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RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP

Dual Credit/Enrollment in Illinois: Results of Expert Panel Deliberations and a Delphi Study of Definitions and Priorities

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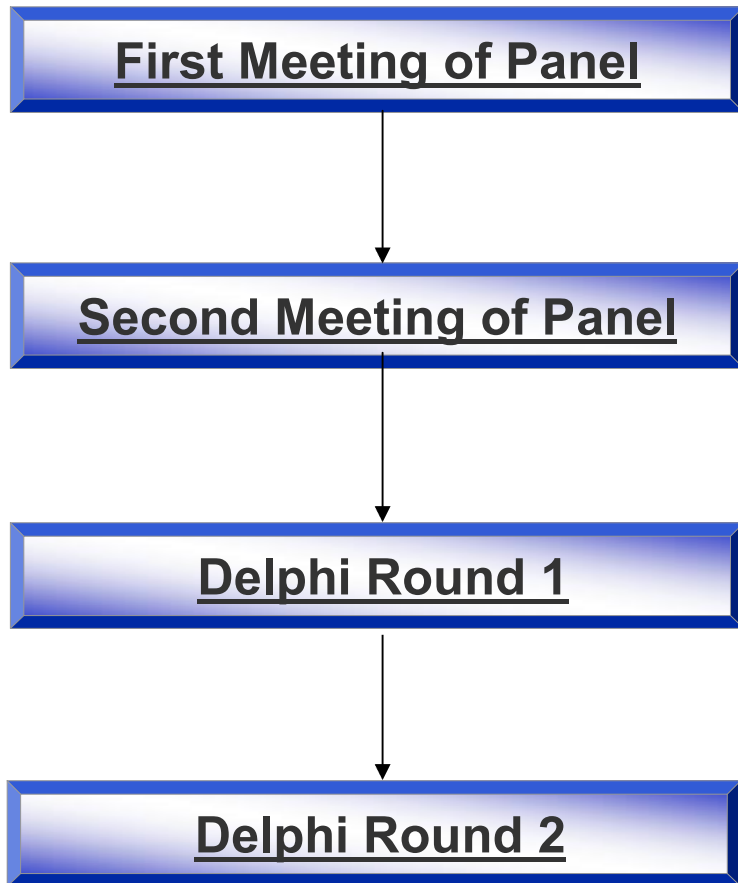
Background

- In 2001, the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) initiated the ***Secondary/Postsecondary Articulation Project*** in cooperation with the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Community College Board.
- The project was started because of growing awareness of varying levels of implementation and uncertain quality in the articulation system and dual credit/enrollment programs in Illinois.
- The purpose of this project was to examine articulation systems in general and dual credit programs in particular in order to guide practice and policy in optimal directions.
- This study was conducted in response to a need to clarify priority issues within the larger project.

Panel Members

- The goal of having panel members was to identify cross-section of state and local practitioners to discuss issues, concepts related to rapid development of dual credit in Illinois.
- Selection criteria included:
 - Area of knowledge (collaboration, articulation agreements, dual credit/enrollment, student transition, Tech Prep)
 - Type of job held (administration, teaching, counseling, research, admissions)
 - Affiliation (secondary, postsecondary, state agency, business/labor/community, IL articulation initiative)
 - Representation (race/ethnicity, gender)
 - Geographical Area (south, central, north, Chicago)
- Total 19 Panel Members were selected.

Process of the Study



- A multi-stage research design was employed - blending expert panel meetings and Delphi technique
- First meeting of panel - 13 panelists participated
- Second meeting of panel - 15 panelists
- Delphi Round 1 - 14 panelists
- Delphi Round 2 - 13 panelists

First Meeting of Panel

- Purpose: To generate issues and ideas related to dual credit/enrollment in Illinois
- Large group and small group discussion
- Three main areas emerged:
 - Definition issues
 - Student issues
 - Policy and management/structural issues

First Meeting of Panel

- 11 major themes emerged: (1) Secondary/ postsecondary collaboration (2) Quality/integrity of program (3) Consistent policies (4) Funding sources (5) Marketing to students and parents (6) Processes for awarding credit (7) Student selection (8) Qualification of teachers (9) Addressing “senioritis” (10) Outreach (access and affordability) (11) Attendance, transportation and safety.
- Research direction was specified as: (1) moving forward the development of statewide definitions about dual credit, dual enrollment, and articulated credit, and (2) identifying research priorities for dual credit/enrollment in Illinois.

