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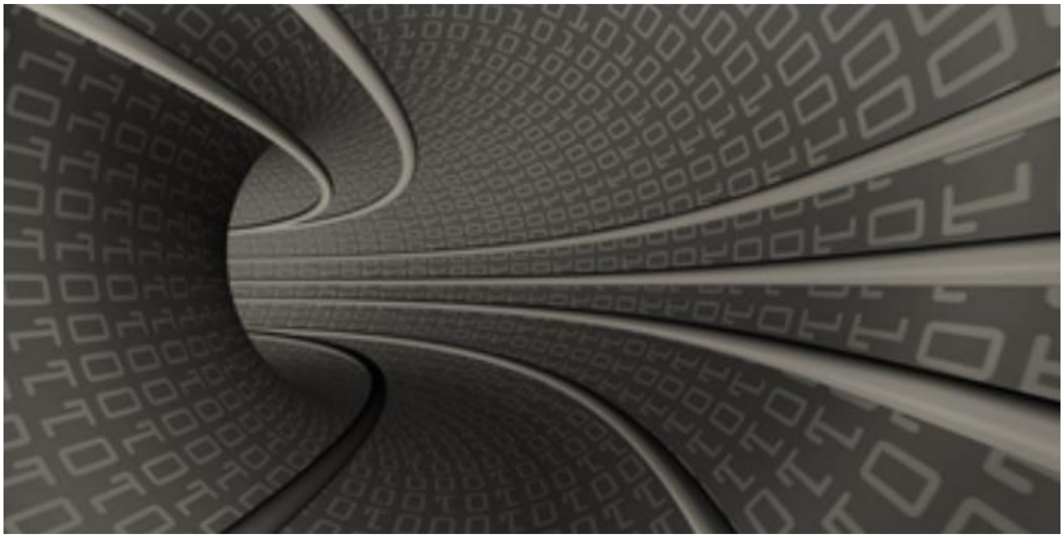

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

A DATA GUIDE FOR CHAIRS

Draft Version 1.2

A Resource for Departments | OIRA

Contents

Introduction

This document is a guidebook for chairs that describes the most commonly used sources of data available from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). These resources can help department chairs understand enrollment trends, craft arguments for additional faculty lines, research retention trends, and otherwise assist the department in their yearly activities.

The OIRA main webpage is located at www.oakland.edu/oira.

Enrollment Data by Department

Users have two options when it comes to finding basic enrollment data on the OIRA website. The most flexible option is to use OIRA's interactive enrollment database. This database is simply a sophisticated Excel spreadsheet that allows users to 'slice' the data as desired. It is currently located in the 'Enrollment' section, under 'Breakdown of Enrollment'.

This database requires Excel versions 2010 or later. Mac users may also experience problems when trying to use this database, as the slicer functionality is only available on the most recent version of Excel for Mac.

Users with the appropriate technology, however, have a very powerful tool at their disposal. A simple table is displayed on the left hand side of the tool, while the right hand side showcases numerous 'slicers' that the user can select. Doing so dynamically changes the pivot table – so users can select just the years they want to view, with just the departments they want to view. There are a host of other selections that you can also select, including breakdowns by gender, grad/undergraduate status, student entry type, fall/winter semesters, race/ethnicity, individual major codes, etc. You can make multiple selections within a specific slicer by holding down the shift or control key while selecting.

For users that prefer 'static' views, there are also flat files by semester that list student enrollment. These flat files are broken down by undergraduate/graduate status and by gender and race/ethnicity. These can be found in the following menu location: Enrollment > Breakdown of Enrollment > By School and College (Tab). Here, undergraduate and graduate enrollment will be displayed on separate drop down headings.

Degrees

Degrees are displayed much in the same way as enrollment information - using the same slicer format as described above. Once again, a flat file is also available for those that prefer it. These flat files are located in the 'historical archive' tab.

