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**Overview of the National Student  
Clearinghouse (NSC) History, Evolution,  
and Data Use**

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## Today's Topics

### Part I: History and Evolution of NSC and Context for New Outcome Metrics

- The Accountability and Assessment Landscape in 2017
- NSC as an Integral Part of the National Postsecondary Data Infrastructure

### Part II: Overview of NSC Data Collections and Data Use Cases Where Clearinghouse Services Can Help

- Accreditation Metrics
- IPEDS Outcome Measures
- Veterans Outcome Measures

### Part III: What's in the pipeline? How StudentTracker 2.0 is Being Upgraded to Ease Institutional Reporting Burdens

- Institutional Reporting and Benchmarking Platform
- "Analysis-ready" detail file

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## Overview of NSC

### NSC History:

- Founded in 1993 by the higher education community, the National Student Clearinghouse relieves the administrative burdens and costs related to student data reporting and exchange.
- We are a 501(c)(6) nonprofit and nongovernmental organization

### NSC Mission:

We serve the education community by facilitating the exchange and understanding of student enrollment, performance and related information. See more at:

<http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/about/>

### Funding Model:

Revenue through industry and workforce solutions with goal of providing research services to data providers at little or no cost (e.g. StudentTracker is free with DV participation and additional data elements)

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## Overview of NSC Research Center and StudentTracker System

### NSC Research Center created in 2010

- 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
- Provide research and information for the benefit of the education community

**StudentTracker for Colleges and Universities** is the production system that institutions use to query enrollment and degree data from NSC. This service is in the midst of a major upgrade (more on that later).

The NSC Research Center supports StudentTracker by providing insights related to educational outcomes reporting, while also producing an array of national public reports and custom research services to clients

Complete archive of public reports (these can be used by institutions for benchmarking): <https://nscresearchcenter.org/ourreports/>

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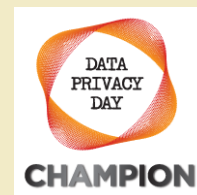
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## NSC Commitment to Student Privacy

All services are FERPA-compliant and the Clearinghouse has worked very hard to obtain numerous privacy certifications and badges from leading privacy advocacy organizations. More info on NSC's commitment to privacy can be found here:

[http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/about/privacy\\_commitment.php](http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/about/privacy_commitment.php)



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## NSC Board of Directors

The **National Student Clearinghouse** is governed by a board of directors comprised of a cross-section of the constituencies that it serves, including representatives from educational institutions, educational associations, and the education finance industry. The makeup of the Clearinghouse's board reflects its status as a trusted, neutral, and reliable source for educational information and services.

- **Ms. Carolyn Ainslie**, *Chair of the Board* - Vice President for Finance and Treasurer, [Princeton University](#), *Educational Institutions*
- **Dr. Steven Brooks**, *Vice Chair of the Board* - Executive Director (retired), [North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority](#), *Education Finance Industry*
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## The Accountability and Assessment Landscape in 2017

What has changed since the 2008 overhaul of the Higher Education Act?

- The Great Recession and austerity measures
- Millennials completing college and Post-Millennials (Gen Z) entering college
- Declining birth rates (recession, decline in teens giving birth)
- Increasing diversity in K-12 and on college campuses
- For-profit Sector: Litigation and Regulatory Action (last week's news)
- Traditional institutions' acceptance of MOOC's (edX)
- Programming Boot Camps, Stackable Credentials, Open Badges
- Data-driven decision making has become entrenched; Growing recognition that meaningful data are more valuable than voluminous data
- StudentTracker 2.0!

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## The Accountability and Assessment Landscape in 2017

- The rapidly changing higher education landscape has led to a renewed focus on key questions around postsecondary access, equity, and learning outcomes and workforce outcomes.
- As a result, a serious national conversation on how to develop a meaningful national postsecondary data infrastructure is taking place, with the Institution for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) providing a forum for discussion.
- Eleven papers were released in 2016, including one authored by the Clearinghouse: [Envisioning the National Postsecondary Data Infrastructure in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#).

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## NSC has evolved to be an integral part of the National Postsecondary Data Infrastructure

NSC is a **self-sustaining**, independent nonprofit organization, built as a voluntary data ecosystem that provides administrative services directly to colleges and universities, as well as data verification, exchange, research, compliance, and analytic services to entities in nearly all reaches of the education community.

