

Data-Driven Decision-Making

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Governors State
UNIVERSITY

An agenda for our discussion

- An overview of myself and Governors State University
- What is Institutional Research (or related offices) and what can it do for you?
- How can a better relationship with Institutional Research improve your work and make your President's lives better?
- What should you be asking your Institutional Research office when you get back?

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Governors State University

Here, we are.

- Medium-sized, public university
- 30 minutes south of Chicago, IL
- 4,857 students
- 52% Full-time
- 11:1 Faculty to Student Ratio
- 66% Female
- 38% African-American
- 13% Hispanic
- 62% Pell Eligible Undergraduates





What is Institutional Research?

What is Institutional Research?

AKA :

Decision Support,
Institutional
Effectiveness, Campus
Research Office

So what does Institutional Research do?
(Association for Institutional Research, 2018)



1. Identify information needs
2. Collect, analyze, interpret, and report data and information
3. Plan and evaluate
4. Serve as stewards of data and information
5. Educate information producers, users, and consumers

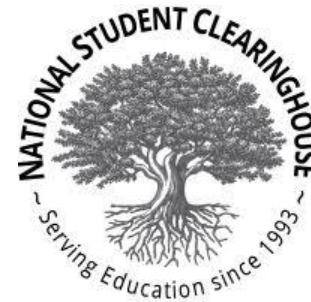
What is Institutional Research?

Why do we matter?

- Institutional Research provides your college or university with ...
 - Consistent reporting practices that you can rely on
 - A knowledgeable resource when reviewing data and reports
 - A historic and longitudinal viewpoint
 - Educators that put the college or university first and understand it inside and out



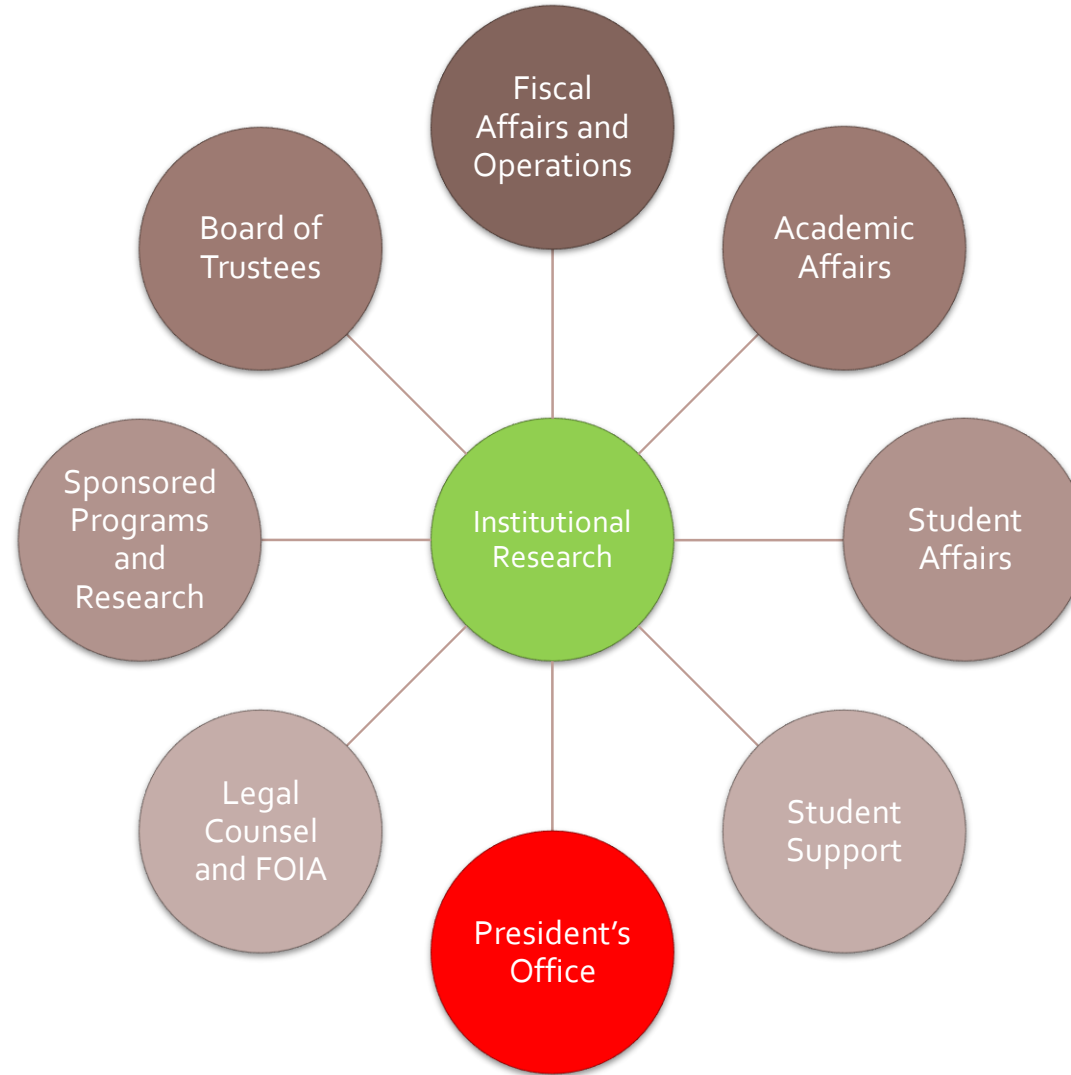
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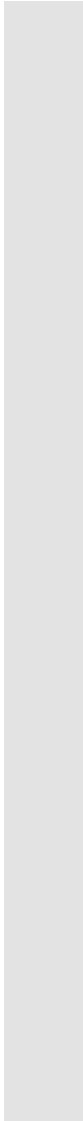



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What is Institutional Research?