Second Meeting of Panel



- Purpose: To gather more input and attempt to reach consensus about definitions and research priorities
- Large group discussion and survey
- Four potential alternative definitions were provided:
 - **Option 1**
 - **Dual enrollment:** Students are concurrently enrolled (and taking classes) in high school and college.
 - **Dual credit:** Students receive both high school and college credit for a college-level class successfully completed.”
 - **Articulated credit:** Students participate in a class for which they currently receive high school credit, and which may be eligible for college credit in the future.
 - **Option 2**
 - **Dual credit:** Students enrolled in college classes receiving both college and high school credit.
 - **Dual enrollment:** Students enrolled in college classes for college credit only.

Second Meeting of Panel

– Option 3

- **Dual credit:** Academic or vocational-technical courses offered at the high school level that provide college credit.
- **Concurrent enrollment:** Enrollment of high school students in a college course where they have the option to receive both high school and college credit.
- **Articulated credit:** (a) Credit for courses taken at the secondary level that counts toward a postsecondary degree or certificate; (b) Credit awarded once the student has enrolled at the postsecondary level and demonstrated mastery through assessment, more advanced course-taking, or other demonstration of competence.

– Option 4

- **Dual/concurrent enrollment:** a high school student enrolled in a postsecondary institution while still in high school.

Second Meeting of Panel

- Option 1 was preferred by the majority of panel members.
- Nine priority issues for program improvement were identified: (1) Secondary/ postsecondary collaboration (2) Quality/integrity of program (3) Consistent policies (4) Funding sources (5) Marketing to students and parents (6) Processes for awarding credit (7) Student selection (8) Qualification of teachers (9) Obtaining student outcomes

Delphi Study

- Based on the results from two panel meetings, we decided to use a Delphi survey approach to obtain more detailed input and attempt to reach consensus from panel members about the definitions and priority issues related to dual credit in Illinois.
- The Delphi procedure requires the involvement of a panel of experts and several iterations of a questionnaire to collect data. It was originally developed to forecast trends and achieve consensus of opinion within groups, and has been used successfully in many areas of inquiry (Linstone & Turoff, 1975).
- By employing Delphi approach, it was possible to hear all the panel members' opinions and ideas, avoiding having any one person dominate the discussion.
- Two rounds of Delphi study were conducted

