

Tech Snacks: Institutional Data with Jay

Faculty are often curious about institutional data and how certain data trends might provide clues about marketing, recruitment, retention, and student success during and after completing their programs. There is a lot of complex data to navigate and interpret, but the Office of Institutional Research and the OCHE Data Warehouse have several dashboards that can help.

MSU-Northern Data

The main source of institutional data at MSU-Northern is the Institutional Research Office page at www.msun.edu/ir/. The Institutional Data tab has a number of resources, including:

IR Apps (aka "IRVM")

To access the IRVM dashboard, click the "IR Apps" link on the main IR site or go directly to irvm.msun.edu. You can also get there through the Early Alerts link.

MSUN Metrics

Enrollment: census and End-of-Term (EOT) headcount overall at MSUN

Banner Enrollment: real-time headcount, filterable by Pell, ethnicity, age, residency, type, etc.

FTE: census and End-of-Term (EOT) overall FTE

Graduation: headcount (nonduplicated) of graduates; degree awards count (duplicated) by degree award type (BA, BS, AA, AAS, etc.)

Retention: several different ways to look at retention rates

Online/F2F: headcounts, credits offered, sections offered, pass rates for each modality

Week By Week Enrollment

Real-time overall headcount and FTE, showing week by week comparisons with previous years

Majors Enrollment

Major Groups by Program Area and by College: headcounts, degrees awarded, graduation, retention – most of these are filterable by race and sex; "counts split" allows you to break numbers down by sex, race, age, FT/PT, athletes, residency

Individual Majors: headcount section includes "List" page – current students in major – and "Detail" page with graduate counts and major counts broken out by sex, race, age, FT/PT, athletes, residency

Instructor Load: student-credit hours per instructor by term; student FTE per instructor by term

Applicants

Real-time applicants vs enrollment comparison, showing week by week application count comparisons with previous years and week by week average enrollment for previous years

Equity Gaps

See overall average GPA, retention rate – separated by gender, minority, first-generation, Pell

NSSE Reports

NSSE collects information from first-year and senior students about their participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. MSU-Northern currently administers this survey every three years.

IPEDS Reports (NCES)

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education. NCES manages the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), which collects data three times a year from every college, university, and technical/vocational institution that participates in federal financial aid. IPEDS reports contain an official, publicly accessible set of institutional data, including headcount, FTE, graduation rates,

retention rates, student demographic information, and various statistics disaggregated by student race, sex, residency, Pell status, etc.

Student Outcomes tab > Student Employment

On the IR site, there is also a “Student Outcomes” tab with a link to the US Census Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO) explorer. This tool shows the average [salaries of MSU-Northern graduate cohorts](#) 1, 5, and 10 years past graduation. Earnings outcomes for graduates from specific institutions are listed by degree field, degree level, and graduation cohort.

Montana University System Data (Data Warehouse)

Several data dashboards are available from the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE): [mus.edu/data/dashboards](#). These dashboards contain aggregate data for all MUS institutions and are filterable by institution (and many other attributes). Some of the more interesting dashboards are linked below. Note: in some areas, the code for MSUN is “MVV.”

Dashboards
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Indian Students• Dual Enrollment• FTE Enrollments• First Time Freshman• Headcounts• Degrees Awarded• MUS Student Success (workforce data, etc.)• Graduation Rates

Headcount Map: <https://mus.edu/data/dashboards/headcount.html>

MSUN Retention and Persistence: <https://mus.edu/data/dashboards/first-time-freshmen.html>

American Indian Student Success: <https://mus.edu/data/AmInd/AI-EnrollmentDashboard.html>

Degrees Awarded by Discipline across MUS: <https://mus.edu/data/dashboards/degrees.html>

Why should I look at data?

Program Review & Program Assessment

Student Success. Understanding program-level student retention and graduation rates allows you to identify patterns and potential areas for improvement.

Program Size. Your major’s headcounts over the years can help you spot trends,

Faculty Load. Faculty load is another way to measure the contributions of individual faculty members (rather than simply pointing to how many majors are in their program).

Peer Benchmarking. The MUS and Census Bureau dashboards can help you find metrics that reveal how your program compares to similar programs in the system.

Collaboration. See what other majors/minors your students have declared and look for collaborative or even cross-curricular opportunities with those program faculty.

Marketing & Recruiting

Employment and Earnings Data. If your program’s graduates have high employment and earnings rates (especially compared to other Montana schools), use this data to emphasize the practical value of your degree.

Student Demographics. Your program’s student demographics and enrollment attributes can tell you a lot about what kinds of students are drawn to your program and where you may be missing out with recruitment. What percent are Montana residents? Full-time? Athletes? Men? Women?

Montana Map with Headcount. The map can make it easy to see what regions tend to send students to Northern, which might help with recruiting strategies.

Grant Opportunities

Demonstrating Need. Many grant opportunities (for research and for student services programs) require or give preference to institutions with certain demographic criteria, such as Pell grant rates, minority student rates, and first-generation student rates. Funding often requires you to demonstrate “need,” which is usually expressed through data.