How do we help? Who do we serve?





How can Institutional
Research make you
happier?

How can Institutional Research make you happier?

- Colleges and Universities are becoming more data driven and data oriented.
- This means data must be **reliable, available, and understood by stakeholders** to be effective.
- Accreditors, Legislators, Boards of Trustees, and even your faculty expect more data as quickly as possible.
- Institutional Research has to provide accurate data to the campus community in a timely manner with the right level of access and help educate everyone who reads the data so they can interpret it.

How can Institutional Research make you happier?

- The college and university presidency has changed considerably in the last three decades.
 - Broader backgrounds for Presidents that has more leaders who did not follow an academic pathway.
 - A culture of expecting data is available to back up a point, make a decision, or simplify a discussion.
 - Considerable demands on you and Institutional Research to fill those gaps and bring them up to speed on topics.

How can
Institutional
Research make
you happier?

Policy makers,
corporate leaders,
accreditors,
and others are asking much
more of higher education
and increasingly questioning
its quality, efficiency, and effectiveness.
(Association of Governing Boards, 2014)

How can Institutional Research make you happier?

Institutional Research can help you answer questions consistently and accurately.

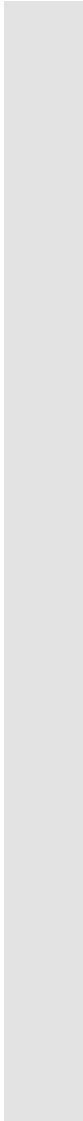
An example, “How many students does our school have?”

- What kind of students?
- Is this about financial issues, academic issues, or just the general public?
- Are you asking this question of other schools?
- Are you looking for students now or official numbers for a specific semester?
- Do you want students for the full year?
- Are we including students in zero credit or off-site courses?



So you want to be data-
driven ...

What should you ask
Institutional Research on
Monday?



What should you ask them for on Monday?

If we are going to be data-driven, then we need a comparison and benchmarking point.

- Two most common forms of comparison: Longitudinal or Benchmarking
 - Longitudinal – Looking at data over time to look for change.
 - Benchmarking – Comparing data to other institutions to understand the proportion and relationship of a value.
- If you don't have a peer list for benchmarking, ask Institutional Research.
- Three types of peers: Relational, Strategic, and Aspirational

What should you ask them for on Monday?

If we are going to be data-driven, we have to provide the key stakeholders with the information they need to make decisions, but not so much information that you overwhelm.

- You and your President need to have regular conversations about what your Board needs to know and how much knowledge they have about topics.
- Providing stakeholders an overview report on a regular basis prompts them to ask questions and can even drive the conversation.
- Two types of reports to ask about: Dashboards and Key Performance Indicators.

What should you ask them for on Monday?

If we are going to be data-driven, we have to align data to the dollars.

- There is a constant push to be data-driven AND cost-conscious in our decisions.
- Institutional Research can align your reporting to expenditures or other costs.
- Ratios like Cost per Credit Hour or Tuition Discounting can simplify analysis and conversations (and they can be benchmarked!)

What should you ask them for on Monday?

If we are going to be data-driven, we have to have a full view of our work, and that includes the lives of students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

- An incredible amount of data exists in the form of campus-based and nationally benchmarked studies. Examples include:
 - National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE)
 - HopeLab Survey of Students' Basic Needs
 - Campus climate and student satisfaction studies
 - Alumni and employer surveys
 - Best Colleges to Work For Survey
 - CAEL Adult Learner 360 Survey
- If there is a topic of interest, IR can point you to a national study or help in the creation of a campus survey.

What should you ask them for on Monday?

If we are going to be data-driven, we have to actually use data when making decisions.

- Institutional Research can help with campus-wide initiatives like addressing faculty hiring or student equity by serving as a lead or supporting the collection/analysis of data.
- Legislative, Trustee, and public questions can have their response augmented by benchmarking and qualitative data to build context.
- Labor modeling, compensation surveys, and space allocation studies can be designed or improved to be more actionable using tools like dashboards and visualizations.

What should you ask them for on Monday?

If we are going to be data-driven, we have to apply data to planning, goal-setting, and the evaluation of our progress.

- Planning: Adding data collection to a planning process or to “tell a story” beyond anecdote.
- Goal-setting: Strategic Planning reporting and monitoring.
- Evaluation: Key Performance Indicators and Strategic Benchmarking.

How to get the most out of Institutional Research?

1. **Get to know** your Institutional Research Office.
2. **Ask lots of questions** because knowing your background makes our work easier and helps us identify gaps in understanding.
3. **If you have an idea of what you want, give us a sketch.** If you don't, then clearly give latitude (and time) for a first draft.
4. **Give us time to help.** You are the busiest people on campus. We aren't too far behind.

What is the “future” of Institutional Research

- As higher education has evolved, our work has evolved too.
- Projecting enrollment, predicting market trends, educating the public and campus stakeholders, and visualizations are all expectations of IR offices now.
- The rise of cost and expense as critical factors in the public’s perception of higher education mean that Budget, Financial Affairs, and Institutional Research need to work together.
- Comfort that comes from having data also means a constant desire for more data and better education. New data tools are making data easier to manipulate and putting more power in the hands of those outside Institutional Research.

Thank You!

Questions??

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