

Decision Support News

Fall Quarter 2007

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DSS HAS A NEW WEBSITE

If you tried to visit our old website recently, you were redirected to our new website. The new site, launched in September, is easier to navigate and has more Institutional Research resources for your use than the old site.

The website has the following topic areas:

- About DSS
- Contact Information
- Decision Support Tools
- Business Objects Downloads
- Institutional Research

Check it out:
<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/pres-provost/dss/index.shtml> or just type “DecisionSupport” in the address line of your browser.

DSS’s Staff Count Universes

DSS has both a current (based on PeopleSoft HR data) and a legacy (based on the CHRIS legacy HR system) head count collection, available in two Business Objects universes. These universes allow users to get counts of employees over time as well as attributes for those employees.

Staff Information PS (for PeopleSoft HR Head Count)
Staff Information Legacy (for legacy CHRIS Head Count)

The counts in the more-current PeopleSoft HR Head Count were designed to match the data produced by Mario Acquesta’s HRIS group, because we were able to make our extracts and counting logic exactly match theirs. The counts from legacy data usually matched, or varied by just tiny amounts, because we had some slight difference in calculation criteria.

Head counts in a given year/month are based on primary jobs as of the 15th of each month,

that are typically at least 20 hours – although the criteria is slightly more complicated than that. If you need to know specifically, we could provide you with the extract and filtering logic!

“You can request head counts or FTEs, and you can even get detailed information on employees, such as anniversary dates.”

1.) What kinds of questions can be answered with these universes?

You can get data by school, department, and other DSS Organization-hierarchy entities. You can request head counts or FTEs, and you can even get detailed information on employees, such as anniversary dates.

The Staff Characteristics included are the Person Name, Age, Birth Date, Gender, Ethnicity, Status, Employee Type, Years of Seniority, JCC information, Hire Date and Seniority Date.

2.) Who can request to have access to the HR Staff Count universes?

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How to Choose a DSS Universe

DSS users, particularly new users, are sometimes overwhelmed by the number of universes DSS offers. Training classes for new users review the available universes and how to choose one based on your data needs.

The first thing to ask yourself is what kind of data you want. Most DSS users are interested in financial data, but some log in to get sponsored projects or staff headcount information. After that, you should ask yourself if you want current data or legacy data. Once you know those two things, you have considerably narrowed your choices.

A quick guide to how to choose a DSS universe is displayed on page 3 of this newsletter. It is a handy, but simple, guide to figuring out the best universe to use when you want financial or sponsored projects information. If you are interested in legacy financial information, the DSS website has a similar guide for SUFIN data in the “Business Objects Downloads” section.

Turn to page 3 for the Guide to Choosing a DSS Universe.

DSS Staff Headcount Universes, cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

These universes are generally available to Budget Officers and Dean's Office staff who are authorized for HR information, require such data to do their jobs, and who are at a high enough level to have access to a broad range of HR data. If you have a need for such information, please contact DSS to request access.

3.) What was the source of the data?

For legacy CHRIS data, we have the data for Fiscal Years 1994 through 2001, and the first part of Fiscal Year 2002 (through 12/2001). For PeopleSoft HR Data, with a few exceptions, we have data for Fiscal Years 2002 through the present.

4.) Are any months of data missing?

We relied on the HRIS team's extracts for our input data until we were able to code our own extracts. Due to some glitches in working with PeopleSoft data early on, there were months where HR was either missing extracts, or the extracts were not quite right – and so both HR and DSS are missing data

for: 01/15/02, 02/15/02, 09/15/02, 01/15/03

5.) Are there any other peculiarities in the data that was extracted?

We pull data from the PeopleSoft Reporting database on the 16th of each month – which is a copy of data that was in the production database on the 15th of each month. There was one month when the database folks were not able to complete the Reporting DB copy – and it happened to be exactly on the 15th/16th – so the data in the Reporting database was as of the 14th – and then the next day's copy would be as of the 16th, which would have been after records would have been purged. So we have not-quite-the-15th data for that month: 11/14/06.

5.) Will the criteria for what gets counted in the Head-Count collection change?

A slight change to include one or two special situations has been implemented by HR, so DSS has also changed its extract to match, as of 11/15/07.

Institutional Research Tools Spotlight: COFHE data

Stanford University belongs to two major data-sharing consortia, COFHE and AAUDE. In the last issue, I described AAUDE, and in this issue I'll talk about COFHE.

