

SAN DIEGO
MESA COLLEGE



Program Review

Summary and Reflections with Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates

Leadership - Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Executive Summary

Describe the successes and challenges your unit has faced since the last comprehensive review.

(For Program Review Year: 2022-23)

Successes:

Since the last comprehensive review, the Institutional Effectiveness Office (IE) has experienced many successes linked to the implementation of innovative solutions to foster continuous improvement within the unit and beyond, amplifying the unit's service across all areas of the college, and maintaining a team that is robust and nimble enough to continue to serve the college community through challenging times.

S1 - Innovation & Continuous Improvement - In fall of 2018, IE began producing a variety of data dashboards that made data accessible to all. To date, the Institutional Research website contains links to 36 dashboards (some of which have been retired), providing the campus with timely information to make decisions, evaluate their programs, engage in program improvement, and comply with reporting requirements. IE was an early adopter of Microsoft (MS) 365 products and was able to create efficiencies by leveraging different software. Before the college officially transitioned to a fully remote environment during the COVID-19 pandemic, the IE team adopted MS Teams to streamline office communication. IE also leveraged Sharepoint to support the collection of evidence for accreditation, and leveraged other MS applications to link and automate the Research Request form and the Project Log. Moreover, the Research Request form was revamped to tie all new research requests to Mesa 2030. During this period, IE also led the transition to a better platform for program review, replacing Taskstream with Nuventive. Lastly, in fall of 2022, IE created the position of Associate Dean of Research & Innovation and presented to the President's Cabinet its plan for innovation, re-inventing the office by revising its name, mission, and description.

S2 - Service - IE is embedded across all areas of the college. Since the last comprehensive review, IE has supported a variety of grants (Projecto Exito, Conexiones, E3, AANAPISI, and NSF) in various capacities, including supporting grant writing, planning, evaluation, and reporting. IE has been deeply engaged in supporting the campus during a program review transition (different cycle and different software, and a condensed program review year during Spring 2023 which required thorough and fast paced planning, frequent pivot decisions, and a higher level of campus support.) and in leading Mesa's strategic planning efforts that led to the creation of the Mesa 2030 Roadmap, which now informs all the work done by the college. Additionally, IE was invested in cross-departmental data and research training, supporting the data coaching program, and welcoming into the team a fellow and a student intern .

S3 - Flexibility - IE successfully transitioned to an in person to an online and hybrid modality as a result of the pandemic. This was possible to the team's ability to quickly adopt new technologies and adapt to a new environment. Since the last comprehensive review, IE has expanded the service it is able to provide to the campus, aided by new technology and leveraging part-time temporary positions.

Challenges:

The transition to a new data database and the creation of a new data warehouse, office staffing issues, and the perceptions and expectations of our office held across campus have been a source of challenges for IE.

Summary and Reflection

C1 - New database and data warehouse – In summer of 2019, IE transitioned to a new database that populated data from Campus Solutions, instead of ISIS. This meant that any project that required data from before and after Summer 2019, required researchers to duplicate data queries and merge results. The transition to a new database was not smooth, and to date, many bugs identified in various data element have gone unresolved, resulting in a dramatic increase in the amount of data manipulation needed to create a good data product. Moreover, not all the student application data was converted into Campus Solutions and some application data was completely lost, which required researchers to always have to link back to the old database to fill in blanks as much as possible. Adding to the complexities introduced by the new database, Hyperion, the data querying tool used by researchers stopped being maintained at the end of 2021, requiring the migration of our data to a new data warehouse. The process to create a new data warehouse, like the process of creating a new database, have drained lots of time from researchers and more work is still needed. IE personnel will need to set time aside to learn the new tools (Power BI and Azure) and rebuild dashboard and data queries.