Delphi Round 1

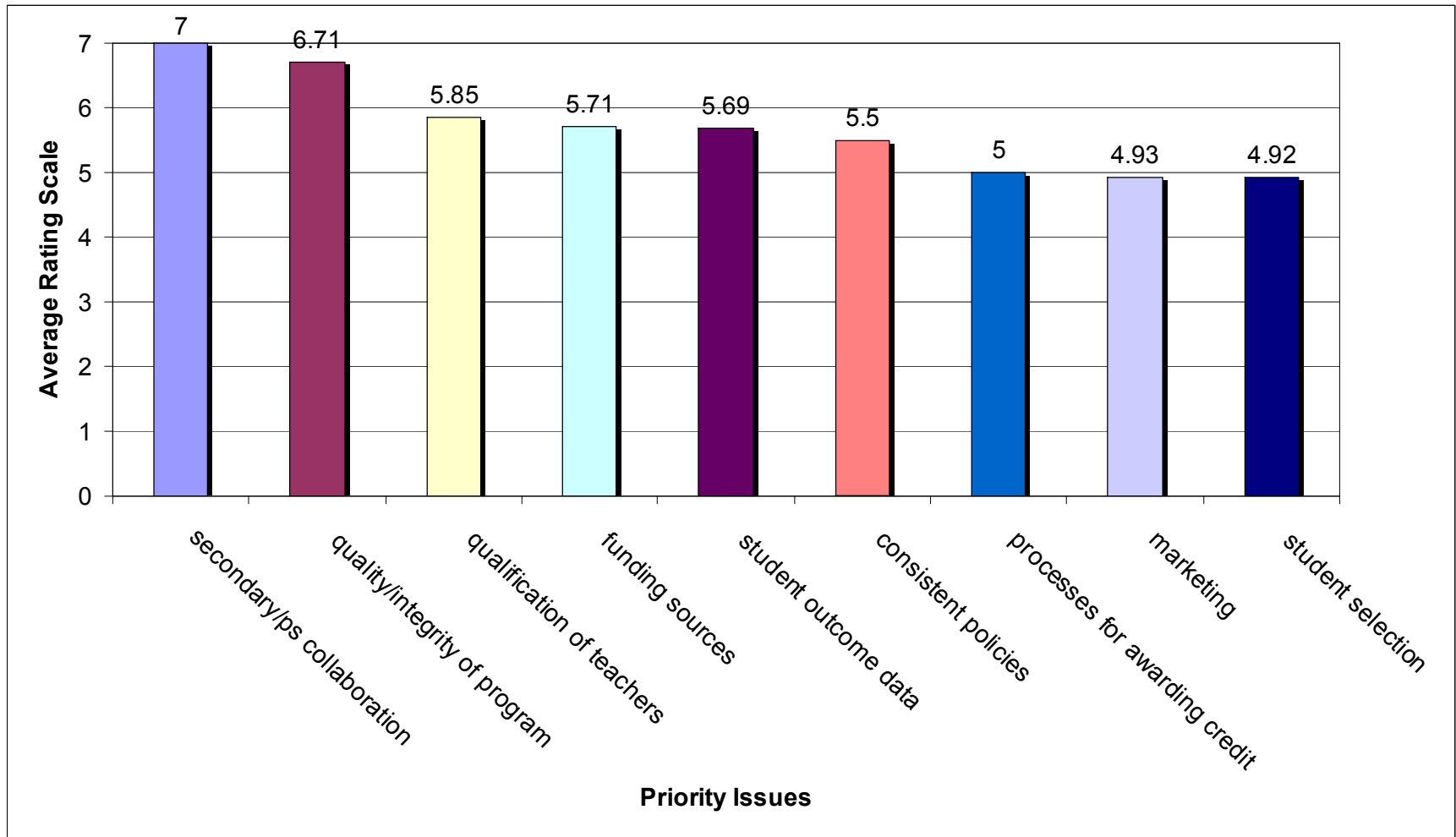
- Purpose: To achieve consensus about definitions and priorities from panel members
- Based on the group discussion and survey results from the second panel meeting, a Delphi survey questionnaire was developed.
- The questionnaire consisted of two main parts. In part 1, we asked their opinions about the definitions provided. In part 2, we asked them to rate the importance of each, on a scale of 1 to 7 (with 7 extremely important and 1 unimportant).
- Delphi questionnaires were distributed in electronic format
- Sub-issues (concerns) related to each of the nine issues were also obtained.
- Considerable consensus was reached.

Delphi Round 1 Overall Results on Definitions



Definitions	Frequency
Dual enrollment "Students are concurrently enrolled (and taking classes) in high school and college."	12 panelists agreed with the definition. 2 panelists disagreed with the definition.
Dual credit "Students receive both high school and college credit for a college-level class successfully completed."	12 panelists agreed with the definition. 2 panelists disagreed with the definition.
Articulated credit "Students participate in a class for which they currently receive high school credit, and which may be eligible for college credit in the future."	9 panelists agreed with the definition. 5 panelists disagreed with the definition.

