AAU Data Collection
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INSTITUTIONAL DATA COMMITTEE

Undergraduate Education

1) Retention and Graduation Rates

AAU institutions should participate in the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) survey. This survey provides data on retention and graduation after the first year through the sixth year by race/ethnicity, residency status, and gender, with SAT/ACT test scores available for each subgroup.

Nationally, retention and graduation data are provided through the Department of Education’s IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) Graduation Rates Survey. However, in comparison to the IPEDS survey, the CSRDE survey provides more detailed retention information and more information about the cohorts (e.g., SAT/ACT scores, GPA, and high school rank).

Currently, 37 AAU institutions participate in the AAUDE/CSRDE data exchange, though these are almost all public universities. A small number of AAU private universities have participated recently and regard the survey as useful and not difficult to complete. AAUDE will develop an annual consolidated, easily interpretable table for AAU university retention and graduation rates (Attachment 1 is an example of the CSRDE survey for entering female freshmen at a given institution). As with all AAU Data Exchange items, AAUDE representatives have access to the data via the AAUDE data warehouse and will be able to run ad hoc queries and design institutional reports as desired.

2) Time to Degree

AAU institutions should collect time-to-degree data for the campus overall, and by discipline. Initially, data will be collected on a subset of the largest degree-producing majors for AAU institutions, to be determined by an analysis of AAU university degree production. The data will be aggregated by institution and discipline, using CIP codes to facilitate comparisons across universities. Time to degree will be calculated with a backward-looking procedure by establishing cohorts of all degree recipients from July 1 through June 30 of a given academic year and then determining when each student in the cohort first started at the institution. AAUDE has developed a methodology for this calculation and will coordinate the time-to-degree data collection and summary reports. The summary reports will provide information by discipline (e.g., biology, physical sciences, business, engineering, arts and humanities, social science) and by individual majors.

This survey will be conducted annually and will include information only for full-time, degree-seeking students who entered as first-time freshmen at the institution; the data will not include transfer students.

A brief survey of the AAU institutions that collect time-to-degree data found that institutions use a number of ways of measuring time-to-degree, including the number of registered terms, the number of academic years enrolled, the number of credits awarded, and the number of elapsed calendar months and years. AAUDE believes it can develop a method to allow institutions to provide data in several different ways and develop crosswalks between them to provide comparable information overall.

Once the data collection procedure described above has been used for a few years, AAU should consider whether to refine the time-to-degree data to employ unit record data collection, which would support expanded analyses by providing, for example, frequency distributions as well as measures of central tendency. If the judgment is that collecting unit record data meets a cost/benefit test of providing sufficiently more useful information, the AAU will carefully evaluate the privacy and security aspects of such a unit-record collection procedure before implementing it.
3) Student Transfers

AAU institutions should participate in a student transfer data collection procedure to be carried out through a contractual arrangement with the National Student Clearinghouse, contingent upon achieving a workable contractual arrangement. The proposed procedure will provide graduation rates that include transfers among AAU institutions, which will provide more complete and accurate data documenting significantly higher graduation rates than are currently reported through federal data reporting procedures. The proposed arrangement with the Clearinghouse will also provide post-baccalaureate graduate program enrollment information for students graduating from AAU universities.

The National Student Clearinghouse is a non-profit organization that provides student degree, diploma and enrollment verification. Its programs are designed to help relieve member institutions’ administrative burdens of providing educational record verification while maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of records in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Institutional data submitted to the Clearinghouse are unit record data, and the Clearinghouse has been managing unit record data effectively since its inception. The Clearinghouse, formed 13 years ago, now has nearly 3,000 colleges and universities participating in one or more of its data collection programs. Among AAU institutions, all but four submit enrollment data to the Clearinghouse, and roughly half submit degree information on those who graduate from the institution.

The National Student Clearinghouse has agreed to work with AAU to develop a procedure for tracking to graduation, or departure from higher education, students who transfer from one AAU university to another, and those who are enrolled in graduate school. (See sample reports in Attachment 2. These sample reports are conceptual in nature, but will be used as the foundation for further work with the Clearinghouse on the final reports.) These transfer data will provide a more complete picture of graduation rates at AAU universities; the data will also provide analytically valuable information about students who transfer from a given institution, where they go, and their outcomes. The transfer tracking process likely will expand to non-AAU institutions; the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges is interested in establishing a comparable arrangement with the Clearinghouse.

