



# TO IR

**Michigan Community College**

**Data Workshop**

**New to Institutional Research Session**



# Coping Skills for Surviving INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

## In the beginning...

Obtaining a new job is usually a cause for celebration, but even the best career move can produce feelings of stress and anxiety. In a short period of time you are faced with a number of different challenges:

- How to cope with new co-workers who all have different work styles
- How to do-code the expectations of your new boss
- Where are the data that I need? Is it accurate? Does it really mean what I think it means?
- What language is this that everyone else appears to understand? IPEDS is not in the French or Spanish dictionary...

When you entered into the world of Institutional Research (IR), you entered into one of the most interesting and fascinating fields of higher education. At first, you will understandably be overwhelmed by the medley of new languages that you will have to learn and comprehend. You'll ask yourself over and over again, "Just what is IPEDS, AAUP, CUPA, etc.?" As IR professionals we have data everywhere, which must become information. And many times, a request that seems straightforward, quickly becomes confusing because there can be many idiosyncrasies to the data.

## Adjustment Timeline

This is not a field in which you become trained quickly, so don't get discouraged with yourself or your job. Here's a realistic timeline for adjusting to an IR position:

- In the first month you will be contributing to your office, but it will probably take 6 months to learn your job.

- In your first year you will see all of the data requests that come in and reports that need to be done, but it will actually take two years to feel comfortable in the position.
- The first year you're doing everything blindly, but during the second year, things come more naturally and you retain what you've learned.

One thing to realize is that "I don't know" by itself is not a good answer. However, "I don't know, but I will check and get back with you" is acceptable. Nobody knows all of the answers, but everybody can search for the answer. As you work through the data and become more familiar with it, your expertise increases. Education and background can be helpful, but a successful career in IR develops with time, experience and a willingness to learn.

## Coping with the workload

Some projects are short requests that might only take a few minutes. Other projects might take months. And the complicated part is that you will have several different types of projects on your 'to do' list at one time.

- Realize that there is no such things as being 'caught up' in this profession
- Prioritize tasks and manage your time effectively
- Know your due dates
- Minimize interruptions when faced with a deadline or overwhelming project

One way to ease your transition into this career is by making a point of familiarizing yourself with your office and your institution. Although it is time consuming, it will help you in the long run to know where your requests are coming from, the best sources of information, who to call/ask if you have a question or problem, and what data are readily available already.

Introducing yourself to key people at your institution and striving to develop a favorable relationship with them will also be mutually advantageous.

## **Write things down**

***Documentation shall set you free!*** Another important tool in managing time and workload is documentation. Many tasks are cyclical – only done once a semester or once a year. Making notes on how you accomplished a task this year will speed things up next year. Be specific: What files did you use, where are they located, what approach did you use. Formalize the process with complete notes so you can find them next time. IF there was little to no documentation when you walked into the job, make sure there will be some when you leave. The one to benefit the most will be you.

## **Confidentiality**

One of the biggest issues a new employee faces is whether or not to give out information. First of all, you have to ascertain that the data have been checked and re-checked for errors. It is easy to lose perspective when looking at the same data over an extended period of time. Even senior research analysts should have someone else reviews reports before they are released.

In addition, ascertain that the information given is not considered confidential. As workers in IR, we generally have access to more data than anyone else on campus. Thus, we need to exert extra caution when asked for information. Just because we have access to the data does not mean that it is acceptable to share it with other people! Even data that are considered public information may need to be approved by someone else at the institution. It never hurts to ask someone more experienced when in doubt!

## **Networking**

Institutional Research provides many opportunities to increase personal knowledge outside the office.

Through seminars, professional meetings, workshops, and the like, we have many opportunities to learn. Remember, any questions asked to increase ones knowledge is not a ‘stupid’ question. Sometimes we wonder whom we can ask. Some IR offices are not very large, often containing only one or two people. In this case, the network of IR colleagues is a valuable resource. Remember that your colleagues in the next county or even the next state are just an email away!

## **Closing Thoughts**

Guard yourself against stress by allowing some humor into your work life. Laugh! It causes relaxation! Researchers say that real belly laughter can relax the muscles more than a vigorous massage. Find things that provide enjoyment and make you laugh. Sometimes a well-deserved play/laughing break can help you re-focus and finish that project that seemed impossible.

## **Welcome to a rewarding career in IR!!**

(Adapted from material from Ronnie Chrestman, Nancy James and Jessica Pierce of Clemson University with a few edits and additions by the NEAIR Mentor Program Committee and Michigan IR folks)

## 10 Things Institutional Research Newcomers Need to Know

- There are no stupid questions – half the people in the room who didn't ask were thinking the same thing.
- Most in the IR world strongly feel that the word 'data' is plural (i.e., 'Data are important', NOT 'Data is important.') although some dictionaries indicate that it can be either plural or singular.
- Deadlines are not to be ignored. Plan your work!
- Overestimate how long a project will take. If you finish early, you look like a genius!
- Make your supervisor look good.
- Share data and information – the more people know, the better your institution can adjust and adapt.
- Strike an appropriate balance between content and appearance. While a good appearance may not disguise bad data, a bad appearance may minimize your good efforts.
- Documentation shall set you free!!!!
- You will *never* remember all of the IPEDS and Perkins definitions.
- There is *always* another way to count faculty and FTE.





# TO IR

## **New to IR Overview**

**Michigan Community College**

**Data Workshop**

**New to Institutional Research Session**







TO IR

July 2015

MI Community College Data Workshop

## Introductions

- Workshop leader
  - Dana Cogswell, Lansing Community College
    - [cogswd@lcc.edu](mailto:cogswd@lcc.edu)
  - Workshop participants

**Special Thanks!** to NEAIR for compiling much of the information presented. This presentation is adapted from an earlier presentation given by Tina Banach and Kristen Buttigieg

## Workshop Topics

- Who/What is IR?
- Values
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Stakeholders & Constituencies
- Responsibilities
  - Data Consistency, Integrity, Quality
  - Data Extraction, Collection
  - External Reporting
  - Internal Reporting
  - Enrollment Management
  - Surveys
  - Assessment
  - Strategic Planning
  - And anything else they ask for...

## What IS Institutional Research?

- Research leading to improved understanding, planning, and operating of institutions of postsecondary education.
  - ~ Association for Institutional Research
- Wikipedia explanation - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional\\_research](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional_research)

# What IS Institutional Research?

## Purposes and Audiences

|                                  |                                   | Formative & Internal<br>For Improvement                           | Summative & External<br>For Accountability  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Organizational<br>Role & Culture | Administrative<br>& Institutional | To describe the institution<br><i>IR as Information Authority</i> | To present the best case<br><i>IR as Spin Doctor</i>                                    |
|                                  | Academic &<br>Professional        | To analyze alternatives<br><i>IR as Policy Analyst</i>            | To supply impartial<br>evidence of effectiveness<br><i>IR as Scholar and Researcher</i> |

From Volkwein (1999). What is Institutional Research All About? NDIR # 104

# What IS Institutional Research?

- Terenzini (1993)
  - Views Institutional Research as organizational intelligence and the knowledge and skills it requires
  - Organizational intelligence refers to:
    - Data gathered about the institution
    - Analysis of data and transformation into information
    - Insight and informed sense of the organization
  - 3 types/tiers of knowledge and skills (hierarchical)
    - 1) Technical/analytical intelligence
    - 2) Issues intelligence
    - 3) Contextual intelligence