NSC supports not only the efficient exchange of information among entities engaged in education and student services but also the **research uses of the data**, ranging from tracking and measuring student access and success outcomes to **benchmarking institutional performance**.

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## NSC as an Integral Part of the National Postsecondary Data Infrastructure

Four Pillars for Strengthening NSC's Role:

1. Encourage and expand existing incentives, mechanisms and opportunities for voluntary transparency on the part of institutions. This means developing metrics and outcomes that offer value by benchmarking institutional improvement and student success.
2. Build stronger public-private partnerships among institutions, ED, and NSC to provide enhancements to public data such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) with minimal increase in institutional burden.
3. Develop a public access data facility that would bring PowerStats-like functionality to NSC data.
4. Extend existing linkages between NSC data and local and state data systems.

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## NSC as an Integral Part of the National Postsecondary Data Infrastructure

- The institutions own their NSC data, are free to withhold it, and must consent to any public release of information using the data that identifies them by name.
- Unlike a governmental agency, NSC cannot enforce levels of participation or unilaterally disclose what is ultimately privately held data.
- To increase participation in a particular data element or initiative the NSC must demonstrate how participation adds value to institutions.
- This recognition of the institutions as key stakeholders is an essential aspect of NSC's role, as evidenced by the words of NSC Executive Research Director Doug Shapiro during the IHEP convening:  
<https://vimeo.com/168337411> (17:00 - 24:00)

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## Clearinghouse Data Elements Collected through Enrollment Reporting and DegreeVerify Services

- Data from both of these services are leverage for educational outcomes reporting
- 98% of college enrollments and graduations at degree-granting institutions are represented
- Detailed guide showing all enrollment data elements collected by the Clearinghouse:  
[http://studentclearinghouse.info/onestop/wp-content/uploads/EnrollRept\\_ProgrammingandTestingGuide.pdf](http://studentclearinghouse.info/onestop/wp-content/uploads/EnrollRept_ProgrammingandTestingGuide.pdf)
- Detailed guide showing all DegreeVerify data elements collected by the Clearinghouse:  
[http://studentclearinghouse.info/onestop/wp-content/uploads/DV\\_ProgrammingandTestingGuide.pdf](http://studentclearinghouse.info/onestop/wp-content/uploads/DV_ProgrammingandTestingGuide.pdf)

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## Three Areas of Educational Outcomes Reporting Where Clearinghouse Can Help Right Now

1. Data Collection for Accreditation Purposes
2. IPEDS Outcome Measures
3. Veterans Outcome Measures (GI Bill Comparison Tool)

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## How the Clearinghouse Can Help with Accreditation Outcomes Reporting

- The data template for the accreditation work is a holistic outcomes metric
- Current projects with WASC and SACS
- NSC would extract the entering cohorts from its own system to save institutions the burden of having to submit them.
- However, the intention is for institutions to have the ability, in the new STCU 2.0, to be able to review and edit their cohorts.

Category of Student/Outcome Measure	Bachelor Cohort Entering		Associate Cohort Entering	
	6 years ago	4 years ago	6 years ago	4 years ago
<b>First-time, Full-time Students</b>				
Degree from original institution				
Not graduated, still enrolled at original institution				
Degree from a different institution				
Transferred to a different institution				
Not graduated, never transferred, no longer enrolled				

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## How the Clearinghouse Can Help with IPEDS Outcome Measures

- It's possible that most institutions are already using the StudentTracker Cohort Query (or a different StudentTracker query) to satisfy their IPEDS OM reporting.
- However, we want to streamline the process as much as possible. IPEDS OM has four different cohorts to track:
  1. Full-time, first-time
  2. Part-time, first-time
  3. Full-time, non-first-time
  4. Part-time, non-first-time(Along with the Pell sub-cohorts for each of these)

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## How the Clearinghouse Can Help with Veterans Outcome Measures

From VA's FY15 Benefits Report:

<http://benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Education-FY15-02032016.pdf>

### Beneficiaries who received education benefits during fiscal year 2015<sup>7</sup>

Program	Total beneficiaries	Total payments (\$000)
POST 9/11	790,507	\$11,199,215
MGIB-AD	61,403	\$442,174
MGIB-SR <sup>8</sup>	63,030	\$141,367
REAP	9,965	\$40,516
DEA	91,755	\$493,224
VEAP <sup>9</sup>	4	\$275
<b>Total<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>1,016,664</b>	<b>\$12,316,795</b>

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## How the Clearinghouse Can Help with Veterans Outcome Measures

How do Veterans Outcome Measures differ from IPEDS OM?

According to [this NCES website](#):

*While some of the key ED outcome measures in the College Navigator are for first-time students, the VA and DOD outcome measures will be based on first-time beneficiaries.*

So, in the [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#), it appears that undergraduates and grad students, for example, would both be counted in the same graduation rate cohort if they both began using the Post-9/11 GI Bill in the same year.

NSC can play a role in making it possible to identify Veterans who are truly first-time-in-college if stakeholders agree that is the appropriate definition.

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# StudentTracker

A cost effective way to replace survey and anecdotal information with timely, documented enrollment and degree data

(versions of ST for high schools, states, colleges, outreach organizations)



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## StudentTracker Data Use Cases

- Identify important enrollment trends and patterns
- Track concurrent enrollment of your students
- Determine cohort graduation rates
- Fulfill federal reporting requirements
- Where do our (non-matriculating) applicants to college?
- Where do our students attend graduate school?
- What do they study in graduate school? (e.g: how many of our theater grads go to med school?)
- *Identify successful non-traditional student pathways to aid in student advising/counseling*

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# How StudentTracker Works

Submit cohort



Run file against our database



Matches compiled in a StudentTracker report



\*Instant queries for individual students can be performed via the Web

Email you when your report is ready

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## StudentTracker 2.0: Institutional Reporting and Benchmarking Platform

- Clearinghouse has run a pilot for the last three years in which we have generated and delivered institution-level completions reports for free. These reports are based on the national dataset assembled for our public [“Signature Report” on Degree Completions](#)
- We have benefited from the feedback from institutions, and hope that institutions have found value in the pilot reports as well.
- The Reports will now be produced in the StudentTracker system so that their generation and delivery can be automated.
- Timing: Goal is to launch the new STCU reporting platform in Summer/Fall 2017.
- Will include institution-level reports on completions and persistence/retention, but other reports will likely be added in future.

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## StudentTracker 2.0: Analysis-Ready Detail File

1. Institutions have frequently expressed feedback that the “long” format detail file is difficult to use, and requires a lot of data transformation before it can be used for analysis.
2. The “long” format file has one row per student per school per term which can add up to a lot of rows.
3. In response, a key part of the upgraded STCU service will be a “wide” format detail file. This version of the detail file will only have one row per student. However, the trade-off is that it will result in a lot of variables (wide file).
4. Guiding Principle for the analysis-ready detail file is flexibility, since many different institutions have many different reporting requirements, yet there are some common needs
5. **We are currently gathering feedback on the variables, use cases, data definitions, and layout**

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## Useful Information and Resources

Website for StudentTracker 2.0 Development. You can sign up here to get updates:

<https://studentclearinghouse.info/studenttracker/>

Clearinghouse Academy Site (with on-demand recorded Wwebinars):

<https://clearinghouseacademy.org/>

Detailed Information about all aspects of StudentTracker:

<http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/colleges/studenttracker/>

StudentTracker Cohort Query Information:

<http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/colleges/studenttracker/vsa.php>

Complete archive of public reports (these can be used by institutions for benchmarking): <https://nscresearchcenter.org/ourreports/>

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## Useful Information and Resources

Excel workbook showing detailed coverage of enrollments by institutional sector and state, including historical coverage back to 2003:

[https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/NSC\\_COVERAGE.xlsx](https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/NSC_COVERAGE.xlsx)

Useful lookup table for cross-walking the non-standardized free text “degree titles” that you receive in the StudentTracker detail file to standardized degree levels. (tab-delimited text file)

[https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Credential\\_Level\\_Lookup\\_Table.txt](https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Credential_Level_Lookup_Table.txt)

Useful lookup table for cross-walking the non-standardized free text “major” that you receive in the StudentTracker detail file to standardized CIP codes. (tab-delimited text file)

[https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/CIP\\_Code\\_Lookup\\_Table.txt](https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/CIP_Code_Lookup_Table.txt)

Document showing the percentage of enrollment records submitted to the Clearinghouse that are populated with each of the optional data elements in the enrollment data collection. Most of these optional elements were added in 2008:

[https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Reporting\\_of\\_NSC\\_Additional\\_Data\\_Elements.pdf](https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Reporting_of_NSC_Additional_Data_Elements.pdf)

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