THE ROLE OF IRPE

In the California Community Colleges
IS IT IR? IE? OR MAYBE PRIE?

- How long have you been in IRPE? < 6 months? <= 2 years?
- How many of you are in a single person office?
- How many of you knew SPSS before starting your job?
- How many of you use R? Before your job?
- How many of you use a variant of SQL? Before your job?
- How many of you knew you wanted to be in IR when you grew up?
One Ground Rule

If someone uses an acronym over the next 3 days and you don’t know it, raise your hand and ask!
A Brief History of IR

• 1950’s: Descriptive
• 1960’s: Analytical & Comparative
• 1970’s: Evaluative
• 1980’s: All of the Above plus Planning
• 1990’s: plus Student Outcomes
• 2000’s: plus Institutional Effectiveness
• Now?

Adapted from “The Role of Institutional Research: From Improvement to Redesign” (Peterson, 1999)
Now

Short digression:
How many of you have killed a conversation at a party or family gathering by trying to explain Institutional Research?

• What is it you do exactly?
• Why do you do it?

(not rhetorical)
What my office does*

- Accountability
  - IPEDS
  - Scorecard
- Accreditation
  - ALO
- Assessment
  - Multiple Measures
  - Validation Studies
- Budget and Resource Allocation
- Curriculum
  - Statistical Validation
- Database Administration
- Data Visualization
- Effectiveness Measures
- Enrollment Management/Scheduling
- Equity
  - Focus Groups
  - Benchmarking
- Grants
- Marketing + Outreach
- Outcomes Assessment
- Predictive Analytics
- Planning
  - Master Planning
  - Facilities
  - Labor Market Analysis
- Policy Analysis
- Professional Development
- Program Review
- Surveys
  - Campus Climate
  - Faculty Evaluation
  - Governance

* Partial List
What should we be doing?

AIR – An Aspirational Vision for IR

“The demand for data to inform decisions in postsecondary education is greater than ever before. Colleges and universities have significantly increased capacity to collect and store data about student and institutional performance, yet few institutions have adequate capacity for converting data into information needed by decision makers. It is even more challenging for them to produce decision support on the fast timelines that decision makers often face.”

With your fingers, show how many people are in the IR office at your college:
What should we be doing?

Peterson 1999

“A more recent focus on institutional quality is in the interest in Total Quality Management (TQM) or continuous quality improvement (CQI)....Unlike more educationally focused notions of quality, this approach suggests a more comprehensive emphasis on developing an institutional culture that stresses policies and practices promoting an environment of continuous improvement; customer or client centeredness; a rational approach to decision making, using intensive measurement and benchmarking; a focus on process design; collaboration and teamwork; and individual empowerment.”
What should we be doing?

Johnstone 2009 (sitting in his office)
“There has never been a better or scarier time to be a research and planning professional in the California Community Colleges.”

Cooper 2018 (right now at Kellogg West Conference Center)
“...until now and, by the way, I said the same thing 2 years ago”

Machiavelli 1532
“And it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things, because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new.”
What about planning?

ACCJC 2014
“The primary purpose of an ACCJC–accredited institution is to foster student learning and student achievement. An effective institution ensures that its resources, programs, and services, whenever, wherever, and however delivered, support student learning and achievement. The effective institution ensures academic quality and continuous improvement through ongoing assessment of learning and achievement and pursues institutional excellence and improvement through ongoing, integrated planning and evaluation.”
The Plan

Bolman and Deal 2008

“An organization without a plan can be labeled as reactive, shortsighted, and rudderless. Planning, then, is an essential ceremony organizations conduct periodically to maintain legitimacy. A plan is a badge of honor displayed conspicuously and with pride. A strategic plan carries even higher status.”

Kelleher (undated and possibly apocryphal)

“We have a strategic plan. It’s called doing things.”
Why are you here?

Curriculum

The 2018 Summer Institute curriculum has been designed to address the following core competencies for institutional researchers and planners:

- Collect/access and analyze data appropriate to address research question(s)
- Effectively communicate research findings to diverse groups of stakeholders
- Facilitate data-informed decision-making across various college stakeholders and constituent groups
- Assess and analyze the organizational, regional, state, and national context of institutional research and planning
- Integrate professional responsibilities, professional development, and personal/professional goals
What questions do you have...

