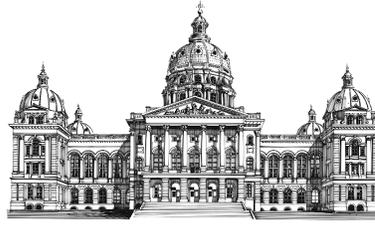


Iowa Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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State Capitol
Des Moines, IA 50319
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Community College Management Information System

ISSUE

A review of the community college management information system.

AFFECTED AGENCIES

Department of Education – Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation

CODE AUTHORITY

Chapter 260C, Code of Iowa

BACKGROUND

The Department of Education first indicated the need for a management information system for community colleges in a report entitled “Strengthening Community College Linkages” published in January 1990. As envisioned by the Department, the system would consist of a centralized electronic database to be utilized for decision-making relative to community college management, planning, and evaluation.

The General Assembly also recognized the need for consistent statewide data from the community college system. In response, the General Assembly provided the following funding to the Department of Education for development and implementation of a management information system for community colleges:¹

- ◆ \$120,000 in FY 1995.
- ◆ \$150,000 in FY 1996.

The source of funding for both years was in the form of an allocation from the educational excellence standing appropriation. The Department utilized the funds as follows:

- ◆ \$157,500 for expenses related to developing the system. These included:
 - ◆ Expenses for a task force and a consultant to develop the data elements.

¹ Funding information is approximate.

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- ◆ Contract programming.
- ◆ Contract with community college technical staff for consulting.
- ◆ Hardware/software expenses.
- ◆ \$112,500 to provide a \$7,500 grant to each of the community colleges. These funds were to be used for purchase of student transcript portability software.

As developed and implemented by the Department, the management information system is to provide data in the following categories:

- ◆ Credit Student Characteristics
- ◆ Non-credit Student Characteristics
- ◆ Financial Resources
- ◆ Human Resources
- ◆ Program Data

Additional detail regarding the data to be provided is outlined in **Attachment A**.

The Education Appropriations Subcommittee has attempted to monitor progress toward completion of the Department's management information system as follows:

- ◆ Senate File 266 (FY 1996 Education Appropriations Act) required the Department to submit a report on progress toward the completion of the system and use of funding provided during FY 1995 and FY 1996. The report was due and was received in January 1996.
- ◆ House File 2477 (FY 1997 Education Appropriations Act) required the board of directors of each community college to submit specific information to the Department of Education by August 15, 1996, and allowed the Department to withhold a portion of the State aid for each community college that did not comply (**Attachment B**). All 15 colleges did submit the required data but not all met the August 15 deadline.
- ◆ During both the 1998 and 1999 Legislative Sessions, the Department was asked to provide updates on progress toward completion of the system. In both years, the Department indicated the status of the system was "in progress" but not yet complete. The Subcommittee indicated to the Department that completion of the system was imperative, especially in regard to the enrollment data which is necessary to determine distribution of State aid to each of the community colleges.

CURRENT SITUATION

While funding was provided to begin implementation of a management information system in FY 1995 and FY 1996, the Department has yet to provide the General Assembly with consistent and complete data from the system. The Department responded to this as follows:

- ◆ FY 1998 - all 15 community college districts did provide enrollment data electronically. Credit enrollment data was submitted and verified; noncredit enrollment data was reported on a pilot basis.

- ◆ FY 1999 – all 15 community college districts provided data electronically for all five categories. However, the Department is currently reviewing certain data for consistency and accuracy. It is expected the data will be available prior to the 2000 Legislative Session.

CONCERNS

While the Department of Education appears to be making some progress toward providing data collected by the management information system for community colleges some concerns regarding the system and data availability remain. Some of these include:

- ◆ Continued delays. Data for FY 1999 is not yet ready for publication, though the fiscal year ended in June.
- ◆ Lack of consistent data in some categories. The data has been collected for FY 1999 but the Department is not confident portions of the information were uniformly or consistently reported. For example, the community colleges were required to report compensation for each of their employees net of benefits. The Department stated that some community colleges reported the base salary and some reported total compensation.
- ◆ Lack of detail for financial data. The community colleges are not required to submit a certified annual report (CAR) that provides as much detail as the one submitted by the K-12 school districts. Requiring a certified annual report for community colleges would have several advantages, such as:
 - ◆ Allow the Department to mandate uniformity in financial reporting, both in definition and application. For example, the community colleges often combine funds differently and classify restricted funds differently. This does not allow for comparison between colleges. Occasionally negative revenues and expenditures have been reported.
 - ◆ Require the Department to reconcile audited financial statements to the financial data currently submitted to the Department and provide for application of generally accepted accounting principles.
 - ◆ Allow the Department to develop a database of consistent financial information that could be accessed to respond to legislative and other inquiries. For example, a database would allow property tax revenue to be extracted for a five-year period. Under the current system, staff must physically access five years of financial reports and manually extract the data. The database would also allow for a detailed breakdown of property tax by type of levy. Currently property tax is reported as one line on the revenue statement and additional detail must be manually retrieved.
- ◆ Lack of estimated data for forecasting purposes. For example, the enrollment data is to be used for distribution of State general aid, but the information collected is for the preceding fiscal year. Fall enrollment data for the most recent fiscal year could be used instead if it was collected and forwarded to the General Assembly by January each year.

