collection and (2) the biggest obstacle to implementing the library data collection in the Fall collection is the variation in fiscal year across institutions. A January–December fiscal year does not allow for reporting the most recent expenditure data in the Fall collection. To implement this new component, the panel suggested that NCES add the eligibility screening question to either the IC-Header or IC survey, as NCES sees fit. Based on the response to the screening question, institutions will be presented with the new library questions in a subsequent component.

The panel discussed ways to decrease the burden for small institutions with limited resources (both limited library resources and limited reporting resources) and agreed that allowing institutions with library expenditures below a minimum threshold to report on fewer data elements may decrease burden. The TRP came to consensus that although the new component collects data on six series, presenting one simplified series to institutions that have expenditures below the minimum threshold should be sufficient for these purposes. Therefore, the TRP suggested that only institutions meeting a set threshold should report on the new library component annually in the Winter collection. Institutions reporting on the condensed data items can do so in the IC survey in the Fall collection. No additional component is needed for these institutions to report.

Discussion Item #4: What Is the Impact on Published Tables, *First Look Reports*, Data Feedback Reports, and Data Tools?

Background

At the conclusion of each collection period, the data collected in each of the survey components are migrated to the IPEDS data tools for dissemination. Data are made available to researchers and others through the IPEDS Data Center (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/>). The site contains all IPEDS variables and a limited number of non-IPEDS variables (about 10,000 to 15,000 in total for the most recent year) and has more than 250,000 visits per month. Designed as a centralized, web-based tool for the retrieval and analysis of IPEDS data, the system allows users to access and evaluate institutional data using a wide range of analytical features that include the ability to construct customized data sets, download full data files, and create different reports including statistics and trends.

Available through the Data Center, the IPEDS Data Feedback Report is intended to provide institutions with a context for examining the data they submit to IPEDS each collection year. The custom reports are mailed to the chief administrator of every Title IV school in the fall. A web-based tool, the Executive Peer Tool (ExPT) is available as a complementary resource to the reports, designed to provide campus executives easy access to institutional comparison group data and access a wider range of IPEDS variables.

In addition to the IPEDS Data Center, NCES makes IPEDS data public through a college search site. To help parents, students, high school counselors, and others obtain information during the college search process, NCES developed College Navigator (<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>). The site averages over 1 million visits per month.

NCES publishes a collection of *First Look* reports that highlight key findings from each IPEDS data collection cycle and that address postsecondary education policy issues with minimal analyses. Three *First Look* reports are published annually and are made available for online viewing and for download. The most recent *First Look* has been downloaded more than 6,300 times since its initial release in February 2011. NCES also publishes IPEDS Descriptive Analysis Reports, Statistical Analysis Reports (most recently published in 2007), Statistics in Brief (most recently published in 2011), Web Tables (most recently published in 2011), and Issue Briefs (most recently published in 2010).

Discussion

After the library data elements are integrated into IPEDS, the data will be available to be included in published tables, *First Look* reports, Data Feedback Reports, and data tools. Reintroducing the ALS variables into the IPEDS data collection may increase the visibility of the ALS data, as indicated in the IPEDS publication and data tools usage statistics. NCES will not publish a separate *First Look* report highlighting academic library data, but will instead integrate an academic library table into one of the three existing IPEDS *First Look* reports. NCES will publish a compendium of all library data tables not included in the *First Look*. All library variables will be available in the Data Center. NCES is limited on the number of pages that can be included on the printed Data Feedback Reports, so one table highlighting library data will be included.

The panel was asked to determine the most appropriate table(s) for inclusion in the *First Look* and Data Feedback Reports. The TRP suggested soliciting further input from the library community and potential users of the data as to the specific chart to include.

Summary of Proposed Data Items for Reintegration into IPEDS

Below is a list of the changes included in the discussion sections of this report.

Additions to Institutional Characteristics or Institutional Characteristics Header

Add an additional screening question to IC or IC-Header (as determined by NCES) for all degree-granting institutions to determine, based on a minimum threshold of expenditures, whether the institution has an academic library:

New eligibility screening question	
1. What are your annual total library expenditures?	RV
<p><i>Based on the information provided, the institution will subsequently be presented with screens in order to report library data elements:</i></p> <p>If NO library expenses, no library data elements will be displayed</p> <p>If GREATER than 0 but LESS THAN minimum threshold, selected library data elements will be displayed</p> <p>If GREATER than minimum threshold, all reintegrated library data elements will be displayed</p>	

RV indicates an institutionally reported value.