Preliminary discussions with the Clearinghouse leadership have indicated that in exchange for full participation by AAU institutions in four basic Clearinghouse programs—Basic (Core) Reporting, Enrollment Verify, Degree Verify, and StudentTracker—no fee will be charged to AAU for reports on graduation rates, including transfers. Less than full participation may result in some fees, but the costs are expected to be modest. Clearly, the broader the participation in the proposed student transfer program by AAU institutions and beyond, the more complete the student transfer data will be.

4) “Net Cost”—the Actual Cost of Attendance for Students

Cost Estimators

AAU members are urged to develop “cost estimators” that provide a specific estimate of the actual cost of attendance for a given undergraduate student. The cost estimator should adjust published tuition, fees, and related expenses to reflect typical financial aid awards based on attributes such as family income and assets, number of students in college, and state residency status. A number of AAU institutions have constructed such cost estimators to allow prospective students and their parents to enter key financial, demographic, and other data to receive estimate of those students’ projected costs of attendance. The use of such calculators produces estimates that are considerably more accurate for most students than stated tuition and fees.

Cost estimators carry an inherent cost/benefit tradeoff: The easier the estimator is to use, the less precise the resultant estimate is likely to be. On the other hand, requiring comprehensive and detailed input, while producing a more accurate estimate of cost of attendance, may reduce the value of the estimator as an easily and widely used instrument.
The cost estimator task force is continuing to examine the issue. Having each institution develop its own estimator assures maximum flexibility in matching the estimator to the circumstances of that institution. But from the point of view of a prospective student or his or her parents, it would be considerably more useful to have a single estimator that was used by all institutions. The task force is examining whether it might be possible to develop a “basic” or default estimator—something equivalent to a tax short form—that all AAU institutions would use. Institutions would be free to develop additional elements to create an “advanced” estimator that would provide more precise estimates based on their local circumstances.

In considering the use of cost estimators, a number of institutions have been concerned about the potential problem of estimates being taken as commitments. Institutions that have used cost estimators have prominently stated that the estimators produce estimates only, not binding commitments. To date, the task force is aware of no significant problems arising from students and parents misconstruing cost estimates as commitments.

Attachment 3 lists a number of cost estimators developed by AAU member universities and others. Attachment 4 includes the key variables that the task force recommends be included in “advanced” cost estimators.

Comparative Cost Data for AAU Universities

In addition to recommending that all AAU universities develop cost estimators for prospective students and their parents, the AAU institutions should share comparative cost data for internal use only, which would be circulated internally without identifying specific institutions. Only current and past year data would be collected. These standardized data would estimate cost of attendance at selected parental income levels ($20-, $40-, $60-, $80-, and $100,000) for a hypothetical dependent, an entering in-state freshman who will live in a campus residence hall and is from a family of four with one student in college. Attachment 5 is the proposed template for this comparative net cost collection procedure. The information provided from these data would, among other assessments, allow institutions to compare the level of tuition discounting that occurs at their institution relative to other peer groups, and provide a cross-institutional comparison of costs among institutions.

5) Student and Alumni Surveys

AAU institutions should administer a graduating senior survey and an alumni survey as a means of measuring student perceptions and outcomes. The Committee’s task force on student surveys has developed a proposed exit survey for all graduating seniors and an alumni survey that would be conducted on a periodic basis (e.g., every two years for graduating seniors and every five years for alumni); the intent is to gather inter-institutionally comparable information from seniors about their college experience and their immediate post-graduation plans, and to track alumni into their future careers. The senior survey contains a set of core questions that all institutions would use; institutions would, of course, be free to add additional questions. The graduating senior survey would be administered in every other year in students’ last term of their senior year or within the first year upon completion of their baccalaureate degree. The alumni survey would be administered every five years to an alumni cohort that graduated five years earlier (five-years-out), with an optional second ten-years-out survey for each cohort. Attachment 6 includes potential items for the proposed alumni survey. Attachment 7 presents a proposed methodology for both surveys.