## What IS Institutional Research?

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Tier 1 –<br/>Technical and<br/>Analytical<br/>Intelligence</b><br><br><b>Fundamental<br/>and<br/>Foundational</b> | <b>Factual Knowledge<br/>or Information</b>  | <b>Analytical and<br/>Methodological Skills</b> |
|  | 1. Basic building/<br>counting blocks        | Research designs, sampling                      |
|  | 2. Common categories,<br>definitions & terms | Statistics                                      |
|  | 3. Counting rules and<br>definitions         | Measurement                                     |
|  | 4. Structure and coding<br>conventions       | Qualitative methods                             |

## What IS Institutional Research?

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Tier 2 –<br/>Issues<br/>Intelligence</b> | <b>Substantive<br/>Dimension</b>        | <b>Procedural<br/>Dimension</b>                             |
|   | 1. Enrollment goal<br>setting           | Understanding<br>political nature of<br>issues and problems |
|   | 2. Faculty workload<br>analyses         | Understanding<br>informal power<br>structure                |
|   | 3. Resource allocation/<br>reallocation | Persuasion,<br>compromise,<br>consultation                  |
|   | 4. Facilities Planning                  | Professional courtesy                                       |

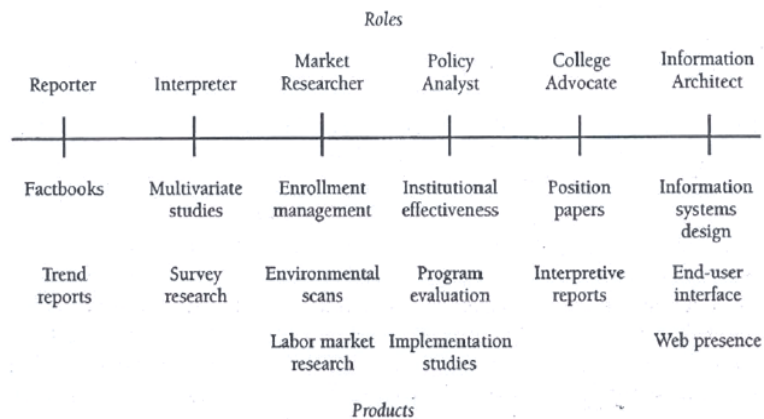
# What IS Institutional Research?

## Tier 3 – Contextual Intelligence

- Makes possible prudent, intelligent, illuminating application of technical and methodological skills
  - ▣ Understanding, interpreting and functioning in a given institution how that institution works
  - ▣ Philosophical, cultural, political, historical
  - ▣ Values, attitudes, respect
  - ▣ Organizational wisdom and savvy
  - ▣ Earns IR professionals legitimacy, trust and respect

# What IS Institutional Research?

Figure 2.1. The Evolution of Institutional Research Roles



Wells, Silk and Torres, 1999

## Values

- A commitment to the highest ethical standards
- A commitment to human subjects protection
- A commitment to confidentiality
- A commitment to your institution
- A commitment to students
- A commitment to serving others
- A commitment to higher education in general
- A commitment to IR and the value of data driven decision making

## Values

- Inquisitiveness and curiosity
- Willingness to work hard
- Willingness to continue to learn and improve
- Collegueship
- Task, rather than strictly time, orientation
- Appreciation and respect for multiple perspectives
- Tolerance for ambiguity
- Willingness to share credit
- Willingness to accept blame
- Discretion
- Objectivity



## Knowledge

What a Practitioner needs to know:

- What constitutes good, “scientific” research, particularly in the social and behavioral sciences
- Have some understanding of psychometrics/measurement principles
- Understand data structures and data storage options
- Develop an appreciation for qualitative research methodologies
- Develop self-knowledge – includes knowing what you don’t know
- How you learn and understand situations

## Knowledge

What a Practitioner needs to understand:

- The structure and function of your institution and the context in which it operates
- The overall structure and function of higher education and how your institution fits into it
- The organizational structure of your institution, including its “experts”

## Knowledge

- Know who the national/regional experts are in various IR related activities
- Know where and what data are available on your campus
- Know where and what data are available beyond your campus
- Know when “enough is enough” and when “less is more”



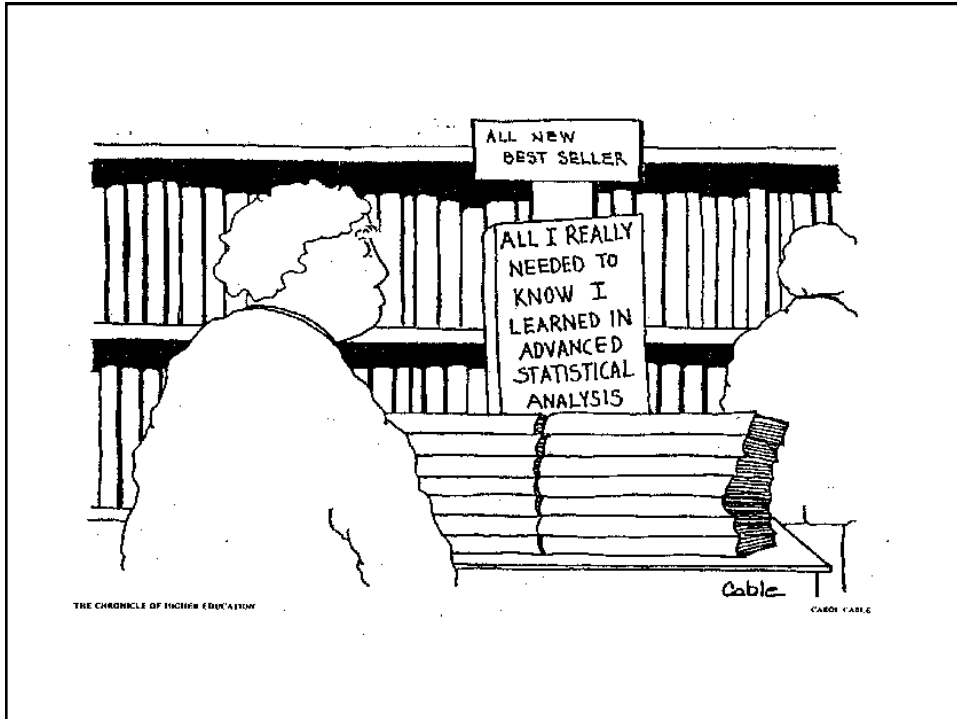
## Skills

‘The ideal candidate will have:’

- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Strong computing, spreadsheet & database skills
- An ability to work with diverse constituencies
- An ability to explain things different ways
- Resourcefulness
- An ability to prioritize & multi-task
- Time and project management skills
- Strong quantitative and analytic skills
- Survey development & administration skills

## Skills

- Ability to conduct statistical analyses
  - ▣ Descriptive and inferential statistics
  - ▣ Various trend and prediction analyses
- An ability to mix presentation modalities
- Ability to “see the forest through the trees”
- Ability to laugh at one’s self
- Ability to “manage-up” when necessary
- Ability to be a good team member
- Sound judgment
- Creativity



