From the Executive Producer….

During June 2017, OIRE underwent its annual strategic planning process. Ours is a three-year plan: FY 2017 – FY 2019. Over the years, we’ve been refining our vision for providing information to our customers. It’s always been our intent to provide customers with interactive tools so that they can, if they so desire, explore targeted data (of course, we’re always there to provide specific data, for those who prefer to not have to spend the time in data exploration).

Our vision is that OIRE:

➢ Is esteemed by our customers for our investigative and interpretive expertise.
➢ Provides unique insights and empowers others to gain their own insights through a holistic perspective.
➢ Effects change via clear and actionable information.

To that end, we’re responding to requests with more interactive products as well as proactively providing customers with the same. It’s taken some years of trial and error with various solutions to provide this interactivity. Institutional software/web platforms have changed, necessitating changes in our solutions. Now, however, it seems as though Tableau (a data visualization tool being promoted by OIT) will be the solution of choice.

Our strategic plan specifically calls out data visualization in one of our main objectives: Enhancement of Data Visualizations. More specifically, we’re proactively seeking opportunities to using data visualizations with our customers, training our staff and customers to effectively use Tableau, and then evaluating the success of those visualizations. We’ll be conducting significant outreach efforts to demo our visualization portfolio, including reaching out to deans and other campus leadership, administrators, and faculty. If you are interested in a demo or learning more, we’re eager to hear from you!!

In other articles in this newsletter, you’ll find specific examples of what has been done and what projects are in the pipeline. I encourage you to peruse and consider what visualizations or interactive data might be helpful for you. We’d be delighted to consult with you on those needs and come up with a plan for you.

You can find more information about our Mission, Vision, Values and our Strategic Planning on our website.

Cut and print…

Christine A. Stroup-Benham, Ph.D.
**OIRE is working to enhance your data experience!**

IR staff members have been rolling out Tableau dashboards aimed at improving the customer experience and understanding of data. Dashboards are used to convey the story behind the numbers and, more importantly, as an interactive data exploration tool to gain valuable actionable insights.

In July, OIRE staff held a meeting with current dashboard customers to evaluate the use of Tableau as a data visualization tool. Examples of topics addressed during the meeting included:

- International student enrollment
- College of Architecture & Planning graduate applications data
- Diagrams depicting students’ changes in academic majors during their time at CU

Thanks to the customers who attended we garnered useful feedback and gained a better understanding of how Tableau is currently used! For some users, it allows them to more easily perform their own ad hoc investigations using Tableau's filtering functions. For other users, it is the visual representation that is more impactful and intuitive than other delivery methods. The dashboards created by staff members are malleable/customizable, so we’d like users to consider Tableau as a self-service tool for data exploration and understanding (of course, if other strategies are preferred, we can still do that!). Please do not hesitate to provide us with feedback and suggestions for improvement because our goal is to improve your insights by effortlessly identifying relevant and interesting patterns in the data.

If you are interested in providing feedback in a focus group setting on your current Tableau dashboard or converting a recurring project to Tableau, then reach out to an OIRE staff member today!

**Did you know?**

Tableau can also be used to produce cool visualizations like word clouds:
Enrollment Report Conversion

We here in OIRE are constantly pursuing new ways to share the data generated by our university with those who seek it. We know that a rich data set is only as useful as it is accessible. With that in mind, we have begun efforts to deliver our regular data content in a more dynamic, meaningful, and creative way – one which empowers the end user while maintaining strict quality standards, both in terms of data integrity and privacy. In pursuit of that effort, we are planning to release the Fall 2017 Census and Summer 2017 End-of-Term data sets both in their current PDF form and as Tableau files.

You will be able to dynamically search through enrollment data down to the major level and see comparisons within those selections by many variables, such as gender, ethnicity, and academic level. We believe that this approach will allow interested individuals at the university to interact with these data in a way that is meaningful to them, while also streamlining the delivery of those data. We look forward to this release in September and are excited to hear your feedback about ways we can continue to improve the data discourse taking place at our university.

Faculty/Staff Information

Not to worry! We’re also using Tableau for more interactive and comprehensive formats for our faculty/staff-related reports. Our current online reporting of faculty and staff is driven by the definitions we use for some mandatory reports that we submit to the federal government each year. These reports are based on counts of permanent, paid employees by job type (e.g., Instructional Faculty, Management, etc.). We break those data down further for the annual CU System Diversity Report where faculty and staff are reported by gender and race/ethnicity within the aforementioned job types.

In the new Tableau reporting environment, OIRE will create an interactive report that will be more detailed and informative. Users will be able to interactively display the employee counts by campus or broken down further by college or department, and displayed by various faculty and staff groupings. As an addition to our current report, percentages of female and minority personnel will be included. The data will also be presented visually in charts and graphs. We hope that these new reports, available this fall, will be valuable tools for customers needing HR information.

In the meantime, if you want/need faculty/staff data in a Tableau format, please let us know!

Other Tableau Options: Heat Maps

To find out more about Tableau, you can visit their website. To download Tableau Reader, click here. To see some of OIRE’s initial Tableau offerings in our online report library, click here (you’ll need to download the Tableau Reader referenced above to open these files).