ALTERNATIVES

The General Assembly may wish to consider the following alternatives:

- ◆ Provide clear and specific direction to the Department to develop and revise data elements of the management information system based on needs at the State level. Many of the concerns listed above may be due in part to a lack of communication between the General Assembly and the Department.
- ◆ Require each of the community colleges to submit a certified annual report (CAR) similar to the one filed by K-12 school districts.
- ◆ Provide some incentive for the community colleges to submit the data consistently and within timeframes required by the Department.
- ◆ Provide additional staff to the Department, at least temporarily, to address remaining concerns of data collection for the community college management information system.
- ◆ Convene a working group of stakeholders to work with the Division of Community Colleges in implementing and refining the management information system.

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Iowa Department of Education
Community College
Management Information System
(MIS)

The Community College Management Information System (MIS) is an electronic data reporting system. The purposes of the MIS are to:

- Provide accurate and timely information to the Department of Education.
- Develop policy, plan, and make decisions based on data.
- Conduct research and evaluation activities.
- Document quality and accountability.
- Respond to requests.
- Market and advocate for community colleges.

The MIS replaces major paper reports submitted from community colleges to the Department of Education, Bureau of Community Colleges. There are five major groups of community college data elements in the MIS. All five major groups were included in the fiscal year 1999 year-end reporting. The five major groups are as follows:

➤ Credit Student Characteristics

- Contains unique identifier/social security number, birth date, gender, race/ethnicity, residency, program identifier, course credit hours, registration type, postsecondary enrollment options, awards received this year, special populations, served with support services.
- The Credit Student Characteristics data files contained one new item in 1999. The student intent/goal has been added to allow the system to better determine which students are enrolled in the program with the goal of completing or graduating from the program. FY99 is the second year that these files, consisting of a Student Information file, Student Course file, and Student Award/Complete file will be collected electronically.

➤ Non-credit Student Characteristics

- All non-credit enrollment (contact hour enrollment) will be included in this file
- Contains 11 items which include district, student identifier, birth date, gender, race/ethnicity, residency, CIP and code set, course number, course contact hours, developmental hours, award received.
- Non-credit Student Characteristics file was collected electronically for the first time in 1999. This file exceeds 600,000 records. Past year collections of non-credit data have only included the sum of individuals in certain categories and the electronic system will allow for much more detailed information on this group of students. Therefore, all general/liberal arts, career option, vocational preparatory and adult education students will be collected as individual records. This will allow more in-depth research on student characteristics, such as age, race/ethnicity, disadvantaged, etc. by program or college.

➤ Financial Resources

- Fund 1 unrestricted, Fund 2 restricted, Fund 7 Plant Fund, revenue sources, Expenditures by category, expenditures by function.
- The Financial Resources data collected include the program prorate sheet, balance sheet, general and plant fund revenue and expenditures, and the square footage/cubic footage for all buildings.
- This information was collected electronically fiscal year 1999 as it has been collected in past years.

➤ Human Resources

- Community college staff are reported in five categories.
 1. Administrative
 2. Instructional
 3. Professional
 4. Secretarial and clerical
 5. Service
- Contains 14 data elements in the Employee Information file.
- Contains 8 data elements in the Employee Position file.
- Replaces the BEDS paper document.
- 1999 was the first year for electronic collection of Human Resource information for all community college employees and contains much more detailed staff data. These data will provide information on the number of credit hours taught and the salary paid during the fiscal year.

➤ Program Data

- Contains county, district, CIP number, school site, instructional level, type of program-service and/or activity, special emphasis, object/purpose, state name/title, local name/title, comments, regular length, approval date, approval type, operational status, award, terms, contact hours, credit hours, maximum graduates.
- Program data continues to be recorded for each college through State Board action as well as through the curriculum system, which records program credit hours, number of terms, and length of program as approved by the State Board of Education.

13 23 Sec. 7. The board of directors of each community college
 13 24 shall submit to the department of education and the
 13 25 legislative fiscal bureau, by August 15, 1996, on forms
 13 26 designed by the department of education in consultation with
 13 27 the community colleges, information which shall include, but
 13 28 is not limited to, the following:

13 29 1. The number of full-time and part-time students enrolled
 13 30 in each program offered by the community college, listed by
 13 31 program.

13 32 2. The number of and any appropriate demographic
 13 33 information, including salaries of full-time and part-time
 13 34 staff, relating to the faculty, administration, and support
 13 35 personnel employed at each community college.

14 1 3. The full-time equivalent total of persons employed as
 14 2 identified in subsection 2.

14 3 4. Tuition charges, fees, and other costs payable to the
 14 4 community college by a student.

14 5 5. The types of degrees granted by the community college
 14 6 and the number of students receiving these degrees.

14 7 6. The amounts of revenues and expenditures from state
 14 8 financial aid, federal funds, tax levies, projects authorized
 14 9 under chapters 260E and 260F, tuition, bonds, other local
 14 10 sources, foundation sources, and donations and gifts that may
 14 11 be accepted by the governing board of a community college.

14 12 7. An inventory of buildings and facilities owned and
 14 13 leased by the community college, and any related operation and
 14 14 maintenance costs.

14 15 8. Infrastructure plans, which shall include, but are not
 14 16 limited to, the amounts expended in the current fiscal year on
 14 17 renovation and construction, and any future plans and
 14 18 projected costs for expansion.

14 19 The department of education may withhold from a community
 14 20 college any state financial assistance appropriated to the
 14 21 department for allocation to the community college for the
 14 22 fiscal year beginning July 1, 1996, and ending June 30, 1997,
 14 23 if the community college fails to substantially meet the

Requires the board of directors of each community college to submit specific information to the Department of Education by August 15, 1996. Allows the Department to withhold a portion of the state aid for each community college that fails to comply.

14 24 requirements of this section.