SAINT AUGUSTINE'S
UNIVERSITY
Transform. Excel. Lead.

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

&

DATA ANALYTICS

The Foundation for an Innovative Future

Strategic Planning Framework

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Office of Institutional Research & Data Analytics is to support Saint Augustine's University by providing accurate data, visual analysis, and research needed to make informed, data-driven decisions in a timely manner.

VISION STATEMENT

The Office of Institutional Research & Data Analytics strives to consistently achieve excellence in meeting the evolving information needs of the Saint Augustine's University community, and is the most reliable source of timely, high-quality analysis for compliance, institutional planning, and decision support.

CORE VALUES

OBJECTIVITY
We foster a thriving intellectual community achieving excellence through the pursuit of knowledge, innovation, learning and inquiry.

ETHICAL
We advance a community of scholars and professionals committed to sustaining and advancing a high quality educational experience.

GOOD STEWARDSHIP
We embrace our Episcopal heritage and advance the development of our students spiritually.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY
We promote an atmosphere of open, civil discourse and careful, respectful listening where freedom of thought, honesty and expression are valued and protected.

TRUST
We cultivate a spirit of trust and dialogue among the University's community and diverse constituencies.

ENGAGEMENT
We are an important and integral part of the larger community, serving as a resource that impacts its growth and development.

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH CORE FUNCTIONS

- Mandated Reporting

- Operational and Strategic Planning

- Data Development & Management

- Survey Research

- Management Information & Policy Analysis

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

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Executive Summary

In November 2021, the President charged the Vice President of Strategic Planning, Research, Technology & Innovation to reactivate the Office of Institutional Research & Data Analytics at Saint Augustine's University. The resulting strategic plan enables Institutional Research to forge a three-year plan that identifies short-term and long-term goals in accordance with the office's mission, vision, and values, while maintinaing a strong tie to the framework of the University's strategic plan, (RE) IMAGINE SAU 2023: The Foundation for an Innovative Future.

The mission, vision, and values in this plan provide a pathway towards strengthening and focusing the role of Institutional Research at Saint Augustine's University, and emphasizes a commitment to providing information, analysis, and necessary research in a timely, ethical, and efficient manner. The plan includes strategic goals supported by objectives and measures of success to ensure those goals are reached.

With new leadership at all levels, an increase in federal and state mandatory reporting, and limited capacity, it has been determined that a new course of action and purpose needed to be defined and put into action for the office. The plan aims to strengthen Institutional Research's ability to provide university administrators, faculty, and students with meaningful services and information in direct support of the strategic plan and data-driven decision-making. The Office of Institutional Research will emphasize a commitment to accumulating data, analysis, and necessary research in a timely, ethical, and efficient manner. Accumulating and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data for campus use and for submission to regional and national accrediting bodies are key components in Institutional Research's role on campus. To re-establish Institutional Research's role as the official gatekeeper of University data, this plan identifies strategies dedicated to supporting academic units and non-academic units focus on specific student data by producing highly valued contemporary and executive-level analyses, reports, and surveys.

First, the Office of Institutional Research is the best source of accurate and timely information for the University and a valuable source of technical expertise. In the effort to highlight our role at Saint Augustine's University, we will actively promote awareness of IR through direct communications; arrange hands-on workshops, training sessions, provide open office hours; and improve functionality and accessibility of the IR website.

Second, the Office of Institutional Research will lead an expansive and effective data governance effort. To build upon this role, IR will lead the strengthening of policies and procedures regarding the data governance structure for data classification, security, and retention of data; increase integration of data sources; and leverage our role as head of data governance to encourage mutually beneficial processes across the campus.

Third, the Office of Institutional Research will offer a portfolio of advanced analytics to the University community to help campus leaders make informed, data-driven decisions. To enhance the quality of information we provide, IR will develop more strategic reporting initiatives in the form of dashboards, scorecards, and operational indicators for offices, departments, and senior leadership; research and produce advanced analytics more frequently to improve the effectiveness of current activities and plan for the future.

