

# NCES ACADEMIC PARTNERS

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Disclaimer: This paper is intended to promote the exchange of information. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the position of the U.S. Department of Education.

# Introduction

- Overview of NCES
- How we do our work
- How NCES involves academics in our work

## Overview of NCEES

- Third largest statistical agency in \$'s (\$304.8 million in FY14)
- Ninth in number of staff (108 in FY14)
- All data collections and most analysis are conducted under contracts

# Role of Academics in NCES Work

- Academic advisors as members of the IES Board
- Academic advisors to contractors
- Academic advisors to NCES staff
- Academic advisors as members of expert panels
- *Academic lecturers*
- *Academics in residence*
- *Academic collaborators with NCES staff*

# National Board for Education Sciences

- 15 voting members appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate
  - 9 academics
  - 4 from foundations or independent consultants
  - 2 vacancies
- Recommend to the Director individuals to serve as Commissioners of the National Education Centers

# Academic advisors to NCES staff and NCES contractors

- Data collection contracts are used in engage academic advisors
  - To contractors for survey content and item development
    - (e.g., Technical Review Panels)
  - To staff for specific tasks
    - (e.g. conceptual frameworks for redesign efforts; longstanding panels)

# Lessons learned

- Targeted activities can be best supported by ad hoc panels or working groups
- Continuity in membership is important in ongoing standing panels
- Academics in residence—need to involve them in agency activities
- Collaboration with staff—need to establish clear expectations at the start

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# The NCES-NISS Partnership: Using A Variety of Mechanisms for Engaging Academic Experts in NCES Research

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# What is NISS?

- The National Institute of Statistical Sciences (NISS) was created in 1990 in response to a National Academy of Sciences recommendation.
- A consortium of national statistics societies and associations established NISS as a free-standing, not for profit research institute.
- It's mission is to identify, catalyze and foster high-impact cross-disciplinary and cross-sector research involving the statistical sciences.

# Origin and structure of the partnership

- Started as individual contract research projects in the early 1990's
- Solidified as part of a long-term NCES program support contract in 1995.
- NISS is a partner in the Education Statistics Support Institute Network (ESSIN)
  - Support NCES data collection and research operations.

# Why we formed the partnership

- Provides access to academic and industry experts and outstanding young professionals.
- Meets NCES's needs for timely expert consultation on cutting-edge statistical and survey research topics.
- Results in improvements in quality, efficiency, and timeliness of its operations and methods.
- The nation and its policy makers benefit from improved education data and statistics.

## Through NISS we can involve academics and experts in many ways including:

- Forming independent panels (of varying sizes and durations);
- Forming collaborative panels (of varying sizes and durations tailored);
- Organizing and running workshops;
- Conducting independent and collaborative research on specific problems.
- Organizing and presenting seminars.

## A variety of products for NCEs needs

- Arms length expert recommendations and or review/evaluation reports on NCEs operations, structures, products, and data
  - (e.g., evaluation of NCEs Statistical Standards);
- Collaborative best practices recommendations
  - (e.g., coordination of future data collections);
- Specific problem solutions
  - (e.g., tracing principals);

## A variety of products for NCES needs (Cont'd)

- White papers; computer code, other working products
  - (e.g., software for PII aggregate reporting, secure distributed computing white paper);
- Workshops and proceedings
  - (e.g., postsecondary choice);
- Informational and educational seminars on special topics
  - (e.g., disclosure avoidance and data protection).

# Ownership of Research

- Academic and industry experts are fully credited for their participation and expenses are reimbursed;
- NISS Technical Reports;
- NCES Publications; and
- Presentations.
- Contract deliverables are government property.



# Overall Assessment of Partnership

- Allows NCES to take advantage of NISS' deep academic connections and fund the participation of top experts in the relevant disciplines to form topical task forces.
- NCES supports 2-3 work groups per year to produce best practices reports.
- The business plan has been successfully ambitious in producing quick turnaround high quality results (typically 6-18 months).

# Partnership Activities

- Evaluating NCES Statistical Standards
- Measuring and characterizing high school graduation and drop-out rates
- Looking at the impact of non-response rates in the 2003 PISA
- Examining Title IX issues in post-secondary institutions
- The value of including effect sizes in data dissemination
- Best practice for NCES surveys for non-response bias issues
- The value of computer adaptive testing in NCES longitudinal surveys
- Procedures to protect respondent and school confidentiality

# Partnership Activities (continued)

- The potential for coordinating future data collections to better represent the entire education pathway from pre-K to post-secondary and adult education
- Disclosure avoidance and data protection
- Full population estimates from NAEP
- Education projections methodology and presentation
- Statistical testing programs for annual reports
- Postsecondary choice

# Partnership Activities (continued)

- Postsecondary choice
- Tracing principals
- Software for protecting PII in aggregate reporting
- Comparable Wage Index
- Teacher Compensation Survey evaluation
- Graphics and Maps in reports
- Secure distributed computing
- Gainful Employment
- To be continued.....

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