2010

Institutional Research...Annual Report, 2009-2010

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Office of Institutional Research
Executive Summary
Our mission is to gather accurate and timely data and make it available to the University of Arkansas (UA) administration and leadership team so that they can make informed decisions and work toward meeting current goals. Moreover, IR is responsible for data compilation and analysis that is essential for university compliance with annual, state, and federal reporting requirements. These data and analyses help the colleges, departments, and administrative units at the university determine the best use of their resources.

IR job responsibilities include one-time and recurring requests for information, major projects, annual surveys and reports, committee/organization participation, and relevant activities or events in support of the University. This year IR completed approximately 275 requests for information and major projects, a 16% increase over last year. Some of the projects spanned the entire year or multiple years and are discussed in greater detail in the Projects section.

Substantial projects completed during the last academic year include:

- Reconstruction of the National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity (Delaware Study)
- Selection of New Benchmark Institutions
- Development of Faculty Utilization Analysis
- Progress on Assessing the Impact of Acts 182 and 672
- Contribution to Graduation Rate Task Force
- Creation of distance education definitions and tracking mechanisms
- Implementation of AHEIS reporting requirements

In addition to completing data requests and projects, IR staff members also participate in campus committees, work with a multitude of offices to collaboratively support University goals, hold membership in regional and national organizations, and engage in professional development activities. Furthermore, due to staff turnover this past year, the office adjusted to accommodate remote employment and spent time training and mentoring our newest staff member.

Dissemination of Information
IR completes or coordinates many ad hoc requests for information every year. These requests come from a variety of offices or individuals, both internal and external, and more often than not require considerable effort to complete. Office productivity continues to become more efficient due to improved programming skills, greater knowledge of local and national databases, and enhanced tracking mechanisms. During academic year 2009-2010, IR completed 16% more requests for information and major projects than during the previous academic year.
Continual improvements to the web site have been beneficial to numerous customers by making answers to commonly asked questions readily available. Likewise, the improvements have indirectly been beneficial to other offices by freeing IR staff to focus on their needs.

Projects
IR completed numerous projects in FY2010. Some of the more prominent projects are listed below.

A. Delaware — IR made a commitment to designate the National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity a top priority. As the name suggests, The National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity (Delaware Study) is a comparative analysis of faculty teaching loads, direct instructional cost, and separately budgeted scholarly activity at the level of academic discipline across all types of colleges and universities nationwide. Participation in the study and use of the peer data provides an in-depth look at how UA faculty workloads and academic programs compare to those at similar institutions. This valuable tool is one of the few national studies that allow us to quantify faculty productivity in a meaningful context.

Perhaps the largest undertaking was the complete re-write of the program that pulls and computes the necessary data elements. It was previously a program written by University Information Technology Services (UITS), but as the programming skills of our staff advanced, we were able to take ownership of the Delaware program. IR had long wanted to bring the program in-house so that we could get a better understanding of how it works and quickly make modifications when definitions and methodologies change. Initially, we had to evaluate the UITS output to make an educated guess about how the program was working and refine the input by trial and error. We then used that as a foundation to consolidate previous UITS fixes and code written by IR as well as modify and adjust portions of the program to better fit the Delaware instructions. The process took several months and required an enormous amount of testing. Prior to submitting the data to the University of Delaware, the program was continually adjusted as we learned more about the data elements, an experience that has been helpful with other types of faculty studies.

Not only are new methods being used to pull the data, but the data are also being used in new ways. The new administration places more emphasis on Delaware data and relies on it to make decisions regarding resource allocation. Thus, IR wants to ensure that the data are as accurate as possible and that a variety of analyses help tell the whole story. For example, UA Delaware results were compared to those of different peer groups, such as institutions of the same Carnegie classification and the Southern University Group (SUG). Having data on peer institutions allows us to construct various comparisons and put our results into a more meaningful context because it’s a way of norm-referencing our processes and outcomes.

In addition to comparing UA programs to that of peers, it is beneficial to analyze internal trends by program and across campus. It allows us to identify potential faculty workload and/or instructional cost issues, serves as an internal check for consistency and accuracy of reporting, and assists administrative decision making. Thus, we created a trend document that tracks the last 10 years of UA submissions. The document contains 13 data elements and 8 graphs per
B. Selection of New Benchmark Institutions — With every new administration come new priorities. IR was charged with developing an extensive database on the previous 54 benchmark institutions. The goal was to create a narrower benchmark group that would allow the University to create more focused comparisons and analyses. For this project, IR compiled over 250 variables for each of the 54 institutions and looked at either the standard deviation of each variable or, when appropriate, created an index to rank the institutions. This approach aided the identification of institutions that were most similar to the UA and those that possess the desired characteristics. Special emphasis was given to student body attributes, curriculum, and revenue sources. The chosen benchmarks and selected indicators are outlined below (Figure 2).
C. Faculty Utilization Analysis — IR was charged with assessing the congruence between our faculty profile and national terminal degree completion data. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Completions survey data were used as the source for identifying the number of people by gender, race, and academic discipline who graduated with a terminal degree during a ten year time period. Degrees were grouped by UA department. Our faculty demographics (gender, ethnicity, terminal degree) were organized similarly to allow for comparison of the groups. The proportions of African American and female faculty by department were compared to national averages. An example of the final analysis is shown below (Table 1) for female faculty in the College of Agriculture, Food, and Life Sciences.

Table 1. Faculty Utilization Analysis of Selected Departments
D. **Act 672** — In 2005, Act 672, *An Act to Strengthen and Expand Transfer Agreements Among Colleges and Universities in Arkansas*, became law. The Act states that any student transferring from another public Arkansas institution who has taken an ACTS course (comparable courses that are offered at many public Arkansas institutions) prior to transferring to the UA cannot be required to take the equivalent ACTS course here. Beginning in 2010-11 the UA will be required to report on the frequency and reasoning behind any exceptions. In preparation for the upcoming reports, ADHE provided data for any new transfer or transfer freshman that UA reported in Fall 2009 and Spring 2010. IR created a program that utilizes the data from ADHE and identifies students that completed the same ACTS course at another Arkansas institution and at the UA.

E. **Act 182** — In 2009, Act 182, *The Roger Phillips Transfer Policy Act*, was passed. Briefly, any student transferring to the UA from an Arkansas institution with an associate’s degree (AA, AS or AAT) will not be required to take a lower level (typically 1000 and 2000 courses) course unless the course is required for their degree, and the student will be admitted with junior standing.

Based on ADHE guidelines and assessment of data from the previous year, IR developed a plan for complying with the law. Adjustments were made to the algorithm that was developed to identify the number of hours and courses that were or were not accepted for transfer, the corresponding grades, and the portion of the UA core curriculum that has been completed. Collaboration with other administrative and academic offices was integral during the development of the plan and programs.

Over the past year, we modified the compliance plan and programs to reflect new directives from ADHE and ongoing conversations regarding definitions and approaches. We’ve worked with the colleges and have automated the process as much as possible. As new scenarios develop, we will continue to adjust the program and develop new policies as well as rely on the Colleges for ongoing guidance.

F. **Graduation Rate Task Force (GRTF)** — IR provided the supportive data necessary for the GRTF committee to identify UA’s strengths and weaknesses regarding retention and graduation of students and to develop recommendations for improving the six-year graduation rate. Trend and background information fostered discussion and laid the foundation for the final report. Much of the compiled data came from existing studies including our retention and graduation study, current benchmark analyses, and national data sources regularly used by the office. Additionally, IR team members spoke to the group about the details of the retention study and facilitated a discussion of the process used to select the new benchmark institutions. Figure 3 illustrates the recent plateau of graduation rates at the University and represents an example of IR’s contribution to the task force.
G. Distance Education — Over the past eighteen months, IR has been investigating distance education definitions, federal and regional policies, potential tracking mechanisms, and best practices. In an effort to prepare for reporting changes and adapt to campus needs, we have been collaborating with the Registrar’s office, Global Campus, and college data representatives to develop a protocol for capturing various types of distance education in the student information system. However, we first had to research distance education so that we could understand what we were trying to capture, determine the implications of potential changes, and forecast implementation problems.

So far, the team has analyzed course type and method trends for the last three years, developed definitions of course methods, learned more about the capabilities and limitations of the campus student information system, compared state course method codes to UA student information system components, outlined the distance education programs and sites approved by Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), noted the inconsistencies between agencies, and identified the gaps in campus distance education approval documentation. The distance education flowchart created by IR (Figure 4) for the Distance Education and Course Components working group was used initially to guide discussion and research relevant issues. It is currently being modified to reflect recent HLC policy changes and will incorporate different types of delivery methods that are being developed or implemented on campus, in accordance with Academic Policy 1622.20.
H. Arkansas Higher Education Information System (AHEIS) — Though numerous changes to state reporting are made annually, a few substantial projects deserve mention. The UA student id field was incorporated into the UA AHEIS SQL database and was populated for every student who has matriculated since 1992. This addition allows IR and other offices to more easily query data from the AHEIS tables and adds to data security by reducing the frequency of social security number use. IR worked with the Registrar’s office to create a policy for processing administrative changes to the snapshot after the census pull. Implementation of the policy has increased the consistency and accuracy of the census day data. Additionally, IR staff spent a considerable amount of time testing the campus student information system patch/fixes and bundles by running the AHEIS process in the student information system test environment. As a result, numerous changes and corrections to the AHEIS process were made, the most notable being new IPEDS race/ethnicity categories.

I. Compliance with Academic Policy Series 1620: Academic Program Review — IR provided information to departments in support of their review of academic programs and in accordance with Academic Policy 1620.10. This year, IR was asked to provide review data for twelve departments and forty-two degree programs. The seven years of information that IR...
compiled can be divided into student, class, and faculty data. All data were at the department level, except for student enrollment and degrees awarded, which provided a more detailed look at individual programs. In all, IR provided data on student enrollment, degrees awarded, faculty salaries with corresponding benchmark information, faculty numbers, faculty instructional workload—both an aggregate report as well as an individual listing (Instructor Load report) of all courses taught by every instructor within a given department, and the average class size for each department. All of the data were broken out by level or rank as well as gender and ethnicity when appropriate. When possible, data were reported using national definitions so as to facilitate benchmarking with other institutions.

**Committees and Other Special or Key Activities**

IR staff members served on the following committees and attended the following conferences:

- ADHE Student Information System Advisory Group
- Academic Leadership Development Program, Southeastern Conference Academic Consortium
- Arkansas Institutional Research Organization (AIRO)
- Association for Institutional Research (AIR)
- Enrollment Services Data and Research Support Group
- Graduation Rate Task Force
- ISIS Leads
- ISIS Steering Committee
- Higher Education Users Group (HEUG) Conference
- Southern Association for Institutional Research (SAIR)
- Southern University Group (SUG)
- Third Level Admissions Committee

**Reports Completed Annually**

Each of the reports completed annually by IR staff is a time-consuming and detail-oriented task, but each one provides valuable information for the Chancellor, departments, or agencies requesting it. Below is a list of reports that IR completes, assists other departments in completing, or coordinates.

- AAUP Faculty Salary Survey
- Accrediting Agencies Update
- ACT Profile
- Benchmark updates
- College and University Professional Association (CUPA)
- Common Data Set/U.S. News and World Report and assorted College Guides
- College Tool Kit
- Consortium for Student Retention data Exchange (CSRDE)
  - Retention of First-time, Full-time Freshmen
  - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics majors
  - Transfer Student Retention
- Degree Counts
- Enrollment by Majors
- Enrollment by AR County and State
Faculty Turnover Report
Federal Reports – National Center for Educational Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System
  ▪ 12-Month Enrollment
  ▪ Completions
  ▪ Fall Enrollment
  ▪ Finance
  ▪ Financial Aid
  ▪ Graduation Rate Survey 200 & Supplemental
  ▪ Human Resources
  ▪ Institutional Characteristics
Financial Highlights data updates
Class Seat Availability
Instructor Load Report
Higher Learning Commission Annual Institutional Data Update
Historically Difficult Classes
National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity (Delaware)
NCAA
  ▪ Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act
Small Class Reports
SSCH by College/School
SSCH Tuition Model
State Reports – (Completed or coordinated)
  ▪ AHEIS Athletic File (annual)
  ▪ AHEIS End of Term Files (4 per year)
  ▪ AHEIS Graduated Student File (2 per year)
  ▪ AHEIS Term Course File (4 per year)
  ▪ AHEIS Term Instructor File (4 per year)
  ▪ AHEIS Term Registration File (4 per year)
  ▪ AHEIS Term Student File (4 per year)
  ▪ AHEIS Workforce File (4 per year)
  ▪ EEO6 – Higher education faculty/employee information
  ▪ OCR A5 – Composition of governing boards for higher education
  ▪ OCR B1 – Applications, acceptances and enrollments
  ▪ OCR B3 – Financial assistance to students
  ▪ Students/Spouses Called to Military Service
Southern University Group
  ▪ Administrative Salary Survey
  ▪ Alabama Tuition Survey
  ▪ Auburn Department Chair Salary Survey
  ▪ OSU Faculty Salary Survey
  ▪ WVU SUG/SREB Summary Survey
TELE Model
Tuition & Fees Survey (multiple surveys for different organizations)
University of Arkansas Graduation and Retention Study
University Highlights for the UA System
○ Voluntary System of Accountability

If you would like more information about Institutional Research, please visit our web site: http://oir.uark.edu/home/