BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS

Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Offices

In the following report, Hanover Research presents the results of a literature review and benchmarking analysis examining the current landscape of the Integrated Institutional Effectiveness (IIE) model and Offices of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) as compared to typical Institutional Research (IR) offices and models.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on an analysis of existing literature and benchmarked Offices of Institutional Effectiveness Hanover recommends:

Merge Offices of Institutional Research and the Office of Assessment under IE and consider some staff expansion.

Reviewed IE offices incorporate IR functions, and some include OIR as a sub-unit. Best practices recommend a minimum of three or four total staff, and reviewed offices have a minimum of three and average of six listed staff members. Since IIE integrates additional accreditation and assessment functions with IR, personnel from the Office of Assessment and other divisions employed specifically for these functions should be transferred to, or shared with, this office.

The IE office should report to either the Provost or the President and the head of IE should be placed in the executive cabinet.

As with IR offices, IE offices frequently report to the Provost/chief academic officer, and many office leaders say reporting directly to the President/CEO would be ideal. Recommendations for IIE state that cabinet-level leadership improves the authority of the office to establish and maintain improvement efforts and facilitates the integration of IE with strategic planning.

KEY FINDINGS

Integrated Institutional Effectiveness (IIE) models and associated offices incorporate institutional research in addition to assessment and accreditation functions.

Institutional research offices frequently handle data collection and reporting (both external and internal). IE offices often include institutional research as a function or sub-unit, as well as program and academic assessment and accreditation management. In some cases, IE offices may also incorporate strategic planning.

IE offices are often led by a director or cabinet-level administrator, report to academic affairs, and have an average of six staff.

Surveys of IR offices show an average of three staff, but benchmarked IE offices report an average of six—likely due to the expanded functions. Both IR and IE offices typically report to academic affairs, and reviewed IE leaders are often at the Assistant/Associate Vice President/Vice Provost level. Recommendations for both IR and IE offices suggest a cabinet-level leader in order to ensure better integration into strategic planning and greater authority to lead improvement efforts.

IE offices/departments offer benefits to coordination, consistency, efficiency, and accountability but may be challenging to implement effectively and staff.

In interviews, presidents of institutions that adopted the IIE model describe benefits including more efficient and effective decision making, improved accountability, greater ability to set priorities, and better integration across related functions and with leadership. There is less consensus on challenges, though many note difficulty with implementation. Specifically, it may be challenging to hire staff with the necessary broad skill sets to support this approach and then bring together theretofore siloed functions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To assist institutions in organizing their IR, BI, accreditation and assessment staff, Hanover Research conducted a literature review and benchmarking study to determine how other universities implement Integrated Institutional Effectiveness (IIE) models with a focus on organization and staffing of Offices of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). The analysis aims to provide insight into the following research questions:

What responsibilities fall within the typical IE portfolio? How does this overlap with- and differ from- the domain of a traditional IR Office?

How are IE offices commonly organized and staffed?

What are the advantages of moving from an IR model to an IE model? What are the drawbacks?

METHODOLOGY

To select the comparison institutions for this analysis, Hanover searched for institutions with an Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), at small and medium-sized institutions; however, some larger institutions are included due to the availability of information and for comparison to smaller institutions.

The following analysis is based on a review of published literature and information drawn from institutional websites as well as publicly available data sources, such as the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

BENCHMARKED INSTITUTIONS

Institution	State	2019 Enrollment	FTE Staff:Student Ratio
Augusta University	GA	9,278	1.7:1
Dominican University	IL	3,622	7.2:1
John Carroll University	OH	4,018	6.6:1
Loyola University Chicago	IL	19,072	6.9:1
Marymount University	VA	4,065	8.0:1
Pepperdine University	CA	9,380	5.5:1
Providence University	RI	5,295	5.7:1
Rice University	TX	7,362	2.3:1
Siena College	NY	3,414	4.8:1
Tidewater Community College	VA	32,982	27.8:1
University of Richmond	VA	4,740	2.8:1

Source: IPEDS
Note: Staff-to-student ratio based on 2018 enrollment and staff, as IPEDS has not posted 2019 FTE staffing data

Institutional Effectiveness is commonly viewed as wider in scope than Institutional Research.

