The Problem

- We are asked for program-level data
  - Lack of program-level retention and graduation rates
  - Complicated (particularly for undergrads)
  - Different programs serve different purposes
  - High stakes – program prioritization (AA driven)
- Reports lumped all non-retained together (whether they graduated or stopped out)
Background

- Historically reported on freshmen cohort
  - University-level only
  - Only one segment of our population
    - No info on grad students
    - No info on transfers
    - No info on those who start part-time

What We Wanted

- Solid & simple approach (easy to explain and defend)
- Fair
  - Useful for all types of programs
- Meaningful for decision-making (high- and low-level)
- Not overly complicated display
- Illuminates
  - Overall performance
  - Historic trends
  - When are students lost
- Something that can be generated yearly w/o too much effort

5 Outcomes

- Five possible outcomes for each student that declares a given major
  - Retained in program
  - Graduated in program
  - Retained in different program
  - Graduated in different program
  - Not retained (stop-out/drop-out)
- Exclusive and exhaustive
General Approach

- Based on cohorts:
  - A student is placed in a program cohort the 1st time they declare a given program
  - Each student in the cohort is flagged as one of the 5 possible outcomes for each ½ year interval (each regular semester)
  - At each interval we report where the members of the cohort fall
  - Each student will only appear in one cohort for a program (usually)

Why this works

- Students are not double-counted (usually)
- We can report data on any interval, if asked
- If a student stops-out, then returns, they are picked back up
- Bridges the gap between retention reports and graduation reports

Technical Approach

- Used SAS to generate data set
- Data put in Excel sheet
- There is one report built per level
  - Drop down lists shows all the programs at that level
  - Formulas reference program code, and populate report based on that code (sumifs, countifs, averageifs, etc.)
  - Expanded on techniques used for our Fact Book automation
Multiple Iterations

Started with term-level data

This is helpful for programs, in the context of program history, but NOT administrators.

Academic Year

Next combined data into academic years

Summary

All students lumped into 3 groups

This is the most summarized data we can (read: are willing to) provide.

The bottom line = Bold 3-group number.
But how does that compare?

This is average program data to use as a comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Program Success</th>
<th>Non-program Success</th>
<th>Not Retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>10.74</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>12.52</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>12.33</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>12.73</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>12.53</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>12.92</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is average program data to use as a comparison

Visual Representation

Horizontal stacked bar

• Normally we would never do this, but …..

What are people asking:
  - How is the program performing?
  - How are students performing overall at institution?
  - How many are dropping out?
We graph 5 Flags too

This works because:

- Horizontally
  - See people transitioning to completers and drop-outs over time
  - Follow specific cohorts
- Vertically
  - Compare performance of different cohorts at the same intervals

Why this report is REALLY awesome

- Use a special approach with a named range to find a list of all unique programs, and populate drop-down box with this list

- VBA to cycle through, do calculations, print PDF out to a directory (by department and college) and move on to next report

Expanding the Idea

- Changing the reporting level
  - CIP code (groups up old and new program codes)
  - Department (helpful if similar programs that students transfer between)
  - College
Ideas for Next Steps

- True Success Rate (VSA, incorporating of Clearinghouse Data)
- Consider rolling averages or other approaches to smooth turbulent data on small groups
- Compare retention data against unit-level goals

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