

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH OFFICE PLANNING & REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION:

In an effort to improve the delivery of its programs and services, the Office of Institutional Research conducted an Office Planning and Review (OPR) process. The review was coordinated by Dr. Chenju Chen, Director, and included an office Self-Study and a Campus Team Review. Campus Team Review members included Dan Edlebeck, Melissa Freiberg, Steve Friedman, Barbara Jones, Barbara Monfils (ex-officio).

MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE OFFICE:

The self-study identified the mission of the Office: "...to provide a comprehensive range of information, data, and research for both on-campus and off-campus constituencies." The self-study further noted that: "the data must be collected in a timely and efficient manner that ensures the accuracy and integrity of the information provided" because the data is used for reporting, decision-making, analysis, evaluation, etc. The Office serves as a "data warehouse" for UWW and as a liaison to the UW System.

SELECTED FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS/MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

- The Office works with a large number of constituencies, both on and off campus, in gathering information to support institutional analyses [p. 1 of Self-Study].
- The Office has a major responsibility for the updating of information about the University on the web [p. 1 of Self-Study].
- Office personnel have taken advantages of opportunities to upgrade their technical skills through formal training and self-training [p. 1 of Self-Study].
- The Office has been recognized for its capacity to provide expertise on research and data-related topics through published articles, successful applications for research grants, and receipt of a scholarship for training on the National Center for Educational Statistics' data bases in Washington DC [p. 2 of Self-Study].
- The Office has responded to a large number of *ad hoc* requests for data as well as completing projects that are due on a regularly-scheduled basis [Appendix A].
- In April of 2003, the Office conducted a survey of faculty, staff, and administrators on campus who used Institutional Research's services. Although the number of respondents was small (between 20-25%), those who responded indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the service [Appendix B].
- In general, the open-ended comments from the Survey note that the Office staff are helpful, courteous, responsive, and professional [Appendix D].

CAMPUS TEAM REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS (by question):

1. What are the major or measurable objectives of the office?

The Committee felt that although objectives were stated, they were not necessarily phrased in measurable terms. The Committee recommends that the Office of Institutional Research review the existing objectives, determine their weight on comparison to each other, and reword the objectives so that they are stated in measurable terms, with measurable outcomes.

2. How do these objectives relate to the division's and the University's goals?

The Committee determined that this section of the self-study was lacking in specificity. The Committee recommends that Institutional Studies link the objectives to specific goals of the University, the Strategic Plan, or possibly the Core Values and Mission Statement (once that document has been approved).

3. What outcomes indicate whether these objectives are being met?

Three major areas of discussion emerged from the Committee's deliberations of this question. First, the Committee felt that the evidence that Institutional Research included could have been quantified more. Second, the Committee noted that information in the self-study did not address how priorities are set. Third, the Committee observed that Institutional Research's perceptions of its role and its ability to provide timely data are not always the same as those of the constituencies Institutional Research serves.

Recommendations:

1. The Committee recommends that Institutional Research establish data-collection methods to better quantify means of assessing outcomes to indicate that objectives are being met.
2. The Committee recommends that Institutional Research formulate written criteria by which priority is assigned to projects.
3. The Committee recommends that Institutional Research continue to work on procedures to enhance coordination with other offices/agencies on campus that have data collection/analysis/updating among their responsibilities in order to maximize campus resources.

4. Have personnel and financial resources been reallocated to meet the goals?

The Committee was unable to answer this question because specific information on the budget and FTE allocations were not in the self-study. Thus, the Committee does not know if Rita's position resulted from the reallocation of resources. The Committee recommends that Institutional Research compile "baseline" information, including FTE, budget figures, and brief job descriptions for the Director and the Budget and Policy Analyst.

5. What improvements are necessary for the office to reach objectives not met?

The self-study cites "the ability to get the data digested and published on a timely basis" as an area of improvement. In addition, the self-study identifies the need to work more closely with News and Public Affairs to share information on trends and available data with the campus. The Committee concurs with the self-study's assessment.

6. What modification of existing objectives or development of new objectives are made for the next five-year period?

The self-study identified two new objectives. They included raising “data awareness of the whole campus” through News and Public Affairs, and meeting with various constituencies on campus to make them more aware of ways in which Institutional Research can be of service.