Although institutional research originally constituted a broad scope, IR offices typically focus on reporting and data provision to support institutional goals and accountability. As of 2015, Offices of Institutional Research at 2- and 4-year institutions primarily handled external reporting and development of internal factbooks. By contrast, Institutional Effectiveness is conceptualized as "an umbrella term covering related terms such as evaluation, institutional research, assessment, or outcomes analysis."

A review of IR and IE offices indicates that differences in mission statements primarily relate to "the role IE plays in planning, assessment, academic and administrative program review, and accreditation activities. IE personnel coordinate or develop these processes and/or monitor progress, assist faculty and staff in developing goals and objectives and evaluating progress, provide training, and document improvement."

Institutional effectiveness offices have proliferated across universities and colleges since the mid-90s.

The move toward Integrated Institutional Effectiveness (IIE) models has been driven by a convergence of several trends: changes to higher education funding processes and accountability, the availability of broader data and planning platforms/systems, and increased competition in the university space. The adoption of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) units is significant, up from 43 institutions listing such an office in 1995 to 501 in 2015.
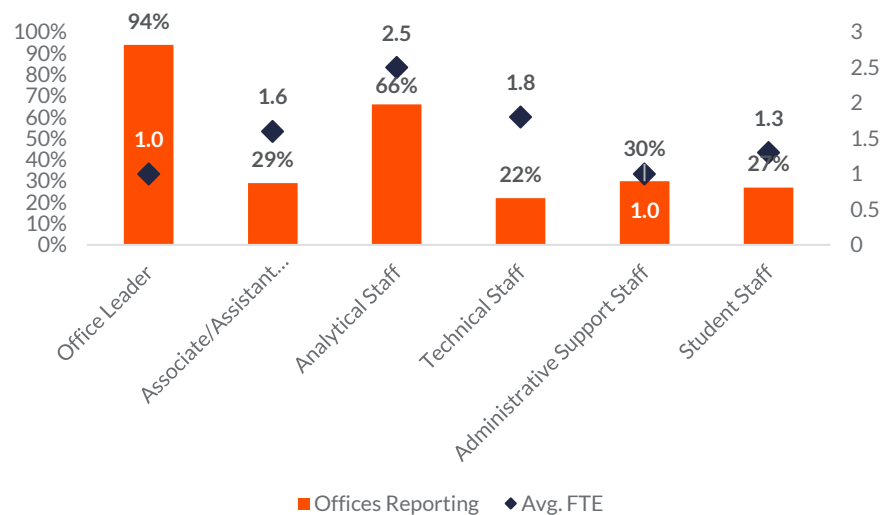
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI IE VS IR

University of Southern Mississippi (USM) maintains separate offices for Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) and Institutional Research (OIR).

- **Institutional Effectiveness** is "responsible for managing all administrative duties related to the University's external accreditation...[it] also works very closely with faculty on the annual assessment of all program-level and general education curriculum, as well as with various University councils and committees responsible for the smooth academic operation of the Institution"

