

METHODOLOGY INTERPRETING SRTK RATES

"Student Right-To-Know" (SRTK) refers to a Federally-mandated public disclosure of a college's Completion Rate and Transfer Rate. The intent of SRTK is to provide to the consumer a statistic of comparable effectiveness that they can use in the determination of college choice. All colleges nationwide are effectively required to participate in the disclosure of rates by July, 2000.

SRTK is a "cohort" study. The SRTK Cohort is a group of students who are: first-time freshmen, enrolled full-time and are degree-seeking. These students are identified in a fall term and their outcomes are measured over a period of time. The SRTK Cohort produces two measures. The first measure is the Completion Rate (the total number of students in the cohort who earn either a degree, a certificate, or who successfully completed a two-year-equivalent transfer-preparatory program). The second measure is the Transfer Rate (the total number of cohort non-completers who were identified as having enrolled in another institution). The tracking period of the cohorts is three (3) years, at which time the SRTK rates are calculated and made public.

SRTK has its merits in that it attempts to provide a standardized measure of college effectiveness nationwide. However, in order to fully understand what SRTK rates mean for a college, one should also know its limitations. First, the cohort group can be quite small compared to the entire Community College population, and is therefore not fully representative of all educational activities at a college. Many Community Colleges do not have the primary mission of producing only transferrable students. There can also be data collection issues involved in the acquisition of valid numbers used in deriving SRTK rates; since there is no central nationwide "clearinghouse" of transfer data, it is impossible to generate accurate transfer-out rates. Additionally, the Federal methodology lowers the Transfer rate for Community Colleges, because transfer students who are considered completers are disallowed in the calculation of the Transfer rate.

SRTK Rates are derived and reported yearly on the IPEDS-GRS (Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System-Graduation Rate Survey). The IPEDS-GRS also tracks part-time student cohorts over a six (6) year period; however, full-time cohort status after 3 years is the only basis for calculating SRTK rates.

INTERPRETING FIRST TIME FRESHMEN STUDY REPORTS

The First Time Freshman (FTF) Study Reports are derived from an expanded "SRTK cohort" study of all FTF in the California Community College System. While the SRTK cohort is limited to Full-Time, Degree Seeking Freshman, the FTF Study expanded the collection of data to ALL FTF, as reported by each college.

The FTF data is derived yearly from the data collected for reporting the IPEDS-GRS (Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System- Graduation Rate Survey). The FTF cohort is tracked on a 3 and 6 year timeframe.