C2 - Staffing - In 2019, IE had seven members, including a dean, an associate dean, three research analysts, an administrative technician, and an administrative assistant. Since then, the team has been missing one to three members due to retirement, departures, and promotions from within. Currently, the IE office is short two research analyst positions. Only two positions are funded by Mesa general fund, one position is funded by the district, and the remaining rely on categorical funds, which makes it challenging to re-hire a new individual when a position becomes vacant. Due to challenges with staffing, IE had to adapt its strategies in order to meet the demands of the campus. This has included relying on NANCE positions, having exempt staff work overtime, removing the cross-validation/external-validation step (and only do self-validation), sacrificing time needed for knowledge-sharing and professional development, increasing the time it takes to deliver products, and declining certain projects due to lack of resources. However, these strategies are not sustainable in the long term. The temporary and part-time nature of NANCE positions has resulted in a high employee turnover, diminishing the return on investment of the time invested in onboarding and training new employees. It usually takes at least a month, and often more, for IT to grant access to all the software needed by IE employees, and it takes much longer for a new employee to begin working semi-independently. Likewise, forgoing knowledge sharing and professional development in the long term, will be detrimental to the office and the campus as a whole, as the nature of the field requires IE members to stay current in order to be able to share with the campus new ideas and best practices.

C3 - Campus Expectations and Perceptions of IE - In light of staffing challenges, IE has been actively participating in various committees and workgroups across campus. Full-time staff allocates an average of 35% of their time to recurring meetings. In the 2022/23, IE team members attended a total of 85 committees and workgroups, showcasing the commendable integration across campus. However, sustaining this expanded role proves challenging without adequate support to fill vacant positions. Another noteworthy challenge is how IE is perceived campus-wide. While our team is qualified in diverse topics, unfortunately some still perceive IE members as primarily focused on number crunching and compliance, leading to resistance when proposing innovative solutions to existing issues.

If applicable, describe any major curricular or service changes your unit has engaged in and the impact of those changes since the last comprehensive review.

As highlighted earlier, since the last comprehensive review, IE has broadened its role across campus by implementing data dashboards, aiding diverse programs, grants, and initiatives, and engaging in multiple committees and workgroups. This increased workload has, however, impacted our capacity for further institutional innovation and effectiveness work rooted in best practices and the education research body of literature.

Summary and Reflection

If applicable, describe the impact of any new resources (human, fiscal, etc) on the unit and/or action plan implementation.

As noted under the successes and challenges prompt, since the last comprehensive review, IE has faced staffing issues. Because most positions are funded by categorical funds, it has been difficult to secure funding to fill positions when they become vacant, stretching the capacity of team. Additionally, ideally, there should be allocated budget for researchers to stay current in the field and attend annual conferences that most researchers in the state attend annually, such as the RP Research Conference and the California Association for Institutional Research (CAIR).

If you assess OUTCOMES, please confirm that the outcomes have been reviewed for accuracy. If you do not assess Outcomes, skip this question.

Related Documents for Charts and Graphs

Executive Summary Complete

Yes

Data Reflection

Trends observed in program/service area's data.

Decline in full-time staff – In 2018/19 IE had seven full-time employees, and as of March 2023, IE had four active full-time employees (three of them in acting capacity), and a fifth employee is in sabbatical.

Increase in initiatives/projects supported – As new initiatives are rolled out, older initiatives continue, increasing the workload for IE. For example, despite Proyecto Exito (HSI Title V grant) or STEM Conexiones (HSI Title III grant) coming to an end, initiatives that started under them continue to require IE support, such as CRUISE or STEM Center Tutoring. Yet, IE must find a way to support new initiatives, such as new AANAPISI and E3 grants, or Strategic Enrollment Management.

Since August 2022, IE worked on 166 projects, most of which are ad-hoc requests (90), followed by recurring projects (74). Approximately every three days IE receives a new ad-hoc research request. A project may consist of updating dashboard (4 to 16 hours), creating a new dashboard (40+ hours), conducting a survey and summarizing findings, or querying a specific type of information from our database. Projects have different level of recurrence (e.g., daily, weekly, by semester, etc.). When accounting for recurrence, the total number of projects add up to 1353 – meaning our office work on 6 projects daily on average.

Committee/Workgroup participation – In 2022/23 IE team members participated in 61 distinct committees or workgroups at the campus, district, regional and state level. Because these committees or workgroups often have more than one IE representative, the unduplicated count of committee/workgroup participation added up to 90. On average, full-time IE members spend 35% of their time participating in these committees or workgroups.