- **Institutional Research** "collects, archives, and maintains institutional data for the purpose of analyzing, distributing and presenting summary information...to support the decision-making process and the planning needs of all academic and administrative units...[and] is responsible for reporting official data to the Board of Trustees for Institutions of Higher Learning for the State of Mississippi (IHL) and the Federal Government (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System - IPEDS)."
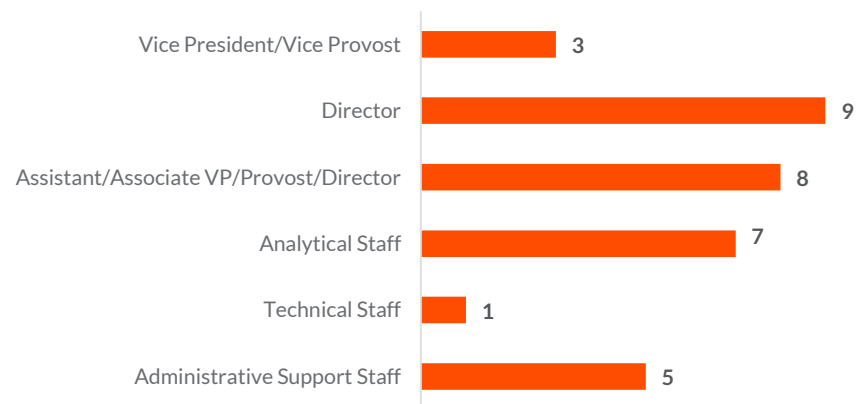
The OIE and OIR are separate units organized under the Senior Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, who in turn reports to the Provost and Senior Vide President for Academic Affairs. Neither office's site links directly to the other; as such, it appears that USM considers IR to be distinct, yet related to IE.

STAFFING

AVERAGE STAFF ROLES AND FTE IN IR OFFICES

Offices Reporting values: Office Leader 94%, Associate/Assistant 29%, Analytical Staff 66%, Technical Staff 22%, Administrative Support Staff 30%, Student Staff 27%

Avg. FTE values: Office Leader 1.0, Associate/Assistant 1.6, Analytical Staff 2.5, Technical Staff 1.8, Administrative Support Staff 1.0, Student Staff 1.3

■ Offices Reporting ◆ Avg. FTE

Source: AIR
Survey includes more than 1,000 public (2-year and 4-year) and private nonprofit institutions.

AVERAGE STAFF IN BENCHMARKED IE OFFICES

Role	Count
Vice President/Vice Provost	3
Director	9
Assistant/Associate VP/Provost/Director	8
Analytical Staff	7
Technical Staff	1
Administrative Support Staff	5

ANALYSIS

A staff of at least three people is recommended for IR/IE offices, with benchmarked IE offices reporting an average of six staff.

According to a survey of over 1,500 IR office leaders at two- and four-year institutions, the average office employed between two and five FTE staff in 2015. However, staffing may differ between public and private institutions (likely based on average size); Hwang reports average staff for IR/IE offices at public institutions as 3.80 compared to 1.98 at private institutions. AHEE recommends a minimum of three to four full-time staff regardless of institutional size, but that "IIE staff members should at minimum include the number of persons (full- and part-time) historically involved in IR, assessment, planning, accreditation, and unit review."

Reviewed IE offices report an average of six staff, with offices ranging from three to 15 listed staff. Director positions are common for leadership, and offices may have multiple directors; several offices report Vice President/Vice Provost positions, as well as Associate/Assistant VPs.
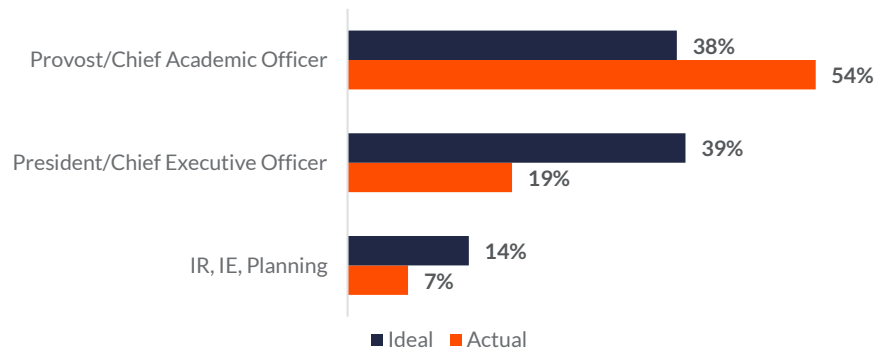
IE offices should ideally be led by a cabinet-level administrator.