The Committee felt that these objectives were valid. The Committee also noted a number of other recommendations as listed above. The Committee further recommends the consideration of the option to invite an external consultant to assist in this process (e.g., Chen’s counterpart from UWGB or another institution in the System).

Attachments: Appendices A, B, and D from the Self-Study

Appendix B: Institutional Research Survey Result Summary
(Conducted during 4-9-03 through 4-18-03)

The survey was modeled after the published instrument on delivering quality service by Valarie A. Zeithaml, A. Parasuraman and Leonard L. Berry (1990)*. After seven years of focus group and instrument testing, they came up with the five key dimensions of top quality services: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. While finishing the Ph.D. dissertation, Chen communicated with those authors. Based on the current IR situation at UW/W, ten questions were selected. Eighty surveys were sent to administrators, department chairs, faculty, academic and classified staff and students who used IR service with a 40% return rate (including the eight surveys with missing data).

* Valarie A. Zeithaml, A. Parasuraman and Leonard L. Berry (1990). *Delivering Quality Service: Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations*. New York: The Free Press.

The following table presents the survey results:

7=Strongly Agree; 1=Strongly Disagree; DK=Don’t Know and treated as missing data.

Questions	N	Min	Max	Mean	STDDEV
1 When the staff in the IR office promises to do something, they have it done.	21	1	7	6.33	1.354
2 When I have a data request, the staff from the IR office shows sincere interest in getting the data from me.	21	2	7	6.29	1.454
3 The staff from this office has a can-do-it attitude regardless how difficult it can be to get the data.	19	2	7	6.32	1.336
4 The staff from the IR office has been timely in responding to my questions or concerns.	23	1	7	6.30	1.396
5 The IR provides up-to-date, accurate and research-based information.	21	2	7	6.10	1.446
6 They have been professional and courteous with me.	24	6	7	6.88	0.338

7 They have the relevant knowledge to answer my questions or know where and how to obtain the required information.	22	2	7	6.00	1.380
8 They are easy to get hold of and give me individual attention.	24	1	7	6.29	1.706
9 They have my best interest in mind.	21	2	7	6.05	1.465
10 They understand my specific data needs.	22	2	7	6.05	1.253

Appendix D: Summary of the respondents' feedback on the survey's open ended question:

"What other comments would you like to make about services from our Institutional Research office? How can we better serve you?"

The IR Office is a developing program at UWW. As a result both the staff of Institutional Research and us as users of the service need to fully understand what can and should be available from IR. The current activities are the more obvious and at this time I do not believe we are taking full advantage of the IR data as a core element of our institutional planning. This will require education and understanding on our part and continued development on the part of IR staff to know and anticipate where and how they can provide data/information that is important to the decision processes.

No suggestions for improvement. The staff does an outstanding job!

My answers are based on the limited contact that I have had with Institutional Research in the data needs that I have had. In all cases, within my limited scope, they are complete, thorough, and professional in their dealing with me.

I really haven't initiated any questions related to generating institutional research, so I'm probably not the best person to answer this survey. I do believe that everyone in the office works hard to generate correct and comprehensive data.

All my experiences have been positive, although extremely limited. The survey asks for more feedback than I'm really comfortable with given limited interaction.

Highly inefficient office. Requires overhaul or elimination. They take years to respond to requests.

The Institutional Research staff members consistently focus on helpfulness, courtesy, accuracy, and professionalism. Our office appreciates their efforts.

Responses are sometimes limited by the availability of data from our database. Institutional Research staff always gives their best effort in trying to meet all the requests that I ask of them. Support levels are sometimes dictated by cooperation with other departments such as Registrar's Office. Appears to be a good working relationship with these other offices. Staff willing to work very hard to assure that all data they provide is as accurate as possible.

I have had limited contact with the office, but the one request that I can remember was handled fairly well. I note that the data on the Provost's site for Audit & Review (<http://acadaff.uww.edu/factbook/UGFallEnroll.htm>) is outdated.

At first I was going to vary my responses, but as I read the comments and responded, I realized that "Strongly Agree" was the most accurate/appropriate response for all. I wasn't aware of whom they serve or what kind of information they can provide. The only time I've asked for information was as a third party.

Quite pleased with the service received.

The staff in this office has been very helpful and supportive to my office.