AAUDE will develop data exchange and reporting procedures for aggregating and disseminating the survey data, allowing institutions to compare their survey responses to AAU institutions overall.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entering Year</th>
<th>N of Cohort</th>
<th>SATV Mean</th>
<th>SATM Mean</th>
<th>Retention Rates</th>
<th>Graduation Rates</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>After 2 Yr</td>
<td>After 3 Yr</td>
<td>After 4 Yr</td>
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### Entering Freshmen Cohort and Where They TRANSFERRED TO:

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<th>Brandeis</th>
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<th>Yale</th>
<th>AAU Total</th>
<th>4-Year Institutions</th>
<th>2-Year Inst.</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
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### Entering Freshmen Cohort and Where They GRADUATED:

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<th>AAU Total</th>
<th>4-Year Institutions</th>
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### Baccalaureate Degree Cohort and Where They ARE ENROLLED

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<th>4-Year Institutions</th>
<th>2-Year Inst.</th>
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</table>
AAU Institutions with a Net Price Estimator Or Information on Net Price:

Arizona - https://financialaid.arizona.edu/money/estimate.aspx
Brandeis - http://www.brandeis.edu/offices/sfs/finaid/costs.html
Carnegie Mellon - http://my.cmu.edu/site/admission/menuitem.926b970fd07533c019300710d4a02008/
Colorado - http://www.collegeincolorado.org/
Florida - https://www.isis.ufl.edu/cgi-bin/eaglec?mdastran=sfi-nely
Johns Hopkins - http://www.jhu.edu/finaid/estimator.html
Princeton - https://sweb.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/FinAid/Finaid_form.pl
Texas - http://www.texascollegemoney.org/

College Board - http://apps.collegeboard.com/fincalc/ecf_welcome.jsp
ACT - http://www.act.org/fane/
**Recommended Variables for a Net Cost Estimator**

**Listing of Estimated Student Expenses:**
- Tuition and Fees (includes mandated health insurance fee)
- Room and Board (excludes phone or cell phone)
- Books and Supplies
- Personal Expenses
- Transportation

**Recommended data elements for an estimated financial aid calculator:**

**Student Status**
- Dependent vs. Independent
- Expected residence (on/off campus)
- State residency

**Family Status**
- Number of people in household
- Number of college students in household
- Age of parents
- Parents' marital status

**Student Income**
- Student income (AGI)
- Student wages
- Income taxes paid
- Untaxed income / benefits
- Cash, savings, checking
- Investment equity (other assets)
- Outside scholarships

**Family Income**
- Household/ Parental income (AGI)
- Parent Wages
- Untaxed Income
- Social Security Benefits

**Family Assets and Allowances**
- Liquid parental assets (cash, savings, checking)
- Investments
- Other real estate equity
- Family business/ farm equity/assets
- Income Taxes Paid

**Recommended elements for the "Results" section after the student/parent completed the requested information on the web-based estimated financial aid calculator:**

**Listing of Estimated Student Expenses:**
- Total Budget Only

**Contributions and Awards**
- Parental Contribution
- Student Contribution
- Grants (not specified)
- Parental loans
- Student loans
- Student work study
Comparative Net Cost Template

(Pink areas to be filled in by campus)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Annual Expenses</th>
<th>Living in a Residence Hall</th>
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<td>Housing and Utilities</td>
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<table>
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<th>Family Income</th>
<th>Estimated Net Cost</th>
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<td>$776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$24,176</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assumptions**
- Dependent/Independent: Dependent
- Class Level: Freshmen
- Residency: In-State
- Housing: On-campus
- Full/Part Time Student: Full-time
- Family Size: 4
- # of family in College: 1
- Parent Marital Status: Married
- Age of Parents: both 45
- Assets: $20,000
- Investments: $5,000
- Student Income: $500
- Student Assets: $0
- Family Business/real estate: $0
- Income Taxes Paid: $0
- Other: ______
AAU Senior Survey Core Questions
Draft
April 2007

Future Plans

A.1. What is MOST LIKELY to be your PRINCIPAL activity upon graduation?

☐ Employment, full-time paid
☐ Employment, part-time paid
☐ Graduate or professional school, full-time
☐ Graduate or professional school, part-time
☐ Additional undergraduate coursework
☐ Military service
☐ Voluntary activity (e.g., Peace Corps)
☐ Starting or raising a family
☐ Traveling
☐ Completely undecided
☐ Other, please specify:

If employment will be your principal activity upon graduation, please answer questions
A.2. through A.8. Otherwise, please skip to question B.1.

A.2. If employment will be your primary activity, which of the following best describes your current state of plans for employment immediately after graduation?

☐ Have accepted a position
☐ Have been offered a position or multiple positions, but declined positions and still searching for preferred position
☐ Considering one or more offers
☐ Currently searching or waiting on offers
☐ Will begin searching for a position after graduation
☐ Not planning on employment

A.3. If you have accepted a position, in what type of organization or sector will you work?

☐ Private sector business
☐ Self-employed
☐ Government or other public institution
☐ Private non-profit (school, arts/culture organization, etc.)
☐ Not currently employed
☐ Other, please specify:

A.4. Which occupation category best describes the position you have accepted or are seeking?

☐ Management
☐ Business and financial/accounting
☐ Computer and mathematical
☐ Architecture and engineering
☐ Life, physical, and social sciences
☐ Community and social services
☐ Marketing and sales
☐ Legal
☐ Education, training and library
☐ Arts, design, entertainment, sports and media
☐ Healthcare/medical
☐ Office and administrative support
☐ Food preparation and serving related
☐ Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance
☐ Personal care and service
A.5. Is your current position related to your undergraduate field of study?
☐ Yes, same field as major
☐ Yes, related to major
☐ No, not related
☐ Not applicable (unemployed, etc.)

A.6. How well do you think your undergraduate education prepared you for the job market?
☐ Very well
☐ Pretty well
☐ Ambivalent
☐ Not well
☐ Not well at all
☐ Not relevant

A.7. How important was Career Services in helping you to find a job?
☐ Not important
☐ Somewhat important
☐ Very Important
☐ Essential
☐ Not applicable

A.8. In what state will you be employed?
☐ Pull down menu

Pursuit of Additional Degrees

B.1. Which, if any, degrees do you plan to pursue either immediately upon graduation or at any time in the future? Please mark all that apply in both columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upon Graduation</th>
<th>Future Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law degree (LL.B. or J.D.)</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical degree (M.D., D.D.S., D.V.M.)</td>
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<td><strong>Master’s Degree</strong></td>
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<td>Master of Arts or Science</td>
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<td>Master of Engineering</td>
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<td>Other Professional Master’s (MSW, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Master’s Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Doctoral Degree (Ph.D., etc.)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering, other applied sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanities or arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional doctorate (e.g., education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other doctorate, please specify:</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
B.2. How well do you think your undergraduate institution prepared you for graduate or professional school?
- Very well prepared
- Generally prepared
- Ambivalent
- Generally not prepared
- Very poorly prepared
- Not relevant

B.3. To what extent did your overall undergraduate experience influence your plans for graduate or professional studies?
- Very positively
- Generally positively
- Ambivalent
- Generally negatively
- Very negatively
- Not relevant

Demographics
C.1. What is your gender?
- Male
- Female

C.2. What is your race or ethnic group?
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

Major
D.1. What was your undergraduate major?
- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Area, Ethnic and Cultural Studies
- Communication
- Journalism
- Computer Science
- Education
- Engineering
- Foreign Languages and Literatures
- Human Sciences
- Legal Studies
- English and Literature
- Library Science
- Biology/Life Sciences
- Mathematics
- Parks and Recreation
- Philosophy and Religious Studies
- Physical Sciences
- Psychology
- Public Administration
- Economics
- Social Sciences (excluding Economics and Psychology)
- Visual and Performing Arts
Education Related Debt

E.1. At the time of your graduation, approximately what will be the total amount borrowed to finance your undergraduate education which you will be personally responsible for repaying?

- None
- $1 to 4,999
- $5,000 to 9,999
- $10,000 to 14,999
- $15,000 to 19,999
- $20,000 to 24,999
- $25,000 to 29,999
- $30,000 to 34,999
- $35,000 or more
- Unable to estimate

E.2. As you prepare to graduate, do you think that the benefits you received from attending your undergraduate institution were worth the financial costs to you and your family?

