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I oppose the proposed removal of the Academic Libraries component from the annual National Center for Education Statistics IPEDS survey.

IPEDS—the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System—is a critically important open and transparent dataset for higher education.

The Academic Libraries (AL) component of IPEDS reflects the key educational role of libraries and their centrality to the mission of higher education. Academic libraries hold a unique position as the heart of their institutions: No other unit supports all other parts of the institution and its educational mission as libraries do.

The AL component of IPEDS supports the agency mission and statutory obligation, as well as a higher education ecosystem that relies on this data.

Data from the AL component of IPEDS is critical to understanding the value libraries provide to the institutional mission.

Removal of the AL component from IPEDS—a mandatory and therefore comprehensive reporting system—will deprive institutions of the ability to effectively benchmark with peers for purposes of investment and resource allocation, particularly with respect to student enrollment and success.

With the inclusion of academic library data, IPEDS is a unique longitudinal dataset that enables the higher education sector to understand the cost of information over time, as well as the correlation between research expenditures and the cost of information.

The AL burden is both lower than other components of IPEDS and willingly met by libraries themselves.