## Stakeholders

- Internal Constituencies
  - ▣ President and Cabinet
  - ▣ Provost or Academic Vice President
  - ▣ Deans
  - ▣ Department or Program Chair
  - ▣ Committees Responsible for Policy and Planning
  - ▣ Students



## Stakeholders

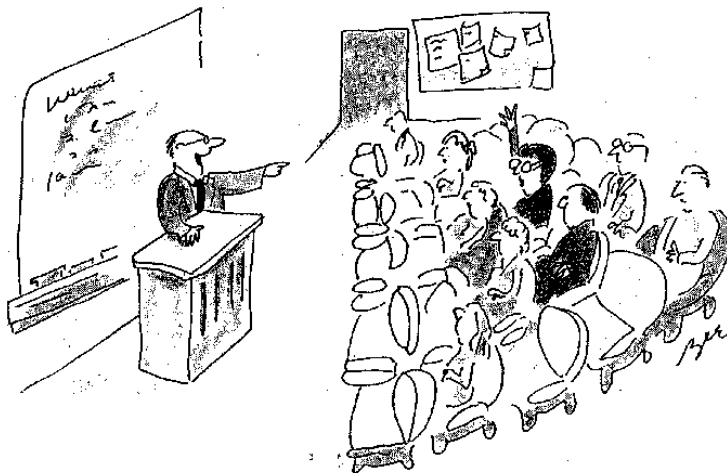
- External Constituencies
  - ▣ Governing Board
  - ▣ Accrediting bodies
  - ▣ Parents
  - ▣ Alumni
  - ▣ Employers
  - ▣ General Public – includes guidebook publishers
  - ▣ Legislators
  - ▣ Consortia and data sharing groups
  - ▣ National, State, or sector specific advocacy groups or associations

# Stakeholders

## Other Constituencies

- Publics
  - ▣ State Higher Education Coordinating Agency
  - ▣ State System Headquarters
  - ▣ Lawmakers
  - ▣ Local Employers
  - ▣ Service Area Communities
- Private, For-profit
  - ▣ Shareholders
  - ▣ Corporate officers
- Privates
  - ▣ General group with which institution is affiliated

“Yes, Jane Lyons of Seaside, Massachusetts, sitting next to Dale Harmon, Class of '96, it IS important for a writer to know his audience.”



# Stakeholders

## Writing for the Audience

- Types of Audiences
  - Executives
  - Board of Trustees
  - Faculty
  - Lay people – students, parents, legislators and staff, the press
  - Technicians – admissions, financial aid, administrative staff
  - Experts – scholars in the field
  - Combinations of the above

# Stakeholders

## Things to think about:

- What do my audiences need to know about this subject?
- What do my audiences want to know about this subject?
- What do I want to tell them about this subject?
- What decisions will or might be made based on this report?
- To what other individuals might my primary audience send this report?
- What other audiences might be interested in the same subject, and will they see my report or other materials from which it was derived?
- What other perceptions might audience members hold on the topic?
- What would the “data owners” say about the report?

## IR Responsibilities

- Data Consistency, Integrity, Quality
- Data Extraction, Collection
- External Reporting
- Internal Reporting
- Enrollment Management
- Surveys
- Assessment
- Strategic Planning
- And anything else they ask for...

## Responsibilities - Data Consistency

- Develop and employ clear data definitions
  - ▣ Develop a set/glossary/library of data definitions
  - ▣ Keep records of the decisions and their implementation
  - ▣ Be able to provide a clear rationale for what you do
- Question past practice
  - ▣ Don't fall into the "that's the way we have always done it" trap
  - ▣ Don't fall into the "that's the way Joe did it" trap
- Develop protocols and follow them
- Develop metadata

## Responsibilities - Data Integrity

- Edit check and re-check
- Sample the data
- Befriend the “owners” of the data
  - ▣ Explanations of context, quality
  - ▣ Review and re-entry of edits
- Look for and recognize patterns
  - ▣ The “Gee, that’s strange” clues

## Responsibilities - Data Quality

- Make comparisons with known standards and/or other institutions/groups
- Examine various measures of central tendency
- Examine various measures of variability
- Employ a “5 point” data summary
- Examine and explore outliers
- Consider the appropriate level of precision needed
- Strike an appropriate balance between “cost and benefit”

## The 5 Point Data Summary In Action



## Responsibilities - Data Extraction

- Standard reports (usually developed by IT in consultation with IR) for distribution to a large audience
  - ▣ Distribute to those who need to know
  - ▣ Consider appropriate audiences
- “Frozen” files
  - ▣ Be cognizant of important dates
  - ▣ Understand that “current” is not always best
- Befriend the “IT guys”



## Responsibilities - Data Extraction

### Common “Frozen” Files

- Applicant files
- Unduplicated student files
  - ▣ Demographics (ex. age, ethnicity, address)
  - ▣ Semester registration and other academic information
    - Program, student level, credits attempted, GPA
- Course enrollment detail files
  - ▣ All registrations, updated with grades
- End of term performance files
  - ▣ GPA, academic actions, academic awards
- Degrees awarded
- Personnel files
  - ▣ Gender, ethnicity, EEO code, tenure status, salary, benefits

## Responsibilities - Mandatory Reporting

### External

- IPEDS (see binder for additional information)
- Perkins
- State specific reporting requirements
  - ▣ ACS, CECR, enrollment, financial
- Governing Board specific requirements
  - ▣ Enrollment, success/completion, accountability
- NJCAA, Achieving the Dream, & other national organizations
- Consortia
  - ▣ VFA, NCCBP, CSRDE, etc.
- ***Be careful of differing definitions...***

## Responsibilities - Mandatory Reporting

### External - Surveys

- Why do you need to care?
  - ▣ PR – just ask US News and World Report subscribers!
  - ▣ Accurate and consistent information
- Efficient completion of these surveys
  - ▣ Common Data Set
- Examples – College Board, Peterson's, College Guide

### What we don't report to the guidebooks...



## Responsibilities - Mandatory Reporting

### Internal

- Fact Books or similar web sites
- Enrollment Trends
  - ▣ Students, seats, FTEs
  - ▣ Split by student or course characteristics
- Success Rate Trends
- Faculty Workload
- Course/Program Assessment
- Finance / Budget related

## Responsibilities - Mandatory Reporting

### Internal

- Advises decision makers – helps inform policy
- Surveys play key role
- Analyses on multiple levels
  - ▣ Institutional
  - ▣ Program
  - ▣ Student trends

## Responsibilities – Enrollment Management

- Enrollment projections - part science, part art
- Requires blending of historical information with campus goals and expectations
  - Size
  - Selectivity
  - Capacity
- Institutional level enrollment projections
- Used for enrollment management AND for budget preparation (i.e. used to project revenue!)

