

# Communicating Outcomes to the Public

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# Why such emphasis on public outcomes...?

- Concerns about the value of higher education
  - Parents/students
  - Employers
  - State legislatures/policy makers
- Concerns about achievement gaps particularly those that are predictable by race/ethnicity and sex
- Concerns about stewardship of federal financial aid funds
- Concerns about consumer protection
- Concerns about massive student loan debt
- Loss of trust in institutions

**Higher Prices and Higher Tuition: The Case for Transparency in Higher Education Pricing and Advanced Credit** <https://www.progressivepolicy.org/publication/hidden-prices-and-higher-tuition-the-case-for-transparency-in-higher-education-pricing-and-advanced-credit/>



# U.S. Department of Education

- Request for Information Regarding Public Transparency for Low-Financial-Value Postsecondary Programs. Looking for public feedback on...
  - What data points and metrics could most help students understand the financial repercussions of enrolling in a particular college (debt/income approach)
  - What factors would help assess programs' nonfinancial value
- Plan to create a public list of low-value programs
- Colleges with programs on the list would be required to send in a performance plan detailing how they plan to remedy the issues

<https://www.highereddive.com/news/education-department-low-value-college-list-for-profit-higher-ed/640116/>

# CHEA Recognition Standards

- Under CHEA standards, institutions are expected to provide results of performance and student achievement that are
  - timely (recent)
  - readily accessible (easy for the general public to find)
  - accurate and consistent (error-free and dependable)
  - clearly explained (years reported, number of students, definitions/meaning of data, etc.)

# CHEA Recognition Standards

- CHEA evaluators randomly reviewed ABHE websites and found:
  - some websites offered poor quality outcomes data
  - some websites lacked accuracy and completeness in the data presented
  - it was difficult to find student achievement results from the homepage



# ABHE's Recent Actions

- The Commission on Accreditation directed a review of student achievement and outcomes made available to the public through institutional websites.
- Institutions that hosted evaluation team visits over the last two years had their websites reviewed by the evaluation team for the following:
  1. Ease of public access to student achievement data
  2. Assessments results addressing institutional and program student learning objectives/outcomes



# ABHE's Recent Actions

- Institutions that did not have an evaluation team visit in that timeframe had their websites and outcomes reviewed by a Commission staff member, with a report of findings submitted to the institution and the Commission.
- Both evaluation team and staff reviews utilized the rubric in the *Policy on Outcomes*.



# Requirements of ABHE Standard 1

- Mission Statement (1:EE1)
- Institutional Goals (general in nature and typically not measurable-1:EE4)
- Clearly articulated student learning objectives for each educational program that support fulfillment of the mission statement. (1:EE5)
- **ALL OF THE ABOVE EASILY LOCATED ON THE INSTITUTION'S WEBSITE AND IN THE CATALOG/S (1:EE6)**





# Requirements of ABHE Standard 2

- **Student Learning Outcomes** that support mission fulfillment (2:EE2)
  - Appropriate to the credential (2:EE3)
  - Multiple Means represented (2:EE4)
- Graduation Rates (2:EE8)
- Employment Rates for Graduates of Professional Programs (2:EE8)
- **ALL OF THE ABOVE EASILY LOCATED ON THE INSTITUTION'S WEBSITE (2:EE8)**



# Our Focus Today

- Everything today is based on the presupposition that institutions are fulfilling the standards and are already able to demonstrate the following characteristics of their outcomes (found in the *Policy on Outcomes*, COA Manual):
  - Outcomes demonstrate mission fulfillment
  - Outcomes are measurable
  - Outcomes are accompanied by metrics to assess fulfillment
  - Outcomes assessments include multiple means for validation
  - **Outcomes easily available to the public**
- Of course, the validity of what you place on your website presupposes that these matters are already in order



# Making Outcomes Easily Available

- ❑ The mission statement, institutional goals, and student learning objectives are easily accessible on the website and in the institution's academic catalog(s).
- **My Recommendation:** create a landing page that houses this information in one place in addition to outcomes information (see the upcoming slides)
- Must be easy to find, should be linked from the homepage
- Common link names: About, Student Achievement, Outcomes Data, Institutional Effectiveness, Institutional Research, Consumer Information
- Example of excellent landing page: <https://www.kingswood.edu/outcomes> (under “About” menu)



# Making Outcomes Easily Available

- ❑ Institutional performance and student achievement outcomes must be available on the website through an easily identified link on the institution's homepage.
- It is easy to couple this information with the information mentioned on the previous slide in **one landing page** with multiple links/side menus.
- A reasonable link name is one that prospective students, parents, donors, accreditors and regulators, and the general public would readily identify as the appropriate place to click to find outcomes data. Obscure link names should be avoided.