Grade Distribution Data by Course and Faculty

By far, the most visited resource is actually one that students frequent the most – our public grade distributions by faculty. This resource displays, by semester, the grade distribution for each section since about 2010. Please note that sections with small enrollments, including many graduate courses, are not reported to protect student privacy.

Departments use this data frequently to examine the distribution of grades for entire courses or sometimes entire levels of courses (i.e. all 200 level courses in their department, etc.). The data is presented in an Excel 'flat file' that displays the results by instructor and CRN key. The left hand navigation in the Excel document can be easily aggregated up to the course level with one simple click on the '2' button in the upper left corner.

Retention Rates by Department

Retention rates by department are located in: Retention & Graduation Rates > Detail by School/College and Department. Chairs and other interested persons are able to see retention rates by program. It's important to understand that these rates are not necessarily comparable to the rates calculated for the overall university. Conceptually, they are all retention rates, but there are differences in the calculations for methodological reasons. The best way to use the rates talked about in this section is in examining year over year trends. It may be feasible to compare your own rates with those of other units within the university, but such comparisons are usually not encouraged – various departments will have considerable nuance within their rates, and a failure to appreciate those nuances may lead to unproductive comparisons.

The first rate that we recommend departments using is located in: Retention & Graduation Rates > Detail by School/College and Department > Fall to Fall Retention by Department.

This Excel document lists fall to fall retention rates from 2006 to the most recent data available. Please note that you'll have to scroll to the right to see more recent data. This document makes use of Excel sheets, which are essentially tabs that can be cycled through on the bottom navigation of Excel. The College of Arts & Sciences is presented in the first sheet, but all other schools are present as a distinct tab.

Each year is broken down into two categories; FTIACs and Transfer students. Unlike national rates, which show the rates of students in a 'cohort' fashion, these rates simply show the percentage of students that where enrolled in a previous fall semester that returned in the subsequent fall. We exclude seniors from this report, because we expect them to graduate (and hence, not return). The return rates are further broken down by the percentage of students that return and stayed within the same major, and the percentage that returned but switched majors. Some departments have very small majors, so their data may change dramatically from one year to the next. Please use caution when making generalizations based on small samples sizes.

The other resource that units may find useful is the non-returning students by department report. Unlike the previous report, this report is presented in a cohort-fashion, and tracks only new students (both FTIACs and Transfer students). Again, this Excel document uses multiple sheets, which can be navigated using the bottom left options.

The downside with using cohorted data is that the sample size plummets. Because this display is somewhat experimental, only overall school/college results are displayed on the first sheet, and only CAS majors are displayed on the second sheet. If chairs find this data useful, we may expand it, by department, to other schools. Several years of data are presented, and users will need to scroll down to see the results for transfer students. The most relevant column to examine for chairs is the column labeled 'Percent of Major Not Enrolled'.

University Retention and Graduation Rates

The most commonly accepted method to calculate graduation and retention rates is to use cohorted students. In almost all national comparison data, only first-time full-time students are cohorted and displayed. (This is the methodology reported to the federal IPEDS system, which all institutions are required to report).

Current retention and graduation rates are located on the OIRA web page under the retention and graduation rates left-hand navigation and can be found by clicking on the large black buttons. Retention rates show the cohort year on the bottom (i.e. the year students entered the university) while also breaking down the percentage of students that were retained and were retained with enough earned credits to graduate within 4 years (i.e. they were sophomores at the start of their second year). The retention document is a graphic loaded into Excel: the first sheet displays first year retention rates while the second sheet shows second year retention rates. There has been considerable increase over the years in the percentage of students that are on track to graduate in 4 years, with considerably large spikes for the 2012 and beyond cohorts. Graduation rates are displayed similarly, and are broken down into 4, 5, and 6 year rates.

Program & General Education Assessment Resources

Though it's not strictly data, assessment related resources for both program assessment and general education assessment are located on the OIRA website as well, under the assessment of student learning left-hand navigation. Forms for completing assessment plans and reports, schedules, general resources, and contact information for questions are all located within these resources.