## Responsibilities – Enrollment Management

### Reports

- Student demographic trend profiles
- Programmatic enrollment trend profiles
- Student outcome trends: retention, time to completion
- Internal student flow – major changes
- FTE by discipline/school/institution
- Environmental Scanning
  - Area demographic changes
  - High School pipeline data

## Responsibilities - Surveys

- More than just administration
- Multiple uses (sometimes for the same data)
  - ▣ Institutional Effectiveness
  - ▣ Program Assessment
  - ▣ Marketing and Enrollment Management
  - ▣ Planning
- Use of a survey cycle to streamline process
- Institutional Human Subjects Review Board

## Responsibilities - Surveys

### Commonly Used Nationally Normed Surveys

- CCSSE (CCFSSE) – survey of engagement
- SENSE – survey of engagement for new students
- Noel-Levitz – satisfaction survey
- HERI – Freshman, Your First College Year
- ACT sponsored surveys
- PACE – employee feedback

## Responsibilities - Surveys

### Tips for Effective Surveys

- Plan!
  - Clear objectives
  - Understand how the results will be used
  - Identify critical questions
  - Ask is the data collected anywhere else?
  - How will you analyze and report the data
  - Who will you survey? Sample or Census?
  - How many?
  - Know what other surveys are happening at your institution
  - Understand the impact on instructional time

## Responsibilities - Strategic Planning

### Setting the strategic direction of the college

- Collaborative process – IR supports (or leads)
- Reflects mission and goals
- Policy analysis – data informs decisions
- Ties to budget and institutional assessment
- Tools
  - SWOT
  - Environmental Scan
  - Indicators
  - Benchmarking

# Responsibilities - Strategic Planning

## Linking The Measurement System



# Responsibilities - Strategic Planning

## Jargon

- Benchmarking
  - A systematic approach and continuous process of measuring and comparing an institution's performance against designated others to gain information to improve its performance
- Competitive Advantage
  - The institution's unique capabilities that give it an edge over its competitors accomplishing strategic goals
- Core Competencies
  - The unique features, capabilities and resources of the institution in key functional areas that can be brought to bear on accomplishing major goals
- Key Vulnerabilities
  - Those resources and capabilities critical to achieving its major goals that the institution lacks

## Responsibilities – Assessment

- Evaluation for the purposes of improvement
- MISSION, MISSION, MISSION
- Comes in many varieties
  - Institutional Effectiveness – concerned with overall institutional performance on a variety of measures
  - Learning Outcomes – concerned with effectiveness of instruction toward improving student learning
  - Program Assessment – concerned with the functioning of a discipline or curriculum - a blend of effectiveness and outcomes measures
  - Needs Assessment – concerned with determining the demand for a particular program or curriculum

## Responsibilities – Assessment

### Types

- Formative – aimed at improving something that is already being done (learning)
- Summative – used for making decisions about resources, people and institutions (accountability)
- Levels of assessment
  - Institutional
  - Programmatic (academic program and administrative units)
  - Course level



## Responsibilities – Assessment

### What it *Can't* Be

- A data collection and storage activity
- A one time activity
- An activity done by administrators (or IR) alone
- Something “they” require but “we” don’t really care about
- An Ironman Triathlon (or a walk in the park)

## Responsibilities – Assessment

### Institutional Assessment

- What is it? – An indirect method for documenting that an institution is meeting its mission
- What drives it? – Accountability to regional accreditation groups and state and national audiences
- What is it linked to? – The institution’s strategic plan!
- Documentation – a series of indicators that measure components of the institution’s strategic plan

## Responsibilities – Assessment

### Academic Program Assessment

- Compiling core data (IR role?)
  - ▣ majors
  - ▣ course enrollment/FTE trends
  - ▣ completion
- Meeting programmatic standards (usually handled on the academic side)
  - ▣ Comprehensive exam
  - ▣ Capstone course
  - ▣ Thesis or research project
  - ▣ Student performance/exhibit
  - ▣ Certification
- Programmatic satisfaction

## Responsibilities – Assessment

### Course Assessment

- Faculty driven/IR consultation
- Meeting the course objectives
  - ▣ Beware of the difference between course objectives and content!
- Examples of designs
  - ▣ Pre/Post Test design
  - ▣ Portfolio Assessment
  - ▣ Post-Test design
  - ▣ Focus groups
- Total score and subgroup analysis

## Responsibilities – Assessment

### Assessment Tools

- Standardized instruments
  - Provide comparative data
  - Have demonstrated reliability and validity
  - Save time – development, scoring
- Institution-developed instruments
  - Tailored to your needs
  - Have face validity with faculty, other constituencies
  - Cost efficient
- Other measures
  - Portfolio assessment
  - Standard assignments with rubrics
  - As varied as those who implement assessment activities

## Other Responsibilities

### Measuring Student Success

- Academic preparedness
- Completion
- Time to Degree/cumulative credits earned
- Retention within program
- Grades/Course retention & completion
- Progression to next level for sequenced courses
- Licensure Rates

## Other Responsibilities

### Financial Analyses

- Student financial aid and tuition policy studies
- Faculty Workload
- Salary comparisons, equity studies
- General finance/budget requests
- Efficiency/process improvement studies

## Other Responsibilities

### Comparison Group Studies

- Used for benchmarking purposes
- Assists in decision making – “What do our peers do?”
- Can help put in context budget requests, teaching loads, salary adjustments, tuition and/or fee increases
- May have different peers depending upon the questions being asked

## Other Responsibilities

### Types of Comparison Groups (Teeter & Brinkman, 2003)

- Competitor – compete for students, faculty or finances
- Aspirational – dissimilar to your institution but worthy of emulation
- Predetermined – arranged together for some purpose (e.g., athletic conference, geographic, Carnegie classification)
- Peer – similar in role and mission

## Current Issues in Higher Ed

- Accountability
  - ▣ State Longitudinal Data Tracking System
- Sustainability
- Fiscal
- Enrollment
- Assessment
- Aging Faculty
- Privacy – FERPA, etc.

## Pulling it all together

- Don't be marginalized by falling into the trap of becoming merely a technocrat!
- Great, Good, and Good Enough
- Don't worry about being perfect – but make sure you strive for continuous improvement
- A great analysis that's never completed and distributed is no good to anyone
- Avoid making doorstops
- Avoid creating roadblocks
- Don't go it alone

## Parting Thoughts

### **All I Ever Needed to Know, I Learned from a Ziploc Bag\***

1. Be transparent
2. Keep things fresh
3. Be versatile and able to multi-task
4. Be tough but flexible
5. Keep things secure
6. Add a little color
7. Unzip every once in a while

\* With thanks to Kathleen Paris and to Mike Doors who borrowed from her!



# TO IR

## **New to IR Resources**

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## NEW TO IR

# RESOURCES FOR IR PROFESSIONALS

MI Community College Data Workshop

## AIR Published Materials

- Monographs
  - *Questionnaire survey research: What Works?*
  - *Strategies for the Practice of IR*
  - *People, Processes and Managing Data*
  - *Effective Reporting*
  - *The Primer For Institutional Research*
- New Directions for Institutional Research
- Professional File
- AIR Alerts

## Journals

- Research in Higher Education
- Journal of Higher Education
- ASHE Higher Education Research Reports
- Society for College and University Planners (SCUP)
- Journal of Applied Research in the Community College (JARCC)
- Community College Journal

## Reports – National Focus

- ASHE Higher Education Research Reports
- NCES Reports (Condition of Education, etc.)
- Lumina Foundation
- Achieving the Dream
- Community College Research Center (CCRC)
- Education Commission of the States
- National Center for Higher Education Management (NCHEMS)
- Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)

## Other Regular Publications

- Chronicle of Higher Education
- Community College Times
- Change
- Postsecondary Education Opportunity
- University Business

