FOUR TYPES OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

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Office of Student Research and Campus Surveys
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CAIR 35th Annual Meeting
November 17-19, 2010
San Diego
A Look Back

• Beginnings....
• Sid Suslow: A Declaration on Institutional Research, AIR, 1972

“The quality of the institutional researcher lies in his ability to discern which methodologies are appropriate to the problem with which he is concerned: adroit application of advanced tools of management science may be grossly inappropriate when applied to certain problems of student behavior, and subtle psychological analysis may lack merit when applied to certain problems of institutional governance.”
Defining Characteristics of the IR Role

• The Dualities of IR (Volkwein, 1999)
  – The Internal Versus the External
  – Academic Versus Administrative Cultures
  – Institutional Versus Professional Roles

• The Irresolvable Tension of Authentic IR
The Four Faces of IR and Level of Education Required (Volkwein, 1999, 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative and Institutional</th>
<th>Formative and Internal— for Improvement</th>
<th>Summative and External— for Accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION AUTHORITY [low]</td>
<td>SPIN DOCTOR [moderate]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICY ANALYST [high]</td>
<td>SCHOLAR AND RESEARCHER [very high]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessing Volkwein’s Typology

• Formative/Internal/Improvement Versus Summative/External/Accountability too restrictive

• Rethinking the 2X2 model, especially in light of recent developments in the practice of IR
The Transformations of IR

• Technological transformation and resultant proliferation of institutional and survey data
  – Knowledge Manager as Fifth Face of IR
• Accountability, reporting requirements, and the widespread display of institutional data
• Emergence of Student Affairs and student-focused IR activity
• Growth of methodologically sophisticated academic research, especially on students
The Opposite Poles of IR

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ROLE

ACADEMIC RESEARCHER

ACCOUNTABILITY TECHNICIAN

ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ROLE
Four Types of Institutional Researcher

- ACADEMIC RESEARCHER
- PROGRAM EVALUATOR
- CAMPUS AUTHORITY
- ACCOUNTABILITY TECHNICIAN
# Approaches of the Four Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Technician</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Evaluator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative resource, interpretation of data and its interconnections, discovery, debunking, reactive spin in defense of institution</td>
<td>Visual display of data, precision, “error-free”, consistency, no statistical controls; proactive spin in public representation</td>
<td>Testing of hypothesis, academic research design, rigorous statistical controls, no spin, i.e., research ethics</td>
<td>Unbiased evaluation of outcomes, effects, rigorous statistical controls, no spin in presentation of results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Orientations to Enrollment Management (Kalsbeek, 2006, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARKET-CENTERED</th>
<th>ADMINISTRATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerned with broad, conceptual goals and purposes (markets, position, brand) of the institution</td>
<td>Concerned with practical efficiencies and effectiveness of processes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACADEMIC</th>
<th>STUDENT-FOCUSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerned with enhancement of learning and advancement of knowledge</td>
<td>Concerned for the experiences of individual students or groups of students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Alternative Modes of Inquiry
(Mitroff & Kilmann, 1978)

**CONCEPTUAL THEORIST [INTUITIVE/THINKING]**
- Multiple possibilities and paradigms; relationships of many variables; challenges assumptions; uncertainty; values **interestingness**

**ANALYTIC SCIENTIST [SENSING/THINKING]**
- Driven toward certainty; equates knowledge with precision, **accuracy**, and reliability; single, self-consistent paradigms

**CONCEPTUAL HUMANIST [INTUITIVE/FEELING]**
- Inquiry to benefit humanity as whole; problems defined by researcher’s own values; **aesthetics** of theory

**PARTICULAR HUMANIST [SENSING/FEELING]**
- Personalizes knowledge; inquiry to benefit individuals; not interested in theories; case studies; **action-oriented**
# Education and Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Academic Researcher</th>
<th>Campus Authority</th>
<th>Accountability Technician</th>
<th>Program Evaluator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Requirement</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues Intelligence</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual Intelligence</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Formal Statistics</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NOT USUALLY</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Role and Approach to Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO YOU ARE</th>
<th>ACADEMIC RESEARCHER</th>
<th>CAMPUS AUTHORITY</th>
<th>ACCOUNTABILITY TECHNICIAN</th>
<th>PROGRAM EVALUATOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>AUTHORITY</td>
<td>ANONYMOUS</td>
<td>EXPERT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCE GROUP</td>
<td>ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE</td>
<td>INSTITUTION</td>
<td>ADMINISTRATION</td>
<td>APPLIED ACADEMIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROACH TO DATA</td>
<td>MULTIVARIATE CONTROLS</td>
<td>NEW CONNECTIONS</td>
<td>DISPLAYS, METRICS</td>
<td>MEASURING EFFECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>NEW KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>INSTITUTIONAL AWARENESS</td>
<td>ACCOUNTABILITY</td>
<td>EVIDENCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
USES OF CAMPUS AUTHORITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERNAL</th>
<th>EXTERNAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUMMATIVE - Generating innovative reports and analysis, often in support of accountability</td>
<td>SUMMATIVE - Fierce defense of institution in face of misrepresentation or attack; “go to” resource for statistical and other information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMATIVE – Exploring new relationships; new understanding in support of intersubjectivity</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## USE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

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<th>EXTERNAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUMMATIVE - Evaluation of existing campus programs and practices</td>
<td>SUMMATIVE - Evaluation for external agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMATIVE – Foundation for campus assessment activities (Bers, 2008)</td>
<td>FORMATIVE – Consultation for grants and proposals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relationships Among the Four Types

- Pluralistic, multiples roles, activities
- Negative influence
- Positive influence, strengthens
Good Academic Research: What is it Good For?

• The better the research, the less useful?
• The tyranny of multivariate analysis
• Bringing the institution back in
Accountability and Its Discontents

- Accountability center stage: Good and bad news for IR
- Dilemma of no controls versus over-control
- Highly visible accountability data does not necessarily mean greater institutional self-understanding (or even accountability)
- Making accountability more (ac)countable
Campus Authority as Authentic IR

- Now that’s interesting!
- Institutional intelligence and memory
- Autonomy and trust
- From authority to author: Creating new knowledge
- The enormous potential of qualitative institutional research
The Neglect of Program Evaluation

• The challenging of looking inward
• Being tough-minded in an SF environment
• Getting serious about program evaluation
SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION

- Academic Research
- Campus Authority
- Accountability

Program Evaluation
UNBALANCED INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

ACADEMIC RESEARCH

CAMPUS AUTHORITY

PROGRAM EVALUATION

ACCOUNTABILITY
Sid Suslow once more:

• “There must be within the institutional research role a **sufficient degree of independence** which permutes it to fully examine and criticize the institution, including its purposes and values. ... Its uniqueness rests in the combination of its role as a **positive critic** concerned with the enhancement and advancement of higher education and its role as a researcher, quantifier, and assessor of quantitative and qualitative information about the institution.... An active institutional research role also requires the sustenance of an efficacious symmetry between activities prescribed by its service to the institution and opportunities for exploration in areas responsive to its own insights and interests. Creativity is an active process which **requires a degree of autonomy that must be real and sufficient**.... Without this fundamental ingredient, the composition of the institutional research role lacks potency.”
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

• Best of times, worst of times?
• Authentic institutional research and the learning community

• Comments, Questions, Suggestions (please!)

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