Increase reliance on part-time/temporary workforce – Since 2018, we have employed 14 part-time employees. The part-time and temporary nature of these assignments is not conducive to employee retention. This means that IE has to constantly invest substantial resources in recruiting, training, and supervising to keep up with the demand for IE support. This is both inefficient and unsustainable. HERF funds were leveraged to hire these positions, and it is uncertain if there will be additional sources of funding in the future to maintain IE part-time workforce.

Describe any equity gaps in the data. Are there differences and/or patterns observed by demographics (e.g.race/ethnicity, gender, age, etc.)

This is one of the areas we aim to improve. Currently, we lack a convenient method to analyze our projects based on different areas to determine which areas have requested our services more frequently. Our ideal approach is to prioritize our services based on the areas that require the most assistance, while also aligning with the goals

Summary and Reflection

and initiatives of the campus, such as Mesa2030. Furthermore, we intent to prioritize our office capacity according to the percent of funding allocation to our research from different areas.

Describe the discussion(s) that took place about the unit's learning outcomes assessment data.

N/A

Related Documents for Charts and Graphs

Data Reflection Complete

Yes

Practice Reflection

Describe current practices your program/service area has engaged in that you believe impact the above data trends and equity gaps.

Implementation of New Research Request Form & Project Log – With the implementation of the new research request form and the new project log in fall of 2022, IE has been more intentional about capturing and measuring our workload by asking stakeholders to submit a research request using our new form. The new form requires requestors to link their request to at least one of Mesa 2030’s strategic objectives. The intention is for the work to be aligned with the institutional goals. However, it is very rare for the office to decline a project request. The adoption of the new research request form has been somewhat slow, as at least half of the research requests were entered by an IE member on behalf of the requestor. A large number of research requests unfortunately tend to come in a few days before they are due, despite the office’s guideline to allow for at least 10 business days. IE manages to fulfill last minute request by working extra hours in the evening or weekend and by shifting priorities. Despite managing last-minute requests with extra effort, it may inadvertently convey a false impression of sufficient staffing and capacity. In reality, fulfilling these urgent requests means diverting resources from other essential areas of our work.

Areas that require IE attention –

- IE has made a lot of data available, but not everyone is using it or is aware of it. IE needs more time and resources to increase awareness and help move the institution from data consumption to data-driven action.
- IE continues to produce reports for a variety of programs, but have fallen behind updating our report warehouse.
- IE created a feedback survey for research requests, but have not been able to implement consistently and leverage this tool.
- IE frequently modifies the office’s work priorities to accommodate research request, at the cost of neglecting the IE department’s goals and mission. There is a desire in IE to be more intentional in improving our internal effectiveness and efficiency as well as driving innovation on campus, but currently lack the capacity.
- The field of Institutional Effectiveness and Research requires continued learning and staying current with the research and best practices. Unfortunately, difficulties securing funding have prevented IE staff to attend annual conferences regularly attended by researchers and IE staff at other institutions.

Reliance on NANCE personnel – IE has relied heavily on NANCE personnel to keep up the expanded role of IE at Mesa College. As mentioned in previous sections, this is not a sustainable way to run an IE office, as funding is always uncertain and the heavy investment of resources to onboard and train new members that are unlikely to stay for a long time.

Summary and Reflection

What other factors (internal or external) might also impact the above data trends and equity gaps?

We appreciate the ability to take advantage of the HERF/Block Grant funding; however, we also acknowledge that there is a need to find a more sustainable solution as those grants will expire and it takes significant resources to constantly train a team of new NANCE virtually every year.

Related Documents for Charts and Graphs

Practice Reflection Complete

Yes

Mid-Cycle Updates

Are there any edits or updates to the Executive Summary above?

