Mission

The mission of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning is to collect, preserve, interpret, analyze, and disseminate information regarding the characteristics, activities, operations, and policies of Portland State University. This information is used by members of the University community for:

1. Mandated reporting requirements
2. Administrative decision-making and policy formulation
3. Academic assessment and accreditation
4. Institutional planning
5. Release to the general public.

The office serves as a central repository for statistical information regarding the University and responds to requests for information from clients within and outside the University. OIRP conducts research on special topics, and complies with state and federally-mandated reporting requirements.

Vision

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning will:

- Provide consistent, accurate and timely information.
- Provide a high level of customer service.
- Analyze and interpret, not just report.
- Serve as a sense-maker and consultant of choice.
- Conduct research that looks forward to anticipate needs.
- Collaborate with others on campus and in other higher education organizations.
- Know and understand the University.
- Be visible to the campus community.
- Stay current with technology.
- Stay current with issues in IR and higher education, generally.
- Pursue professional development opportunities for its members.

Narrative

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning will provide consistent, accurate and timely information to members of the campus community and external audiences; analyze and interpret information in support of institutional priorities; develop technological solutions that respond to information needs; serve as a “sense maker” and consultant of choice to Portland State leaders and
decision makers; conduct special studies and research projects that reflect current or historical conditions and look forward to anticipate needs; develop and maintain strong collaborative relationships with administrators, faculty, staff and students at the University and with other higher education institutions and organizations; be visible to the campus and interact with colleagues across the institution in order to develop and maintain a deep knowledge of the University, its operations and priorities; stay current with technology and with trends and issues in IR and higher education, generally; and, pursue opportunities that lead to the personal and professional growth of its staff and faculty.

Supporting literature

Matier, Sidle, and Hurst (1995):

“Because of a fundamental shift in the way decisions are being made in colleges and universities, institutional researchers can no longer be content to merely collect, analyze, and disseminate information to support decision making. In addition, institutional researchers must become information architects, change agents, and consultants of choice within their respective institutions.”

Hutchings and Schulman (1999):

“Traditionally, these offices have been treated as a kind of company audit, sitting outside the organization’s inner workings but keeping track of its ‘effectiveness’ as witnessed by graduation rates, student credit hours, faculty workloads, and so forth. Imagine, instead, a kind of institutional research that asks much tougher, more central questions…If we reconceived ‘institutional research’ to be about such questions, in the service of its faculties, led by faculty members, then the scholarship of teaching would not be some newly conceived arena of work, or a new route to tenure, but a characteristic of the institution that took learning seriously.”

The Advisory Board (2009):

Five characteristics of effective institutional research:
1. Interpreting data, not just reporting it.
2. Building strong relationships
3. Understanding the University
4. Predicting key issues
5. Cultivating staff with technology skills