

# Using Data to Improve Higher Education

## *Research, Policy and Practice*

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In recent decades, higher education systems and institutions have been called to respond to an unprecedented number of challenges. Major challenges emerged with the phenomenal increase in the demand for higher education and the associated massive expansion of higher education systems. In response universities were called to adopt planning and research methods that would enable them to identify and address the needs of a larger, more diverse student body. Higher education institutions began to place greater emphasis on planning and marketing, seeking to maintain their position in an increasingly competitive higher education market. Under the current economic downturn, universities are under pressure to further cut costs while maintaining their attractiveness to prospective students.

As a result educational policy makers and administrators are called to select the 'right' alternatives, aiming for both efficiency and effectiveness in delivered outcomes. This book provides insights into the use of data as an input in planning and improvement initiatives in higher education. It focuses on uses (and potential abuses) of data in educational planning and policy formulation, examining several practices and perspectives relating to different types of data. The book is intended to address the need for the collection and utilization of data in the attempt to improve higher education both at the systemic and the institutional level.

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