

COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH/ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

PLAN FOR CWRU CENTER FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

2003-2004 PLAN



Center for Institutional Research

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This report covers staffing, organizational structure, and proposed projects and activities. Later reports will provide details of the proposed analysis agenda for the Center, focusing on efforts to develop a comprehensive database for analysis of student issues. The purpose of these coming reports is to inventory major undergraduate and graduate student-related data collection efforts and move towards a coordinated effort at providing data for analyzing student related issues. The reports also outline research activities for the 2003-2004 period. Later reports will cover research activities other than those focused on student issues, including strategic planning and analysis of faculty issues.

PROPOSAL FOR A CENTER FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH (CIR)

Overview

Mission: The Center for Institutional Research at CASE provides information and research about the university's students, faculty, staff, programs, and environment to support decision-making, policy analysis, institutional assessment, and strategic planning. Based in the Office of the President and the Provost but drawing on the expertise of staff in a number of units, the center's resources are available to school-based faculty and staff as well as to central administration and campus committees. Policy and priorities for the Center will be established by the Office of the President and the Provost.

Information: The center serves as a clearinghouse for information about the university's people, programs, resources, and external environment. Center staff coordinate the university's reporting to federal and state agencies, respond to requests for information from within and outside the university, participate in inter-institutional data exchanges, and maintain a Web site for profile data about CWRU.

Research and Policy Analysis: The center uses the data it collects to provide analytical support for planning and decision-making at the university. In addition, the center conducts surveys of faculty, staff, students, and alumni to track longitudinal trends and assess institutional goals and objectives. At the request of the university's administration, center staff may also undertake special studies or develop models for planning purposes, particularly in the areas of undergraduate enrollment, admissions, and financial aid.

Outcomes Assessment: As a component of its research activity, the center provides coordination and support for academic outcomes assessment, and in particular for the activities of the Outcomes Assessment Executive Committee. As requested, center staff may also assist academic and administrative departments in identifying and designing assessment procedures and instruments, and in analyzing the data collected.

Special Projects: Staff in the Center for Institutional Research also provide coordination and support for special projects with institution-wide impact, including such activities as self-study for re-accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, preparation for reauthorization by the Ohio Board of Regents, and *ad hoc* university committees and task forces.

Data Management: The center maintains various databases and census files for longitudinal studies and statistical analyses. Center staff work with data custodians for key information systems – particularly those for admissions and student data – to help improve and ensure the integrity of data used in planning, decision-making, and reporting.

Staffing

Full-Time Staff (based in the Office of the President and the Provost)

- James W. Henson, PhD, Institutional Research Specialist
- Jean Gubbins, Institutional Research Associate

Center Associates

- Dan Dowhower, Associate Director, Undergraduate Admission
- Amy Hammett, University Registrar
- Michael Long, Institutional Research Analyst, Budget Office
- Julie Petek, PhD, Director of Degree Audit and Data Services, Office of Undergraduate Studies
- Venus Puliafico, Associate Director of Financial Aid
- Dennis Rupert, Director, Student Affairs Finance and Administration

Associates are based in other units but have responsibility for and/or expertise in the data used in the Center's activities. They may also conduct institutional research as part of their regular responsibilities. Center staff and associates will meet regularly to discuss current projects, data issues, and common interests and concerns. Associates will also serve as the primary contact when Center staff need to request data from individual units. Other academic and administrative units may be asked to participate in the Center as its activities develop.

Priorities for the Immediate Future (three to six months)

- Undertake a comprehensive review of needs for outcomes/satisfaction data, particularly at the undergraduate level, and develop a plan for coordinated administration of student surveys (either existing or new instruments) or other data collection processes.
- Working with the Vice Provost for Enrollment, develop a plan for collection and analysis of data to support enhanced undergraduate recruitment and retention efforts.
- Plan for research studies necessary to support the special emphasis areas selected for the university's self-study for re-accreditation.
- Develop a longer-range plan for the center's role and for marketing its services to the campus.

Examples of Specific Responsibilities

- Coordinate annual reporting to federal and state agencies, including the IPEDS survey series required by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Respond to requests for information about CWRU from a wide range of internal and external clients, including college guidebook publishers; compile the Common Data Set of statistics for guidebook reporting.
- Coordinate the university's participation in inter-institutional data consortia, including the HEDS (Higher Education Data Sharing) Consortium, the AAU Data Exchange, the Association of Independent Technological Universities, and any data exchange with the Ten Universities Group.
- Collect longitudinal data on peer institutions and national trends.
- Create and maintain a Web site with institutional profile data and selected research results.
- Track and analyze student survey data, including results from the CIRP freshman survey, HEDS senior and graduate student surveys, the National Survey of Student Engagement, and other local and national surveys.
- Coordinate the archiving, external reporting, and on-campus dissemination of institutional research reports and the relevant supporting data.
- Develop models to support planning and decision-making, particularly in priority areas such as undergraduate enrollment, admissions, and financial aid.
- Design and implement new institutional surveys or other processes for gathering data to support assessment of academic outcomes and institutional objectives.
- Provide a forum for regular communication and discussion among center staff and associates, as well as staff from other offices with IR-related responsibilities.