## Bibliography: Information Dissemination

- Interpreting and Presenting Data to Management (AIR Professional File 36)
- Enhancing Information Use in Decision Making (New Directions for Institutional Research 64)
- “On the Nature of Institutional Research and the Knowledge and Skills It Requires” (Terenzini, 1991)

## Bibliography: Data Graphics

- Handbook of Graphic Presentation (Schmid and Schmid, 1979)
- The Visual Display of Quantitative Information (Tufte, 1983)
- The Elements of Graphing Data (Cleveland, 1985)
- Say It with Charts (Zelazny, 1985)
- Envisioning Information (Tufte, 1990)
- Effective Color Displays: Theory and Practice (Travis, 1991)
- Elements of Graph Design (Kosslyn, 1994)
- Visual Explanations (Tufte, 1997)

## Professional Associations - National

- National IR Organizations
  - Association for Institutional Research (AIR)
  - National Community College Council for Research and Planning (NCCCRP)
  - Society for College and University Planners (SCUP)
- American Educational Research Association (AERA)
- Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)
- League for Innovation in Community Colleges

## Professional Associations – Regional & State

- Northeast Association for Institutional Research (NEAIR)
- State IR Organizations
  - ▣ Michigan Association for Institutional Research (MI AIR)
  - ▣ Michigan Community College-Collaborative for Accountability, Research and Effectiveness (MCCCARE)
  - ▣ Michigan Community College Data and Evaluation Committee (MCCDEC)

## Other Related Professional Organizations

- American Society for Quality (ASQ)
  - ▣ <http://www.asq.org/>
- Baldrige
  - ▣ <http://www.baldrige.com/>
- Higher Learning Commission
  - ▣ <http://www.ncahlc.org/>

## External Data Sources

- NCES – IPEDS Data Center
- Data Sharing Consortia (HEDS, NCCBP, CSRDE)
- NCHEMS – National Center for Higher Education Management Systems
- National Student Clearinghouse
- Highered.org
- Commercial companies

## IR Web Resources

- AIR
  - <http://www.airweb.org>
- MIAIR
  - <http://www.miair.org>
- MCCARE – discussion board
  - <http://kandmwood.com/MCCData/index.php>
- NEAIR
  - <http://www.neair.org>
- MACRAO – Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers
  - <http://www.macrao.org/>

## Federal Web Resources

- NCES
  - <http://www.nces.ed.gov>
- Census Bureau
  - <http://www.census.gov>
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
  - <http://www.bls.gov>
- O\*NET
  - <http://online.onetcenter.org/>
- Department of Education
  - <http://www.ed.gov/>

## National Organizations/ Publications

- National Student Clearinghouse
  - <http://studentclearinghouse.com/>
- National Governor's Association
  - <http://www.nga.org>
- Achieving the Dream
  - <http://achievingthedream.org/>
- National Center for Higher Education Management Systems
  - <http://www.nchems.org>

## National Organizations/ Publications

- The Chronicle of Higher Education
  - <http://chronicle.com>
- Inside HigherEd
  - <http://insidehighered.com>
- Council for the Advancement and Support for Education
  - <http://www.case.org>
- Postsecondary Education Opportunity
  - <http://www.postsecondary.org>

## State Organizations

- MI Workforce Programs, Community College Services
  - <http://www.michigan.gov/mdcd>
- MI Community College NETwork (MCCNET)
  - <http://www.michigancc.net/>
- Michigan Community College Association (MCCA)
  - <http://www.mcca.org/>
- MI Center for Education Performance and Information (CEPI)
  - <http://www.michigan.gov/cepi>
- MI School Data
  - <https://www.mischooldata.org>



## Helpful Community College Web Sites

- American Association for Community Colleges
  - <http://www.aacc.nche.edu>
- The League for Innovation in the Community College
  - <http://www.league.org>
- National Community College Council for Research and Planning
  - <http://www/ncccrp.org>
- And, Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_





# TO IR

## **New to IR Glossary**

**Michigan Community College**

**Data Workshop**

**New to Institutional Research Session**



## Glossary of Terms

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**10th Day:** Census date that is commonly used as a snapshot in time by institutions to reflect enrollment following the add/drop period.

**Academic year:** The period of time that includes the fall, winter and spring/summer semesters.

**Accreditation:** The formal process by which a recognized body assesses and recognizes that an institution meets an accepted set of criteria or standards.

**Activities Classification Structure (ACS):** Uniform data reporting requirements used in making State budget and appropriation decisions. The funding formula is based on ACS information such as full-time equated (FTE) students, contact hours, expenditures and other activity measures.

**Ad hoc:** Requests for data that are outside of the normal reporting and assessment cycle of an office; typically these unique data requests answer a specific question being asked by a unit and are not repeated annually.

**Admitted student:** An applicant who is enrolled in a class or program.

**Applicant:** An individual who has fulfilled the institution's requirements to be considered for admission.

**Articulation:** The process by which credits are transferred from one institution to fulfill requirements at another institution; the formalized equating of one institution's course with another's.

**Assessment:** The process of measuring progress and examining the status of an institution or unit with regard to a goal or objective; see also Learning Outcomes Assessment, Institutional Effectiveness Assessment.

**Associate degree:** An award that normally requires at least two but less than four years of full-time equivalent college work and is at least 60 credits (AA: Associate in Arts, AAS: Associate in Applied Science, AS: Associate in Science, etc.)

**Attrition:** The process or rate at which a student leaves an institution or its program.

**Awards conferred:** see Completions

**Bachelor's degree:** An award (baccalaureate or equivalent degree, as determined by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education) that normally requires at least four years but not more than five years of full-time equivalent college-level work.

**Balanced scorecard:** A strategic planning and management system used to align activities to the vision and strategy of the College and monitor organization performance against strategic goals. The scorecard is set up to view the College through five perspectives (student success, programs and services, workforce, finance and community) and within each develop metrics based on the priorities of the strategic plan to then collect and analyze data relative to the metrics in order to track results.

**Baldrige:** A particular type of assessment and recognition system based on business models.

**Benchmark:** An institution's goal for a given indicator, frequently based on peer performance or on trends over time; may also refer to an external criterion against which an institution measures itself.

## Glossary of Terms

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**Carnegie Classification:** System for categorizing institutions based on control (public/private) and highest degree awarded.

**Certificate:** An award that normally requires at least one but less than two years of full-time equivalent college work and is a minimum of 30 credits but less than 60 credits.

**CIP code:** A taxonomy coding scheme that contains titles and descriptions of primarily postsecondary instructional programs. It is a six-digit number that is assigned to programs as a means of classifying them by their specialty.

**Cohort:** A specific group of students established for tracking purposes.

**College ready:** A new student who does not place into developmental education courses.

**Common Data Set (CDS):** A set of data elements commonly reported to external sources, including guidebook publishers; institutions who publish their CDS on the web can submit the URL in lieu of completing publisher surveys.

**Completions:** The number of recognized degree completions (associate, certificate) awarded between July 1 and June 30 of a reporting year.

**Contact hour:** A unit of measure that represents an hour (55 minutes) of scheduled instruction given to students.

**Continuing education:** Courses which are offered outside of an institution's array of credit-bearing courses, typically shorter in length than the traditional semester.

**Cost of attendance:** Includes tuition and fees, books and supplies, transportation, room and board, and miscellaneous expenses.