(January 2024 Update)

In 2023, the office faced significant challenges due to personnel transitions and a severe staff shortage, impacting our ability to progress towards established goals. Internal projects and activities were put on hold to prioritize college support. Some of these internal projects included:

- Power BI districtwide training - On Hold
- Database transition participation - Partially On Hold
- IE team building - On Hold
- IE knowledge sharing - On Hold
- Dashboard updates - Partially On Hold
- Bachelor's Degree Program involvement - Partially On Hold
- SurveyMonkey training - On Hold
- SurveyMonkey account distribution - On Hold
- Foundation meeting participation - Partially On Hold
- Team professional development - On Hold
- Research documentation processes - Partially On Hold
- COA tangible activities for improvement - Partially On Hold

With only one researcher for several months out of the year (previously, we had four, including the associate dean), the strain was evident.

Our reliance on NANCE positions has proven ineffective and inefficient in utilizing personnel and campus resources. The temporary and part-time nature of these roles has resulted in a high turnover, diminishing the return on investment in onboarding and training. Typically, it takes at least a month, often more, for IT to provide access to the necessary software, and even longer for new employees to achieve semi-independent work. As all NANCE positions in our office require supervision and we lack sufficient full-time researchers for oversight, it leads to unproductive utilization of their time.

Summary and Reflection

Therefore, a more strategic approach is to redirect the funds intended for hiring two NANCE positions and utilize them, along with additional funds, to establish one full-time, restricted position. We are grateful for the support from colleagues across the campus, enabling the creation of a restricted researcher position to support two grants over a two-year period. Additionally, we have collaborated with regional partners to advocate for and secure a restricted researcher in CTE (sunset in June 2025). This additional staff support, despite its restricted nature and one position expires in 1.5 year, is crucial for partially resuming the planned activities at least in the next 1.5 year, assuming there is no other transition. Finally, it is lesser known that there are two divisions within IE. One is Institutional Effectiveness, and one is Institutional Research, and while they are related, the nature of work is not the same. Thus, we are very grateful and excited for the possibility of having the Associate Dean of Research to lead the Institutional Research function (and to do the research work too because the Associate Dean traditionally has been a researcher role). This will free up the Dean's time to focus on serving the needs for Institutional Effectiveness on campus.

Are there any edits or updates to the Data Reflection above?

N/A (Data reflection is included in other update sections)

Are there any edits or updates to the Practice Reflection above?

(January 2024 Update)

Despite being significantly understaffed in 2023, with several months operating with only one researcher, we successfully processed over 210 projects in the 2023 calendar year. This number is likely an underestimate, as we estimated about 10% to 20% of projects were not documented due to time constraints. It's important to acknowledge that the dean of IE had already managed workload expectations at various areas on campus, yet we still processed a high number of projects. This in a way is a good news because it highlights the substantial use of data and research in various aspects at Mesa.

Here are examples of some of the projects:

Institutional Research:

- Facilitated the successful launch of the Strong Workforce Counselor Institute, providing individualized data dashboard access and one-on-one sessions with faculty.
- Supported institutional applications for the Aspen Prize and ESCALA State Department Award.
- Aligned enrollment management data metrics between Mesa and the District Office, revising syntax for accurate Mesa context.
- Conducted the campus-wide Student Parent Survey to assess support for parenting students.
- Completed major external mandated reporting for two Federal grant APRs for HSI Title III E3, AANAPISI.
- Performed online vs. in-person analysis across campus and the School of Humanities.

Institutional Effectiveness:

- Initiated broader conversations on institutional effectiveness through training on SMARTER goals and Measures.
- Implemented new and improved business processes using the Office 365 platform to enhance institutional capacity and efficiency.
- Received the Mesa Foundation Innovation Grant and hosted the Outcomes Summit.

Summary and Reflection

- Guided the successful transition to the new platform for Outcomes Assessment and Program Review through various support initiatives, including the development of a handbook, a series of guided videos, a series of workshops, and over 100 individual support sessions
- Collected information about the current status towards Mesa 2030.
- Successfully delivered ACCJC's ISER and the supplemental evidence request.
- Developed Project Log 2.0 with a better user interface and sharing abilities.
- Developed governance guidelines for committee chairs.
- Initiated discussions on CTE research agenda and the impact of activities/programs.

Summary and Reflection

Alignment with Mesa 2030

Unit Goal: Prioritize research request based on potential for impact in alignment with Mesa 2030.

