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## **Higher Ed Organizations Release Dataset from Non-First-Time Student Enrollment and Persistence Study**

A group of higher education organizations today released the [complete dataset](#) from the first national effort to benchmark the persistence patterns of non-first-time (NFT) college students. Previously released findings from the study showed [low completion rates](#) for returning students and examined the [efficacy of mandatory “15 credit per semester” policies](#) at 2-year programs.

The group is releasing the dataset to enable others concerned with outcomes in higher education to conduct their own analysis and to spur further research into the factors affecting college credential attainment rates, particularly among working adults. The initiative is a cooperative effort between the American Council on Education (ACE), InsideTrack, NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, the University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA) and the National Student Clearinghouse.

“Our initial analysis raised many important issues that merit further study,” notes NASPA President Kevin Kruger. “By releasing the data, we hope to encourage others to take a deeper look at the underlying causes of attrition among returning students and what can be done to enhance their success.”

According to Dave Jarrat, vice president of marketing at InsideTrack, the data released today is just the tip of the iceberg. “More research is needed if we’re going to meaningfully move the needle on adult college completion,” Jarrat notes. “You can’t fix what you don’t measure and we currently do a poor job of measuring outcomes for adults returning to higher education.”

Deborah Seymour, assistant vice president of ACE’s Center for Education Attainment and Innovation says that the group invested in creating the dataset to begin filling in gaps in data available through Federal data sources. “Most of the higher education outcomes data available focuses on first-time, full-time students,” says Seymour. “These traditional students no longer represent the majority of students attending our nation’s colleges and universities.”

The group also hopes the data will support important policy discussions happening at the state and national levels, including those pertaining to the financing of higher education for working adults. “We want to arm policy makers with data on the students our higher education institutions are actually serving,” says Robert Hansen, CEO of UPCEA. “For too long, policy decisions have been driven by memories of the four-year, residential

college experience most students no longer have.”

The dataset includes summary results from two cohorts of students tracked by the National Student Clearinghouse. The first cohort consists of 4.5 million students who re-enrolled in college between Aug. 15, 2005 and Aug. 14, 2008 after at least one year away from higher education. The second cohort consists of 7 million students who re-enrolled between Aug. 15, 2008 and Aug. 14, 2013. Data for both cohorts is segmented by level of institution, age, gender, geographic location, enrollment intensity and the type of degree being pursued.

The group will hold discussions on the data and its implications at the following events:

- ACE Annual Meeting, March 14-17, Washington DC
- 2015 NASPA Annual Conference, March 21-25, New Orleans LA
- UPCEA 100th Annual Conference, March 30-April 1, Washington DC

A compressed file containing the dataset and accompanying notes can be downloaded here: <http://www.insidetrack.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/nft-student-clearinghouse-dataset-ace-insidetrack-naspa-upcea.zip>

### **About ACE**

Founded in 1918, ACE is the major coordinating body for all the nation's higher education institutions, representing more than 1,600 college and university presidents, and more than 200 related associations, nationwide. It provides leadership on key higher education issues and influences public policy through advocacy. For more information, please visit [www.acenet.edu](http://www.acenet.edu) or follow ACE on Twitter @ACEducation.

### **About InsideTrack**

Society thrives when students succeed. Since 2001, InsideTrack has used a proven combination of coaching, analytics, consulting and technology to unlock potential in millions of students and the institutions they attend. We invite you to join the leading colleges, universities, foundations and others working with us to enhance the transformative power of higher education. Please visit us at [www.insidetrack.com](http://www.insidetrack.com) and follow us on Twitter @InsideTrack.

### **About NASPA's Research and Policy Institute**

NASPA's Research and Policy Institute (RPI) intentionally links research, policy, and effective student affairs practice in support of student success and the strategic priorities of the association. The RPI generates scholarship and conducts policy analysis to articulate student affairs contributions to student success, learning, and development; interprets information to advance practice and policy conversations; and connects the research and policy activities of NASPA members to increase reach and impact. To learn more and access publications, blog postings, and data resources, please visit [www.naspa.org/rpi](http://www.naspa.org/rpi).

### **About UPCEA**

UPCEA is the association for professional, continuing, and online education. Founded in

1915, UPCEA now serves most of the leading public and private colleges and universities in North America. With innovative conferences and specialty seminars, research and benchmarking information, professional networking opportunities and timely publications, we support our members' service of contemporary learners and commitment to quality online education and student success. Based in Washington, D.C., UPCEA builds greater awareness of the vital link between adult learners and public policy issues. Visit [www.upcea.edu](http://www.upcea.edu).

**About the National Student Clearinghouse**

The National Student Clearinghouse (a nonprofit formed in 1993) is the trusted source for and leading provider of higher education verifications and electronic education record exchanges, handling more than 700 million verification requests and 250 million education record exchanges annually. The Clearinghouse serves as a single point of contact for the collection and timely exchange of accurate and comprehensive enrollment, degree, and certificate records on behalf of its more than 3,600 participating higher education institutions, which represent 98 percent of all students in public and private U.S. institutions. The Clearinghouse also provides thousands of high schools and districts with continuing collegiate enrollment, progression, and completion statistics on their alumni. Visit [www.studentclearinghouse.org](http://www.studentclearinghouse.org).