Knight draws from trends in enrollment management and IT to suggest a cabinet-level chief institutional effectiveness leader. Interviews with Vice Presidents of institutional effectiveness (or equivalent administrators) indicate that such a position provided a greater understanding of leadership priorities and issues, more effective communication with campus leaders, greater authority and responsiveness to requests, and more participation/immersion in campus politics.

This recommendation is not unique to broader IE offices. AIR's *Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research* recommends establishment of a Chief Information Research Officer (CIRO) equivalent to other executives such as the Chief Information Officer (CIO).

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH OFFICE LOCATIONS AND REPORTING STRUCTURES

Provost/Chief Academic Officer — Ideal 38%, Actual 54%

President/Chief Executive Officer — Ideal 39%, Actual 19%

IR, IE, Planning — Ideal 14%, Actual 7%

■ Ideal ■ Actual

Source: AIR
Survey includes more than 1,000 public (2-year and 4-year) and private nonprofit institutions.

PARENT OFFICES AND REPORTING STRUCTURES FOR BENCHMARKED IE OFFICES

8 of 11 benchmarked offices operate as part of, or report to, Academic Affairs offices or Provosts.

3 of 11 benchmarked offices reside within, or report through, alternate structures (e.g., directly to the President, or the VP of Planning and Policy)

ANALYSIS

IE offices often contain IR offices as a component or list IR as a responsibility.

Leimer indicates that the relationship between IR and IE may differ based on the institution's conception, with IR being a department or activity or being a completely distinct and equivalent unit. All 11 IE offices benchmarked by Hanover for this report either contained an IR office or listed Institutional Research/Reporting as one of its responsibilities. In some cases—such as John Carroll University or Providence College—the IE office may have a director or associate director of IR as part of its staff.

Like IR offices, IE offices often are housed within Academic Affairs and/or report to the Academic Affairs Provost.

According to AIR's national survey, in 2018 more than half of IR offices report to the Provost or Chief Academic Officer while 20 percent report to the President or Chief Executive Officer; however, the share reporting to the President or CEO increased slightly since 2015 (from 16 percent to approximately 20 percent). When asked about ideal reporting structures, roughly even percentages (almost 40 percent each) expressed preferences for reporting to the Provost/CAO versus the President/CEO. As such, a greater shift toward direct reporting to the President/CEO could be beneficial.

All institutions reviewed by Hanover in this report maintain a distinct Office of Institutional Effectiveness. These offices primarily have organizational charts that place them as reporting to Academic Affairs Provosts and may be defined on the website as an office within Academic Affairs departments/offices.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY/FUNCTIONS

SERVICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REPORTED BY BENCHMARKED IE OFFICES

Institutional Research

Data Stewardship

Accreditation

Major OIE Functions

Strategic/Institutional Planning

Program Assessment

Student Learning Assessment

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY OIE

Pepperdine University's Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) incorporates Institutional Research alongside other aspects of evaluation and assessment. The About OIE page describes the function and mission of IE and IR as:

- **Institutional Effectiveness:** "supports the University's mission, values, and core commitments by providing institutional research and leadership in the areas of accreditation and assessment...[its] overarching goal...is to ensure educational quality and data integrity with a focus on student success and student learning"