Round 1 Overall Results on Priority Issues



Delphi Round 2

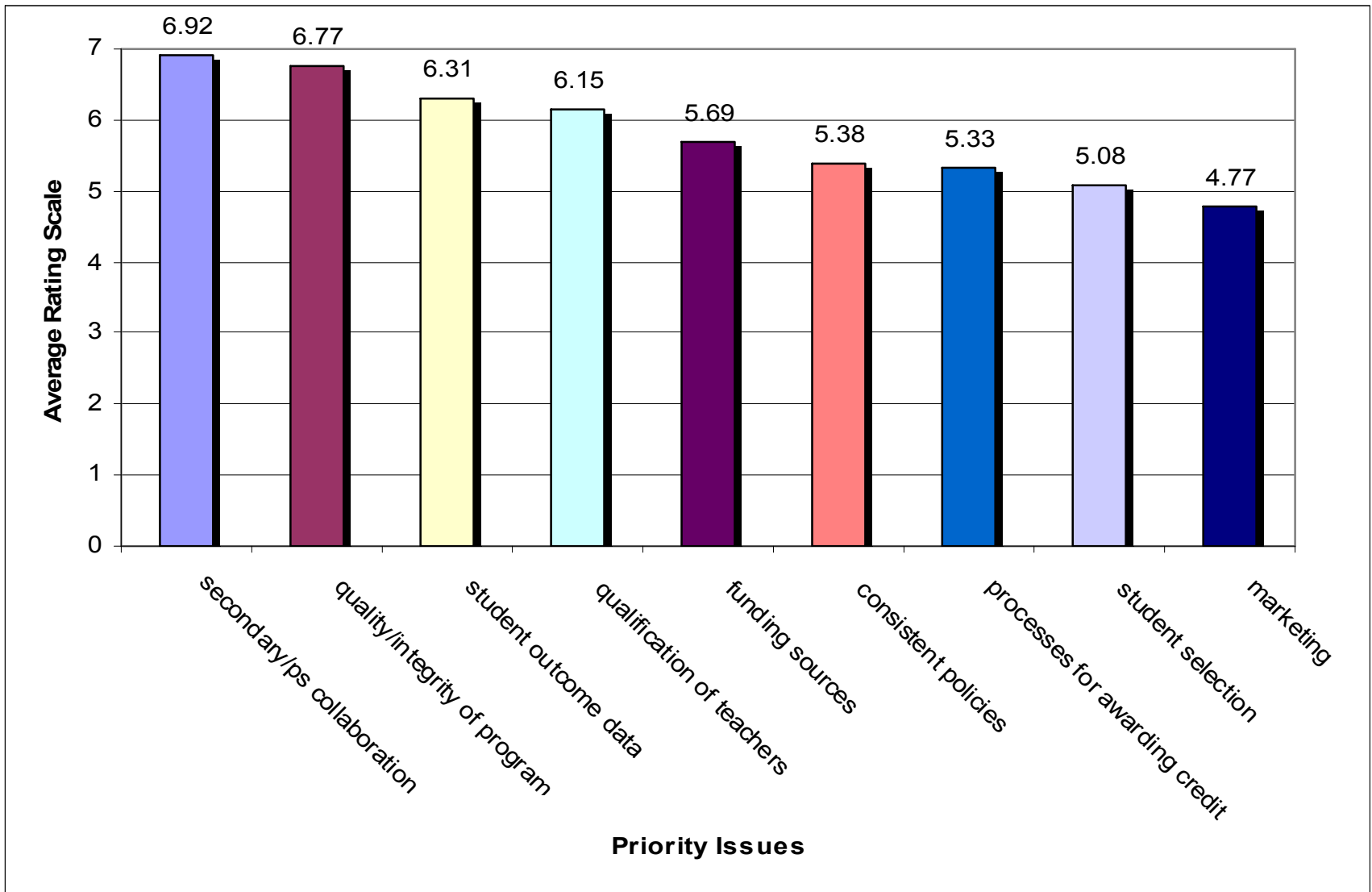
- Purpose: To gather a final consensus regarding statewide definitions and priorities
- Panelists reviewed their Round 1 responses and contrasted them with other panel members.
- Panelists had the opportunity to change their earlier rating.
- Result: greater consensus was reached.

