Some introduction…..In a world with increasing distribution of on-line services, including those offered by higher education institutions, little has been gathered about the practices for establishing and appropriately managing distance education records. The purpose of this survey is to create an inventory of the practices for institutions offering distance education programs where the business of record development and identity proofing happen every day.

AACRAO has 1000 members with XX institutions represented. At each of these institutions, key representatives, those familiar with the identity management practices of distance educational services, were asked to respond to the survey. Most responses came from registrar staff (43%) followed by distance education staff (26%) and admissions staff (17%). Those institutions without distance education programs either did not respond or were removed from the analyses.

A total of 76 individuals responded to the survey (See Appendix 1 for a list of the institutions). The majority of universities administer their student credentials for traditional and distance education programs in one system (79% of all who responded). Of the 66 respondents who provided information about the size of their distance education programs, the majority (70%) have distance education enrollments of 100 or more with 47% having programs with 500 or more students.

Need more intro here…something like…..These institutions establish various kinds of remote relationships with students for various purposes and record this activity as part of their everyday business. The general business begins with records capturing an individual’s interest in the institution and the ability of the institution to provide targeted information for these prospective students. In general, as the prospective student comes closer to making a decision to apply, attend and receive a degree at these institutions, the activity recorded becomes more complex as do the credentials required to access this information. The added complexity is that most of these activities happen remotely making the links between the person, the data and the record more tenuous. The credibility of these records strengthens as the institutions capture unique student attributes or have documented proof (e.g., photo id card) that can be linked to the electronic record. This survey provides insight into how institutions offering remote education, develop an electronic student record and the level of assurance institutions build between the electronic record and identity of the individual as they offer various types of on-line services.

As universities develop access profiles for their internal staff based on the level of understanding of FERPA and appropriate data handling practices, so it may be reasonable to develop student service profiles based on the level of assurance universities have about the student’s credentials and the link to their electronic record.

**The first point of entry**

When is the first record about a student created at our institutions? The majority of respondents first learn about prospective students from phone calls and on-line inquiries (58%), which is also how most (59%) students make their initial contact with the university. Some students send their test scores to the university (22 out of 76 or 29%), which would also create an institutional record; students provide a photo id at the time of taking a test which creates some level of confidence about the identity of the student who took the test and also the test score is packaged with a variety of student attributes that are linked to the student.

The quality of the first record created for a student varies by the number and consistency of student attributes gathered and stored with that record. Since the most common source of data for an initial record is a phone call or online inquiry, the basic information gathered may be limited to things like name, address, phone number, email. While phone and email are the most popular, still nearly 80% (60 out of 76) of the remote students also make initial contact through an application which provides consistent and unique student attribute that are useful for establishing a link to any other existing record. These attributes can also be used to help authenticate the student to the appropriate record. Of the 16 who do not submit an application for their initial contact, 2 institutions use the test score as how they first learn about the prospective student.

It would appear that most records begin with substantial information about a student from the application or test submission processes (62 out of 76 or 82%).

**Credentials to access the record**

Once a record is created and matched to any existing records, the next issue relates to access to that record via a login credential. The credential is essentially the key or token allowing access to the record.

The respondents indicated that login credentials are assigned by most universities once students are admitted (34%) to the university, while many other universities assign the credential after their initial application (26%). The best practices reported for communicating the login credentials to the remote persons were to 1) send a one-time link to a password selection page (via US Mail or email or mobile) or 2) to ask a prospect to access a webpage and choose/obtain login credentials (user id/password). Out of 76 respondents, 33% used one of these best practice techniques. Using the US post office (considered the second best practice) was reported by 41%, while 18% sent the credential via user provided email or mobile number.

**Services offered/used**

The respondents report that students are able to use the login credentials for a variety of basic services, learning management system (16%), course enrollment (15%), campus services (e.g. portal, calendar, email, at 15%) and distance education services (14%). Admissions (14%) and financial aid (12%) are also common purposes for this credential.

For respondents who indicate that submitting an application is their initial point of contact (n=60), the types of services used are relatively similar to those described by all respondents (16% for learning management, etc.). Likewise the services used for respondents who provide login credentials when the student is admitted (n= 26) or when the student applies (n=20), remain similar to the entire set of respondents (n=76), with course management, LMS, campus services continuing to be among the top 3 services available. Admissions services and financial aid services are also very popular across all populations.

