



A VISION FOR THE FUTURE IR OFFICES

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Education's Purpose is to Replace an Empty Mind with an Open One



Malcom S. Forbes

Review of Literature & Reference

A: Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research

Swing, R. L., and Ross, L. E. (2016). Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research. Association for Institutional Research, Tallahassee, Florida. Retrieved [11/05/2016] from <http://www.airweb.org/aspirationalstatement>.

B: A New Vision for Institutional Research

Swing, R. L., and Ross, L. E. (2016). A New Vision for Institutional Research. Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 48, 6-13. DOI: 10.1080/00091383.2016.1163132

C: National Survey of Institutional Research Offices

Swing, R. L., Jones, D., and Ross, L. E. (2016). The AIR National Survey of Institutional Research Offices. Association for Institutional Research, Tallahassee, Florida. Retrieved [11/05/2016] from <http://www.airweb.org/nationalsurvey>.



A: Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research

- The Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research is not a prescription but simply a conversation starter to introduce new models together with past traditions utilizing data on a broader level to make smart decisions to improve student success.
- The premise grew out of the increasing demand for decision support from a wide range of consumers (faculty, staff, students, manager and academic leaders) and the challenges and limited capacity IR Offices face to meet these growing demands to support higher education decisions.
- The statement presents a hybrid approach where IR Offices will work in combination with other departments and units on campus to produce an “organization-wide” institutional research function rather than a concrete domain of a single administrative unit.
- The aspirational statement calls for institutional capacity for data-informed decision-support for a broad range of “decision makers”, including students.
- IR Offices will continue to fulfill many of their current roles while sharing expanded responsibilities in data and analytics with a broad array of faculty, staff, administrators and students.

A: Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research

- The Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research makes student success a core element of an effective decision-support system of management and a broad range of “decision makers”.
- Students as Decision Makers
- Faculty as Decision Makers
- Staff as Decision Makers



B: A New Vision for Institutional Research

Conventional Functionality of Current IR Offices

- The burden on institutional research is due in part to its organizational placement as a narrowly defined service unit. That is, the dominant structure of institutional research is based on service relationships with a small set of key decision makers.
- The institutional research office provides services to a ranked set of users with the president, chief academic officer, and mandatory external reporting function as the top “clients.” In addition, the office serves an array of other lower-priority clients—but only to the degree that “extra time” is available after servicing the primary clients first.

Figure 1: Institutional Research as Service Provider (Ranked Set of Clients)



B: A New Vision for Institutional Research

Model Some IR Offices are Moving Towards

- In a federated network model, the institutional research office is still the largest center for analytics, and there remain ranked clients, large and small. The prominent shift in this model is the growth of capacity that occurs outside of the office of institutional research.
- Increased demand may result in additional resources for the office of institutional research, but the re-allocation of resources within decision-making units drives the growth of capacity for the entire institution.
- It is the expansion of non-traditional users and producers, coupled with increased access to technology and tools—not the decline of the institutional research office and ranked clients—that creates the new scale of institutional research work.
- A federated network model signals that the institutional research function operates as an organization-wide resource.

Figure 2: Institutional Research as Federated Network



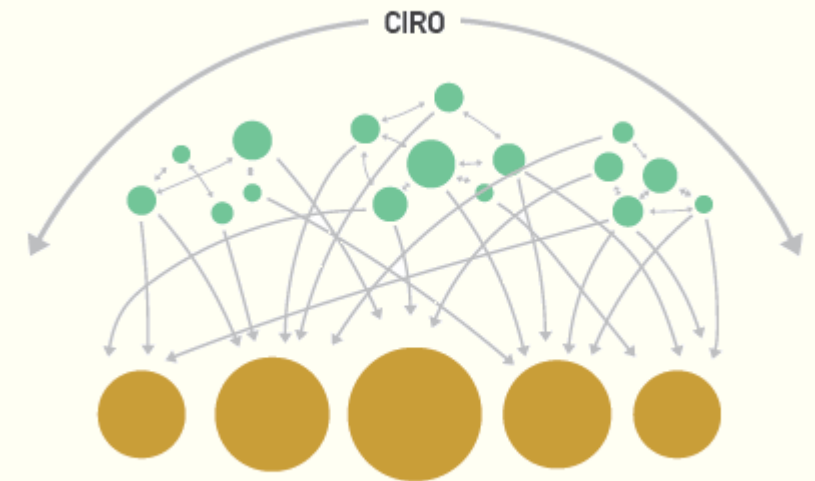
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The Future IR Office Model