Some responses:

• What does a successful IR office look like?
• Best practices for integrating into the work of the college...
• How should we navigate campus politics...?...Do IR offices take positions in initiatives?...How do others build campus-wide trust of data...?
• How do you balance a thorough analysis with a practical analysis?
Daly’s Taxonomy

- Data Reporter
- Analyst
- Evaluator
- Authority
- Advisor
- Visionary

In order for an IR Office to be effective, able to take on these roles.
IR Visionary

• Jim Barr
  • “There are no ‘best practices,’ only best people. People make a practice shine.”
  • “Ask the right question and you’ll find the right answer.”
  • “One day a number turned into a real student, and it transformed how I looked research—at real human beings.”

Research Analyst
Contextual Awareness

Analytical/Technical Skills

Communication Skills
Power

• Position Power (Authority)
• Control of Rewards
• Coercive Power
• Information and Expertise
• Reputation
• Personal Power

• Alliances and networks
• Access and control of agendas
• Framing: control of meaning and symbols
  • Zones of Indifference

Bolman & Deal 2008
Orthogonal Delta

Enough about you...

...what about us?
Where are we?

• California Community Colleges
  • 2008 Basic Skills Initiative
  • 2012 Student Success Task Force Recommendations (Student Success Initiative)
  • 2014 Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI)
  • 2015 Strong Workforce Task Force (Strong Workforce Initiative)
  • 2017 Vision for Success
  • 2017 California Guided Pathways Project

• Little Hoover Commission
  • 2012 Serving Students, Serving California: Updating the CCC to Meet Evolving Needs

• And others
  • Education Insights Center
  • CCRC
  • MDRC
  • WestEd

• CA FWD
  • Achieving the Dream (ATD)
  • Completion by Design (CBD)
Statewide

Completion
Percentage of degree, certificate and/or transfer-seeking students starting first time in 2011-12 tracked for six years through 2016-17 who completed a degree, certificate or transfer-related outcomes.

<table>
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<th>COLLEGE PREPARED</th>
<th>UNPREPARED FOR COLLEGE</th>
<th>OVERALL</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>70.4%</strong></td>
<td><strong>41.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.2%</strong></td>
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<td>N=46,239</td>
<td>N=142,358</td>
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Gender

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Age

<table>
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<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>58.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>31.4</td>
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<tr>
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Ethnicity/Race

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<td>63.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>american indian/alaska native</td>
<td>60.3</td>
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<td>asian</td>
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<td>white</td>
<td>71.6</td>
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Progress

Bailey, Jaggars & Jenkins 2015
“Colleges have been willing, and often enthusiastic, to experiment with new practices and strategies...Yet further results from the ATD study suggest that these reforms have not changed colleges’ overall outcomes in any substantial way.”

Grubb & Gabriner 2012
“Until success rates can be improved, the promise of community college as the route to success for nontraditional students, or as the locus of equity for low-income and racial minority students, or as a pathway to American Dream cannot be realized.”
“But with the current state of knowledge and data, no one, absolutely no one, has any idea about which reasons are more important than others, and no one has the quantitative data that might enable a statistical analysis of which causes are more important.”

Phillips & Horowitz 2017
“We know that engaging in more effective data use practices has the potential to help community college educators because we have seen that happen in our work...That said, just having the data is not enough.”
What are the biggest challenges...

Selected responses:

• Presenting data in meaningful way and training staff to do technical tasks.
• IRPE playing a support function and not a leading function
• Being limited with technology available
• Sharing vision and need of IRPE with executive leaders.
• Lack of buy-in from college constituents.
• Trust of the data at the campus...
• Getting clean data!
• I was hired for my technical and analytic skills...[but] I am basically doing a simple data entry job
The Role of IRP in the CCCs

Brecht

“Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it.”
The Role of IRP in the CCCs

- Organizational Development
- Decision Support
  - Data
  - Context
- Story Telling
  - Students
  - Planning
Your Role

1. Gain as much knowledge about your college and the machinations of the college system as you can.
2. Be competent and trustworthy.
3. Become a good story teller.
4. Teach the people you work with.
5. Step on toes.
6. Turn data into Information.
7. Ask questions.
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