



BACKGROUND/HISTORY

Higher education in Indiana has historically relied heavily on public four-year universities supplemented by a number of well-regarded private colleges. Indiana has two flagship institutions: Purdue University’s main campus in West Lafayette and Indiana University–Bloomington. Both are members of the Big Ten and the Association of American Universities and are classified by the Carnegie Foundation as “Research University – Very High” (i.e. “Research I”) institutions. Indiana also has one major national private university: Notre Dame.

As higher education expanded nationwide in the 1960s and 1970s, Indiana chose not to establish an extensive community college system like those built in the neighboring states of Illinois and Ohio. Instead, Indiana built a system of regional public universities with governance split between IU and Purdue, while also maintaining larger, less selective, autonomous four-year universities in Muncie (Ball State), Terre Haute (Indiana State), and, more recently, Evansville (the University of Southern Indiana). In addition, the state’s urban public university in Indianapolis is governed jointly by IU and Purdue. Indiana also established a system of local two-year vocational and technical colleges. But starting in the late 1990s, education leaders have worked to recast those institutions as a community college system with a more traditional mission of providing low-cost, accessible access to courses and degrees leading to transfer. This remains a work in progress.

Indiana’s economy is very manufacturing-dependent relative to other states, and the percentage of adults with a college education is low. The state also tends to be a net exporter of people with college degrees—the so-called “brain drain” problem. Per-capita personal income in Indiana is below average, and tax rates are not particularly high, leading to lean state budgets and university funding levels at or below those of peer competitors.

Indiana has a well-established student financial aid system that provides relatively generous support to needy students in comparison to other states. Unlike some states, Indiana has kept most financial aid resources focused on students with financial need. Public college and university tuition, however, is above average. Indiana has been nationally recognized for strong connections between higher education and K–12, including establishment of a defined college preparatory curriculum for high school students.

INDIANA SCORE CARD

GATHERING INFORMATION	✓
Student Outcomes	–
Learning	–
Progression and Attainment	✓
Further Employment, Education, and Life	–
Institutional Practices	–
Teaching and Engagement	–
Efficiency and Financial Stewardship	✓
Equity, Access, and Affordability	–
Alignment With Pre K–12 Education	–
Scholarship and Research	–
Economic and Community Development	–
Degree Production and Economic Impact	✓
Arts, Culture, and Service	–
Adult Education and Extension Services	–
Overall Quality of Information	–
State- and Systemwide Information	✓
USING INFORMATION	✓
Governance and Strategic Planning	✓
Funding	✓
Transparency and Markets	✓
– = Needs Improvement ✓ = In Progress + = Best Practice	


Higher education governance in Indiana is relatively decentralized, with the two main university systems, the two-year system, and the other four-year universities enjoying substantial autonomy in setting tuition, awarding financial aid, and many other matters. Higher education is coordinated by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, which was established in 1971 and whose 14 members are appointed by the governor.


GATHERING INFORMATION


Measurement isn’t sufficient for accountability, but it is necessary. Any legitimate effort to hold institutions accountable for success must begin with a fair, accurate

process for gauging success. Higher education is multifaceted in design and mission—there are many different kinds of institutions serving diverse student groups while working to accomplish a large variety of goals. Accountability systems that don't examine all facets of an institution risk presenting a narrow, distorted view of success and creating unbalanced or even perverse incentives that are misaligned with institutional missions and larger policy goals.


Student Outcomes


 **Learning:** Indiana does not publicly or systematically release accountability information on this measure.


 **Progression and Attainment:** The Indiana Commission for Higher Education reports institutional graduation and retention rates and publishes the information disaggregated by student race/ethnicity. Graduation rates are presented in comparison to those at peer institutions. Ten-year graduation rates are published for Indiana's regional public university campuses, reflecting the higher number of adult and part-time students who attend those institutions. For two-year institutions, Indiana reports the number and percentage of students who transfer to a four-year campus.

 **Further Employment, Education, and Life:** Indiana publishes the percentage of graduates residing in-state one and five years after finishing their degree, by institution.


Institutional Practices


 **Teaching and Engagement:** Although a number of Indiana institutions participate in surveys like the National Survey of Student Engagement (which is housed at Indiana University–Bloomington) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, no such data are required by the state.

 **Efficiency and Financial Stewardship:** Indiana reports overall debt service as a percentage of all university operating expenses, along with aggregate longitudinal data stretching back to the 1970s. It also shows institutional peer comparisons for the ratio of dollars spent on instruction to all instructional and general expenditures. The Commission for Higher Education also issues periodic reports on campus space utilization.


 **Equity, Access, and Affordability:** The state reports the percentage of institutional grant aid dollars allocated by need, as compared to so-called “merit-based” aid.


Indiana reports the net price of attendance as a percentage of the state's median income at each institution. The state also reports average debt at graduation among resident students who borrowed, by institution.


 **Alignment with Pre K–12 Education:** Indiana reports on the number and percentage of entering students earning dual enrollment credits by institution.

 **Scholarship and Research:** Indiana reports total federal research and development expenditures, broken down by “science and engineering” and “other” categories, by institution. It also reports total sponsored grant and contract expenditures.


Economic and Community Development

 **Degree Production and Economic Impact:** Indiana reports the number and percentage of graduates by degree level and instructional program for each institution.