Lastly, through this process we will identify the steps required to enhance the Office's preparedness for the potential loss of institutional knowledge through attrition and turnover. To lessen the impact of such events, IR will develop a repository of institutional knowledge, processes, and definitions; create succession plans, and initiate knowledge sharing sessions.

Institutional Research Defined

Institutional research is a broad category of work done at colleges and universities to inform campus decision making and planning in areas such as admissions, financial aid, curriculum, enrollment management, staffing, student life, finance, facilities, athletics, and alumni relations.

Institutional researchers collect, analyze, report, and warehouse quantitative and qualitative data about their institution's students, faculty, staff, curriculum, course offerings, and learning outcomes. They are involved in collecting and reporting information to government bodies (e.g., the US Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System), to the public (e.g., College Portrait and Common Data Set) and various college guide publishers (e.g., U.S. News & World Report and College Board). On occasion, institutional researchers share data with one another to compare their own practices and outcomes to those of similar institutions.

Finally, institutional research is the source of much of the information provided to regional and national accreditation bodies to document how institutions fulfill the standards for accreditation. In addition to reporting, institutional researchers often engage in data analysis, ranging from simply testing whether differences in reported data are statistically significant to developing and using causal and predictive statistical models. Such models are often used in support of assessment and strategic enrollment management.

INSTITUTIONAL
RESEARCH
STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL I: Data & Research Services

increase recognition and utilization of Institutional Research & Data Analytics to provide data and research services that support campus innovation and insight.

GOAL II: Data Governance

The Office of Institutional Research & Data Analytics will lead an expansive and effective data governance structure.

GOAL III: Decision Support Services

The Office of Institutional Research & Data Analytics will offer a portfolio of advanced analytics to the University Community.

Goal I: Data & Research Services

increase recognition and utilization of Institutional Research & Data Analytics to provide data and research services that support campus innovation and insight.

**GOAL I
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

- Educate campus partners on information and services available from Institutional Research in order to reduce repetition and replication across campus units.
- Encourage optimization of resources and improve efficiency by working with Enrollment Management and the Registrar's office.
- Provide technical workshops, training sessions, webinars, and open office hours.
- Continue the improvement and functionality/user friendliness of the IR Website

OUTCOME MEASURES

- Increased number of outreach efforts.
- Increase in attendance of technical workshops, training sessions, webinars, and office visits.
- Decreased frequency of data requests for data that is already accessible on the Institutional Research website.

GOAL II:DATA GOVERNANCE

The Office of Institutional Research & Data Analytics will lead an expansive and effective data governance structure.

GOAL II
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Lead the strengthening of policies and procedures regarding the data governance structure for data classification, security, and retention of data.
- Improve integration of data sources.
- Leverage our role as head of data governance to encourage mutually beneficial processes.

OUTCOME MEASURES

- Solicit support and collaboration from upper level leadership and lead regular meetings with core users.
- Increased data integration.
- Frequency of meetings with data owners (division/unit leaders) across campus.

SAINT AUGUSTINE'S UNIVERSITY

CLASS OF 1973

GOAL III: DECISION SUPPORT SERVICES

The Office of Institutional Research & Data Analytics will offer a portfolio of advanced analytics to the University Community.

GOAL III
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Empower campus community by providing decision support services as well as analysis needed for making informed and transparent decisions.
- Identify resource services, reports or specialties provided by Institutional Research to inform the campus community
- Provide contextualized data and analyses to better understand and evaluate St. Augustine's University by utilizing data to promote and support the continuous improvement efforts of the campus community.

OUTCOME MEASURES

- Increased cooperation with departments to create unit dashboards and scorecards.
- Number of advanced analytic projects completed each year.
- Survey faculty/staff on the usability and satisfaction of reports provided by IR.

