From the Director’s Chair….

It’s Fall and a brand new academic year! Welcome! In this edition of NOIR you’ll find information about our strategic planning retreat, the new Clery Crime Report, how the graduation rates data are utilized, and a bit more about Gary Reedy, one of our Senior Research Coordinators.

As mentioned in the last NOIR edition, IR had its strategic planning retreat in July. One critical aspect that grew out of our discussions was improved communication with our customers. We’d like to offer you the opportunity to have IR staff come to your unit and chat about IR reports, requests you can make of us, the IR website, or any other questions you might have. It is this outreach that will enhance our relationships with you and enable us to better understand your needs. So, give me a call at x52935 (or send an email) and schedule a session!

And here is a late-breaking news flash: We are sad to announce that Gary Reedy and Nicole McWhirter will be leaving our office this month. Gary has decided to take a position with CSU’s IR office (much closer to his home in Fort Collins!) and Nicole will be moving down to the ninth floor of the Lawrence Street Center to work in the Office of Policy and Fiscal Analysis. Our best wishes to both as they embark on these new professional journeys! Both have made significant contributions to the office and the institution and will be sorely missed. IR will be filling these positions, so please be patient with us as we make these transitions.

Another transition that is happening is reformulating the IR office organization to take on the responsibilities of the Office of Institutional Accreditation, Strategic Planning, and Effectiveness (OIASPE). Ms. Kimberly Thompson has left CU Denver to pursue other professional opportunities. As a result, IR is working with leadership to develop a thoughtful model on how to incorporate the OIASPE functions with those currently provided by IR. This is a very exciting opportunity to create a more comprehensive and integrated set of offerings and I will share updates with you as decisions are made!

Join us as we dive into another academic year and find out some new things about the office goings on!
Reminder: Requesting Data from IR

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Analysis (OIRPA) strives to provide you with timely, accurate, and clearly presented information. In order to ensure that we meet your needs for the requested data, it is important that we receive your request two to four weeks in advance of the date you require the information. Please be assured that we will work with you when emergency requests arise; however, so that all customers enjoy the same level of service and projects/requests are prioritized appropriately, it is important that we know of your needs as far in advance as possible. Also, keep in mind that the online report library is an excellent resource. If you would like us to demonstrate any aspects of our website, please let us know! We are happy to come to your unit and provide a demo and answer questions.

Data Request Form  ■  Main Phone: 303-315-2840  ■  IR Email: IR@UCDenver.edu

FAQ: Why does IR ask so many questions?

Oftentimes, customers are surprised and somewhat dismayed by the fact that IR asks follow-up questions when a request is made. Please be assured that we are not being difficult! We just want to provide you with the very best information that is available. To do so, we need to understand why you are asking for the data and how the information will be used. This will help us use the appropriate data sources, data definitions, and the like. Also, what seems to be a very straightforward question, like “how many faculty do we have?” or “how many students are enrolled?” really does have nuances that significantly impact the answer you receive. So, please bear with us if we seem to be overly inquisitive: it’s only to supply you with exactly what you need…even when you don’t exactly know what that is.

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Newsreel: New Clery Crime Report

In compliance with The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act), UCD’s annual campus security report was published to our website by October 1st.

The Clery Act, required to be completed by all colleges and universities that participate in federal financial aid programs, discloses information about crime on and near respective campuses. The Act also puts forth requirements that each institution must abide by such as the publishing of an annual crime statistics report, timely warnings to the campus community about crimes posing an ongoing threat, and the maintaining of a public crime log available at all times.

This past February, the U.S. Department of Education released a new edition of The Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting. This updated handbook addresses the changes and additions of guidelines regarding reporting missing students, emergency response and notification, the three conditions a crime must meet to be termed a burglary, hate crime reporting, and fire incident reporting requirements.

If you would like additional information regarding the Clery Act please visit The Security on Campus website or contact Mindy Baker at 303-315-2839.

Customer Survey / Website Feedback

Many thanks to those of you who responded to our 2011 Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Analysis (OIRPA): Evaluation of Office, Services, and Staff! The results are available online.