- The move to an institutional research is needed to assure that informed decisions routinely occur across an organization with the speed and flexibility required for real-world management of modern postsecondary education.
- New opportunities are possible when many hands are involved. A broader range of decision makers are supported by the institutional research function, and a student-focused paradigm can emerge without degrading required reporting and basic management support.
- In this model, leadership requirements shift dramatically as institutional research transitions from a single department to an institution-wide resource and matures as a matrix function.
- In a matrix model, specialists in data collection, business intelligence, quality assurance, and other data-related skills are embedded in various teams on an “as needed” basis that allows talent to be shared across organizational boundaries.
- Key to this arrangement is leadership. Thus, creating a Chief Institutional Research Officer (CIRO) to be the overarching leader responsible for assuring that the entire matrix network has the resources—tools and analytic capacities—and the shared organizational structure to allow seamless building upon the work of others in the matrix.

Figure 3: Matrix Model-Data Users & Producers Serve on Cross-Functional Teams



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The “one source of the truth” is quickly being replaced with data inspection through many lenses, creating an array of varying conclusions derived from the same raw data.

C: National Survey of Institutional Research Offices

- The changeability of the core IR mission is a compliment to the dedication and flexibility of institutional researchers, yet the institutional variations extract a toll on further developing the field to serve decision makers.
- The purpose of this study is to capture a “real time” snapshot of the resources and capacities of institutional research offices.
- While the Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research calls for IR to be an institution-wide function, no one is anticipating the demise of institutional research offices as specific units charged with significant data-related tasks.
- Data set IPEDS Universe of not-for-profit institutions as the target population, respondents closely match the characteristics of colleges and universities overall (e.g., size and sector).
- Response Rate 52%: N = 1,261 responses (394 responses from 2-year and 867 responses from 4-year institutions)



C: National Survey of Institutional Research Offices

How ready are colleges and universities to pursue a student success-focused mission informed by data?

- Not surprisingly, this work confirmed much of what was already believed about institutional research; there are vast differences in IR capacity and organizational arrangements that are idiosyncratic to individual colleges and universities. The survey data allow us to understand these differences more clearly.
- The results challenge the common notion that structures and resources explain observed variances in institutional research capacity and efficacy.
- Like much in life, the amount of resources we have matters less than what we do with our resources and how high we set the aspirational bar.



C: National Survey of Institutional Research Offices

Structure of IR Offices

Report to Chief Academic Officer – 50%

- 2-Year Institutions: 22%
- 4-Year Institutions: 63%

Report to the President – 25%

- 2-Year Institutions: 22%
- 4-Year Institutions: 18%

Director and Professional OIR Staff	2-Year Institutions	4-Year Institutions
Less than 1 FTE	1%	1%
1 FTE to fewer than 2 FTE	17%	18%
2 FTE to fewer than 3 FTE	41%	35%
3 FTE to fewer than 5 FTE	28%	26%
5 FTE to fewer than 10 FTE	12%	17%
10 FTE or more	1%	3%

Figure 4: IR Staffing

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PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY

- 83% data reporting – federal mandatory (81% primary responsibility for IPEDS reporting)
- 81% data reporting – guide books/rankings
- 81% institutional fact books
- 80% data reporting – state mandatory
- 74% enrollment reporting and analyses
- 64% data sharing with consortia
- 53% key performance indicators development/monitoring

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SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

- 67% contribute to accreditation studies
- 62% contribute to strategic planning
- 58% contribute to program accreditation
- 53% contribute to learning outcomes assessment

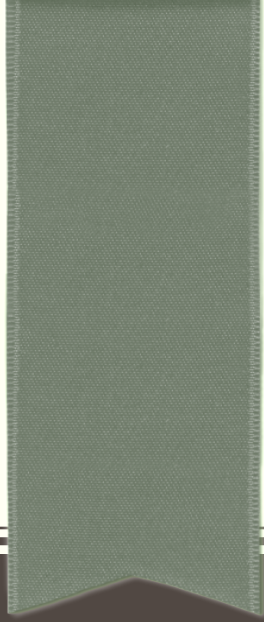
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NO RESPONSIBILITY

- 69% student financial aid modeling
- 65% institutional budget/finance modeling
- 61% student borrowing/debt studies
- 60% class scheduling/demand studies
- 60% space utilization studies
- 57% salary equity studies

DISCUSSION





THANK YOU!