

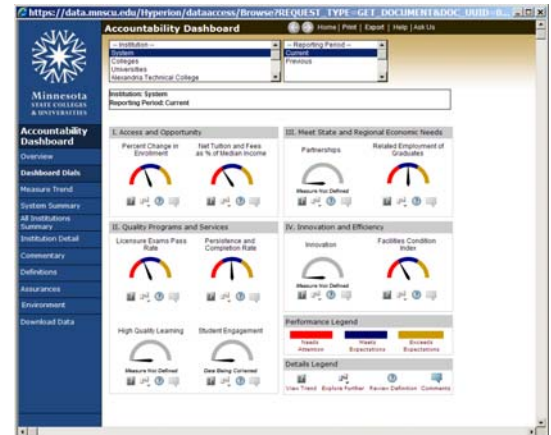


Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

ACCOUNTABILITY DASHBOARD

PURPOSE

The dashboard's purpose is to promote continuous improvement and hold the system and each of its 32 colleges and universities accountable by providing ongoing performance assessment. Currently, the dashboard reports data on six of 10 measures for each college and university and for the system as a whole. They are affordability, student persistence and completion rates, employment rate of graduates, licensure exam pass rates, facilities condition and percent change in enrollment. Four other measures – high-quality learning, student engagement, partnerships and innovation – are under development. The dashboard also provides context for interpreting system and institutional performance with trend information, comments and direct comparisons.



BACKGROUND

As a public entity, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system is charged with delivering the best possible quality of higher education programs while making effective use of resources. Although accountability and measurement of results long have been a part of the system's work, several recent national reports have recommended expanded accountability and performance reporting. The call for increased accountability and transparency has grown because higher education plays an increasingly critical role in achieving public and individual goals. As the cost of college rises, lawmakers, business leaders and taxpayers are skeptical that America's colleges and universities can produce the quality of graduates needed to maintain this country's competitive edge in a global economy. Prospective students and parents also wonder about the value they receive for their money.

DEVELOPING THE DASHBOARD

In 2003, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees adopted an accountability framework based on the four directions in the trustees' strategic plan. They are to: 1) increase access and opportunity, 2) promote and measure high-quality learning programs and services, 3) enhance the economic competitiveness of the state and its regions, and 4) innovate to meet current future and educational needs.

In February 2007, the board directed the system staff to develop an online reporting tool that would be easy to use and available to the public. An ad hoc committee of trustees, college and university presidents and system leadership directed the dashboard's development. System staff, working with research directors and others from the colleges and universities, developed the measures and other content. A private contractor, iBusiness Solutions, based in Bloomington, Minn., was hired to develop the online tool.

HOW THE DASHBOARD COMPARES TO OTHER PERFORMANCE TOOLS

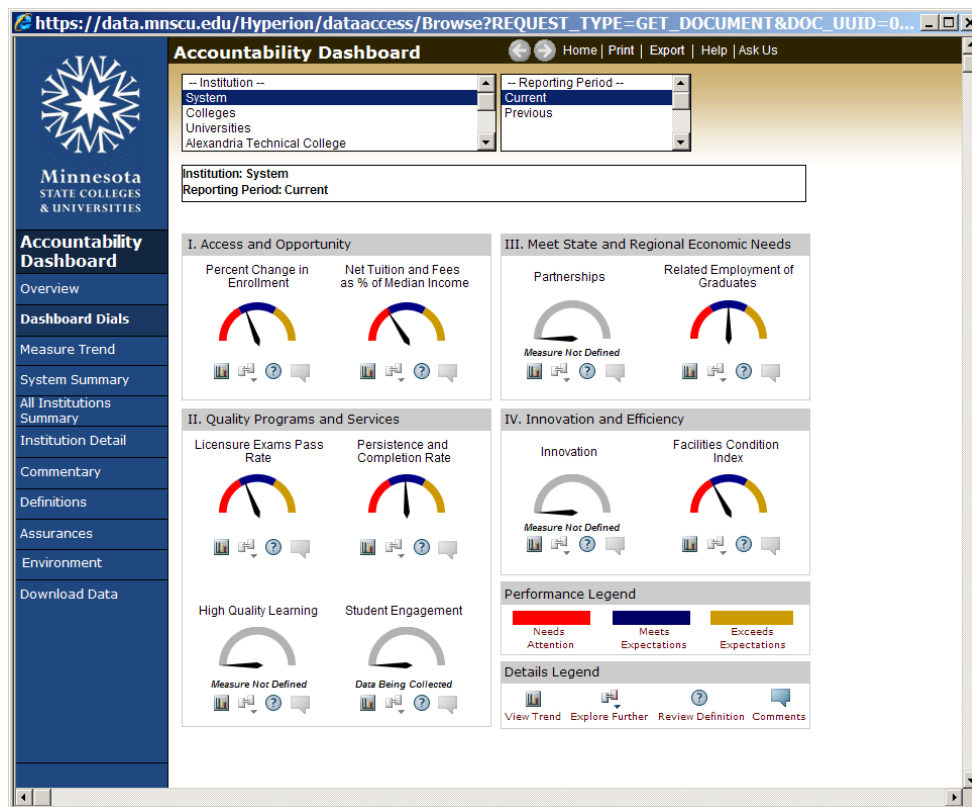
Several basic differences exist between the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' Accountability Dashboard and association-developed accountability tools, such as the Voluntary System of Accountability, also known as

VSA, and the University and College Accountability Network or UCAN. While the dashboard's purpose is to promote continuous improvement and accountability, VSA and UCAN provide information to consumers.

The dashboard's audience is trustees, system leaders and state officials, though it is available to the public. The primary audience for the VSA and UCAN is prospective students and parents. The dashboard reports performance data for the system and all 32 state colleges and universities. VSA and UCAN report consumer information for colleges and universities that choose to participate.

The dashboard provides context and trend information. Also, users can view system and institution performance data from various perspectives and download data. VSA and UCAN present a separate report for each institution with one year of data and links to institutional Web sites.

The dashboard presents six (eventually 10) performance measures about learning, employment and facilities that assess progress toward system strategic directions or goals. Besides reporting the measures, the dashboard uses objective standards to classify performance and assign a meaning to the numbers: gold for "exceeds expectations," blue for "meets expectations" or red for "needs attention."



To access the dashboard, use Internet Explorer and go to www.mnscu.edu/board/accountability/index.html

ABOUT MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system (www.mnscu.edu) comprises 32 state universities and community and technical colleges on 53 campuses serving the higher education needs of Minnesota. The system serves about 242,000 students per year in credit-based courses and an additional 140,000 students in non-credit courses.

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