**College Scorecard Counselor and Advisor Training**

**Benefits of Using College Scorecard Data Handout**

College Scorecard offers two primary benefits in guiding students through the college selection process:

* Focus on high-priority data elements, providing a filtered and refined view.
* Reliable data from accurate sources, ensuring trustworthiness in decision-making.

The table below summarizes the benefits of College Scorecard by category.

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| **Categories of Data** | **Importance of Category** | **Research Justification** | **Data Sources** |
| Costs | Addresses the common overestimation of college costs by students. Offers average annual costs (net price) rather than just tuition and fees, providing a realistic financial expectation. | Research shows students tend to overestimate college costs. College Scorecard focuses on average annual costs (net price) for a more accurate assessment.  *What high schoolers and their parents know about public 4-year tuition and fees in their state*. (2018). National Center for Education Statistics | United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics based on data reported from individual schools with consistent methodology and data definitions. |
| Graduation and retention | Indicates the likelihood of student success and institutional effectiveness. Key for evaluating the academic environment. | Research shows that the overall 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began seeking a bachelor’s degree at 4-year degree-granting institutions in fall 2014 was 64 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).  Research also shows that at 4-year institutions, only about 62% of college students finish their program within six years (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2023). This number is lower for 2-year institutions, where only 34% of students finish their program within 3 years or 150% of normal time required for completion. An example of completing a credential within 150 percent of the normal time is completing a 2-year degree within 3 years. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). This means there are many who are still repaying student loans for a non-existent award. (Lee, S. & Shapiro, D., 2023). |
| Typical earnings | One common reasons students cite in choosing to go to college is the expansion of employment opportunities. To that end, data on the earnings and employment prospects of former students can provide key information. | Implies that for individuals, assessing potential future earnings and returns from their education should be a part of their decision-making process when considering higher education investments​​.  Barrow, Lisa, and Ofer Malamud. "Is College a Worthwhile Investment?" Annual Review of Economics 7 (2015): 519-555​ | IRS calculated earnings data based on W-2 and 1040SE filings |
| Field of study | Highlights potential outcomes for specific majors, aiding students in choosing a field aligned with their career aspirations and financial goals. | Outcomes for specific fields of study within an institution can vary substantially. For example, for institutions that offered more than one bachelor’s degree, the average institution’s highest-earning bachelor’s degree was estimated to be 2.5 times higher than its lowest-earning bachelor’s degree on year after completion.  U.S. Department of Education. "Field of Study Data Documentation." College Scorecard. Last modified March 2021. https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/assets/FieldOfStudyDataDocumentation.pdf.  Reeves, Richard V., Dimitrios Halikias, and Eleanor Krause. "Putting Your Major to Work: Career Paths after College." Brookings, July 12, 2017. https://www.brookings.edu/research/putting-your-major-to-work-career-paths-after-college/. | IRS calculated earnings data based on W-2 and 1040SE filings. Federal Student Aid data systems that track student loans. |
| Median loan debt | Provides a clear picture of the debt burden, a significant consideration for financial planning | Student loans impact many undergraduate students. In 2020–21, some 38 percent of first-time, full-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students were awarded loan aid.  National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). Loans for Undergraduate Students and Debt for Bachelor’s Degree Recipients. Condition of Education. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved 3/6/2024, from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cub> | Federal Student Aid data systems that track student loans. |
| Campus diversity | Diversity has been linked to enhanced problem-solving and performance. It enriches the educational experience, preparing students for a global workforce | Groups of more diverse problem solvers have been found to outperform groups of less diverse problem solvers, and companies with more diversity in their leadership also tend to be top financial performers. Research suggests that employers “encourage a more diversified workforce and create awareness to increase organizational performance.” (Turi, J.A., et al., 2022) | United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics based on data reported from individual schools with consistent methodology and data definitions. |
| Test scores and acceptance | Assists in targeting schools where students have a realistic chance of admission, making the search more efficient. | Efficient school searches focus on schools where a prospective student might be admitted and succeed. College advisors should assist students in searching for colleges that match their qualifications, interests, and goals. Students are encouraged to apply to multiple colleges to help them find a matching school and apply for a backup college to which they are more confident about being admitted while considering the required test scores needed for admission.  Over the years, studies have shown that various achievement tests, like SAT and ACT, may predict college performance. However, many schools have shied away from requiring test scores, especially during and post-pandemic. Current research has indicated that SAT and ACT scores help in college admission decisions for many universities. In a recent paper Chetty, Deming, and Friedman discuss the relationship between standardized test scores and college GPAs. They concluded these three things:   1. There is a correlation between students with higher SAT/ACT scores and higher college GPAs as compared to peers with lower SAT/ACT scores; 2. High school GPA does not predict academic success in college; and 3. There is a correlation between SAT/ACT scores and comparable college grades for students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. (Chetty, et al., 2024) |

**References**

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