*Q8 with Q10, for those who don’t pass the credential securely, what services are provided?*

**Permanent Credential**

For the 30 institutions that replace the initial login credential with a permanent credential, the largest share do this once they are admitted (37%) or the registration activity is complete (23%). The majority of institutions (38) do not replace the login credential. Similar to the first credential, 30% communicate the credential using a best practice (link or institutional email), 16% US Mail (a second best practice) and 32% pass the credential to a user provided email or mobile number. Nearly all of the 30 institutions require that the password be changed upon first login (90%).

*Compare Q 10 with Q13 Communicate initial credential and communicate final credential*

**Supporting documentation**

Almost all institutions receive supporting documentation for an initial record from a third party (e.g., testing service), only 5 institutions indicate that the never receive supporting documentation. As may be expected, most receive supporting documentation before students are admitted to the university…..

*Need to clean up this question so that you capture the first point of entry for each institution, not multiple responses for each institution.*

The new information provides more confidence in the identity of the person (74%) but very few provide more services or access to more sensitive information because of this increased confidence (8% provide more).

Identity proofing is the process used to verify the physical identity of an individual by having them present identifying documents such as a passport or drivers license or through challenge-response questions that contain information about the individual being ‘proofed’ that would not be available to the general public. Surprisingly 40% do not perform any type of identity proofing. Of those who responded (68), around 22% do identity proofing during the prospect to admission process, and 37% have done some form of identity proofing by the time the student is admitted. Approximately one third of the institutions record the act of identity proofing (19 out of 59) or capture the image of the evidence and link it to the person’s record (22 out of 59).

The task of identity proofing largely falls on the Admissions office (29%), Registrar’s office (19%) or the Distance Education office (15%), with some institutions allowing multiple offices to perform this task. For some institutions the identity proofing process results in an ID card being issues (15 institutions), a password being reset (7), or being issued a permanent login credential (7).

*Consider Q 21, 22, 23, 24,27, 28 – lift a few comments from 28 just for the narrative.*

I like this quote from Q28

“It is cumbersome but the reality is that identity theft is the number one White collar crime in the United States and it is our obligation to ensure the identity of the applicant, the active student, and graduates. What is worrisome is that as fast as technology may cover the exposure the dishonest individuals respond just as quickly to the security changes.”

Appendix 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| University | Size |
| UW Stout | Over 500 |
| University of Alabama |  |
| Park University |  |
| Oregon State University |  |
| University of Southern California |  |
| Indiana University School of Continuing Studies |  |
| The University of North Carolina at Greensboro |  |
| Washington State University |  |
| Colorado State University |  |
| Arizona State University |  |
| Boston University |  |
| Amarillo College |  |
| Herzing University |  |
| Iowa State University |  |
| University of Wisconsin-Platteville |  |
| George Mason University |  |
| Mississippi |  |
| University of Southern California |  |
| Roane State Community College |  |
| Norwich University |  |
| Gonzaga University |  |
| Saint Joseph's University |  |
| Alvernia University |  |
| University of Minnesota, Crookston |  |
| University of Miami |  |
| UNC Charlotte |  |
| Graceland University |  |
| Anthem Education Group |  |
| Naval Postgraduate School |  |
| Marylhurst University |  |
| University of La Verne |  |
|  |  |
| Technical College of the Lowcountry | Under 500 |
| Covenant Theological Seminary |  |
| United Theological Seminary |  |
| Charleston Southern University |  |
| Harding University |  |
| Oral Roberts University |  |
| Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions |  |
| TCU |  |
| Pennsylvania College of Technology |  |
| Baptist Bible College & Seminary |  |
| Carnegie Mellon University |  |
| Sul Ross State University |  |
| Nebraska Methodist College |  |
| Friends University |  |
| Marian University |  |
| Holy Names University |  |
| Southern Oregon University |  |
| Ohio Northen University |  |
| Whitworth University |  |
| Hebrew College |  |
| Multnomah |  |
| Southeast Technical Institute |  |
| Patrick Henry College |  |
| Dallas Christian College |  |
| Averett University |  |
| Toccoa Falls College |  |
| Northern Seminary |  |
| Southern California Seminary |  |
| Erikson Institute |  |
| Trinity Bible College |  |
| Eternity Bible College |  |
| Crossroads College |  |
| Dakota Wesleyan University |  |
| Covenant College |  |
| Multnomah University |  |
|  |  |
| mills college | Unknown |
| St John's College Springfield IL |  |
| Harvey Mudd College |  |
| Sacred Heart School of Theology |  |
| Embry Riddle Aeronautical University |  |
| Southern Polytechnic State University |  |
| Thunderbird School of Global Management |  |
| George Fox University |  |
| Elgin Community College |  |
| University of La Verne |  |