The Consortium on Financing Higher Education – also known as COFHE (pronounced like CO-FEE) – is an institutionally supported organization of thirty-one *private* colleges and universities. COFHE was formed in 1971, initially funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to examine how selective, private colleges and universities could discuss their commitment to providing exceptional educational opportunities for highly talented students as well as best practices in fiscal management. The nine original "Sloan Study" institutions were joined by additional institutions in 1974 to form COFHE; the current membership stands at thirty-one. The criteria for establishing the COFHE membership were that each institution: 1) be private, 2) attract a national undergraduate applicant pool, 3) be willing and able to participate actively in the various projects of the Consortium, and 4) have characteristics enough in common with the other members to permit each school's inclusion in various cooperative studies.

COFHE has historically concentrated on collecting and providing comparative data on admissions and financial aid. It produces each year several "color books" that contain analysis and data on tuition and fees, freshman financial aid, admissions statistics, and how financial aid is financed. These color

books go back many years and provide a great source of longitudinal admissions and financial aid data.

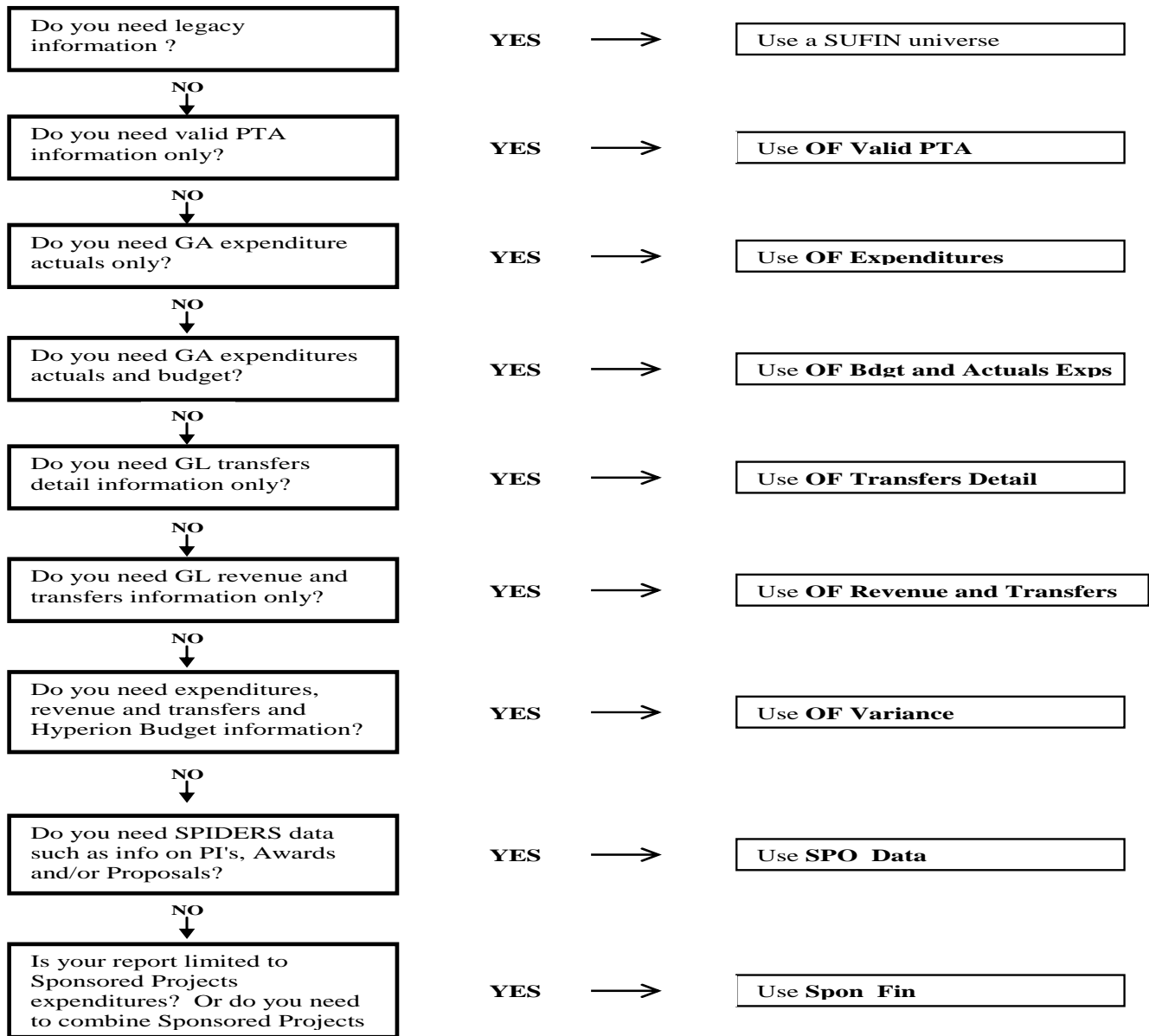
COFHE also administers an annual data collection called CIPP—COFHE Institutional Profiles Project. The data collected includes enrollment, endowment, faculty counts, class size, and faculty salaries. (Stanford does not participate in the faculty salaries surveys because COFHE does not mask the data.) The CIPP data is used extensively in the DSS External Statistics Book.