- Yes
- No
### Skill Development

**F.1. How well do you think your undergraduate education prepared you to:**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 - Not at all</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 - Very well</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write Effectively</td>
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<td>Think analytically and logically</td>
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<td>Understand how scientists ask questions and design experiments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand international perspectives on economic political, social, and cultural issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use the knowledge, ideas, or perspectives gained from your major field</td>
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**F.2. How well did your undergraduate education prepare you for personal and professional situations that require:**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 - Not at all</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 - Very well</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of contemporary issues in society, technology, and the natural world, and appreciation of their complexity of cause and consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding of and appreciation for the arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to evaluate and choose between alternative courses of action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to get along with people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives</td>
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<td>Ability to work as a member of a team or group</td>
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</table>
AAU Alumni Survey Core Questions
Draft
March, 2007

Employment and Job Satisfaction

A.1. If you are currently employed, in what type of organization or sector do you work?
☐ Not currently employed
☐ Private for-profit corporation/company/group-practice
☐ Self-employed, own business, or professional practice (non-group)
☐ Government or other public institution or agency
☐ Private non-profit (school, college, arts/cultural organization, etc.)
☐ Other, please specify:

A.2. Which occupation category best describes your current position?
☐ Management
☐ Business and financial/accounting
☐ Computer and mathematical
☐ Architecture and engineering
☐ Life, physical, and social sciences
☐ Community and social services
☐ Marketing and sales
☐ Legal
☐ Education, training and library
☐ Arts, design, entertainment, sports and media
☐ Healthcare/medical
☐ Office and administrative support
☐ Food preparation and serving related
☐ Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance
☐ Personal care and service
☐ Law enforcement
☐ Construction and extraction
☐ Farming, fishing and forestry
☐ Transportation
☐ Military
☐ Homemaker
☐ Student
☐ Other, please specify:

A.3. Is your current position related to your undergraduate field of study?
☐ Yes, same field as major
☐ Yes, related to major
☐ No, not related
☐ Not applicable (unemployed, etc.)

A.4. How well do you think your undergraduate institution prepared you for the job market?
☐ Very well
☐ Generally well
☐ Ambivalent
☐ Inadequate
☐ Very inadequate
☐ Not relevant
A.5. Overall, how satisfied are you with the course of your career thus far?

- [ ] Very satisfied
- [ ] Generally satisfied
- [ ] Ambivalent
- [ ] Generally dissatisfied
- [ ] Very dissatisfied
- [ ] Not relevant

A.6. Thinking of your current and prior positions, how important are the following principles to your sense of job satisfaction?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Ambivalent</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition from colleagues</td>
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<td>Influencing political and social values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having responsibility for the work of others</td>
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<td>Being well off financially</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping others in need</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributing to science and innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being involved in artistic activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being successful in my own business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keeping up with developments in my area of expertise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work that is in accordance with a particular philosophy or religion</td>
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<td>Working with like-minded colleagues</td>
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<td>Challenging yourself intellectually</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other, please specify:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Pursuit of Additional Education

B.1. Have you enrolled in a degree program since graduating from your undergraduate institution?
- [ ] No (Skip to question B.4.)
- [ ] Yes (Mark all boxes that apply in question B.2.)

B.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Received</th>
<th>Currently Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second bachelor’s degree</td>
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<td>Other doctorate, please specify:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B.3. How well do you think your undergraduate institution prepared you for graduate or professional school when you compare yourself with others in your graduate/professional degree program(s)?
- [ ] I was very well prepared
- [ ] I was generally well prepared
- [ ] I was adequately prepared
- [ ] I was inadequately prepared
- [ ] Not relevant

B.4. To what extent did your overall undergraduate experience influence your plans for graduate or professional studies?
- [ ] Very positively
- [ ] Generally positively
- [ ] Ambivalent
- [ ] Generally negatively
- [ ] Very negatively
- [ ] Not relevant

B.5. In what state do you currently reside?
- [ ] Pull down menu

Demographics

C.1. What is your gender?
- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female
C.2. What is your race or ethnic group?
☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
☐ Asian
☐ Black or African American
☐ Hispanic or Latino
☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
☐ White

