

## IPEDS, SAM, VSA, & VFA: Comparing Tools for Tracking Cohorts & Measuring Student Progress

IPEDS generally highlights traditional college student outcomes. However, part-time, transfer, or returning students are common. Failing to examine such students in IR metrics underserves strategic planning and institutional effectiveness. A panel of IR professionals representing community colleges and a public state university system will lead a discussion of supplements to IPEDS such as the SAM, VSA, VFA, and more.

### Presenters in Attendance

Ellie Shockley, Ph.D. (Moderator)  
Institutional Research Analyst,  
Bismarck State College  
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Natalie Solverson, MPA  
Director of Institutional Research,  
University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

Erin Volk, Ph.D.  
Director of Institutional Research &  
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Iowa Tech Community College

### Presenters Unable to Attend

Todd Bailey, M.S.  
Senior Institutional Planner  
University of Wisconsin System

Heather Retzer  
Lead Research Analyst & Assessment  
Coordinator, ND State College of Science

IPEDS Supplement Measures Discussed:

***Student Achievement Measure (SAM)*** tracks student movement across diverse postsecondary institutions to provide a more complete picture of undergraduate student progress and completion within higher ed. Measures track first-time freshman, transfer-in students, full-time students, and part-time students. SAM is a joint initiative of the six national higher education presidential associations: AACC, AASCU, ACE, AAU, APLU, & NAICU.

[www.studentachievementmeasure.org](http://www.studentachievementmeasure.org)

***Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)*** was created to provide greater accountability through accessible, transparent, and comparable information on student progress and learning outcomes at public four-year institutions. The info is made available through an online platform, College Portraits. The VSA is sponsored by the APLU & AASCU.

[www.voluntarysystem.org](http://www.voluntarysystem.org)

***Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA)*** is a national accountability system developed to measure community college performance & effectiveness. Managed by AACC, community college leadership defined measures to align to the unique missions of these institutions and the students that they serve. VFA is now a system measuring outcomes of diverse college students & a data tool for reporting, displaying, and benchmarking community college data.

<https://vfa.aacc.nche.edu>