The results were used and discussed during our upcoming strategic planning retreat. Several comments we received suggested that we needed to invest in additional outreach endeavors. We’ve devoted several of our new strategic plan’s objectives to this effort and encourage you to give us a call so that we can discuss how to best work with you and/or your unit!

Survey results are available at all times and you can provide us with feedback anytime!

If there is anything that you would like to discuss in person, please do not hesitate to contact IR’s Director, Dr. Christine Stroup-Benham at x52835.

Yet another way to provide feedback! Many of the pages on the IR website have a link to a feedback form on which you can provide immediate comments/suggestions for a specific web page. This form is completely anonymous; however, you can choose to provide your name if you’d like to be contacted regarding the feedback you submit.
What are graduation rates and how are they used?

Reporting graduation rates is one way to quantify success. While the calculation of graduation rates is simple (number of students [from the cohort] receiving degrees within a given time period divided by the total number of students in the cohort), it’s the data organization that can be tricky.

Using the rates requires understanding two basic components: the population for whom the rate is reported and the time period being reported. A full cohort population definition is beyond the scope of this column but a simple description of the traditional cohort population is degree-seeking undergraduates that are first-time, full-time in fall (a detailed definition is in our report library). The second component, time period, involves the amount of time it takes for the student to receive a degree. Traditional time periods are 100%, 150% and 200% time which translate to 4-year, 6-year and 8-year rates for the traditional population.

Graduation rates using these traditional cohorts and time periods are used at state and federal levels by both governmental agencies and research organizations. These standards are also used by CDHE (Colorado Department of Higher Education) in reports based on SURDS (Student Unit Record Data System) files and the basic ‘Graduation Rates’ report in our own report library.

We provide these standard graduation rates to other entities, including VSA (Voluntary System of Accountability) - an initiative to provide information to prospective students and parents), for college guide books, and other reports. The institution shares this information with the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE), a data source for research related to improving student success. In return, we receive data on retention and graduation rates for the other participating institutions.

An advantage of using the standard definitions is we are able to compare our rates to those published by most other institutions. A disadvantage is that this information pertains to only a limited portion of our students. When the standard definitions are not adequate, IR provides graduation rate information for specialized populations (e.g., international students, graduate students, and students in specific programs such as nursing/business). Also, rates for new undergraduate transfers and undergraduate students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) majors are included in our report library. We are developing a reporting tool that will allow users to select the student populations and characteristics, then compute the retention/grad rate. Once this new tool is in place, we’ll let you know!

Staff Spotlight

Hi, my name is Gary Reedy

My CU experience began as a freshman at the Boulder campus where I was a music major on an athletic scholarship. Eventually I ended up teaching at a southern university after which I found myself at Boulder again, this time as an employee in the IR office. After 7 years at Boulder I moved to the Denver Campus Registrar’s Office where I did systems development and support for projects involving student data. Finally, almost 3 years ago I returned ‘home’ to IR (this time with the University of Colorado Denver).

I am responsible for providing university data for most SURDS and student-related IPEDS data submissions. They are the state and federal data files we are required to provide. I am also responsible for most things related to retention and graduation rates. Specifically, I developed data files used for reports published by IR, answer ad hoc requests for rates and provide university data to national entities like CSRDE (Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange) and LSAMP (Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation).

I am into all things mechanical and technical and I think faster is always better ... except sometimes in music. I have found I can do almost anything with one notable exception, which is finding the time to do everything I want to do! In the time left after working/commuting I enjoy and value family times, creating/arranging music, exercising and cars (I am a ‘car guy’). My commute time will soon be reduced significantly as I have accepted an offer to continue IR work at another institution less than 15 minutes from my home (compared to the multiple-hour journey currently made to UCD). Friends and acquaintances at CU will be greatly missed but I do look forward to the extra time I will have to enjoy those ‘other’ activities mentioned earlier.

Finally, I want to say a big thank you to Lou (Boulder IR), Christine, Dave and all my friends from IR and Office of the Registrar for a wonderful 20+ years at CU.