Where does IEP report?

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning reports to the President and supports the institutional assessment, planning, and research needs of the entire College. The reporting structure reflects recent trends in institutional effectiveness and research designed to inform planning and policies at the institutional level. In recent decades, institutional research offices evolved from a passive agency that responds to “requests for data” to the delivery of advanced quantitative analytics, diverse research design capabilities, and data analytics and visualization tools for end-users. Additionally, institutional researchers with advanced degrees or experience are expected to provide actionable recommendations that balance respect for institutional traditions and knowledge of market conditions driving changes in higher education regionally and as a whole. Iona College’s reporting structure for the OIEP reflects the effort to establish a fully mature institutional research, planning, and effectiveness function at Iona College in a short period of time.

What is the role of institutional research in the OIEP?

Traditional Institutional research and reporting provides the underlying data definitions and infrastructure to measure and enhance the performance of higher education institutions. Federal (IPEDS), state (NYSED), and voluntary (Common Data Set) submissions provide specifications useful in the design of longitudinal research data sets that support the College’s operations and resource planning as well as institutional effectiveness studies that seek to adhere to social scientific research principles. Institutional reporting remains a vital function that secures the College’s reputation in the public space and provides benchmark comparisons and trends for decision-making. The Office of IEP directs much of the institutional reporting for educational outcomes and verifies data submissions by other departments when appropriate.

How does OIEP view its role in the support of academic programs?

In 2005-06, I had the privilege of conducting a degree program assessment study for a large public university on the west coast that entailed interviews with dozens of program chairs. I came away from that research with the conclusion that program uniqueness and distinction are the currency of academic programming that many chairs and deans value the most. For the university’s administration, I suggested that these program values presented three areas of challenge to the administration. First, **programmatic agency**: are administrative policies and procedures empowering academic departments and chairs to define the unique benefits and distinct qualities of their programs to prospective students? Second, **administrative efficiency**: does the administration possess the know-how and resources to
provide an infrastructure that enables academic decision-makers to deliver their programs’ unique promise and distinctive outcomes to students? Third, collaborative partnerships: does the administration cultivate partnerships with academic leaders that advance the mission and planning of the institution in a manner consistent with the advancement of academic programming. Iona College administration has already taken great strides to meet these challenges as evidenced by its recent commitment to become a more distinguished, agile, and transparent institution of higher education over the next five years through the collaborative effort of strategic planning action teams and standing committees.

Does the OIEP respond to requests for data?

Yes, it does. The data that OIEP collects throughout the year and submits to external agencies will soon be available in reports through an OIEP public Web site on the Iona Web site. Internally, in the upcoming years, OIEP and IT plan to build out an internal resource or repository to provide reports, dashboards, visualization tools, and other resources to support both operational and strategic decision-making. In addition, ad-hoc requests for surveys, research requiring statistical analysis, or studies using the longitudinal data sets described above are always welcome. Such requests should be vetted and approved as a priority by a member of PC or a strategic planning action item committee.

When will OIEP have more staffing support?

The 2012-2013 Iona College Budget included two (2) positions which were not filled in the same academic year, the unfilled positions include an (1) Assistant Director of Institutional Assessment and Research and (2) a research analyst. OIEP plans to fill those positions during the summer months and early Fall 2013.

Does research now need IRB and OIEP approval?

For research with the Iona community by staff and administrators, the College often requires colleagues to communicate to the IRB and to review the informative materials on the IRB Web site regarding human subjects research. For instance, student survey research is human subjects research that receives an exemption from IRB approval as research in “an established or commonly accepted educational setting... and involves only normal education practices (HHS)”. Consequently, the institutional research must stay within the guidelines of all exemptions. For faculty and others with IRB approval and permission to use the administrative systems through the Provost’s Office, the OIEP will seek to accommodate requests as priorities and resources permit. Due to a recent decrease in response rates on student surveys, the College plans to implement a survey coordinating body and formal procedures to ensure that students are not unduly inundated with survey requests throughout the year that compromise our strategic survey initiatives such as National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and similar institutional benchmarking projects.

For additional questions, please contact Joe Wycoff, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, at jwycoff@iona.edu or 914-633-2373.