# Making Outcomes Easily Available

- Does your institution have institutional learning outcomes (ILO's)? Then they must be on the website and backed up with data.
  - Don't know what an ILO is? [Here](#) and [here](#) are excellent overviews.
- Institutions are required to have student learning objectives (“The student will...” statements) for each program as required in Standard 1, therefore the outcomes (demonstrated measurements/end results) need to be on the website and backed up with data.
- Good examples of SLOs on institutional websites: [Modesto Junior College](#), [NILOA's “Framework in the Field” Transparency Framework](#)
- GOOD ABHE Example: <https://www.calvary.edu/institutional-research/>



# Making Outcomes Understandable

- From the *Policy on Outcomes* (COA Manual, p73):
  - Outcomes data must be stated in a meaningful fashion that the general public would understand.
  - Percentage data should be accompanied by the number of students in the cohort or population that the percentage reflects.
  - Where the number of responses is cited, the total in the population should also be cited.
  - Reporting should also reference what year(s) the data reflects.
  - A reasonable majority of students must be achieving the outcome for claims that the institution fulfills the outcome (e.g., 75% of students).
  - Statements of outcomes should reflect observations concerning all students in the program (aggregate results), not just outstanding achievement by some of the students in the program.



# A Word About Graduation Rates

- You set the parameters for the graduation rate calculations that you make available publicly on your website, which has **VERY** important implications:
  - Graduation rate should include an explanation of what it means, especially if using a custom definition: is it full-time, first time six years later? Is it 150% for AA programs? If graduate, what is the timeframe (sometimes more than undergrad time)? There should be a footnote with data to explain what the calculation means, not just how many in cohort and what years reflected.



# A Word About Graduation Rates (cont'd)

- You set the parameters for the graduation rate calculations that you make available publicly on your website, which has **VERY** important implications:
  - For many ABHE institutions, a year or two of biblical higher education is the goal for students who would otherwise receive a completely secular higher education. Students who transfer to programs at other institutions of higher education rather than complete a program at the ABHE institution may be included as “transfer-out” students and reported as a combined “graduation/transfer-out rate.” Data reported this way should be clear in related outcome statements.
  - Showing multi-year data is appropriate, especially for small enrollments (best to do if graduation rate is 0% one year and 100% the next).





# A Word About Retention Rates

- You set the parameters for the retention rate calculations that you make available publicly (optional), which has VERY important implications:
  - Retention rate can mean different things, so a footnote is appropriate there: first-year students returning the following year--fall or spring, or just fall? Remember, you can use non-IPEDS definitions, but you need to explain what they mean so that the public understands.
  - Showing multi-year data is appropriate, especially for small enrollments (best to do if retention rate is 0% one year and 100% the next).

# Good Examples

- Easily Accessible: [Institute of Lutheran Theology](#) (button right there on the homepage!)
- Great Detail/Explanation Level: [Stark College and Seminary](#)
- Outstanding Visualization and Description for Public Audience: [Welch College](#)
- Great Outcomes Data: [Christ Mission College](#)



# The Policy on Outcomes Rubric

- Category 1- Institutional Goals
  - Clearly Defined?
  - Support Mission Fulfillment?
- Category 2- Student Learning Objectives
  - Clearly Defined?
  - Stated in Measurable Terms?
- Category 3- Student Learning Outcomes
  - Effectively Measured by Assessment Methods and Metrics?
  - Indicators of Achievement (Benchmarks) Defined?
  - Benchmarks Rigorous Enough to Verify Objectives are Met?
  - Evidence that Outcomes are Being Met?



# The Policy on Outcomes Rubric

- Category 4- Graduation/Transfer Out Rates
  - Meeting ABHE Expectations Over the Last 3 Years?
  - \*Currently 25%
- Category 5- Retention Rates
  - Meeting ABHE Expectations Over the Last 3 Years?
  - \*Currently 25%

# The Policy on Outcomes Rubric

## **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

The Policy on Outcomes rubric does not specifically address the issue of easy accessibility, but the Policy itself does, so your website has been reviewed to assess how accessible to the public your outcomes are, either through a recent evaluation team visit or the Website Outcomes Review report received by your institution.

# Final thoughts...

- ABHE is reviewing Standard 2 as part of the Comprehensive Standards Review
- We are also reviewing the Policy on Outcomes in light of CHEA requirements and USDE and NACIQI discussions currently underway
- We are enhancing evaluator training with regard to assessing Standard 2 compliance
- This is about far more than compliance with accreditation standards. We are CONFIDENT that you are doing good work at your institutions. Public transparency of student outcomes gives you a GREAT OPPORTUNITY to showcase your work for internal and external constituents and prospective students and families!