**Consortium
On
Financing
Higher
Education**

COFHE has recently become well-known for its survey research. COFHE coordinates the survey efforts of its member institutions by providing a common instrument, a web survey service, and delivery of the results. COFHE instruments are used to survey freshmen (every year), seniors (every 2 years), all students (every 4 years), alumni (every 5 years), and parents (every 5 years). Although Stanford would often like to run its own surveys so that the questions are very Stanford-specific, we choose to use COFHE surveys for the valuable

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A Quick Guide to Choosing a DSS Universe



(Continued from page 2)...COFHE

comparative data they provide. While it is important to know how Stanford is doing, it is very useful to also know how Stanford is doing as compared to its peer institutions.

One last item COFHE produces is an annual "Presidents' Book". COFHE chooses a timely topic each year, and produces an in-depth report using COFHE data and other research. Past reports have included "Middle Income Families and COFHE Schools", "Financial Aid Trends and Implications for COFHE Institutions", "Participation by Low Income and First Generation Students in COFHE Institutions", and "Comparative Performance and Outcomes of Under-Represented Minorities at COFHE Schools".

Other COFHE ad-hoc projects have included staffing, retention, and graduation rates.

Keep COFHE in mind if you need comparative data for selective private colleges and universities, particularly in the areas of admissions, financial aid, and survey research. Contact Rana for more information.

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DSS Welcomes New Administrative Assistant

DSS has hired Elizabeth Gardiner as a half-time administrative assistant. She started in September, and helped usher DSS into its new location. She works Tuesday through Thursday, and can be found on the second floor of Building 60, in Room 223. Her email address is bethgard@stanford.edu. Welcome, Elizabeth!



Here is our new home, Building 60. We're on the second floor, at the end closest to Memorial Church (the left side as you face the building).

U-CAN Launched!

Stanford recently joined U-CAN, a new website aimed at high school students and their parents as they research college opportunities. U-CAN stands for the University and College Accountability Network, and it is sponsored by NAICU, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. The aim of U-CAN is to provide basic college information in an easy to read format that all NAICU members can use. The universal format provides for quick comparability. This effort was the result of a year's worth of consumer research by NAICU.



You can see Stanford's profile here:
http://members.ucan-network.org/stanford_university2

or visit the whole site at:
<http://www.ucan-network.org/>

If you've got a college-bound son or daughter, this site is a good research tool to use as a starting point!

Survey Updates

In the last newsletter, we reported that the NRC will publish its findings in late 2007. However, the new date is February 15, 2008. This date is tentative also, so don't count too heavily on it. We are currently working on a Department Profile-like report for the NRC data.

We also reported on the USNews ratings of undergraduate educational institutions. The report came out on August 19, and Stanford was once again ranked at #4.

Quick Notes from DSS

*If you ever create a report in Business Objects and find that it is running, and running, and running....you may want to "kill" it. Simply exiting from Business Objects isn't enough, however. You need to call someone in DSS (Anita or Kathy) and they will follow through by stopping the process from running on the database as well. If you don't take that extra step, the database will continue to process your query, slowing down the server for all users. Also, Anita and Kathy can help fine-tune your query so it is efficient and quicker.

*Recently our source system "STAR" process loads have been taking a full 24-hours, causing excessive downtime for DSS users. Thus, we have decided to convert to month-end processing only, and the weekly updates are no more.