Standardizing College Admissions Data from Vendors: The Path & the Promise

Michael Hovland, PhD, University of Iowa

Monday, March 26, 2018, 10:30-11:45 AM

Session ID 7117

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March 25-28, 2018
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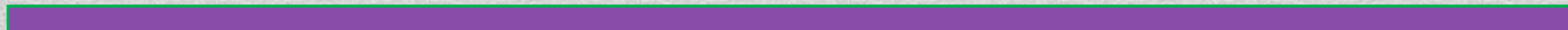Advancing Global Higher Education

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- If you must leave the session early, please do so as discreetly as possible

- Please avoid side conversation during the session

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Introduction

- Many institutions purchase search names from multiple data providers such as ACT, College Board, NRCCUA, Cappex, Chegg, and CBSS and receive student names from many other organizations as well, such as NACAC, College Week Live, and Raise.Me

- The number of search vendors increases every year

- The output files from these data providers are not even standardized for simple fields such as postal code, date of birth, and high school grad year, let alone fields such as intended major, race/ethnicity, and religious affiliation

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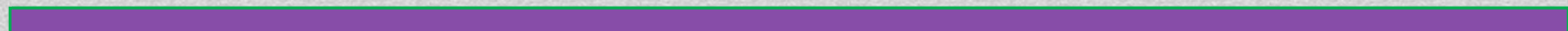Advancing Global Higher Education

Introduction, contd.

- As a result, campuses (and CRM software vendors) must build extensive lookup tables and crosswalk tables to put non-standard data into a standardized form

- Rather than having hundreds of campuses do the heavy lifting of standardizing the data, it makes more sense for a small number of data providers to do the heavy lifting on behalf of all the clients that support their services

- Our position is that data providers can decide what data fields they wish to collect and report to clients. However, any data they decide to report should be standardized with similar data from other data providers

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Learning Outcomes of This Session

The lack of standardized data affects all colleges and universities

- After this session, I hope you'll have a better understanding of the problem, the range of possible solutions, and most importantly that you will get involved in making solutions happen.

- The effort has been officially endorsed by NACAC and AACRAO. Now we need grassroots support to push for change.

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Current State of Efforts

- Data Standardization Working Group organized in 2016 and has met at NACAC 2016 and NACAC 2017

- The group comprises representatives from all the major vendors as well as several representatives from colleges and universities

- Beginning this spring the Working Group will be "adopted" and supported by PESC (Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council)

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Data Elements to Standardize

- Student Attributes

- Geography

- Enrollment Preferences

Student Attributes

- Date of Birth
- Sex
- Race/Ethnicity (Federal values)
- Race/Ethnicity (Raw values)
- HS Graduation Year
- High School Code

- Home School Code
- Phone
- GPA
- Class Rank
- Religious Affiliation
- Citizenship status
- Parent/ guardian education

Basic Principles for Attributes

- For date fields, determine recommended formatting
- For phone, determine recommended formatting
- For category fields (e.g., race/ethnicity)
  - determine a recommended numeric or alpha single character code
  - determine the corresponding label for the label field
  - determine format (upper/lower, etc.)
- For all category fields, the values are a complete list; individual vendors may be choose to report a subset of values
- For category fields, multiple values are never reported in one field

Geography

- State Code Alpha
- State Code Numeric
- Country
- County Code
- Province Name
- Zip Code
- Zip+4

- Non-US Postal Code
- Postal Delivery Point
- Postal Correction Character

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Basic Principles for Geographic Data

- For category fields (e.g., country)
  - determine which external standards to follow for fields like country codes
  - determine a recommended numeric or alpha single character code
  - determine the corresponding label for the label field
  - determine format (upper/lower, etc.)
- Determine formatting for fields like zip code

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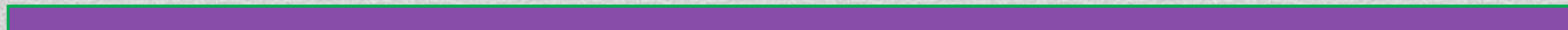Orlando, Florida / www.aacrao.org

Enrollment Preferences

- Intended Majors
- Preferred College size
- Highest level of education to complete
- Preferred College type
- Preferred College Affiliation
- Preferred distance/location

- Preferred College setting
- Family Income

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Basic Principles for Enrollment Prefs

- For category fields (e.g., parent/guardian education)
  - determine a recommended numeric or alpha single character code
  - determine the corresponding label for the label field
  - determine format (upper/lower, etc.)
  - standardize values across vendors
- For continuum variables such as HS GPA and class rank, standardize the values across vendors

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Why So Important to Standardize Intended Majors

- The most difficult field to standardize, but the most to gain

- The data point most closely associated with a student's enrollment

- The data point most often associated with specific and campus-wide recruitment efforts

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Engineering, General as an Example

Codes	Labels
• 14	• ENGINEERING
• 14.01	• Engineering, General
• 14.0101	• Pre-Engineering
• 14.0102	• Engineering
• 450	• Preengineering
• 490	• Engineering (Pre-Engineering), Gen
• 540	• Engineering (General)
• 1175	• Math & Engineering
• 1375	
• 43	

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The Goal for Intended Majors

- One common list of no more than 500 majors that vendors would use all or part of
- One CIP code for each intended major
- Use an intermediate step of cross-walking every vendor code and label to a preferred CIP code
- Choose major labels that are descriptive, short, and simple enough to be easily understood by high school students
- Choose an alphabetization so students will find majors of interest ("Engineering, Civil" vs. "Civil Engineering")

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Possible Next Steps

- Publish crosswalk tables on PESC site

- Conduct surveys on campus preferences for specific data elements

- Write R code to clean up vendor files at point of data entry

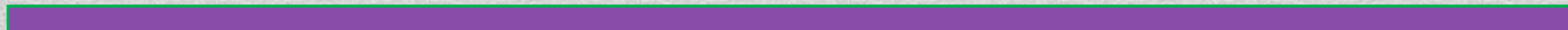- Publish crosswalk files across vendors for each data item

How You Can Help

- When you interact with vendors, ask them what plans they have to standardize their data, specially when they ask you to do something, such as:

  - Pilot a new product or be involved in a research project

  - Partner on a conference presentation

- Tell them that non-standard data makes unnecessary work and expense for your campus

- Make sure vendors know you care!

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How You Can Help, contd.

- Talk with your CRM and admissions software vendors about data standardization – in a sense they have the most to gain
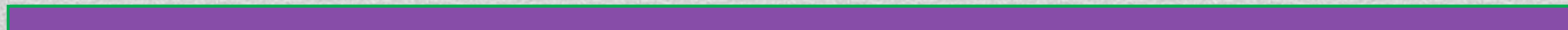
Questions?
Comments?

Thank You!

Michael Hovland, PhD

michael-hovland@uiowa.edu

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