

Presentation Script

So now that we've learned a bit about the focus group method, let's see it in action.

Before we begin though I'd like to give you some background on our discussion topic and the wonderful group of people who are here to participate.

Background on our topic:

The Undergraduate Student Success and Graduation Rate Dashboard was developed by a subcommittee of the WSCUC Commission to provide our region with a method for gathering accurate information on student completion.

Specifically, the dashboard is a tool for tracking an institutions performance in the areas of retention and graduation.

The method utilizes six data points for a period of eight years to calculate two basic measures- the **unit redemption rate** and the **absolute graduation rate**.

The **unit redemption rate** is the proportion of units granted by an institution are eventually 'redeemed' for a degree from that institution.

So another way to think about it is- if units are a proxy for tuition- how much of student tuition dollars eventually result in a degree.

-PAUSE-

The **absolute graduation rate** is the proportion of students that eventually graduate.

In other words the absolute graduation rate is the percentage of students who begin studying at an institution that eventually graduate. The absolute graduation rate is also very inclusive. It includes first-time or transfer, full-time or part-time students.

-PAUSE-

The method was piloted in fall of 2013 by a limited number of WASC institutions. WASC introduced a voluntary pilot it to all member institutions July 15- August 15, 2014.

The purpose of the pilot was to help the WSCUC Commission and staff learn from a larger group of institutions how the method works and what challenges they may be facing in responding to this request. The Commission has required that starting in May of 2015 institutions will be expected to provide this data as part of the WSCUC annual report.

The reason we are conducting this focus group is to find out:

- What challenges were faced by institutions generating the data?
- What can WSCUC do to better support institutions in responding to this new reporting requirement?
- Is the GRD initiative perceived as worthwhile by those who participated?

Profile of the group (for the audience)

The focus group is comprised of staff members whose institutions responded to the extended pilot request for the Undergraduate Student Success and Graduation Rate Dashboard.

All hold the key role of institutional research lead at their institutions.

Introduction

Tell us your first name and your favorite breakfast food?

Background/Communications

1. How did you first find out about the Graduation Rate Dashboard? What was your initial impression?
 - a. Did you have any immediate concerns when you heard about it? What was it?
 - b. Was there anything about the communications that you found confusing?
2. Do you think the GRD initiative is worthwhile? Why or why not?

Challenges

3. When it came time to working on the request did you encounter any challenges? What were they?
 - a. What questions arose in the process of preparing the data needed to complete the worksheets?
 - b. Were there specific student types, credit types, or grade types that you found particularly challenging?

Speculation

1. What can WASC do to better support institutions in responding to this new reporting requirement?

Focus Group Participation Consent Agreement

Topic: The WSCUC Undergraduate Student Success and Graduation Rate Dashboard

You have been invited to participate in a focus group study on the WSCUC Undergraduate Student Success and Graduation Rate Dashboard extended pilot.

The focus group is intended to collect information regarding your experience responding to this data request, with specific interest in any challenges you or your institution may have faced in understanding, collecting or responding. By collecting your feedback we hope to clarify future requests, improve documentation and training around the method and better support all WSCUC institutions in accurately collecting, reporting and understanding these measures.

The focus group will be conducted before a live audience at the 2014 CAIR Conference in San Diego, CA. To help ensure we accurately capture all your comments we will be recording the session. You will not be identified by name in any written transcripts or feedback.

You have the right to withdraw your consent to participate at any time. If you have any comments, questions or concerns about the project please contact Henry Hernandez, WSCUC Director of Communications and Information Systems at hhernandez@wascsenior.org, (510)995-3169.

In appreciation for your involvement you will be presented with a \$50 American Express Gift Card at the completion of the session.

Acknowledgement

Please initial one and sign below:

____ Yes, I agree to participate in this study.

____ I do not agree to participate in this study.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Focus Group Resources

Tag/Word Cloud Generators

<http://www.jasondavies.com/wordcloud/>

Free, good controls with vector graphic support

<http://tagcrowd.com/>

Qualitative Analysis Software

Atlas.ti- <http://atlasti.com/>

Windows/MacOS

Nvivo- <http://www.qsrinternational.com/>

Windows/MacOS

Allows for easy import from SurveyMonkey and EndNote (PC Version only)

Maxqda- <http://www.maxqda.com/>

Windows/MacOS

Other Helpful Resources

Krueger RA, Casey MA. [Focus Groups, A Practical Guide for Applied Research. SAGE Publications](#); 2014.

Morgan DL. [Focus Groups as Qualitative Research](#). SAGE; 1997.