Round 2 Overall Results on Definitions

Definitions	Frequency
<p>Dual enrollment</p> <p>Delphi Round 1 definition was: “Students are concurrently enrolled (and taking classes) in high school and college.”</p> <p>Alternative definition based on the comments from the panelists in the Delphi Round 1 was: “Students are concurrently enrolled (and taking college level classes) in high school and college.”</p>	<p>3 panelists preferred previous definition.</p> <p>8 panelists preferred alternative definition.</p> <p>2 panelists suggested other definitions.</p>
<p>Dual credit</p> <p>Delphi Round 1 definition was: “Students receive both high school and college credit for a college-level class successfully completed.”</p> <p>No alternative definition emerged from the Delphi Round 1.</p>	<p>12 panelists agreed with the definition.</p> <p>1 panelist disagreed with the definition.</p>

Definitions	Frequency
<p>Articulated credit</p> <p>Delphi Round 1 definition was:</p> <p>“Students participate in a class for which they currently receive high school credit, and which may be eligible for college credit in the future.”</p> <p>Alternative definition based on the comments from the panelists in Delphi Round 1 was:</p> <p>“Articulated credit programs align secondary and postsecondary courses in order to allow students who successfully complete selected high school courses to become eligible to apply for credit in the corresponding college course in the future.”</p>	<p>1 panelist agreed with the previous definition.</p> <p>8 panelists agreed with the alternative definition.</p> <p>4 panelists suggested other definitions.</p>

Round 2 Overall Results on Priority Issues



Delphi Study Results: Definitions

These definitions were agreed upon by the majority of the panelists in the Delphi process:

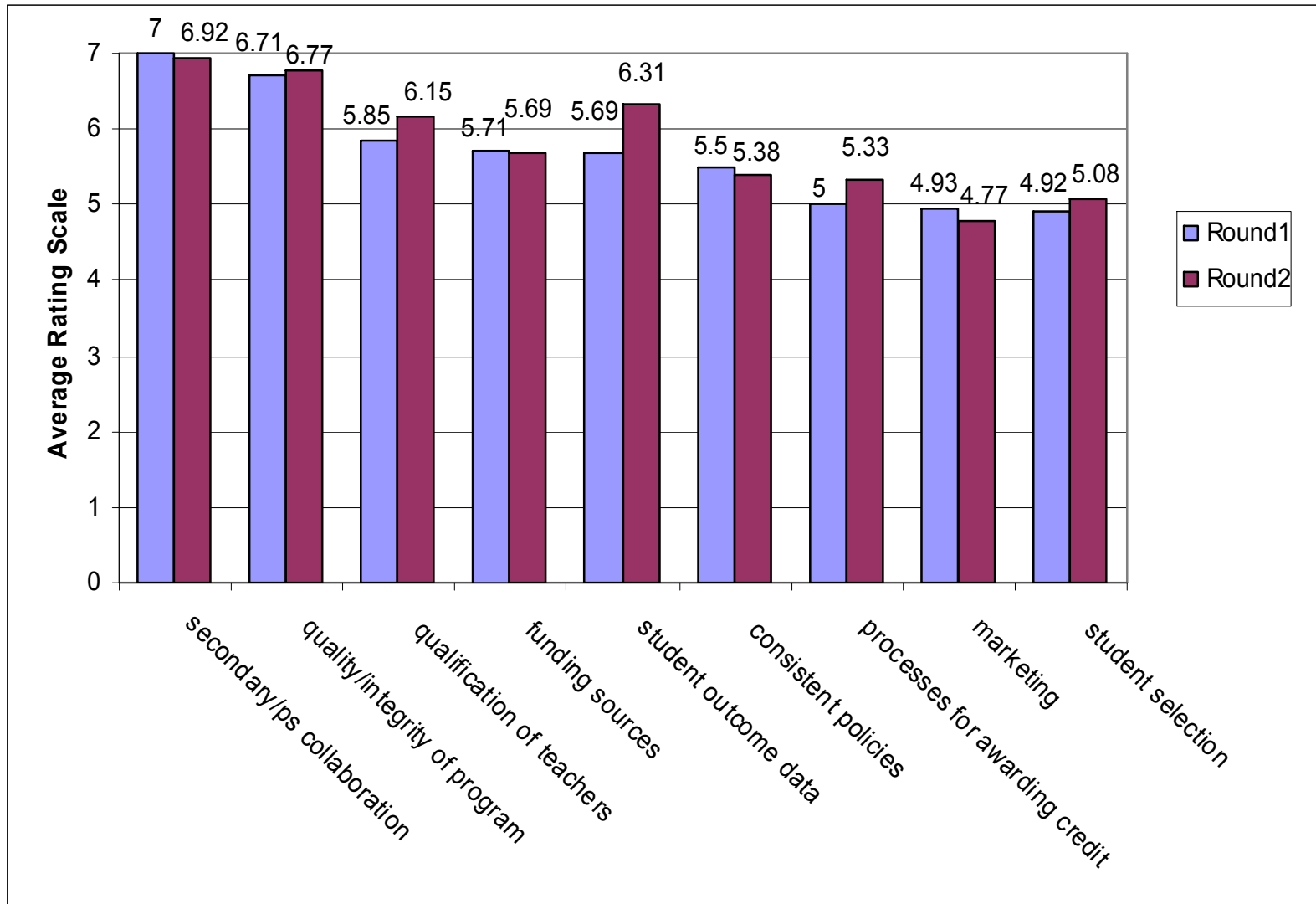
- ***Dual enrollment.*** Students are concurrently enrolled (and taking college level classes) in high school and college.
- ***Dual credit.*** Students receive both high school and college credit for a college-level class successfully completed.
- ***Articulated credit.*** Articulated credit programs align secondary and postsecondary courses in order to allow students who successfully complete selected high school courses to become eligible to apply for credit in the corresponding college course in the future.