Additions to Human Resources Component

Suggested IPEDS Data Element		
Staff	Full-time count	Part-time count
Librarians	RV	RV
Library Technicians	RV	RV
Archivists, Curators, and Museum Technicians	RV	RV

RV indicates an institutionally reported value.

Addition of a new annual reporting component to the Winter collection for all degree-granting institutions meeting a minimum expenditure threshold to collect the following data items:

Suggested IPEDS Data Element		
Outlets	Count	
Number of branch and independent libraries—exclude main or central library	RV	
Expenditures	Amount	
Total salaries and wages	RV	
Are staff fringe benefits paid out of the library budget?	RV (Y/N)	
Fringe benefit expenditures if paid by the library budget	RV	
Materials/services cost	CV (sum of the three data elements below)	
One-time purchases of books, serial backfiles and other materials	RV	
Ongoing commitments to subscriptions	RV	
Other information resources	RV	
Operations and maintenance expenditures	CV (sum of the two data elements below)	
Preservation services	RV	
All other operations and maintenance expenditures	RV	
Total expenditures	CV (sum of all data elements in series)	
Is the library collection entirely electronic? Yes/No If YES, display Digital/Electronic column only If NO, display both Physical and Digital/Electronic column		
Library Collections	Physical	Digital/Electronic
Books	RV	RV
Serial titles	RV	RV
Databases	*	RV
Media	RV	RV
Total (sum of all data elements in series)	CV	CV
Circulation	RV	RV
Interlibrary Services	Number	
Total interlibrary loans and documents provided to other libraries	RV	
Total interlibrary loans and documents received	RV	
Virtual Reference		
Does your library support virtual reference services?	Yes/No	

CV indicates a calculated or prepopulated value, and RV indicates an institutionally reported value.

*Databases are digital/electronic resources only.

Addition of a new annual reporting component to the Winter collection for all degree-granting institutions reporting library expenditures greater than \$0 library but less than the minimum expenditure threshold to collect the following data items:

Suggested IPEDS Data Element

Is the library collection entirely electronic? Yes/No
 If YES, display Digital/Electronic column only
 If NO, display both Physical and Digital/Electronic column

Library Collections	Physical	Digital/Electronic
Books	RV	RV
Serial titles	RV	RV
Databases	*	RV
Media	RV	RV
Total (sum of all data elements in series)	CV	CV
Circulation	RV	RV

CV indicates a calculated or prepopulated value, and RV indicates an institutionally reported value.
 *Databases are digital/electronic resources only.

Implications on Reporting Burden for Institutions

A number of the ALS data elements will not be reintegrated into IPEDS, so the TRP agreed that the current estimate of 8.3 burden hours is too high for the new component. To provide context, the panel reviewed the burden estimates for the various IPEDS surveys and determined that the 200 percent Graduation Rates survey is similar to the new library component based on the number of questions. As such, the panel estimated that the approximate time required to review instructions, search data sources, complete and review their responses, and transmit or disclose information is approximately 4 hours.

What Are the Reporting Implications of These Suggestions?

The sustained process of transition into IPEDS will follow four steps:

1. After the TRP process is complete, NCES will submit to OMB changes to its information collection clearance for IPEDS; public comments will be received.
2. Data collection *preview* screens for 2012-13 will be developed and loaded into the web-based data collection system (either integrated into components or as a stand-alone survey).
3. In September 2013, the collection system will open with ALS integrated as a separate, annual Winter component into the IPEDS data collection for institutions exceeding the minimum threshold. The selected data elements will be integrated into the IC component for institutions with library expenditures below the minimum threshold.
4. In 2014, data will be available in publications and data tools.

Comments

RTI is committed to improving the quality and usefulness of the library data reintegrated into IPEDS. **We encourage interested parties to send any comments or concerns about this topic to Janice Kelly-Reid, IPEDS Project Director, at ipedsTRPcomment@rti.org by October 18, 2011.** As noted above, RTI is specifically interested in the **implications on reporting burden as well as on the quality and usefulness of the library data elements** based on the proposed revisions.