- **Institutional Research:** "a process of collecting, analyzing, and reporting on information about the institution in order to make data informed decisions and meet federal and accrediting mandates"
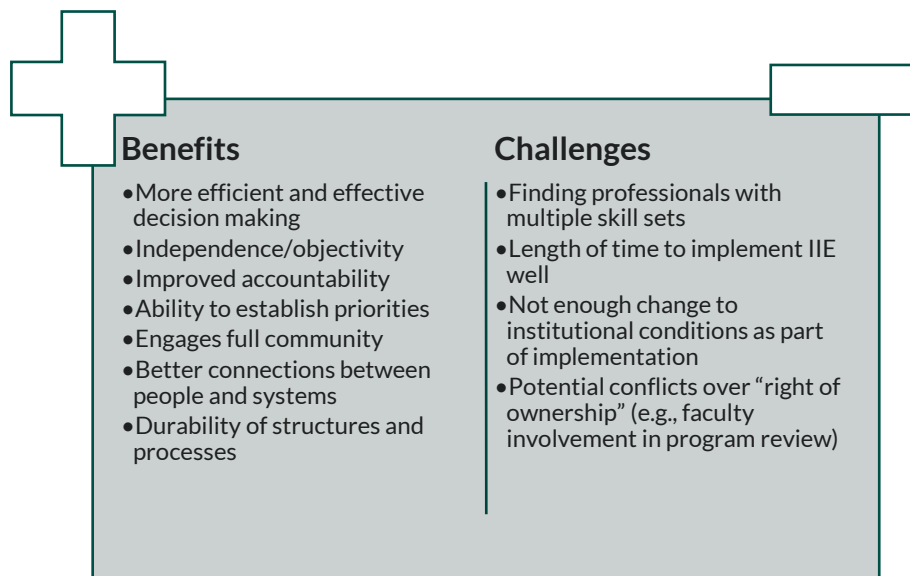
OIE at Pepperdine also includes educational research, which "involves examining, investigating, and disseminating research findings as related to student success, institutional learning outcomes, and higher education constructs."

Pepperdine maintains a separate Business Intelligence Department that "brings together data from internal and external sources to help make strategic decisions across various levels of the University." OIE notes that BI's University Analytics "provides data from internal and external sources, including access to OIE- and Admission-related dashboards."

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES/RISKS FOR THE IIE MODEL

Interviews with presidents of institutions with IE offices cite benefits of the IIE model that include "improved effectiveness and efficiency of decision making; improved institutional accountability and ability to establish priorities...durability of decision support processes; better connection of people and systems; heightened ability to focus on student success; and the potential to influence policy." Challenges cited typically relate to poor implementation of the IIE model, but there may be risks in hiring necessary staff and the length of time to implement the model.

Benefits
- More efficient and effective decision making
- Independence/objectivity
- Improved accountability
- Ability to establish priorities
- Engages full community
- Better connections between people and systems
- Durability of structures and processes

Challenges
- Finding professionals with multiple skill sets
- Length of time to implement IIE well
- Not enough change to institutional conditions as part of implementation
- Potential conflicts over "right of ownership" (e.g., faculty involvement in program review)

Source: Bartolini et al.

OPTIONS FOR TRANSITIONING BETWEEN IR AND AN IIE MODEL

Developing a New Office
- Avoids perception of existing office affecting new unit
- Avoids potentially allocating responsibilities to staff without needed skills
- Helps clearly define and communicate mission
- Can be strategically positioned

Expanding Existing Office
- Leverage already established infrastructure
- May be faster and lower-cost
- Modifying name may communicate new direction or expanded mission

Combining Offices/ Units
- Can combine existing functions that are related
- May help integrate knowledge and processes from different units to better integrate functions
- Could eliminate duplication of resources

Source: Leimer

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS BENCHMARKING

Benchmarked Offices of Institutional Effectiveness are located at institutions in the United States. Hanover prioritized small to medium-sized private non-profit institutions.

