

Higher Learning Commission
Self-Study Questionnaire/Report for Non-Instructional Units

Non-Instructional Unit: Institutional Research (IR)

Individual(s) Completing the Questionnaire/Report: Chunju Chen

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Describe in a paragraph or two what your unit does (i.e., the services it provides).

The primary objective of the IR Office is to provide a comprehensive range of information, data, and research for both on-campus and off-campus constituencies. As the information will be used to support decision-making, policy formulation, planning, evaluation, and reporting processes, the IR office strives to collect the information in a timely and efficient manner that ensures the accuracy and integrity of the information provided.

The specific responsibilities of the IR Office include: serving as the liaison for UW System's Central Data Report, and for state and federal agencies with respect to information reporting; developing standard reports of institutional information; maintaining and updating a research web site with facts of the university; providing planning and analytical support for decision-making; working collaboratively with internal and external clients and providers to ensure efficiency and uniformity of information; developing and assisting survey activities; providing expertise in research design, survey methodology, statistical computing, analysis and interpretation of data; preparing reports such as student demographics and enrollment trends, tuition revenue projections, faculty workload and productivity, etc.

2. Who is/are the constituency/ies you serve, and approximately how many of each constituency do you serve annually? (e.g., students, academic departments, classified staff, etc.)
 - UW System Administration: Routinely/regularly (can be weekly or monthly, and with higher frequencies when CDR reports are processed during Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer semesters.)
 - External data requests from individuals, educational institutions, high school principals, federal government, publishers, etc. Averaged to bi-weekly.
 - Preparing data for all academic departments' programs reviews and assisting with data when faculty write grant proposals: All year round
 - Responding to campus administration's and any other offices' data requests: All year round
 - Assisting students' research projects when they need data: Averaged to bi-weekly
 - IR Office's Web-Site with the frequently asked information: All year round
3. Overview and evaluate the adequacy of the human, physical, and fiscal resources your department deploys to serve students and meet other programmatic needs by answering the questions below:

Human Resources

Evaluate the general adequacy of the human resources (i.e., the # of employees (including student help) and their skills) relative to the unit's ability to serve the constituencies

identified above and achieve other programmatic goals. Do this by assigning a number between “1” (**completely inadequate**) to “9” (**completely satisfies needs**).

7.5 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you’ve assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

Traditionally, IR has been a one-person office supported by a modest student help budget. In the summer of 2001, a research analyst of 0.5 FTE was hired. In summer of 2002, this 0.5 FTE was increased to 1 FTE to help meet workload demands and increased expectations.

The growing responsibilities for the IR office can be grouped into two major categories: (1) **Routine/regular tasks**. E.g. completion of a variety of external reports and surveys on time; the on-line fact book updating; the Central Data Request reports every semester and relevant maintaining and new issues; local data warehouse activities; compiling any data needs by administration for decision making on issues such as enrollment, retention, graduation, faculty workload, salary equity, etc.; the assessment activities involving the programs reviews of academic departments and OPR of non-academic units; the professional development of the IR personnel with growing skills in new technology, research and grant seeking; (2) **Ad hoc requests**. Those requests are on a daily basis and can be as diverse as one can imagine. The IR office serves like a clearing house for data needs internally and externally.

There are a few areas the IR office would like to devote more energies, such as conducting more in-depth research and statistical analysis to study the impacts of campus new initiatives on students success; spending more time on the planning and automation of various reports; designing more data dissemination plans to reach out to more audiences. That's why "7.5" was assigned.

Physical Resources

Evaluate the general adequacy of the physical resources (e.g., office and storage space, supporting technology, other equipment) allocated to the unit relative to the unit’s ability to serve the constituencies identified above and achieve other programmatic goals. Do this by assigning a number between “1” (**completely inadequate**) to “9” (**completely satisfies needs**).

8 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you’ve assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

The two student employees in the IR office are still using very old PCs. One is a Windows 95 model. We managed to get a Windows 98 from T&IR's surplus pile, which is not any better, if not saying worse than the original 95 model. We'll try to find a real better one from the surplus pile.

Fiscal Resources

While recognizing that every unit would benefit from a larger budget, evaluate the general adequacy of fiscal resources allocated to the unit to serve its constituencies and achieve other programmatic goals by assigning a number between “1” (**completely inadequate**) to “9” (**completely satisfies needs**).

8 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you’ve assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

A larger budget will certainly help us do more. However, given the current overall budgeting situation across the campus, the UW System , the state and the whole nation, it's better we choose to be content with what we have.

- In a paragraph or two, overview significant changes made in your unit since 1996 (i.e., the last North Central Association Accreditation Visit). (e.g., re-organized, key staff changes, change in purposes, etc.)