Saint Augustine's University: Institutional Research Current State

The Office of Institutional Research & Data Analytics was re-activated in 2022 to serve the needs of Saint Augustine's University faculty, students, and staff in compiling, analyzing, and distributing data concerning the function of the University, as well as to provide a reporting component to satisfy state and federal requests and mandates. Within this general purpose, the office's responsibilities are distributed between the areas of Institutional Research, data analysis, reporting, and supporting assessment. The genesis of the current office, under the leadership of the VP for Strategic Planning, Research, Technology & Innovation, is to serve as an independent information resource for decision makers and university-wide informational needs. Specifically, the office has responsibilities pertaining to institutional research that are centered on supporting administrative planning, policy making, decision making, and institutional support.

Prior to the re-establishment of this office, data was not widely shared among division leaders and chairs. Various individuals were frequently called upon to help inform faculty and staff about the data, and how the data could be used. The Vice President of Strategic Planning, Research, Technology & Innovation restructured the division; this necessitated a change in the organization of the office, which also resulted in the addition of data analytics to assist faculty and executive leaders with discovery, interpretation, and communication of meaningful patterns in data.

A combination of increased availability, greater administrative reliance on data, technology, and a changing guard has made information a highly valued commodity. The current administrative team at Saint Augustine's University is highly reliant on data and information. The University, the state, and the nation are currently facing huge budget shortfalls. In order to provide robust services, it is imperative that Institutional Research be supported by the institution, by allocating funds for additional personnel and ongoing professional development geared at operating an efficient and effective unit.

In order to regain these abilities, in light of the current financial and hiring situation, we plan to add additional personnel (IR Data Analyst, IR Research Associate, Research Interns) employ temporary, part-time personnel to conduct analysis and research as needed on behalf of the office and the university. Our plan for accomplishing this and other goals are outlined in subsequent sections.
1. Reporting of only specific student and staff data
2. Completing specific surveys and special reports
3. Many more current-topic and executive-level analyses
4. Retention/Graduation/Success
5. Repository for and source of official University information

Institutional Research: Strategic Positioning

Strategic planning is a systematic process of envisioning a desired future and translating this vision into broadly defined goals or objectives and a sequence of steps to achieve them. It is the process of identifying long-term goals and objectives, and then determining the best approach for achieving those goals and objectives. This look towards the future identifies the mission, vision and goals of an organization and action steps necessary to achieve the vision.

Institutional Research's services should include the following functions, in direct support of Saint Augustine's University's mission:

Mandated Reporting
1.   Federal (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Surveys, Higher Education Opportunity Act, Office of Civil Rights, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study)
2.   State (North Carolina Commission for Higher Education)
3.   Accreditation (Higher Learning Commission, academic departments)
4.   Others (internal and external requests)

Operational and Strategic Planning
1.   Communicate processes and plans
2.   Benchmarking
3.   Peer analysis

Data Development and Management
1.   In-house databases
2.   Data warehouse
3.   Develop Argos reports in Colleague

Survey Research
1.   Develop Survey Instruments
2.   Collect and analyze data
3.   Present and visualize results

Management Information and Policy Analysis
1.   Factbook   3. Research Studies   5. Ad hoc reports
2.   Statistical Summaries   4. White Papers   6. IR Website

Now, more than ever, research, analysis, and turning data into usable information are needed to drive the decisions being made by executive-level personnel. To that end, with the newly created vision, mission, and values in place, the next step is laying out the goals to reach the vision, live the mission, and believe in the values.

Institutional Research: Implementation Plan

An implementation, or operational plan is a short-term plan formulated to achieve tactical objectives. It describes short-term ways of achieving milestones and explains what portion of the strategic plan will be put into operation during a given operational period; in this case, the 2022-2023 academic year.

Year 1

A. Appoint an Advisory Board
To assist the office in reaching its goals and to help guide the process, in advisory board will be formed in the Fall 2022 semester. The board will be comprised of key faculty and staff from across campus who either use institutional research data on a regular basis, use other data on a regular basis, or who helped shape data collection policy. A list of advisory board members is available in Appendix __.

B. Adopt the Strategic Plan
The advisory board will advise and provide recommendations and feedback regarding the strategic plan. The adoption of the strategic plan will take place in the October 2022 advisory board meeting.