Delphi Study Results: Priority Issues

Priority issues were identified and ranked according to their importance for program improvement. The overall ranking is as follows, with 1 being of highest importance.

1. Secondary/postsecondary collaboration
2. Quality/integrity of program
3. Obtaining student outcome data
4. Qualification of teachers
5. Funding sources
6. Consistent policies
7. Processes for awarding credit
8. Student selection
9. Marketing to students and parents

Priority Issues- Comparison of Round 1 and Round 2 Results



Delphi Results: Priority Issues



The figure in the previous slide shows that:

- Overall, all the issues obtained a high average rating--panelists considered all the issues important.
- The variability of ranges by panelists became lower in Round 2 compared with Round 1. Thus, more consensus was reached in Round 2.
- There were few differences between Round 1 and Round 2 regarding the importance of each issue with only two noticeable changes. The first change was an increase in the average rating of **obtaining student outcome data**. The second change was the switch of the rank order between **marketing** and **student selection**. We assume that through the Delphi process, our panelists had chances to reflect on the opinions of other panelists and influence each other.

Findings

- *Secondary/postsecondary collaboration and quality/integrity of program* were identified as the most important issues both from the Delphi study and panel expert meetings.
 - Panelists agreed that secondary/postsecondary collaboration is a critical foundation for the improvement of other priority dimensions.
 - Key components of program quality/integrity of program included the compatibility and equivalence of curricula, the qualifications and proficiency of the faculty, the quality of students, and adequate program assessment.

Findings

- Prominent policy themes throughout this study included: (1) Student and faculty selection (2) How to award dual credit (3) Assessment of student learning outcomes.
- Themes in each category are inter-connected. For example, in discussing the sub-issues (concerns) related to *student selection*, there were comments like, “We need to have minimum student standards to guarantee program integrity and quality,” implying the close relationship between student selection and quality/integrity of programs.

Implications

- The results of this study show that there have been two major tensions related to dual credit/enrollment programs. The first is between **consistent policy vs. flexible policy**. Some panelists favored having consistent statewide policies, stating that they facilitate continuity across the state, ensure the integrity of the overall program, and assist in better understanding of the issues. Others argued that policies need to be flexible because they should change as dual credit programs evolve.
- The second tension is between **promoting accessibility vs. maintaining program quality/integrity**. Some panelists prioritized the need to keep the doors open for as many students as possible. Others emphasized selection of students based on academic competency and urged that they meet the same entrance standards as regular college students.

Recommendations

- We recommend the establishment of consistent statewide policies including statewide definitions of key terms to set an overall framework that will help move this process forward. At the same time, schools and colleges may be given leeway to structure programs according to their own unique needs, resources and limitations within provided guidelines.
- We recommend that policy makers collaborate with practitioners to establish reasonable student selection criteria based on institutional contexts and priorities.
- A concentrated marketing effort is needed to convince school administrators, teachers, and counselors of the value of the program. Securing support from them will be a critical factor in reaching parents and students.

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- This report is available on the website:
<http://occr1.ed.uiuc.edu/art/research.asp>