In 2002, the IR office was moved to the Division of Academic Affairs from Budget and Planning Office under the Chancellor's Division.

In another paragraph or two, describe why these changes occurred.

As part of the campus wide re-organization, these changes are made to better meet the increased data needs for issues from the Division of Academic Affairs.

MISSION & PLANNING

- In a paragraph or two, describing any significant projects/initiatives that your unit is planning or currently has underway, but has not yet completed.

We have been trying to get as much of our routine reporting automated and standardized as possible, working collaboratively with the other relevant offices to build up a query library to enable campus users such as administration and departments to run frequently needed reports for planning purposes.

- Below are five “core values” the University identifies as central to its purposes and operation. Please evaluate the importance of each core value in terms of how each aligns with the purposes of your unit (i.e., take a hypothetical 100 points and distribute them among the five values, with those values that align more closely to the purposes of your unit receiving more points).

Core Value	Importance (100 points)
Commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding	25
Development of the individual	15
Personal and professional integrity	15
Commitment to serve	30
Commitment to develop a sense of community, respect for diversity, and global perspectives	15
Total=	100 points

7. Each and every academic and non-academic unit engages in planning for the future. Review the list of variables below and evaluate the extent to which each of the following influences decision-making behind the planning process for your unit (i.e., take a hypothetical 100 points and distribute them among the planning variables listed below, with those variables playing the larger role in your unit’s planning efforts receiving more points)

Planning Variables	Importance (100 points)
The mission of the university or the unit	10
Academic assessment data/information relevant to student performance against learning outcomes	10
Other data/information gathered relevant to performance (e.g., Audit & Review feedback)	10
Societal/Cultural trends (e.g., changes in demographics, lifestyles, professions)	10
Campus trends (e.g., changes in university-initiated needs and demands)	10
Technology trends (e.g., technology developments that affect delivery of service)	10
Professional trends (e.g., changes evident at other universities/colleges)	10
Available human resources (e.g., # of employees, talents, etc.) within the unit	10
Available financial resources (e.g., budget, available and accessible \$)	10
Available physical resources (e.g., space, existing technology, etc.)	10
Other:	
Total=	100 points

8. Does your unit have a mission statement?

Yes X No

If you answered “yes,” please list the mission statement here. or, if your mission statement can be accessed on the web, please list the URL here.

<http://acadaff.uww.edu/ir/factbook/OI.htm>

If you answered “yes,” please describe how, if at all, this mission statement plays a role in your unit’s planning and/or decision-making.

Being closely and directly related to the University's goals, the IR office's mission statement has been playing an important role in the IR office's long term planning as well as daily activities. Our working projects, energies, and priorities are mapped out based on the goal of fulfilling the mission.

OPERATION AND PERFORMANCE

9. What are the major or measurable objectives of the unit?

- a. Responds to UW System administration, state, federal and other external agencies with respect to information reporting;
- b. Develops and disseminates standard reports of institutional information;
- c. Maintains and updates a research web site with university facts and research results;
- d. Provides planning and analytical support for decision-making;
- e. Works collaboratively with internal and external data providers to ensure efficiency and uniformity of information;

f. Develops and conducts surveys, provides expertise in research design, survey methodology, statistical computing, analysis and interpretation of data.

10. What outcome measures (i.e., data, information) provide evidence that your unit's objectives are being met?

The most measurable outcome of the IR Office's efforts to meet the objectives are reflected in the satisfactory results of the IR Office's Office Planning and Review evaluations in Fall 2003. The IR office's major focus is to provide data for internal and external requests. Providing quality service in a timely and useful fashion is something IR office takes pride. During the OPR procedure, a survey about IR office's service quality was sent to campus administration, faculty, academic staff, classified staff and students who have used the services provided by the IR office. The survey is modeled after a nationally tested instrument containing the critical criteria for delivering quality services. With 7 being the highest possible score, the feedback was very positive as all criteria were rated at 6 or higher.

On top of answering daily data request, we also make extra efforts to stay research active by publishing research results in refereed higher education journals, seeking and obtaining grants, participating in hands-on training with National Center of Education Statistics, etc.. Our fact book on line is also a successful story in meeting a variety of data requests.

11. Related to question #10, does the unit regularly collect data/information to evaluate how effectively it serves its constituency(ies)? (This might include surveys of constituencies.)

Yes

No X (Only during the OPR procedure.)

If "yes," please list specific data/information sets that the UW-W Self-Study Committees, and/or the Higher Learning Commission's Visiting Accreditation Team can access to review/consult.

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12. In a paragraph or two, describe specific changes to the unit's operation or planning, if any, have resulted from the collection and use of the data/information identified in the preceding questions. Please be specific.