**Course enrollment:** The number of students enrolled in a particular course.

**Credit course:** A course that, if successfully completed, can be applied toward the number of courses required for achieving a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.

**Credit hour:** A unit of measure representing an hour of instruction per week over the entire term. It is applied toward the total number of hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.

**Degree-seeking:** Students enrolled in courses for credit that are recognized by the institution as seeking a degree or formal award. At the undergraduate level, this is intended to include students enrolled in vocational or occupational programs.

**Demographics:** A set of data which describe a population in terms of set characteristics such as gender, age, race, education level, household size, and income.

**Developmental education:** developmental education courses teach academically under-prepared students the skills they need to succeed in college-level courses. These courses provide learning strategies designed to improve or overcome any marked deficiency in basic competencies, including a deficiency in content previously taught but not learned. Basic competency is defined as reading, writing and mathematics.

## Glossary of Terms

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**Distance learning:** A field of education that aims to deliver education to students who are not physically 'on site' (i.e. online courses).

**Dual enrollment:** A program through which high school students may enroll in college courses while still enrolled in high school. Students are admitted for one semester at a time and must have signatures from parent and high school principal.

**English as a Second Language (ESL):** A course of study designed specifically for students whose native language is not English.

**Enrollment:** Number of students enrolled in a particular semester.

**Environmental scanning:** Environmental scanning is a research project that is designed to collect information about the markets or competitive environment in which the institution operates. This information typically includes population and other socio-demographic data and projections to identify market opportunities, but may also include information gathered about competition or other market threats.

**Faculty:** Persons responsible for the direct instruction of students.

**Fall cohort:** The group of students entering for the fall term established for tracking purposes and includes first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students.

**FERPA:** Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act – the federal law governing the safekeeping and reporting of educational records.

**Fiscal year:** A 12-month period over which a college budgets its spending, e.g. July 1 - June 30.

**Fiscal Year Equated Student (FYES):** The calculated equivalent of a student having completed one full year of instructional work (31 semester credit hours or 496 semester contact hours).

**First-Time, Full-Time Student:** A student attending any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. Includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term. Also includes students who entered with college credits earned before graduation from high school.

**First-year student:** A student who has completed less than the equivalent of 1 full year of undergraduate work; that is, less than 30 semester hours (in a 120-hour degree program) or less than 900 contact hours.

**FTE (full-time equivalent) student:** A measurement equal to one student enrolled full-time for one academic year. Total FTE enrollment includes full-time plus calculated equivalent of the part-time enrollment. The full-time equivalent of the part-time students can be estimated using different factors with one calculation being full-time students + 1/3 part-time students = FTE.

**Full-time student:** A student enrolled for 12 or more semester credits in fall, winter or spring.

**Gateway courses:** Generally, a gateway course is one that the majority of students take and typically includes the first college-level math and English courses at an institution.

**Grade point average (GPA):** Calculated by multiplying the grade in each course by the corresponding credits to calculate honor points and then dividing the total number of honor points by the number of credits. GPAs are calculated by semester and cumulatively.

## Glossary of Terms

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**Graduation rate:** The number of students entering the institution as full-time, first-time, degree-or certificate-seeking students in a particular year (cohort) who complete their program within 150% of time (3 years for an associate degree). Calculated by: (the number of students from a given new student cohort who graduate) divided by (the number of students who initially enrolled in that cohort minus any who are considered to be “allowable exclusions.”) For purposes of reporting Student Right-To-Know graduation rates, allowable exclusions are: students who are deceased, students who are totally and permanently disabled, students who have left school to join the armed forces, students who have left school to serve with a foreign aid service of the Federal Government, such as the Peace Corps, and students who have left school to serve on official church missions.

**Guest Student:** A student that is primarily attending one institution but is granted permission by their home institution to take specific courses at another institution.

**Headcount (unduplicated):** see Unduplicated Headcount

**High school diploma or recognized equivalent:** A document certifying the successful completion of a prescribed secondary school program of studies, or the attainment of satisfactory scores on the Tests of General Educational Development (GED), or another state-specified examination.

**High-school market share:** The percent of high school graduates in the college’s service area who enroll in the first fall semester after graduating from high school.

**In-district tuition:** The tuition rate paid by students living in-county.

**Incentive:** A reward used for completion of a survey or participation in a research project.

**Indicator:** A measure of an institution’s performance on a stated goal or objective.

**Institutional Effectiveness Assessment:** Type of assessment which measure’s an institution’s progress toward its overall strategic goals; typically includes measures of all areas of the institution, including financial indicators as well as student success measures; ideally a measure of the institution’s progress toward achieving its mission.

**IPEDS Surveys:** The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), established as the core postsecondary education data collection program for NCES, is a system of surveys designed to collect data from all primary providers of postsecondary education. The IPEDS surveys are a series of interrelated surveys to collect institution-level data in such areas as enrollments, program completions, faculty, staff, finances, and academic libraries. The IPEDS Web site is: <http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds>.

**Learning centered college:** Describes the shift from a college being an institution that exists to provide instruction to an institution that exists to produce learning.

**Learning community:** A purposeful structuring of curriculum to link together coursework so that students find greater coherence in what they are learning and greater interaction with faculty and peers.

**Learning Outcomes Assessment:** Type of assessment which measures progress toward stated goals related to the acquisition of a specific set of skills or knowledge.

**MACRAO (Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers):** An articulation agreement established to improve the process of transferring course work between two-year and four-year colleges in Michigan.

**Matriculation:** The process of beginning to take courses toward the achievement of a degree.



## Glossary of Terms

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**Mean:** Also known as the average and is calculated by adding up all of the numbers and then dividing by the total number of cases.

**Median:** The middle value in a list of numbers. To find the median, numbers in data set have to be listed in numerical order from lowest to highest.

**Merit-based aid:** Financial aid awarded to a student based on ability, typically academic or other specialized talent, without regard to financial need.

**Mode:** The value(s) that occurs most often. If no number is repeated, then there is no mode for the data set.

**Need-based aid:** Financial aid awarded to a student based on a calculation of financial need, at times in conjunction with consideration of academic or other ability but not dependent upon it.

**Needs Assessment:** A study to determine the relative demand and utility of a proposed program; typically includes an environmental scan, a study of workforce needs, and an analysis of similar programs offered by competitors.

**Non-degree seeking:** A student enrolled in credit-bearing courses for personal interest or skill development but do not have intentions of completing a degree. High school students who are considered to be dual enrolled students are also classified as non-degree seeking.

**Non-resident:** A student who resides outside the college service area.

**Non-resident alien:** A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a visa or temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely.

**Non-traditional field/program:** Occupations or fields of work for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work.

**Non-traditional student:** A student who is older than the traditional recent high school graduate attending higher education, typically aged 25 and older.

**Occupational program:** Programs designed to prepare students for careers upon completion. Career programs may or may not transfer to 4-year institutions.

**Opening day:** The first day of classes for each semester.

**Out-of-district tuition:** Tuition rate paid by students living outside of the college's county but still reside within Michigan.

**Outcome:** Measurable results of a particular program or process.

**Output:** The tangible products of the educational process.

**Part-time student:** A student enrolled for fewer than 12 credits per semester.

**Peer:** An institution similar in mission, size, and demographics (among other factors) frequently used for comparison or in the development of institutional goals.

