

Higher Education Analytics Center

NORC at the University of Chicago was founded in 1941 with a mission to conduct high-quality social science research in the public interest, and this mission continues to inform our work today. In 2016, building on more than 50 years of higher education research, we formalized our commitment to providing high-quality higher education research in the public interest with the formation of the Higher Education Analytics Center.

The Higher Education Analytics Center at NORC leverages our extensive experience conducting research on higher education to bring effective and affordable research and data collection offerings to institutions of higher education and other organizations related to higher education.

Our mission within the Higher Education Analytics Center, informed by our institutional mission and our non-profit status, is to provide institutions and other organizations with the data and insights necessary to their continued functioning and improvement. We approach all work with deep technical expertise, a spirit of collaboration, and a commitment to scientific integrity.

Our services range from large-scale cross-sectional and longitudinal data collection and analyses through individualized consulting on discrete issues that can be addressed by data analytics. We also provide consultation on evaluation methods and data collection design.

Projects

Campus Climate Surveys

NORC regularly conducts campus climate surveys on behalf of institutions that wish to obtain feedback directly from their student body and collect critical information on not only the incidence of sexual assault but also students' understanding of consent, institutional reporting procedures, and other important topics. Administrators can use this data to develop comprehensive solutions and evaluate their impact by comparing these baseline results to future data.

NORC has conducted climate surveys on sexual assault and misconduct as well as diversity and inclusion for the following clients:

- Rice University
- Stanford University
- The University of California, Berkeley
- The University of Chicago
- Walden University

Additionally, NORC has published several blog posts about the importance of collecting high-quality data on campus climate and the ideal methodology for doing so.

NORC has also completed in-depth qualitative investigations of the working climate for faculty, particularly faculty women, on behalf of Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, and a major Midwestern professional school.



Career Pathways

The journey of our nation's students does not end with their final degree completion; their education must prepare them for success in the workforce. We know that many PhD holders follow careers outside of academe and many leave the U.S. entirely after graduation. Similarly, many JD holders pursue careers outside of law firms. Recipients of Associate's, Bachelor's, and Master's degrees may continue their studies, enter the workforce, or some combination of these two.

NORC researchers track the career and professional pathways of degree recipients to determine how they contribute to the workforce and society, both here and abroad, and how these outcomes change over time. We are particularly experienced with tracking down degree recipients who have left the country and at extracting degree and career information from publically available sources, in addition to more traditional survey techniques.

Transitions into and Success in Higher Education

NORC researchers and data collection experts collaborate with outside experts to gain insight into many of the factors that influence whether and how potential students enter higher education. Our research has focused on several facets that influence this important transition, including:

- College advising (including virtual advising)
- Financial aid availability
- Equity issues in access to higher education
- Academic preparation for higher education
- Assisting institutions with evaluating measures used in the admission process
- Students' decision-making processes in selecting institutions

Partnerships with Businesses

There is a growing recognition among both businesses and institutions that strategic partnerships between these two groups can provide benefits to both. When institutions align their educational programs with the needs of the business community, businesses benefit from an improved pipeline of well-trained, local talent. When businesses lend resources to institutions, students benefit from participation in work-based learning experiences (such as internships and capstone projects) and other High-Impact Practices.

NORC evaluates a number of these partnerships between institutions and businesses to provide a better understanding of how they benefit both sides as well as the students. We are also currently engaged in developing a taxonomy of work-based learning experiences by gathering information from businesses and from students who have participated in such experiences.

Other Institutional Support

NORC's Higher Education Analytics Center seeks to support institutions in other areas as well. This includes consulting on available data sources, conceptualizing and implementing data collection or evaluation projects on any scale, providing short- or long-term analytical capacity to institutions, or any other services related to gathering and understanding data related to higher education. In addition to the topics described above, some of the challenges we have helped institutions handle include:

- Creating a system for benchmarking key outcomes for which no publicly available data source currently exists
- Gathering data on how faculty and staff members utilize internal resources such as HR and tech support
- Learning about students' experiences with and use of tobacco
- Extending campus climate survey research to include faculty and staff

Association Research Support

In addition to our work with institutions, we support professional and academic associations and other non-profit and commercial organizations that wish to collect data on or otherwise learn more about educational processes and outcomes. NORC tracks educational attainment and career outcomes by field of study to better understand workforce characteristics by both discipline and industry, and designs studies around the analytic needs of the client's association or industry perspective.



NORC at the University of Chicago is an objective, nonpartisan research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions.

**Start a conversation.
Contact us.**

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