Goal Status: Active

Beginning Year: 2022 - 2023

Projected Completion Year: 2023 - 2024

Mapping

Mesa College Strategic Plan: Roadmap to Mesa2030: (X - Highlight the X to Align)

- Community - Objective 3: X
- Completion - Objective 3: X

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p>Action Plan Status: Active</p> <p>Action Plan: 1. Being clear about IE project timeframe and available capacity – allowing researchers to focus on a project at a time.</p> <p>2. Triage project requests that are directly related to Mesa2030, mandated reporting, and potential high impact.</p> <p>3. Build a research request prioritization logic tree and integrate it into the research request.form.</p> <p>Action Plan Cycle: 2022 - 2023, 2023 - 2024</p>	<p>Submission Date: 01/18/2024</p> <p>Action Plan Update: Activity 1. Completed. The Dean communicated with the campus several times through different means about the office capacity and timeline for resuming certain activities.</p> <p>Activity 2. In progress.</p> <p>Activity 3. In progress.</p> <p>Update Year: 2023 - 2024</p> <p>Action Plan Progress: On Track</p>

Leverage existing data

Unit Goal: Leverage existing data products to increase equity-minded action on campus.

Goal Status: Active

Beginning Year: 2022 - 2023

Projected Completion Year: 2024 - 2025

Mapping

Mesa College Strategic Plan: Roadmap to Mesa2030: (X - Highlight the X to Align)

- Community - Objective 1: X
- Community - Objective 3: X
- Completion - Objective 3: X

Summary and Reflection

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p>Action Plan Status: Active</p> <p>Action Plan: 1. Link more district and Chancellor’s Office resources on our website.</p> <p>2. Leverage our NANCE workforce to develop a resource page and video trainings of how to use existing data products (short clips).</p> <p>3. Increase the frequency of posts on IE Twitter account with more data snip-its.</p> <p>Action Plan Cycle: 2022 - 2023, 2023 - 2024, 2024 - 2025</p>	<p>Submission Date: 01/18/2024</p> <p>Action Plan Update: Activity 1. Not completed due to capacity issue.</p> <p>Activity 2. Not completed due to the lack of full-time staff to supervise the NANCE/lead this work</p> <p>Activity 3. Not completed due to capacity issue.</p> <p>Update Year: 2023 - 2024</p> <p>Action Plan Progress: Barriers Encountered</p>

Best practices

Unit Goal: Identify, share, co-create, and establish sustainable, innovative practices and systems that advance equity and excellence, and increase efficiency.

Goal Status: Active

Beginning Year: 2022 - 2023

Projected Completion Year: 2024 - 2025

Mapping

Mesa College Strategic Plan: Roadmap to Mesa2030: (X - Highlight the X to Align)

- Community - Objective 4: X
- Completion - Objective 3: X
- Pathways and Partnerships - Objective 1: X

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p>Action Plan Status: Active</p>	<p>Submission Date: 01/18/2024</p> <p>Action Plan Update: Activity 1. Completed. Even though it is restricted position, it is still very helpful and more beneficial for the college in the next 2 years.</p> <p>Activity 2. Partially completed. It was not done systematically.</p> <p>Activity 3. Incomplete.</p> <p>Activity 4. Partially completed. The effort started in CTE area.</p> <p>Update Year: 2023 - 2024</p> <p>Action Plan Progress: On Track</p>

Summary and Reflection

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p>Action Plan: 1. Increase IE capacity by filling full-time positions and finding more time through project prioritization.</p> <p>2. Conduct a self-evaluation using the state's SSM Dashboard data to identify positive progresses Mesa college has made, contact the relevant departments to learn and disseminate best practices.</p> <p>3. Leverage databases, such as What Works, to learn about best practices that IE can introduce to the college.</p> <p>4. Secure funding for researchers to attend research conferences annually.</p> <p>5. communicate with campus about the IE's role in institutional effectiveness effort such as short and long term planning</p> <p>Action Plan Cycle: 2022 - 2023, 2023 - 2024, 2024 - 2025</p>	