C. Qualifications Documents
Qualifications documents, or biographies, list the required work-related knowledge, education, and experience needed to complete the work of the office. Each staff member has completed this document, as will all personnel who work for the office (Appendix __). This will put a process in place that establishes criteria for evaluating interested contract associates (faculty/staff associates, consultants, and affiliates).

Year 2

D. Research Associate
One of our strategic initiatives is to hire a Research Associate for the office. The Research Associate will be responsible for gathering data, preparing reports, analyzing data and statistics, and related functions and for using web-based reporting systems to improve data access and analysis for leadership, academic support units, state and federal agencies, and other stakeholders; maintains a calendar of regular data reports, responds to ad hoc requests for data and information, and creates standard reports from a variety of sources utilizing Microsoft Access and Excel.

Institutional Research Defined

E.   White Papers/Fact Sheets

In order to increase efficiency and to allow staff to better plan in order to complete projects on time, white papers are being created for every survey, report, and project that the office completes. This will also allow new staff to learn about projects, the amount of time involved, when they must be completed, the data involved, etc.

F.   Increase Web Presence and Data Access

Institutional Research turns data into information. This information isn't useful if the campus community cannot access it. In order to increase the campus' ability to gain access to more information, we have created a website and created a new work request form. If data are needed that are not available on the website, users can request that information, also providing us with how the request benefits the university's strategic plan.

2023-Year 3

A.   Professional Development

Funds will be used for staff to learn new skills as needed to move the various projects forward. A few examples would include IPEDS Training, conferences, Institutional Research conferences, etc.

B.   Annual Report

Beginning Fall 2023, the Office of Institutional Research will begin producing an annual report, reporting on the progress of its efforts over the course of the prior year. This report will allow the office the opportunity to showcase its accomplishments and detail its threats and limitations.

Higher education research is generally conducted by specialists from various disciplines who have research as part of their academic or professional duties (Altbach, 2014; Teichler, 2000). However, there is a distinctive subgroup of researchers investigating higher education topics in the service of an institution's management (Teichler, 2014). These specialists convert data into information and communicate their analyses throughout the institution. As such, institutional research sits at the junction of research and knowledge management.

The main objective of the chapter is to present a developmental framework for IR and its potential uses. This work contributes to a theory of IR in that it delineates general principles to structure what is being studied. The framework articulates what are the main dimensions of IR (e.g., organizational sectors, functions, resources and competencies) and identifies and defines the constitutive elements of each dimension. The concepts provide the basis for a common language used to conduct empirical studies, to facilitate communication among scholars, and to understand the logic and performance of IR across a wide variety of competencies, content areas, and purposes.
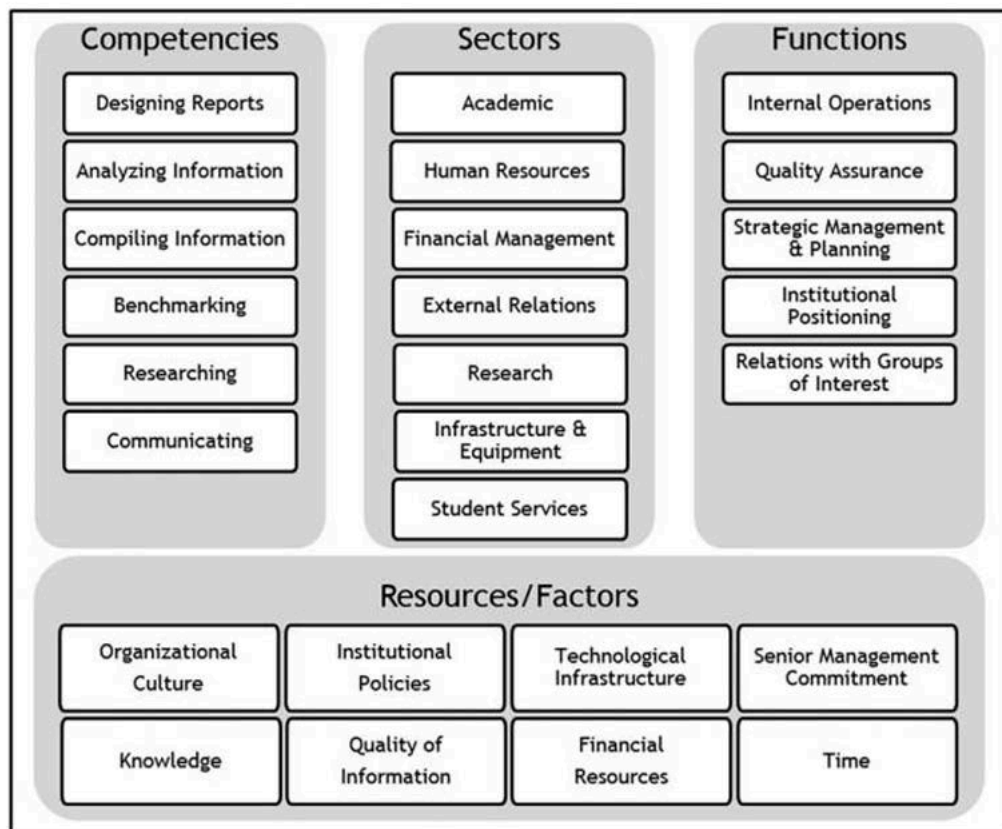