## Glossary of Terms

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**Perkins Core Indicators:** A state performance accountability system to assess the effectiveness of the state in achieving statewide progress in occupational education and to optimize the return on investment of Federal funds in occupational education activities. The current Perkins Core Indicators are: technical skill attainment; credential, certificate or degree; retention or transfer; student placement; non-traditional program participation; non-traditional program completion.

**Persistence rate:** Continued enrollment of students from one semester into another  
Next-Term Persistence: Number of credit students enrolled in the fall that re-enroll for the subsequent winter semester.  
Next-Fall Persistence: Number of credit students enrolled in the fall and re-enroll the following fall semester.

**Placement rates:** The percent of graduates who find employment within 6 months of completing their degree or certificate. Graduates who indicate that they are not seeking employment are excluded from the calculation.

**Program enrollment:** The number of students enrolled in a particular program (i.e. Associate in Arts, Nursing).

**Qualitative:** Non-numeric data, often collected through focus groups and open-ended survey questions.

**Quantitative:** Data which can be expressed numerically and analyzed using statistical techniques.

**Race/ethnicity:** Category used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. A person may be counted in only one group.

**Race/ethnicity unknown:** Category used to classify students or employees whose race/ethnicity is not known and whom institutions are unable to place in one of the specified racial/ethnic categories.

**Recruitment:** The marketing of an institution (both to prospective students and to prospective employees); also refers to all aspects of the admissions process from initial contact to enrollment.

**Resident:** A student whose legal residence is within the College's service area.

**Resident alien or other eligible non-citizen:** A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who has been admitted as a legal immigrant for the purpose of obtaining permanent resident alien status (and who holds either an alien registration card [Form I-551 or I-151], a Temporary Resident Card [Form I-688], or an Arrival-Departure Record [Form I-94] with a notation that conveys legal immigrant status, such as Section 207 Refugee, Section 208 Asylee, Conditional Entrant Parolee or Cuban-Haitian).

**Retention:** see Persistence

**Self-report:** Data which rely on [student] reports of their opinions, perspectives, or perceived progress on some measure; often used when direct observations are impractical.

**Self-study:** A formal self-examination of an institution, program, or unit, typically conducted as part of an accrediting process; often produced by committees or teams comprised of faculty, administrators and other staff.

**Significant difference:** In statistics, a result is called statistically significant if it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Generally, differences are said to be significant if the p-value is less than .05.

## Glossary of Terms

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**Special Populations:** In general, a sub-set of the student population that has special programs or policies applied that are intended to assist the group.

**Stop-out:** Describes students who leave an institution for one or more semesters during their career at an institution.

**Student credit hours (SCH):** see Credit hour

**SWOT:** A technique used in environmental scanning which identifies an institution's (or unit's) Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

**Traditional student:** A student who is under the age of 24.

**Transfer program:** Programs designed to transfer to a four-year institution.

**Transfer student:** A student entering the institution for the first time but known to have previously attended a postsecondary institution at the same level (e.g., undergraduate). The student may transfer with or without credit.

**Unduplicated headcount:** The sum of students enrolled with each student counted only once during the reporting period, regardless of when the student was enrolled. For example, if a student was enrolled for a particular academic year in the fall and winter, they would only be counted once.

**Unmet need:** The portion of a student's financial need remaining after calculated family contributions and financial aid have been applied.



# CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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## PREAMBLE

The Code of Ethics and Professional Practice (Code) of the Association for Institutional Research was developed to provide members of the Association with some broad ethical statements with which to guide their professional lives and to identify relevant considerations when ethical uncertainties arise. It also provides a means for individuals new to the profession to learn about the ethical principles and standards that should guide the work of institutional researchers.

Although the Association also serves those institutions that employ our members, our primary service to those institutions is achieved through our individual members. Hence this Code is directed to individuals and not institutions although basic tenets contained within the Code are also applicable to our colleges and universities and should be compatible with institutional codes and values.

The persons who practice institutional research (IR) are a diverse group from many different academic backgrounds and from many different professional experiences. Add to this diversity among IR practitioners the tremendous variation in the practice of IR as defined at individual colleges and universities, and IR professionals would seem to have little common ground. It is precisely for these reasons that this Code of Ethics and Professional Practice is important.

Many of the professions from which IR practitioners come have their own standards or codes for acceptable and even expected performance. This Code adds to those existing documents in recognition of the special and different demands inherent in the practice of institutional research. In many institutions the institutional researcher is viewed as the “guardian of truth” or the “conscience” of the institution. This is an extra burden for institutional researchers, and this Code provides some guidance to practitioners who bear that burden. Along with the other professional standards, this Code defines a normative expectation for institutional researchers in their work. At the same time, the Code provides the foundation for institutional research as a profession.

Although it provides standards, the Code does not provide a set of rules. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist with respect to interpretation, and specific application must take into account the context of a given behavior. Adoption of a code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior or resolution of all disputes. Rather, it sets forth standards to which professionals aspire and against which their actions can be judged (both by themselves and others). Ethical behavior should result from a personal commitment to engage in ethical practice and an attempt to act always in a manner that assures integrity. All members of AIR should pledge to maintain their own competence by continually evaluating their research for scientific accuracy, by conducting themselves in accord with the ethical standards expressed in this Code, and by remembering that their ultimate goal is to contribute positively to the field of postsecondary education.

Finally, this Code is a living document that must change and be shaped as the practice of institutional research continues to evolve and develop.

## SECTION I - COMPETENCE

- (a) **Claims of Competence.** The institutional researcher shall not, in job application, resume, or the ordinary conduct of affairs, claim or imply a degree of competency he/she does not possess.
- (b) **Acceptance of Assignments.** The institutional researcher shall not accept assignments requiring competencies he/she does not have and for which he/she cannot effectively rely upon the assistance of colleagues, unless the supervisor has been adequately apprised or unless he/she would acquire the necessary competence prior to doing the research. The institutional researcher should use methodologies or techniques that are new to him/her only after appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those methodologies or techniques.
- (c) **Training of Subordinates.** The institutional researcher shall provide subordinates with opportunities for professional growth and development.
- (d) **Professional Continuing Education.** The institutional researcher has the responsibility to develop his/her own professional skills, knowledge, and performance and to keep abreast of changes in the field.

