

USING THE NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE (NSC) FOR STUDENT TRACKING

What is the National Student Clearinghouse? Established in 1993 first as the National Student Loan Clearinghouse that provided services to loan guarantors and lenders of college financial aid recipients' enrollment records, today the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) has become the largest national database of student enrollment, claiming participation from over 3000 US colleges and universities that enroll 91% of US college students. Through contracting with the NSC, colleges have regularly used this non-profit organization's services for enrollment verification for deferment of the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) loans, transcript orders, and degree verification. Participating institutions are required to submit enrollment and/or degree award data of their students electronically multiple times each academic year.

In recent years, more and more higher education institutions have found new value of the NSC database – to track their own departed students nationwide where no other resources were able to provide in such capacity. Some institutions have reported using the NSC database to help their colleges obtain a fuller picture of their students' transfer and degree attainment activities elsewhere, especially those crossing the state borderline, and boosted their student educational achievement outcomes.

How can Mt. SAC utilize the NSC? Traditionally, we rely on the State or the Chancellor's Office system database to provide summary report of certain academic achievement such as transfer to UC or CSU of our students, but the data is limited to within state public school system and as aggregated data only. With the NSC, it can provide the college or its various programs to track our students, even at the individual student level, to see if they continue education in any type of four year institutions nationwide, not limited to just in-state public institutions, but also private and out of state schools. Previously, the Research Office has helped Mt. SAC programs such as Bridge, Math Academy, and Paralegal to track their students via NSC.

There are, however, some **limitations** to the NSC database: (1) enrollment data are limited to what have been submitted by each college, for example, Mt. SAC participated in 1996 and on, no prior data of 1996 is available, (2) the NSC filters the submitted enrollment data and students with no Social Security Numbers (SSN) or have conflicting SSNs will not be accepted, (3) concurrent students' enrollment data of the second school will not be credited, (4) records can also be missing from the NSC if there's no match in NAME and DOB due to inconsistency in spelling or number variation and if student or college blocks data, and (5) student degree verification will be limited to those institutions that participate and report data and currently the participation rate is half of that of the enrollment verification. Despite all these, the NSC still the best source available so far to search our departed students' continuing academic activities on individual bases across the state borders.

For more information about the NSC, search here
<https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/>

If interested to use the NSC for student tracking, please contact the Research Office for additional information and services by calling ext. 5551 or email mtsai@mtsac.edu.