Stages of Growth for the IR Professional

Robert Daly
Assistant Vice Chancellor, Emeritus
University of California, Riverside
I'm an institutional researcher.

Is a career possible?
“My mother doesn’t understand what I do for a living.”
...like student affairs, institutional research is a dead-end field in higher education.
Beware of a career in institutional research. It has no obvious career path beyond director."
The typical career path for an institutional researcher!

Step 1: Analyst
Step 2: Director
Step 3: Retirement
Gregg’s four types of institutional researchers

1. Accountability Technician
2. Campus Authority
3. Program Evaluator
4. Academic Researcher
DATA REPORTER Is Where An IR Career Starts

**Career Level:** Beginning position

**Context:** Context is often missing

**Communication Skills:** Sending

**Presentation Skills:** Good data reports

**Impact:** Supportive
ANALYST
An ANALYST Has Some IR Experience

**Career Level:** Mid-level position

**Context:** Often in context

**Communication Skills:** Receiving

**Presentation Skills:** Refined display and organization of data

**Impact:** Some influence, authority in a few areas
An EVALUATOR Begins To Make An Impact

**Career Level:** Mid-level + experience

**Context:** Analysis in context in evaluative areas

**Communication Skills:** Understanding

**Presentation Skills:** Creative in display of data

**Impact:** Recommendations
An AUTHORITY Understands Campus Operations

Career Level: Advanced

Context: All analysis in context

Communication Skills: Still understanding

Presentation Skills: Talented and creative in presentations

Impact: Innovative solutions + recommendations
An ADVISOR Causes Change

Career Level: Mid-level manager
Context: All work in context, internally + externally
Communication Skills: Agreements
Presentation Skills: Proactive in presenting solutions
Impact: Advice can directly cause change
VISIONARY
A VISIONARY Is At The IR CAREER PINNACLE

**Career Level:** A senior-level manager

**Context:** Always in context + political environment

**Communication Skills:** Action

**Presentation Skills:** Visionary for IR office and institution

**Impact:** Takes action, creates change
How do I get to Stage 6?
Try to learn something about everything.
Obtain Extensive Institutional Knowledge

**Academic:** Learn about campus governance and the academic departments
Obtain Extensive Institutional Knowledge

Academic:

Administrative: Learn about campus processes, about the key staff, and how budgeting works
Obtain Extensive Institutional Knowledge

**Academic:**

**Administrative:**

**Public Relations:** Understand and work with your public relations staff
Obtain Extensive Institutional Knowledge

**Academic:**

**Administrative:**

**Public Relations:**

**Your IR World:** Provide context, internally and externally, and over time
Improve Your Technical Knowledge

Data Analysis: Get your hands dirty!
Improve Your Technical Knowledge

**Data Analysis:**

**Technical Skills:** Statistics, programming, data systems, data sources, spreadsheets, writing, Web
Improve Your Technical Knowledge

Data Analysis:

Technical Skills:

Resource Mgmt:

There are no absolutes. Every decision has costs and benefits. Understand the difference between effective and efficient.
Get Lots of Training

Never Stop Learning New Stuff

1. Professional development courses
2. Summer institutes
3. Workshops
4. Drive-in workshops
5. Technical training
6. Leading from the middle academy
7. Leadership skills training

and ...
Be active in the RP Group and attend CAIR!
Be Highly Dependable

Always get the job done right and quickly
Think out of the box

Perspective
Is So Very Important!
AS FAR AS I CAN SEE, EVERYTHING LOOKS JUST FINE
Be a Great Communicator

*With Presentations*

- Communicating with groups is essential
- A presentation expert, not a PowerPoint expert
Be a Great Communicator

With Presentations

With Presenting Data

• Only present what is important
• Context is so very important
• “Take the garbage out”
Be a Great Communicator

With Presentations
With Presenting Data
With Senior Officers

• Interpersonal skills are very important
• Present and interact in committee meetings
Be a Great Communicator

**With Presentations**

**With Presenting Data**

**With Senior Officers**

**With Faculty**

- Understand the roles and priorities of faculty
- Interact with the campus and district faculty organizations
Take on Leadership Roles

Committees are a good start

Participate in decision making

Work on being a visionary
Why are leadership roles so important?
What can I do to advance my IR career?

1. Set your career goal
2. Avoid career “dead-ends”
3. Use the 6 stages
4. Get an honest evaluation & identify your weaknesses
5. Get a review of your office
6. Take lots of training
How Do I Get To Stage 6?
How Do I Get To Stage 6?

Be Invaluable!
Be Dependable!
Be a Leader!
Be the Best!
Created by Robert Daly

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of Patricia Daly
Director, Student Affairs Communications
University of California, Riverside


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