Fig. 1. A Knowledge Management Framework for IR.

This framework offers a definition of the level of development for each competency, characterized in the form of descriptive statements. These statements are the basis of a questionnaire the measurement tool used to determine the level of development attained which assigns a level of development to each competency in each organizational sector. As an example, the statements describing the levels of development of the competency Designing reports are presented in Table 5. The statements describing each of the competencies were presented for validation to the group of experts, with the vast majority (between 9 and 11) agreeing to the final version of the descriptors, as illustrated in Table 4. Table 6 presents examples of the levels of development for a few competencies in a matrix format to help visualize how the parts combine. It also clarifies how this conceptual framework aligns with and builds upon Terenzini's levels of intelligence, while allowing for a diagnosis of the advancement of IR at a more granular level. For instance, descriptions of the levels of development for the competency Analyze Data dovetail with Terenzini's first tier of intelligence where technical and analytical skills range from basic to very advanced.

An advantage of the framework is that the levels of development within analytical intelligence are more fine-grained: the different analytical skills required are clearly identified and their levels of development are described in more detail with operational descriptions of each. This information would allow an IR Director to more specifically diagnose the current status of each competency and to identify what actions would be required for further development, resulting in greater overall analytical intelligence.

The assessment of competency development separately for each organizational sector corresponds to Terenzini's tier of issues intelligence. Greater levels of advancement in different organizational sectors directly feed the IR office's knowledge of distinct institutional management areas. Furthermore, the framework explicitly combines analytical intelligence with issues intelligence, as the levels of development of the competency are embedded within the organizational sectors.

This new framework for IR presents several advantages. First, it incorporates the different dimensions of IR in a comprehensive unit while keeping them separate from one another to avoid confounding. Second, it adds a new dimension specifying what competencies are required to carry out the activities of IR instead of relying on a detailed inventory of the activities themselves. This higher level of abstraction of the competencies dimension is more synthetic, more comprehensive, and more resilient to environmental changes making some activities come and go. Third, the framework clarifies how the competencies can exist at different levels of development in accordance with the concept of knowledge management. This provides specificity and measurability. The framework specifies that exercising competencies in more sectors and for more functions also represents further development, because each addition entails a more comprehensive expertise. While sectoral development can be treated as additive because the competencies are evaluated for each, it is currently unclear how to treat the multiplicity of functions in a quantitative manner because there is overlap of competencies and sectoral content across functions. This is the subject of future work. A fourth advantage of the framework is that it enables comparisons of individual institutions to peer groups, across types of institutions, and at regional or international levels.

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