13. Please provide a list of services, if any, that your unit provides for constituencies that are external to the university.

- A variety of surveys and reports requested regularly by federal government, U.S. Department of Education, publishers, and University of Wisconsin System Administration

- Principals and teachers of high schools whose graduates come to study at UW-Whitewater

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14. Please list any partnerships your unit has developed with the community (external to the campus, at the local, national, or global-level).

- Association of Institutional Research
- Association for the Institutional Research in the Upper Midwest
- Overseas Chinese Association for Institutional Research
- SPSS online listserv (Statistical Package for Social Research)

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STUDENT LEARNING (COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOUR UNIT HAS AS PART OF ITS MISSION OR PURPOSES THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS)

15. If your unit serves students as its primary constituency, does the unit have learning or development-related objectives relevant to its work with students? That is, does your unit expect that students will acquire certain knowledge or skill sets as a direct result of working with your unit or its programming?

Yes

No

If “yes,” please list these outcomes/objectives.

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16. Does the unit use data/information to evaluate the extent to which these learning or development-related objectives are, or are not being met?

Yes

No

If “yes,” please list specific data/information sets that the UW-W Self-Study Committees, and/or the Higher Learning Commission’s Visiting Accreditation Team can access to review/consult.

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17. What specific changes to the unit's operation or planning, if any, have resulted from the collection and use of the data/information identified in question #15? Please be specific.

SELF-EVALUATION

Strengths

18. List and prioritize no more than three primary strengths that have emerged in your unit's efforts to meet its mission, goals, or objectives. To identify these strengths, you may wish to consider: What does your unit do very well? What good things do people say about your unit? How has your unit aided the campus in meeting its mission? In what ways has your unit "gone beyond the call of duty?"

After identifying each strength, specify supporting evidence that suggests that the statement is true. This may include data/information gathered relevant to unit performance, trend data, information gathered from audits or external agencies visit, etc.

1. Specific Strength: Ability and capacity to work well with other internal and external agencies to secure means in order to provide all data requests timely and accurately through different approaches
 - Supporting Evidence: The Office Planning and Review results. We receive many data requests all year round and we have been able to satisfy those requests. We strive to provide the best quality services by good planning and by treating every single request as the most important request regardless who is requesting the data.
2. Specific Strength: Ability to foresee emerging issues and to ensure data consistence and availability of historical data.
 - Supporting Evidence: We have been actively advocating and participating in building a data warehouse to ensure efficient and accurate data reporting. We also make extra efforts to preserve historical paper reports of key areas. We don't recall any incident that we can't help answer some data requests or turn data requests away. For example, once we received a request for data of the last 100 years about our female African American students' enrollment and graduation statistics. We did our best and were able to satisfy this external data request.
3. Specific Strength: Ability to stay abreast with the issues in the big picture of the whole higher education realm nationally and internationally. We are actively involved in research and grant activities. This strength helps enable us to address our daily activities from a broad perspective.
 - Supporting Evidence: Have published articles in Higher Education referred journals, presented research results at national conferences, obtained grant to help support student help in the office, and participated hand-on training on national data sets of higher education with National Center for Educational Statistics.

Concerns

19. List and prioritize no more than three primary concerns that have emerged in your unit's efforts to meet its mission, goals, or objectives. To identify these concerns, you may wish to consider: What could be improved? What is done poorly? What do we, as a unit, avoid doing, even though we know it's important?

After identifying each concern, specify supporting evidence that suggests that the statement is true. This may include data/information gathered relevant to unit performance, trend data, information gathered from audits or external agencies visit, etc.

Finally, identify one or more recommended actions to address the area of concern. This may include actions that your unit has already begun, actions being planned, or preliminary thinking about how to address the area of concern.

1. Specific Concern: To work closely, continuously and creatively with other offices on the campus to reach out to more UW-Whitewater alumni and the employers of our graduates, so that we can build up a strong information collection system with a meaningful and useful feedbacks from our graduates and the employers. With such a foundation, we can better focus our efforts on improving our academic programs and services, but also answer other relevant data needs such as for accreditation, funding raising, and so on.
 - Supporting Evidence: Currently we have yet been successful receiving any significant amount of feedback from alumni and their employers via mail surveys.
 - Recommended Actions: With the supports from the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the office of News and Publications and the Alumni Center, currently we have been working with a digital assessment company and have just begun trying to increase our responses by conducting more activities online. We'll make more efforts learning about successful experiences from other institutions on getting adequate on the graduates and hopefully we'll be able to build up a routine systematic mechanism to gather responses from alumni and employers.
2. Specific Concern:
 - Supporting Evidence:
 - Recommended Actions:
3. Specific Concern:
 - Supporting Evidence:
 - Recommended Actions: