

WHERE DOES INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH FIT IN?



Jane Hendry and Ashraf Conrad
University of Cape Town
June 2008

Overview

- Definitions
- Reasons for doing IR
- Techniques
- Dimensions of Organisational Intelligence
- Models of Organisational structure
- Some SA Examples
- Where Does IR Fit In?

What is Institutional Research

- Collects and analyses data concerning students, staff and educational facilities in order to promote institutional effectiveness – provides information for planning, policy formulation and decision making
- Zimmer (1995)...a range of activities involving the collection, analysis and interpretation of information descriptive of an institution and its activities, including its students, staff programmes, management and operations...assist institutional leaders (in both academic and administrative domains) through informing their planning and decision making.
- Supports the decision-making role by serving as an info resource centre for planning, meeting special needs of administrators and committees, conducting analytical studies and preparing reports to government and other external agencies

Why do IR?

- Description/state of institution
- Systemic/institutional comparisons
- Planning (overall, academic, enrolment, budgeting and resource allocation)
- Policy analysis and issues identification
- Evaluation, monitoring and review
- QA, continuous improvement
- Decision support
- Investigating and understanding problem areas

Typical IR Techniques

- Data conversion to management info (MIS)
- Trend analysis; performance against plans or targets
- Surveys: design, sampling, administration, results interpretation
- Statistical analyses – regression, extrapolation
- Decision support modelling
- Enrolment projection/planning

Organisational Intelligence required for IR (Terenzeni, 1999)

- Technical/analytical intelligence
- Issues intelligence
- Contextual intelligence

Model of organisational structure (Mintzberg, 1983)

1. **Strategic apex** (VC/DVCs, Senate and Council): global view and ensures alignment with mission – accepted corporate plan
2. **Operating core** (academic staff): core functions of teaching, research and SR
3. **Middle Line** (DVCs, Deans and Executive Directors of support departments) – connects 1. and 2.
4. **Technostructure**: Units concerned with change, env scanning and work performance
5. **Support service units**: support activities, support core business

Taylor (1989: IR supports and enhances decision-making. Mostly a support service unit under the middle line

Various locations of IR in SA

- Under Rector/Vice Chancellor
- Within Academic Planning, or Planning more broadly (Planning and QA)
- Within Student Services
- With HEMIS co-ordination or not
- Within Finance
- Within ICTS (CIO role?) – but differentiate between data and systems administration and information

2006 Benchmarking Summary: University of Pretoria

- Academic Planning Administration:
 - deals with submissions of reports to external agencies
- Academic Planning:
 - deals with alignment of resourcing and plans to vision and mission
- Quality Assurance:
 - includes document management, promotion, provision of data for QA purposes, communication and liaison internally and externally, maintenance of records and systems improvement. It does NOT include reviews
- BIRAP:
 - includes HEMIS (2), systems developers (2), programmer analysts (2) IT support, institutional research, strategic planning. IT staff work with the production database that supports the e-factbook.
- Audit and Advisory Services

2006 Benchmarking Summary: Wits University

- Strategic Planning:
 - covers institutional research, management information, and HEMIS (2)
- Academic Planning:
 - covers checking of compliance and academic planning at all levels and overseeing of reviews but not managing of reviews
- Reports to the VC

2006 Benchmarking Summary: University of Stellenbosch

- Institutional Planning
 - HEMIS, Institutional Planning, Institutional Research, and Management Information. They construct differential performance contracts for operating units aligned to the institutional performance indicators.
- Quality Assurance and Academic Planning
- Institutional Planning and Enrolment Planning reports to ED Finance

2006 Benchmarking Summary: University of the Free State

- Regional Cooperation
- HEMIS
- Quality Assurance:
 - includes liaison with the internal and external bodies
- Programme Planning and Development
 - includes reviews and programme approvals
- Institutional Research and Management Information
- Registrar of Planning
- Reports to Vice-Rector: Academic Planning

2006 Benchmarking Summary: University of KwaZulu Natal

- Planning
- Management Information
 - includes HEMIS; Academic Structure; Auditing and Data quality and Client IT support
- Quality promotion and Assurance
 - includes: student evaluation; self-evaluation; institutional research ; programme approval ; review coordination; Director; Programme management and coordination. They provide support for teaching and learning through the use of educational technology and supporting strategic interventions to improve teaching and learning.
- IPD reports to DVC with responsibility for Planning

2006 Benchmarking Summary: University of Cape Town

- Academic Planning
 - involved with Academic Processes which include Programme Planning and Curriculum matters
- Quality Assurance
 - responsible for the management of academic review processes within UCT's teaching and learning context and the continuous impact of UCT's Quality Management System
- Institutional Information Unit
 - provides management information to, and conducts institutional research for various committees and stakeholders within the university and supports the Academic Reviews. The unit produces annual reports such as the Faculties Report, Institutional Fact Book, First Destinations Report, etc. In addition, the IIU deals with ad hoc queries from a variety of sources within the university environment as well as outside parties.
- IPD reports to DVC with responsibility for Planning

Where therefore to locate IR? (1)

- In line with stated IR objectives
- Role dependence (roles must be clearly specified)
- Internal vs external balance its functions
 - External predominance: “Strategic Apex”
 - Internal focus: “Middle Line”
- “Protected from executive motives for power and control” – objectivity?
- Sensitivity to and awareness of issues impacting on core business (teaching, research, SR)
- Implications for resourcing

Where therefore to locate IR? (2)

- Degree of integration wrt policy formulation
- Core Business of Institution
 - Teaching and Learning vs Data flow
- Effectiveness
 - Clarity of purpose
 - Data integrity
 - Communication
 - Analysis (interpretation, implications and recommendations)
 - Accessibility
 - Usefulness
 - Proactive
 - Management Responsibility