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Designing Research for Organizational Change: From Analysis to Advantage

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The institutional research function in community colleges today is a vestige of the linear markets community colleges operated in yesterday. The market has changed dramatically and so, too, must colleges in their approach to research. Institutions organizing research solely around conventional competitive strategies and performance measures will lose market share. A strategically guided model for research changes the basis for assessment from institutional performance in a commoditized market to institutional advantage in a turbulent market. In so doing, it focuses on how research data can be generated and used to achieve an advantage by differentiating one institution from others in competition for students and resources. Researchers will find the transition to this model difficult. Savvy practitioners will adopt parts of the model that meet current and compelling needs and defer decisions about other parts until conditions warrant and support their use.

Using Unemployment Wage Data to Assess Educational and Economic Outcomes in a Multicultural Inner-City Community College

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It is often necessary for educational institutions to produce documentation about the value of their programs. Traditional methods of accomplishing this are fraught with limitations that hamper reliability, validity, and external significance. This study uses Unemployment Insurance/Social Security Insurance (UI/SSI) wage data to examine the effects of participation in educational programs at a multicultural, inner city community college. The economic outcomes of course, certificate, and associate degree completion programs were examined for males, females, age groups under 25, 25-35, and over 35, students from economically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged backgrounds, and students with a vocational/technical area of concentration. Results showed impressive gains in earnings two years after leaving college compared to earnings while in the last year of college for all groups who had completed an associate degree or a certificate, and unexpectedly high earnings gains for students who had completed just one or more courses. The most impressive earnings gains were for economically disadvantaged students who completed associate degrees (257.2%) and for associate degree completers with a vocational/technical area of concentration (200.4%).

Assessing Transfer and First-Time Freshmen Student Performance

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Comparing the academic performance of transfer students and first-time freshmen college students is difficult due to differences between the two groups. Using returning students rather than new students and controlling for the number of credits earned results in groups of transfers and first-time freshmen that are more homogenous than the traditional cohorts of new transfers and first-time freshmen, allowing for more appropriate performance comparisons. The data presented here support the hypothesis that transfer students perform worse than native students at this institution on four academic outcomes. Less certain is the magnitude of the difference. By focusing on returning students rather than new students, the effect of integration difficulties on new transfers and new natives is minimized. Controlling for credits earned puts transfers and natives on an “equal” footing, which is essential given the large numbers of credits that transfers bring with them. Even with these factors and others taken into account, native students still out perform transfers.

Parents and the College Choice Process for Community College Students

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This article examines parent expectations from a community college and parental roles in the college choice process of community college-bound students. Parents of recent high school graduates (class of 2000) enrolled in the local community college in the fall of 2000 were surveyed. One-third of surveyed parents (225 out of 674) returned questionnaires. Overall, parents had high academic goals for their children, wanted the college to prepare their children for bachelor's degrees, and overestimated their children's academic abilities. They engaged in a number of college choice activities, but relied primarily on college publications and college and high school personnel to provide information. Parent socioeconomic status was not associated with parent expectations or roles, but parent perceptions of their children's academic skills were associated with students' academic achievements, timing of parent involvement in the choice process, and factors prompting the selection of the community college. Implications for improved communications with parents of prospective community college students are discussed. This work was funded in part through a grant from the Council of North Central Two Year Colleges.

Seeking Stakeholder Views: Iowa Community Colleges @ 2000

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[Gene Gardner](#), Iowa Association of Community College Trustees

The Iowa Association of Community College Trustees embarked upon a strategic process to develop a state-of-the-state report on Iowa community colleges and to assist in developing a plan for their future. The research process involved the use of a stakeholder committee and a series of participant hearings with key constituents. The data were collected and verified by the researchers. Themes that emerged from the hearings were: access is important and must be maintained; workforce preparation is important and must be maintained; quality is essential; and identification of best practices is crucial. These data served as the basis for planning processes and policy making for the community college presidents and trustees and provided information for the community colleges to tell their story to various constituencies.

The IR-EP: A Powerful Model for Self-Assessment and Planning in Institutional Research

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This article describes an institutional research office's establishment of an outcomes-oriented self-assessment model rooted in the college's mission and goals. The framework enables Institutional Research departments to evaluate their effectiveness, and more importantly, to use the results of self-assessment to plan future activities, thereby ensuring effective customer service and continuous improvement. The model was successfully implemented and continues to be used by the Office of Institutional Research at Butler County Community College to measure goal accomplishment and to guide planning within the department and at the institutional level. This article highlights why and how the framework was developed and how the author utilized the model to improve the information and services provided by Institutional Research.

A Comparative Study of Community College Faculty Leadership Styles

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This study examines leadership styles of community college faculty at the South Carolina Technical Colleges and faculty at the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario, Canada. The "Teaching as Leading Inventory," developed by Baker (1989) was administered to the two groups. Survey results indicated that the faculty in the South Carolina Technical Colleges had more years of teaching experience, on average, and were more task-oriented, whereas the faculty in Canada were, on average, more others-oriented and action-oriented. No gender differences were revealed in action vs. reflective orientation. However, female faculty members were more others-oriented than their male colleagues. Based on the finding that the greater the number of years of teaching experience the more a faculty member is others-oriented, and thus, more action-oriented, it can be implied that time and experience are critical in effective teaching of

community college students.