Research on OU Students

OIRA produces a number of research reports, usually about students themselves. When we do, we place most of them publicly on our website for the campus community. They can be found under the research and presentations section in the left-hand navigation. Topics vary, but typically cover research on survey results we conduct, financial aid, student outcomes, time to degree, diversity issues, advanced placement credit, etc.

Surveys

OU students participate in numerous surveys. Those that are sponsored by OIRA have their results placed on our website. For the most part, departments will find the NSSE survey to be the most useful. The NSSE survey (National Survey of Student Engagement) is a survey specially designed for students to provide information about their undergraduate experience, including their views about the quality of their education and how they spend their time.

While NSSE curates opinions on current students, the CIRP survey examines the opinions of entering students during their orientation before they even start on campus. The CIRP survey usually includes an excellent overview of the contents of the survey for the latest year, but additional details are included in the full results, all of which is available on our website.

Common Metrics for Program Review

Program review, whether formal or informal, can be a complicated process. OIRA has developed an easy to use tool to assist chairs with their review of programs. The tool contains common metrics for departments that list some basic data that most departments will find useful. Specifically, it shows a 10 year history on the following data elements: Enrollment by Major (UG and Grad), Degrees Awarded (UG and Grad), Student Credit Hours per Faculty FTE, Total Student Credit Hours Delivered, and Student to Faculty Ratios. Each of these pieces of data are available by department and some are even available by program where applicable. The data is presented in easy to use Excel graphs. The data is usable only by those with Excel versions 2010 or later. Much like the Interactive Enrollment Database, Mac users may not be able to use the resource appropriately. The Common Metrics data set is available by request (oira@oakland.edu).

Departmental Support Data

You may have heard, or perhaps even remember, that at one point in time we had what was called 'Departmental Support' data available on our website. This data is no longer posted on our website. However, it is still available by request! Departmental support data displays some fairly detailed data on student credit hours, faculty numbers, student to faculty FTE, and other assorted metrics – all displayed by department. For those interested, your access is only an e-mail away (oira@oakland.edu). Departmental Support data is another tool that departments can use in program review. Some of this data is actually available in the Common Metrics resource listed above, but the level of detail in the Departmental Support data is often more fine grained. This data is available in flat files, so it is ideal for those that are not able to use the slicer functionality presented in the Common Metrics resource.

Student Credit Hour Generation

There are a couple of ways to look at student credit hour (SCH) generation. The best data exists in the aforementioned departmental support data or the Common Metrics data. But, those data have an update cycle that is often behind what many departments prefer. For fall semesters, users can find student credit hour generation by rubric. For many departments, examining the rubric credit generation will give you data similar to the departmental support data or Common Metrics data. The caveat here, is that if you have a large number of faculty in your department that teach credits in other discipline, this report will count those credits in that other discipline.

Unfortunately, this resource only displays fall data. But, academic year data is available. However, it has a slightly different format. Instead of displaying student credit hours, it displays Fiscal Year Equivalent Students (FYES) – which is a state derived metric for calculating student FTE (full-time equivalency). But, it's essentially just another way to count credit generation. This report also examines the data by rubric – so if you come from a department where faculty are routinely teaching in other disciplines, then the departmental support data or the common metrics data is a better resource for you.

OIRA does not provide revenue generation data by department. Department's are encouraged to use student credit hour generation instead, especially since they are fundamentally linked.

Enrollment by Course

Departments can also examine historical enrollments by course, an especially useful resource for planning future section offerings.

The data is displayed in Excel flat files. To get to it, go to our website (www.oakland.edu/oira) and click on:

1. Breakdown of enrollment
2. By School and College (a section in the top area)
3. Course Enrollment Summary (which opens up a drop down section)
4. From there, select the term you want (or click on the Historical Data to go to a page with that goes back to fall 2008).