

SREB

Student Information Portal Assessment

The “SIPA” Project

Southern
Regional
Education
Board

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Purpose of the Project

SIPA is designed to study state, regional and national level student information portals promoting college access. The overarching goal is to collect information about these portals; to define, document, and categorize the findings; to evaluate the effectiveness of state, regional and selected national portals; and to offer recommendations from these findings for the future development and support of portals.

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Portal Selection Criteria

- Site must pertain to multiple institutions (for example site contains information on all institutions in state, or all public institutions, etc.)
- Site must focus on college access (can include focus on traditional high school/college student, graduate student and/or adult learner/degree completion)
- Site must provide at least one service beyond general information on going to college (such as online applications or high school course planning)
- Institutional sites linked from SHEEO agencies or state sites simply were excluded
- Sites could not be commercial (such as www.u101.com or www.CollegeBound.net)

Our Portal “N” = 124

- 87 statewide sites (can include all institutions, statewide public, statewide private, statewide, two year, etc.)
 - 19 states that have more than one statewide site
- 30 private/independent college association sites
- 7 national sites (Methodist, Baptist, Historically Black Universities, etc.)
- Portals were not found for Idaho, Wyoming and Washington, D.C.

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Portal Categories

- Portals were reviewed and mined for information themes and categories.
- **10** categories were established and then further divided into sub-categories if necessary.
- Each category or sub-category was then organized into appropriate variables according to the information available on the site.

125 Variables we are studying

Portal Categories

Categories include:

- Portal Administration
- Middle Grades and High School Planning
- College Pre-planning
- College Admission
- Career Planning
- Financial Aid

Portal Categories Continued

- In-College Services
- Graduate Students
- Non-traditional Student Populations
- Distance/Online Learning
- Other (includes any other information that does not relate directly to other categories)

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Portal Administration

- Demographic Data (7 variables)
 - Institutional Representation
 - Administering Agency
 - Year Initiated
 - Third Party Provider
- Portal Configuration Data (8 variables)
 - Account Creation
 - Other Language Translations
 - Technical FAQ

Middle Grades and High School Planning Variables

- 14 variables
 - Career Information for Middle Grades Students
 - College Aspirations for Middle Grades
 - Personalized Academic Planner
 - College Planning Timeline
 - Information on Dual Enrollment
 - Events/College Fairs
 - Add Your Advisor or Counselor

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College Pre-Planning Variables

- 23 variables that apply directly to college admissions (as compared to planning)
 - College Admissions Test Preparation
 - Going to College Overview
 - College Profiles
 - College Criteria Search
 - College Cost Information
 - First Year Transition
 - Student Life

College Admission Variables

- 8 Variables
 - General Application Procedures
 - Online Applications (link to the institution's website application)
 - Online Applications (one application that can be submitted to many institutions)
 - Third Party Application Service
 - High School Transcript Service
 - Application Submission Confirmation
 - Application Tracking
 - Application Fee Payment Transmittal

Career Planning Variables

- 14 variables
 - General Career Information
 - Career Lists
 - Career Information for Parents
 - Career Self-Assessment Tools
 - State Level Career Data
 - Information on State-Designated “High Need” Careers
 - Resume Tools

Financial Aid Variables

- 16 variables
 - Financial Aid Overview
 - Federal Financial Aid Information (loans, grants, scholarships)
 - State Financial Aid Information (loans, grants, scholarships)
 - Scholarship Search
 - College Savings Plans
 - Financial Aid/Loan Calculators
 - Link to FAFSA
 - FAFSA Data Transfer (Transfers applicable data from portal profile to FAFSA Application)

In-College Services Variables

- 6 variables
 - Transfer Planning/Articulation Tools
 - General Transfer Student Information
 - Links to Other State Sites/Tools on Transfer Credit
 - College-to-College Transcript Services
 - Developmental/Remediation Services

Graduate Students Variables

- 4 variables
 - Graduate School Only Search
 - General Admissions Requirements
 - Graduate School Online Application
 - Graduate Program Listings

Non-Traditional Student Populations Variables

- 8 variables
 - High School Diploma/GED Seekers
 - Adult Learners
 - Non-traditional Students
 - Career Changers
 - Degree Completers
 - Information for Ethnic Minorities
 - Credit Assessment for Prior Learning
 - Financial Aid for Non-Traditional Students

Distance/Online Learning Variables

- 2 Variables
 - Distance/E-Learning
 - Online Course or Program Catalog

Other Variables

- 14 Variables
 - Information for School Counselors
 - Information for Other Audiences
 - Multi-Media Information
 - Information Saving Toolkit (etc. email, saved college listings, saved applications, etc.)
 - Workforce Development Information
 - News or “What’s New” Feature
 - Post-college Information
 - Web 2.0 Technologies (Blogs, Chats, etc.)
 - Statistical Data

Next Steps

- Identifying appropriate contacts for survey
- In-depth survey for portal administrators for review and evaluation of data
 - “validate” our findings
 - Respond to series of questions
- Telephone follow-up discussions
- “User” survey (parents/students)
- One state “case study”
- Preliminary report detailing findings
- National conference with WICHE in 2010
- Release of final report