Major

D.1. What was your undergraduate major?
☐ Agriculture
☐ Architecture
☐ Area, Ethnic and Cultural Studies
☐ Communication
☐ Journalism
☐ Computer Science
☐ Education
☐ Engineering
☐ Foreign Languages and Literatures
☐ Human Sciences
☐ Legal Studies
☐ English and Literature
☐ Library Science
☐ Biology/Life Sciences
☐ Mathematics
☐ Parks and Recreation
☐ Philosophy and Religious Studies
☐ Physical Sciences
☐ Psychology
☐ Public Administration
☐ Economics
☐ Social Sciences (excluding Economics and Psychology)
☐ Visual and Performing Arts
☐ Health Professions
☐ History
☐ Business/management
☐ Music
☐ Nursing
☐ Other

Education Related Debt

E.1. At the time you graduated, approximately what was the total amount borrowed to finance your undergraduate education which you were personally responsible for repaying?
☐ none
☐ $1 to 4,999
☐ $5,000 to 9,999
☐ $10,000 to 14,999
☐ $15,000 to 19,999
☐ $20,000 to 24,999
☐ $25,000 to 29,999
☐ $30,000 to 34,999
☐ $35,000 or more
☐ Unable to estimate
E.2. Reflecting back, do you now think that the benefits you received from attending your undergraduate institution were worth the financial costs to you and your family?

- [ ] Yes, definitely.
- [ ] Maybe, but not sure.
- [ ] No, definitely not.

**Skill Development**

F.1. Based on what you know now, how well do you think your undergraduate education at [name of institution] prepared you to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Development</th>
<th>1 - Not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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</table>
F.2. How well did your undergraduate institution prepare you for personal and professional situations that require:

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>contemporary issues in</td>
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<td>society, technology,</td>
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<td>and the natural world,</td>
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<td>perspectives</td>
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<td>Ability to work as a</td>
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<td>member of a team or</td>
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AAU Institutional Data Committee  
Surveys of Graduating Seniors and Alumni  
Methodology and Procedures - Recommendations

General
- Recommended core set of questions that may be incorporated into existing surveys of graduating seniors and alumni or conducted as a separate survey.

Senior Survey
- Recommend web survey
- Strive for best possible response rates and make rates public. If possible, include any analysis of non-response bias.
- Survey the complete census of graduating seniors or use sampling procedures that allow for generalizability of findings to population.
- Survey data are confidential.
- Anonymity of data determined locally based on institutional practices, policies, and local IRB.

Alumni Survey
- Recommend first year of administration in 2009 and a five year cycle going forward (2009, 2014, 2019, etc.)
- Recommend that survey covers five years out cohort (for example, graduating class of 2004 in 2009), with ten years out cohort as optional (class of 1999 in 2009)
- Web or paper survey
- Strive for best possible response rates and make rates public. If possible, include any analysis of non-response bias.
- Survey the complete census of each alumni cohort studied or use sampling procedures that allow for generalizability of findings to population.
- Survey should not be connected in any way to an alumni giving solicitation.
- Survey data are confidential.
- Anonymity of data determined locally based on institutional practices, policies, and local IRB.

Exchange and Sharing of Data
- Exchange data under the auspices of AAUDE
- Adhere to data exchange and sharing policies of the AAUDE
- Store data in the AAUDE data warehouse
- Exclude personally identifiable information from unit record data (student name, SSN)
Determine AAUDE caretakers for the survey
AAU INSTITUTIONAL DATA COMMITTEE DATA COLLECTION
RECOMMENDATIONS

GRADUATE EDUCATION

The recommendations below are crafted to provide comparable, inter-institutional information focusing on major Ph.D. programs. Once the recommended procedures are in place, AAU will work with institutional research and planning officers and graduate deans through the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE) and the Association of Graduate Schools (AGS) in the Association of American Universities to consider broadening the scope of Ph.D. data collection and adding master’s degree data.