 **Arts, Culture, and Service:** Indiana does not publicly or systematically release accountability information on this measure.

 **Adult Education and Extension Services:** Indiana does not publicly or systematically release accountability information on this measure.

Overall Quality of Information


 Indiana has a Student Information System that collects a variety of “unit record,” privacy-protected data about individual students, including enrollment, credit attainment, degree attainment, demographics, transfer, high school academic performance, SAT and ACT scores, and student financial aid. The state does not use its P–16 data system to track students as they make the transition from high school to college, nor does it report post-higher education employment outcomes using state employment databases.

Indiana reports some institutional data longitudinally, and in some cases relative to peer institutions. Both practices give important meaning and context to the information. Graduation rates are disaggregated by race/ethnicity, an important element given persistent attainment gaps between white and minority students.


Overall, Indiana's accountability information is out-of-date compared to other states; the most recent

“Postsecondary Education Indicators” report is dated February 11, 2005, and contains data through the end of the 2003–04 academic year. The state adopted new statewide accountability metrics in January 2009; baseline data presented alongside these metrics come from 2007, but they are given as state totals only.


State- and Systemwide Measures

 As state totals, Indiana reports the percentage of high school graduates going directly to college compared to other states, as well as the percentage of 25- to 44-year-olds enrolling part-time. It also reports the cost of attendance compared to median family income, six-year graduation rates, freshman-to-sophomore persistence, bachelor’s degrees awarded per 100 undergraduates, and the percentage of state residents with a bachelor’s degree.

USING INFORMATION

 Simply making information available does not, in and of itself, constitute a well-functioning accountability system. Measurement is only step one; step two is making the information that comes from measurement meaningful. There are different ways to do this, but they’re all variations on a theme: injecting information about quality into existing processes that college decision-makers care about. These processes can be grouped into three areas: governance and strategic planning, funding, and transparency and markets.

Governance and Strategic Planning


 Indiana’s governance-based mechanisms for institutional accountability are weak compared to other states. The Indiana Code explicitly provides that the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) “has no powers or authority relating to the management, operation, or financing of a state educational institution except as expressly set forth by law.” Unlike states where price-setting is centrally coordinated, institutional boards of trustees in Indiana have final say over tuition and fees at their respective institutions.

There are no formal mechanisms by which state higher education leaders or trustees are held accountable for results as measured by the CHE or other bodies.

In June 2008, the CHE adopted *Reaching Higher: Strategic Initiatives for Higher Education* outlining


strategic initiatives in college completion, affordability, preparation, and accountability. It includes numeric targets for, among other things, degrees produced, graduation rates, tuition and fees as a percentage of median family income, and research and development expenditures.

Funding

 Indiana requires institutions to submit performance information to the Commission for Higher Education and the State Budget Agency as part of their biennial budget requests to the governor and General Assembly. Institutions have substantial discretion in choosing what measures to report.

Indiana adopted a performance budgeting policy for the 2007–09 biennial budget, providing incentives based on institutional improvement in degree completion, on-time graduation, and transfer between two- and four-year institutions. The commission has stated a goal of incorporating new performance measures, such as student course completion, into the 2009–11 budget.

Transparency and Markets

 Information can be found relatively easily on the Indiana Commission for Higher Education Web site. The commission publishes annual grade-level magazines aimed at informing students of what they need to know to go to college. The magazines are delivered to every elementary and secondary school in the state, and then delivered to every student in every grade.

Indiana maintains a Web site for prospective college students called LearnMoreIndiana. It contains basic information for students of all ages. The college portion addresses things like how to fill out the FAFSA and what courses to take in high school. One unique aspect is that it allows students to send high school transcripts to Indiana colleges and universities free and online. The lone link to an interactive tool is to CollegeMatchMaker, a free matching program provided by College Board. The site doesn’t facilitate comparisons between institutions on key outcome measures like graduation rates. Indiana appears to focus on providing prospective students general information about preparing for, applying to, and paying for college, rather than putting accountability information in the hands of students and parents choosing colleges as a means of influencing institutional behavior.

ACCOUNTABILITY DOCUMENTS

Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Reaching Higher: Strategic Initiative for Higher Education in Indiana

<http://www.che.state.in.us/Reaching%20Higher.shtml>

Reaching Higher With Accountability

<http://www.che.state.in.us/Reaching%20Higher/Versions%20for%20Distribution%20-%20All/1-%20Accountability-7-7.pdf>

Reaching Higher: Strategic Directions for Higher Education in Indiana

<http://www.che.state.in.us/Reaching%20Higher/Versions%20for%20Distribution%20-%20All/7-Reaching%20Higher-7-7.pdf>

Student Information System Instructions and Definitions Beginning Year 2007–08

http://www.che.state.in.us/academics/SIS%20instruction%20manuals/Instructions2008_4_10_07.pdf

Indiana's Postsecondary Indicators

<http://www.che.state.in.us/overview/Indicators%20Final,%20Full%20Report,%20with%20page%20numbers%20and%20cover%20pages,%20Feb%202005.pdf>

Report of the Subcommittee on Higher Education: Volume I – Recommendations

[http://www.che.state.in.us/news/Indiana%20Report%20101404,%20Vol%20I,%20Final%20\(1-2%20sided\).pdf](http://www.che.state.in.us/news/Indiana%20Report%20101404,%20Vol%20I,%20Final%20(1-2%20sided).pdf)