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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 13, 2021

TO: Institutional Research Staff, Maryland Colleges and Universities

FROM: Barbara Schmertz, Ph.D., Director of Research and Policy Analysis

SUBJECT: Distance Education and COVID-19: Reporting Guidance for 2021-2022 Collection Year

Update to Temporary Reporting Guidelines tied to COVID-19 – 2021-2022 collections

In July 2020 and November 2020, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) issued guidance for institutions regarding reporting courses and enrollments in their data collections as face-to-face instruction shifted to forms of distance education. This guidance aimed to clarify 2020 -2021 data collections, namely the Course Information System (CIS) and the Enrollment Information System (EIS), as well as the Distance Education Survey.¹ As institutions continue to manage the disruptions to operations due to the COVID-19 virus, it seemed prudent for MHEC to share guidance for the upcoming 2021-2022 collections as well.

See below for the following guidelines:

- Per the agency’s original memos, for the 2021-22 collections, institutions should, to the best of their ability, report enrollment and course information based upon the modality of instruction as defined at the time of the student’s registration/start of the course.
- This means:
 - Courses should be categorized by the instruction type ([DD125](#)) at the time of the start of the course/beginning of registration. These include: traditional instruction, blended hybrid, online, and other modalities listed in the [definition](#).
 - Students should be identified as enrolled in “some,” “none” or “all” ([DD100](#)) distance education courses based on the modality of instruction for the course at the time of the student registration/ start of the course(s).
 - Institutions should follow the standard instructions in the Data Cookbook for the Distance Education Location Code ([DD101](#)) and Instructional Location ([DD126](#)). Note these have changed for the 2021-2022 collection year to

¹ Academic Affairs staff members at MHEC have begun discussions with the agency’s Finance and Administration colleagues on aligning data collection guidance and definitions with those put forth for budget-related requirements (e.g., the CC-6, S-6). Decisions from Finance and Administration will come via separate guidance.

- reflect the State of Maryland's definition of distance education.
- For the Distance Education Survey (DE), Program, Course and Student data should be reported in alignment with these definition clarifications.
 - For Hyflex courses, institutions should follow the guidance shared in a memo distributed to institutions earlier this month (see email from me with subject line "FY 2022 Guidance on classifying "HyFlex" classes and enrollments in MHEC surveys and collections" from May 4, 2022).

MHEC is aware that some institutions may not have the ability to follow these guidelines due to the nature of their student registration systems; however, all effort should be made to do so.

Because of this possible limitation, MHEC will use caution when interpreting these data make note, as appropriate, to the possible inconsistency in institutional reporting on these variables.

Please note that MHEC will continue to provide guidance as needed, and will clearly signal when institutions can return to pre-pandemic means by which to define and report these data.

If you have any questions regarding these reporting guidelines and definitions, please feel free to contact Dr. Barbara Schmertz (barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov).