DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

In many areas of life and work, we are driven by metrics. We wear smartwatches, buy smart appliances, and use various apps to monitor cardiac fitness, calories eaten, steps walked, electricity used, sleep obtained, and so forth. We live in the age of the Quantified Self. Through better data, our thinking goes, we will know more about our strengths and weaknesses and can adjust accordingly. Sometimes our good intentions end up paving a road to an undesired location.

Back in 2015, I bought a fitness tracker. I was so excited to track my steps, challenge myself to be more active, and see how I stacked up against my friends who also had trackers. A few months into the adventure, I learned that people were attaching their devices to dogs, rotating appliances, or just sitting around moving their wrists to game the system. Why were people buying something ostensibly to track fitness but not actually getting fit?!

This is a great example of Goodhart's Law: "When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure." We sometimes lose sight of what we are trying to accomplish on an individual or institutional level by focusing too much on a quantifiable (and unfortunately corruptible) proxy for the outcome we desire.

In my role, I am the last person to say that numbers do not matter, but not everything that matters can be counted. Phenomena as complex as good health or student success are not determined via one specific, narrow measure. They rely on many measures from a variety of dimensions, all of which require different inputs and means of assessment. When setting goals, we should be clear-eyed in how we define and measure goal completion to keep ourselves honest along the way.   Heather Mechler, OIA Director | hsmechler@unm.edu

WHAT'S NEW IN THE DATA COMMUNITY?	CHANGES IN FEDERAL REPORTING	FEATURED TABLEAU VIZ	FEATURED OIA STAFF
Getting Involved in the Broader Data Community – Getting Started with Tableau	International vs. 'alien': why words are important in institutional reporting.	Graduate Student Success Metrics Dashboard Carnegie Classifications Dashboard	Charla Orozco

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE BROADER DATA COMMUNITY: GETTING STARTED WITH TABLEAU

BY CHARLA OROZCO

"Better decisions are the goal, while data and analytics are a means to that end" ~Randall Pulfer (TC22 Presenter)

I recently attended the virtual Tableau Conference, and learned of many great ways to get involved in the data community, no matter your current experience level and budget. For one, you can create a free Tableau Public account here, and use many of the same features you would have on the (not free) desktop version. Find the How-To videos to get yourself started with the platform here.

Tableau Public is also a great place to explore other visualizations. You can connect with other data people in many of the same ways you would on social media: You can like, favorite, and share their visualizations. You can also follow your favorite accounts to get notifications when they share new dashboards. If you're interested, you can follow the OIA Tableau account here.

You can also participate in the free bi-weekly Back 2 Viz Basics Project. The data set or prompt will be released every Sunday. Contributors will have one week to participate - build your viz, complete the questions, design a mock-up, etc. Submissions will be tracked. A review blog will be posted. The cycle repeats." For more information, check out their website.

If all this leaves you longing for more, you can look into one of Tableau's many programs for professional development. I am set to get started on the Tableau Certified Data Analyst track myself, but I haven't yet so I'll have to get back to you on how it goes. More information on Tableau's various professional development offerings can be found here.

INTERNATIONAL VS. 'ALIEN': WHY WORDS ARE IMPORTANT IN INSTITUTIONAL REPORTING

BY MONTE-ANGEL RICHARDSON

Changes are on the rise with how federal institutions categorize international students. Recently, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) has begun classifying foreign students who are not from the United States as 'race/ethnicity unknown' rather than the controversial category of 'non-resident alien.' The reasoning for this change is that only U.S. citizens are to be categorized in the specific Race/Ethnicity categories. The non-resident category is reserved specifically for students that are in the U.S. under that specific legal status.

This decision is an important one, and draws attention to the controversy of referring to international, non-resident students as 'aliens'. According to the IRS, an alien is any individual who is not a U.S. citizen or U.S. national. A nonresident alien is an alien who has not passed the green card test or the substantial presence test. However, the impact of using this word to describe students, or 'others', who are not from the US, has indirect consequences.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a human "alien" is "a foreigner, a stranger, an outsider" or someone who is "opposed, repugnant." 'Alien' is now commonly considered a derogatory term for a foreign-born person and has very negative connotations. By referring to someone as 'alien', we are separating them from ourselves. We are placing them in a category that is less than human, unrelated to our own lived experiences. During a time when hate crimes are on the rise towards racialized, and marginalized communities on college campuses, this is particularly dangerous. When institutional reporting bodies validate the use of this problematic word by including it in their reporting systems, they are only perpetuating the problem.

With the baggage the term has come to carry, we should urge other institutional reporting bodies to follow in IPEDS' footsteps and ditch it in favor of words like "noncitizen" or "asylum seeker" or another non-pejorative term that fits the situation.
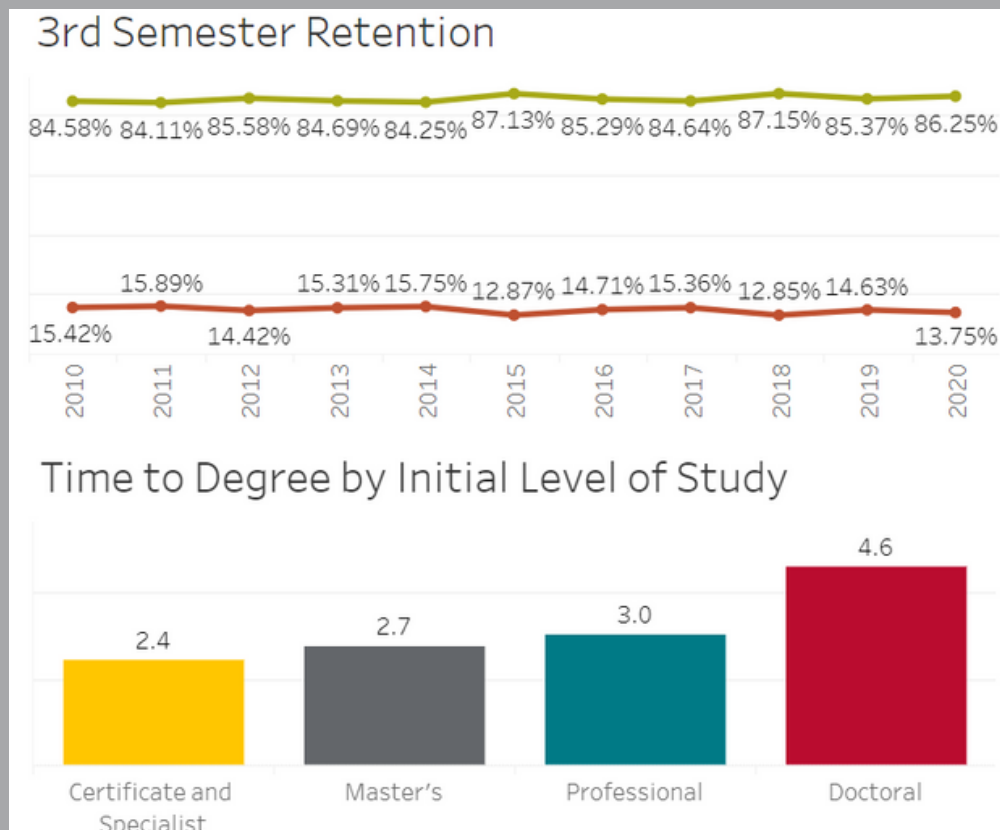
FEATURED TABLEAU VIZ:
GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS METRICS

BY JING FENG

The Graduate Student Success Metrics dashboard consists of four graphs:

1. Count of new graduate students by level (Master's, Doctoral, Professional, and Certificate/Specialist) and year.
2. Third semester retention rate by entry year: The green line shows retention rates, and the red line shows the percentages not retained by the third semester.
3. Graduation rate by entry year: The green line shows the percentages of graduate students who have earned their degrees as of now, and the red line shows the percentages that have not graduated yet.
4. Time to degree by level of study: Shows the average time (in years) students spent to graduate in each degree level.

All four graphs can be filtered by demographics, entry year, level of study, college and program at the same time.

3rd Semester Retention

84.58% 84.11% 85.58% 84.69% 84.25% 87.13% 85.29% 84.64% 87.15% 85.37% 86.25%

15.89% 15.31% 15.75% 12.87% 14.71% 15.36% 12.85% 14.63%

15.42% 14.42% 13.75%

2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

Time to Degree by Initial Level of Study

Certificate and Specialist	Master's	Professional	Doctoral
2.4	2.7	3.0	4.6

Ethnicity (A... ▼)

Gender (A... ▼)

Entry Year ▽ ▼
(All) ▼

Entry Level of Study
(All) ▼

Entry College
(All) ▼

Entry Program
(All) ▼

Degree Level
(All) ▼

Degree College
(All) ▼

Degree Program
(All) ▼

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FEATURED TABLEAU VIZ: CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATIONS DASHBOARD

BY CHARLA OROZCO

Recently, our director Dr. Heather Mechler, took the data on Carnegie Classifications from 2010 through 2021 and made a Tableau dashboard. The Carnegie Classifications were developed to recognize and describe institutional diversity.

The Carnegie Classification has been the leading framework for recognizing and describing institutional diversity in U.S. higher education for the past four and a half decades. Starting in 1970, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education developed a classification of colleges and universities to support its program of research and policy analysis. This framework has been widely used in the study of higher education, both as a way to represent and control for institutional differences, and also in the design of research studies to ensure adequate representation of sampled institutions, students, or faculty.

The dashboard visualizes distance scores, which are created by taking both the aggregate and per-capita index scores, and using the standardized Euclidean distance formula to determine their distance from (0,0). The dashboard can be filtered for specific schools using the "Institution Name" filter on the right, and/or by year (2010-2021), and/or rank (R1 or R2). Check it out here.

OIA FEATURED STAFF: CHARLA OROZCO

BY ZACHARIAH KIBUTA

Charla Orozco, born in Warwick, Rhode Island, joined OIA in August 2022. She pursued undergraduate education in Business Administration and Spanish Literature at Roanoke College in Virginia, graduating in May 2014. She then moved to Albuquerque to continue on to her masters in Latin American Studies at UNM, which she completed in May 2016. Now, she is working to complete a second master's in Cybersecurity and Business Analytics, expected graduation December 2022.

Charla continues to learn anything everything she can about Data Analytics and Data Visualization from professional development opportunities like the Tableau Conference and the online platform Datacamp. Her goal has always been to create meaning from data, with emphasis on making data useful and action-oriented.

Charla's most favorite thing to do is spend time with her family her husband, Adrian, son, Ezra, and their two dogs. When not working, she loves to spend time at Explora or the BioPark.