Institution	Office	Responsibilities	Housed Within/Reports To	Component Offices/Teams	Enrollment (FTE Staff per Student)	Staff
John Carroll University	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	• Student Learning Assessment • Program Review • Institutional Research	• Provost and Academic Vice President	• Institutional Research unit	3,506 (6.6)	• Count: 3 • Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment • Director, Institutional Research
Tidewater Community College	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	• Institutional Research • Program Outcomes Assessment • Strategic and Annual Planning • Regional and Specialized Accreditation	• Distinct office • VP reports to President	• Planning and Accountability • Institutional Effectiveness • Information Technology	31,098 (27.8)	• Count: 9 • Vice President for Information Systems and Institutional Effectiveness • Director of Planning & Accountability • Associate Director of Institutional Effectiveness • Coordinators • Administrative Assistants • Programmer Analysts
Loyola University Chicago	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	• Institutional Research • Assessment, Evaluation, and Accreditation Leadership • Data Stewardship • Program and Student Learning Assessments	• Academic Affairs Provost	• Institutional Research	19,332 (6.9)	• Count: 10 • Vice Provost • Director, Institutional Effectiveness • Associate Director, Institutional Research • Research Associates • Research Coordinators • Data Systems Coordinator • Systems Administrator
Providence College	Institutional Effectiveness	• Strategic Planning • Assessment • Institutional Research • Accreditation • Program Review	• Academic Affairs	• Institutional Research	5,310 (5.7)	• Count: 5 • Associate Vice President/Chief Institutional Effectiveness Officer • Director and Assistant Director of Assessment • Director of Institutional Research • Research Analyst
Pepperdine University	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	• Institutional Research • Accreditation • Assessment • Education Research	• Did not find organization chart or notation about hierarchy on website	• No sub-offices or teams specified	9,814 (5.5)	• Count: 5 • Director of Institutional Research • Senior Business Assessment Analyst • Business Assessment Analyst • Coordinator of Assessment • Research Assistant

Source: Institutional Websites (see embedded hyperlinks); student headcount (2019) and FTE staff-to-student ratio (2018 due to lack of 2019 staffing data) from IPEDS

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Institution	Office	Responsibilities	Housed Within/Reports To	Component Offices/Teams	Enrollment (FTE Staff per Student)	Staff
Siena College	Institutional Effectiveness	• Accreditation • Assessment • Institutional Research • Institutional Review Board • Strategic Planning	• Academic Affairs	• Office of Institutional Research • Institutional Review Board • Strategic Planning	3,516 (4.8)	• Count: 3 • Associate VP of Academic Affairs/Institutional Effectiveness • Director of Institutional Research • Senior Research Analyst
University of Richmond	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	• Accreditation • Program Assessment • Administrative Planning and Evaluation • Institutional Research and Reporting • Strategic Planning Analysis	• Director reports to VP of Planning & Policy	• No sub-offices or teams specified	4,602 (2.8)	• Count: 5 • Director of Institutional Effectiveness • Assessment Specialist • Senior Research Analysts • Administrative Coordinator
Dominican University	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	• Institutional Research • Data Stewardship • Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes • Accreditation Leadership	• Academic Affairs	• No sub-offices or teams specified	3,506 (7.2)	• Count: 3 • Director of Institutional Research • Director of Academic Assessment, Evaluation and Achievement • Director of Continuous Improvement
Augusta University	Division of Institutional Effectiveness	• Accreditation • Analytics • Assessment • Data Governance • Institutional Reporting • Integrated Planning • Program Planning • Program Review • Project Management • Survey Research	• Academic Affairs/Provost	• Staff listing divided into Planning & Accreditation, Institutional Project Management, and Institutional Research	9,575 (1.7)	• Count: 15 • Vice President of IE • Administrative Assistant for VP • Planning Coordinator • Program Coordinators • Project Manager • Associate Vice President, Institutional Research • Survey Research Coordinator • Institutional Information Analyst

Source: Institutional Websites (see embedded hyperlinks); student headcount (2019) and FTE staff-to-student ratio (2018 due to lack of 2019 staffing data) from IPEDS

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Institution	Office	Responsibilities	Housed Within/Reports To	Component Offices/Teams	Enrollment (FTE Staff per Student)	Staff
Rice University	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	• Institutional Research • Survey Administration • Academic Assessment • Nonacademic Assessment	• Provost • Vice President for Finance	• No sub-offices or teams specified	7,542 (2.3)	• Count: 5 • Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness • Assistant Director • Organizational Insight Analyst • Executive Assistant
Marymount University	Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness	• Accreditation • Assessment • Institutional Research • Planning	• Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management	• No sub-offices listed, but leaders specific to planning/strategy and institutional reporting	4,055 (8.0)	• Count: 4 • Assistant Vice President, PIE • Director, Planning and Strategic Initiatives • Coordinator, Institutional Reporting • Research Associate

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