## SECTION II - PRACTICE

- (a) **Objectivity.**
  - i) Unbiased Attitude. The institutional researcher shall approach all assignments with acknowledgement of personal biases and make all attempts to minimize the effect of such biases in the conduct of the work.
  - ii) Conflicts of Interest. The institutional researcher should disclose situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, decisions or the performance of services. Disclosure and proper management of such situations assures that unavoidable conflicts do not interfere with the integrity of performance of duties.
- (b) **Use of Accepted Technical Standards.** The institutional researcher shall conduct all tasks in accordance with accepted technical standards.
- (c) **Initial Discussions.** Before an assignment is begun, the institutional researcher shall clarify with the sponsor and/or major users the purposes, expectations, strategies, and limitations of the research.
  - i) Special care shall be taken to recommend research techniques and designs that are appropriate to the purposes of the project.
  - ii) Special care shall be taken to advise the sponsor and/or major users, both at the design phase and, should the occasion arise, at any time during the execution of the project, if there is reason to believe that the strategy under consideration is likely to fail or to yield substantially unreliable results.
- (d) **Identification of Responsibility.** The institutional researcher shall accept responsibility for the competent execution of all assignments which he/she, or a subordinate, undertakes, and shall display individual and/or office authorship, as appropriate, on all such reports.
- (e) **Quality of Secondary Data.** The institutional researcher shall exercise reasonable care to ensure the accuracy of data gathered by other individuals, groups, offices, or agencies on which he/she relies, and shall document the sources and quality of such data.
- (f) **Reports.** The institutional researcher shall ensure that all reports of projects are complete; are clearly written in language understandable to decision-makers; fully distinguish among assumptions, speculations, findings, and judgments; employ appropriate statistics and graphics; adequately describe the limitations of the project, of the analytical method, and of the findings; and follow scholarly norms in the attribution of ideas, methods, and expression and in the sources of data.
- (g) **Documentation.** The institutional researcher shall document the sources of information and the process of analysis in each task in sufficient detail to enable a technically qualified colleague to understand what was done and to verify that the work meets all appropriate standards and expectations.

## SECTION III - CONFIDENTIALITY

- (a) **Atmosphere of Confidentiality.** The institutional researcher shall establish clear guidelines about confidentiality issues within the institutional research office.
- (b) **Storage and Security.** The institutional researcher shall organize, store, maintain, analyze, transfer and/or dispose of data under his/her control in such a manner as to reasonably prevent loss, unauthorized access, or divulgence of confidential information.
- (c) **Release of Confidential Information.** The institutional researcher shall permit no release of information about individual persons that has been guaranteed as confidential, to any person inside or outside the institution except in those circumstances in which not to do so would result in clear danger to the subject of the confidential material or to others; or unless directed by competent authority in conformity with a decree of a court of law.
- (d) **Special Standards for Data Collection.**
  - i) Balancing Privacy Risks Against Benefits. The institutional researcher shall, at the design stage of any project, thoroughly explore the degree of invasion of privacy and the risks of breach of confidentiality that are involved in the project, weigh them against potential benefits, and make therefrom a recommendation as to whether the project should be executed, and under what conditions.
  - ii) Developing Specific Guidelines. Where appropriate, the institutional researcher shall adopt a written description of any specific steps beyond the regular guidelines within the institutional research office that

are necessary during a specific assignment to ensure the protection of aspects of privacy and confidentiality that may be at specific risk.

- iii) **Disclosure of Rights.** The institutional researcher shall ensure that all subjects are informed of their right of refusal and of the degree of confidentiality with which the material that they provide will be handled, including where appropriate, the implications of any freedom of information statute. Any limits to confidentiality should be made clear.
- iv) **Appraisal of Implications.** The institutional researcher shall apprise institutional authorities of the implications and potentially binding obligations of any promise to respondents regarding confidentiality and shall obtain consent from such authorities where necessary.

#### **SECTION IV - RELATIONSHIPS TO THE COMMUNITY**

- (a) **Equal Treatment.** The institutional researcher shall promote equal access and opportunity regarding employment, services, and other activities of his/her office, without regard to race, creed, gender, national origin, disability or other accidental quality; and in analysis, demeanor, and expression shall be alert to the sensitivities of groups and individuals.
- (b) **Development of Local Codes of Ethics.** The institutional researcher should develop and promulgate a code of ethics specific to the mission and tasks of the institutional research office and should strive to cooperate with fellow practitioners in the institution in developing an institution-wide code of ethics governing activities in common. The institutional researcher should take reasonable steps to ensure that his/her employers are aware of ethical obligations as set forth in the AIR Code of Ethics and Professional Practice and of the implications of those obligations for work practice.
- (c) **Custody and Archiving.** The institutional researcher shall apply all reasonable means to prevent irrevocable loss of data and documentation during its immediately useful life; and, being aware of the role of data as institutional historic resource, shall act as an advocate for its documentation and systematic permanent archiving.
- (d) **Assessment of Institutional Research.** The institutional researcher shall develop and implement regular assessment tools for the evaluation of institutional research services.
- (e) **Institutional Confidentiality.** The institutional researcher shall maintain in strict confidence and security all information in his/her possession about the institution or any of its constituent parts which by institutional policy is considered to be confidential, and shall pursue from Section III of this Code all processes for that purpose as are appropriate.
- (f) **Integrity of Reports.** The institutional researcher shall make efforts to anticipate and prevent misunderstandings and misuse of reports within the institution by careful presentation and documentation in original reports, and by diligent follow-up contact with institutional users of those reports. If an institutional research report has been altered, intentionally or inadvertently, to the degree that its meaning has been substantially distorted, the institutional researcher shall make reasonable attempts to correct such distortions and/or to insist that institutional research authorship be removed from the product.
- (g) **External Reporting.** The institutional researcher has an obligation to the broader community to submit and/or disseminate accurate information and engage in responsible reporting when requested by legitimate authority, including federal, state, and other governmental agencies and accrediting bodies. With respect to private inquiries, such as those from guidebook editors, journalists, or individuals, the institutional researcher, should he/she respond, is bound by the same standards of accuracy, confidentiality, and professionally responsible interpretation.

Professionally responsible interpretation includes consideration of how the requesting individuals or organizations will employ the information. A sound understanding of how information will be used is fundamental to decisions regarding what type of information and supporting materials is appropriate and whether to participate with the request, if such reporting is not mandatory.

#### **SECTION V - RELATIONSHIPS TO THE CRAFT**

- (a) **Research Responsibilities.**
  - i) The institutional researcher shall seek opportunities to contribute to and participate in research on issues directly related to the craft and in other professional activities, and shall encourage and support other colleagues in such endeavors.

- ii) The institutional researcher should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work actually performed and to which he/she has contributed. The institutional researcher should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.
- (b) **Integrity of the Profession.** The institutional researcher should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.
  - i) The institutional researcher should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession. He/she should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.
  - ii) The institutional researcher should contribute to the knowledge base and share with colleagues knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics. He/she should seek to contribute to the profession's literature and to share knowledge at professional meetings and conferences.
- (c) **False Accusations.** The institutional researcher shall take care not to falsely demean the reputation or unjustly or unfairly criticize the work of other institutional researchers.
- (d) **Incompetence of Colleagues.** The institutional researcher who has direct knowledge of a colleague's incompetence should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action. If efforts to change a colleague's incompetent behavior or practice are unsuccessful, the institutional researcher has an ethical and professional obligation to use the institutional or agency guidelines for reporting such conduct.
- (e) **Unethical Conduct of Colleagues.**
  - i) The institutional researcher shall take appropriate measures to discourage, prevent, identify, and correct unethical conduct of colleagues when their behavior is unwittingly or deliberately in violation of this code or of good general practice in institutional research.
  - ii) The institutional researcher who believes that a colleague has acted unethically should seek resolution by discussing the concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such a discussion is likely to be productive.
  - iii) If efforts to change a colleague's unethical behavior or practice are unsuccessful, the institutional researcher has an ethical and professional obligation to use the institutional or agency guidelines for reporting such conduct.

*Adopted by AIR membership 12/18/92  
Updates Approved by the AIR Board 12/14/01  
Updates Approved by the AIR Board 5/2/13*