

MISSION, ORGANIZATION, AND SCOPE

Institutional Research and Planning Cornell University

16 February 2006

Mission – Contextualize institutional decision-making.

Organization – The office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) is a unit of the Division of Planning and Budget. Along with IRP, the University Budget Office; the Office of Capital Budget and Space Planning; the Office of Planning Information and Policy Analysis; and the Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment all report to the Vice President for Planning and Budget who reports to the Provost. The offices work collaboratively to serve the academic, planning, and budgeting objectives of the university.

Scope of Activities – The efforts of IRP are organized around four primary clusters of activities:

- A. IRP serves as the chief information clearinghouse for the university.
 - IRP accesses, utilizes, analyzes, and reports on data from all major university databases (HR/Payroll; Academic Personnel Database; Student Information System; etc.). When individuals inside or outside the university need [facts](#) and figures about the university, they turn to IRP for assistance in answering their queries.
 - IRP works closely with University Communications to provide the institution's various publics with accurate and appropriate information. The office maintains the official university electronic fact book and serves as the focal point for the majority of reporting to major governmental or other regulating agencies. IRP interfaces regularly with external publishers that utilize data for a variety of purposes, such as USN&WR, Peterson's, Barron's, etc. To meet many of these data needs IRP maintains an electronically available [Common Data Set](#).
 - IRP coordinates the university's participation in a variety of inter-institutional data exchanges.
- B. IRP conducts social science research about students, faculty, staff, and other activities at the request and for the benefit of the institution's executive staff, deans, trustees, and others to support regular, on-going institutional self-examination.
 - IRP utilizes its access to existing university data stores to conduct regular, ad hoc, and special analyses of demographic, workforce, and compensation trends; [graduation rates](#); compensation patterns, etc. These data are also utilized to model current and potential admissions, financial aid, and

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[enrollment patterns](#); faculty flows; tenure ratios; tenuring rates; and other similar matters.

- IRP conducts both quantitative and qualitative data gathering exercises to fuel analysis of issues of importance to the university. A major component of this work is done in collaboration with a consortium of selective, private universities and liberal arts colleges with whom Cornell most directly competes for students and faculty. Through the consortium, we participate in a regular program of [surveys](#) of freshmen, currently enrolled students, graduating seniors, alumni, and parents of currently enrolled students. Participating in this consortial research permits Cornell to gather longitudinal data about our students using standardized survey instruments that enhance the reliability and validity of the data collected. It also permits Cornell to reference its results with those of norm-groups of institutions.
- C. IRP conducts policy analysis to inform decision-making.
- The executive staff, deans, and trustees rely on IRP to engage in policy analysis – often in collaboration with other campus groups – that leads to recommendations in support of institutional decision making.
 - IRP is an active participant in committees and task forces. The office has investigated the effects of the end of mandatory retirement, the management of undergraduate enrollments, the relative effects of how admissions and financial aid are practiced at Cornell, the role and function of athletics on campus, the future direction of the social sciences, faculty work-life issues, etc.
- D. IRP facilitates and manages institutional planning and deliberative processes.
- IRP plays a coordinating role in shepherding the university through large-scale planning and review processes such as [reaccreditation](#) activities, NCAA certification, [dean searches](#), etc.