1. Enrollment

AAU institutions should participate in the AAUDE exchange item “AAUDE enrollment by program,” which was initiated as a pilot program last fall. This survey collects enrollment data at all student levels – graduate, undergraduate, non-degree, and professional. It focuses on local academic programs rather than discipline or institutional totals, yet can be aggregated to produce those results as well. The survey data will support comparisons of enrollment of, for example, Ph.D. students in history, students seeking master’s degrees in Chinese, biotechnology master’s students in engineering vs. biology programs, Ph.D. students with multiple programs or majors, and graduate students not seeking degrees.

Institutions completing the item also can use standard queries to the AAUDE data warehouse to package their graduate enrollment data in formats requested annually by the Thomson-Peterson’s Survey of Graduate and Professional Institutions, by National Science Foundation – National Institutes of Health Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering, by CGS/GRE (Council of Graduate Schools Graduate Record Exam Survey of Graduate Enrollment), and by ACT. The AAUDE survey is more comprehensive and more detailed than any of these annual surveys, and more detailed than the annual U.S. Department of Education IPEDS collection.

2. Completion rates

AAU institutions should collect data on Ph.D. completions. Data on the percent of students who complete a Ph.D. program and, in conjunction with time-to-degree data (see below), will provide a basic measure of comparative student performance in Ph.D. programs. AAUDE is developing an exchange item on Ph.D. completions, which will be completed after the procedure used in the National Research Council (NRC) Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs has been evaluated at the completion of the NRC assessment project.

3. Time to degree

AAU institutions should collect time-to-degree data drawn from institutional records. The National Science Foundation collects time-to-degree data through the Survey of Earned Doctorates, but these data are self-reported data subject to some inaccuracy and omission. AAUDE will develop a new time-to-degree exchange item for its annual data exchange after evaluation of the NRC’s time-to-degree procedure being used in its doctorate programs assessment project.
4. Graduate student financial support

AAU institutions should participate in the AAUDE exchange item on graduate assistant stipends. This recently implemented exchange item collects stipend data by program within institutions. AAUDE will monitor and revise the data collection as needed to achieve greater inter-institutional comparability, and an AAUDE task force has been formed to develop proposals for expanding the stipend survey to include all forms of graduate student financial support, including fellowships. The task force will also track and evaluate NRC’s procedure for collecting graduate student financial support data in its ongoing doctoral program assessment project.

Graduate student financial support is perhaps the most difficult category of graduate education data to collect in a comparable form across institutions. However, gathering comparable student support data across institutions will enable departments to evaluate the competitiveness of offers to admitted students, provide useful information to deans and other central administrators about the costs of supporting graduate students, and about the relationship of financial support to student recruitment and performance.

5. Graduate student exit survey

AAU institutions should have all Ph.D. recipients complete a common graduate student exit survey. A graduate student survey task force has developed a draft set of questions that would form a core survey to be used by all AAU institutions, providing inter-institutional comparisons of key aspects of students’ graduate experience and subsequent career plans. The survey data will be compiled for comparison across institutions, using AAUDE data-sharing policies to preserve anonymity of individual student data. Individual institutions may wish to add additional questions for their own use. The Association of Graduate Schools is reviewing the core survey. A final survey will be ready for implementation shortly, and the Committee recommends all AAU institutions use this survey. However, crosswalks will be developed for comparing results of similar questions and different response scales from institutions that have already developed and wish to continue using their own exit surveys.

6. Ph.D. outcomes

The Committee recommends that all AAU universities participate in a Ph.D. educational and career outcomes survey of Ph.D. recipients after the completion of their degrees, to be conducted by University of Washington’s Center for Innovation and Research in Graduate Education (CIRGE). The estimated cost of participation for each institution is $9,000 to $10,000 per year per institution, if all or most AAU institutions participate. CIRGE has conducted several such surveys, built on earlier work that CIRGE Director and University of Washington Professor Maresi Nerad carried out at the University of California, Berkeley with Joseph Cerny, then Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate School at Berkeley. The procedure will involve locating Ph.D.s three to 10 years after Ph.D. completion and surveying them about their current circumstances and views of their graduate education. A rotating three-year cycle will cover surveys in the five broad areas of natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, engineering, and professional schools (Attachment 1). Participating institutions will receive analytic reports, will be able to contract with CIRGE for additional specific reports such as comparisons with selected peer institutions, and will have access to the data through a licensing process that addresses institutional review board and other data-handling requirements.