

CIE UPDATE

The Center for Institutional Effectiveness

Spring 2019 • Issue 12

Moments in Assessment History: The 1980s and the Issue of Quality

Last year (2018) marked the 35th anniversary of the report *A Nation at Risk*. Released in 1983, *A Nation at Risk* marked, according to many higher education scholars, a major shift in the national debate on higher education. While the 1960s and 1970s were all about access, it was during the 1980s that the dialogue shifted from access to quality.

This began in 1981 when Terrel Bell, Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education, established a National Commission on Excellence in Education. The Commission's 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, attracted worldwide attention. Here, for the first time, higher education was characterized as "a rising tide of mediocrity" that threatened America's future.

Bell then established another group which issued a report in 1984 entitled *Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education*. *Involvement in Learning* emphasized student involvement in the teaching/learning process. Quality in higher education was determined to require, among other things, "first-rate assessment of learning procedures" with regular feedback.

In 1985, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities appointed a commission to study the role and future of public colleges and universities. This report, released in 1986 and titled *To Secure the Blessings of Liberty*, articulated the need for institutional student outcomes and determinants for institutional effectiveness.

The 1990s furthered the national dialogue on student outcomes and institutional effectiveness. Stay tuned for future installments of "Moments in Assessment History." ■

"Where Can I Get the Data I Need?"

We all know the importance of data – from using data to make educated decisions and influence change, to planning and tracking classroom outcomes and student success. Often, the question, "Where can I get the data I need?" arises. Well, you will be happy to know that Bergen Community College has this covered! We are fortunate to have some excellent data gatherers and crunchers here who not only can get you the data you need, but can teach you how to gather some of it yourself!

While the professionals in Institutional Research (IR) have the primary task of handling mandated reporting – the stuff we must report – to IPEDS, Middle States and various federal, state, and local agencies, as well as providing institutional data for non-mandatory reporting including the Fact Book, National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), and Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), IR also handles internal projects. If you are looking for data about program reviews, retention and persistence trends of a particular student cohort, or need assistance with the preparation, execution and analysis of surveys, you can submit a request to Institutional Research by going to <http://www.bergen.edu/about-us/institutional-effectiveness/institutional-research/data-request-form>.

For day-to-day internal ad hoc reports and data, the go-to person is Pam Ricatto. Pam, along with her colleagues in IT, can prepare up-

to-date data to track enrollment and retention numbers. They can also set up auto-generated scheduled reports to help areas track their students' activity on a weekly or daily basis. In addition, if you are interested in knowing how many students in your program have enough credits to graduate next semester or are curious to know how many students in your program with a GPA over 3.0 began with a developmental math placement, Pam Ricatto is the data guru who will produce that report for you. To submit a request to IT to receive a scheduled report to improve student outcomes or just a one-time inquiry, send an email request to the Help Desk helpdesk@bergen.edu. Put "data request" in the subject line.

For those of us who want to be a part of the data gathering experience, there is training through the Center for Teaching and Learning (CITL). "Creating Savedlists in Colleague" is a workshop that addresses how to identify the data needed to create the parameters for a savedlist and the syntax used to create the savedlist. Savedlists are lists of student IDs that can be saved and used to compare data from the same groups of students from year to year or for a one time inquiry. Class offerings can be found at <http://ww3.bergen.edu/pages1/pages/349.aspx>.

So, if you haven't already done so, reach out to these areas and see what the data can do for you. ■

The Impact of Classroom Instruction and Assessment Practices on Student Retention

Research suggests that college faculty have a strong impact on student retention. In the classroom, instructors can enhance the academic experience of underprepared college students by varying how information is presented and diversifying planned assessments and activities. At Bergen, faculty can deeply impact whether or not students remain engaged or feel out of place in the classroom.

In *The Courage to Teach*, Palmer Parker describes how students should be encouraged to relate the information presented in their courses to their own life experiences. Students' "small voices" are relevant and should be incorporated with the "big voices", which are the instructor, the textbook and the theory and research related to the discipline. Instructional practices that provide students with opportunities to draw on their background and experience lead to more confident participation and increased engagement. When students feel they belong in the academic setting, they are more likely to persist.

Research shows us that the majority of community college students do not spend time on campus outside of class. Once class is over, they leave campus to attend to other obligations. In his 2008 research, Vincent Tinto concluded that if college instructors do not reach students in the classroom and, at times, reshape students' academic experiences, they will miss the great majority of students who need extra support. Tinto's research points to the classroom as the center of student education and life. It can be viewed as the primary target for institutional action, greatly affecting student retention. While institution-wide support is available for our students, retention can

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be deeply impacted through the quality and quantity of interaction between faculty and students. ■

The Joy and Woe of Program Review

A well-executed internal program review can be helpful in bringing together evidence of progress towards meeting goals set by an administrative or academic area, as well as for planning future initiatives. It also can result in appreciating the strengths and pitfalls of the area of study. However, the internal review process can be a burdensome job of setting up cohesive teams, going through iterations of self-study documents and getting ready for yet another external reviewer.

To ensure your program review goes well and leads to improvements of your area, here are some tips on how to lead the program review process:

- Create a review team that represents the area of study.
- Prepare a detailed self-study to identify successes and failures.
- Share drafts with people who are NOT on the review committee to get regular feedback.
- Choose an external reviewer who is familiar with the context of your program.
- Be realistic in setting up expectations from the end results.
- Request a formal response from the dean or vice president who asked for the review.

An effective program review calls for a celebration of the accomplishments, and results in a renewed focus on dealing with any shortcomings. The value of the internal review process is in the conversations with likeminded colleagues, the chance to gauge where you are on the spectrum and an opportunity to plan for the future. ■

Source: Jane S. Halonen and Dana S. Dunn, *Avoiding the Potholes of Program Review*, February 27, 2017, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Avoiding-the-Potholes-of/239330>

Institutional Research Data Reports – Spring 2019

Every semester Bergen Community College's Institutional Research (IR) department puts out a number of data reports, data briefs, and survey reports on their website. Below is a list of the major reports that IR created in Spring 2019, a short description of each, and where they can be found on the website.

- **Bergen Community College Fact Book 2018 – 2019** – presents data relating to enrollment, graduates, faculty and other personnel, college finances and demographics. *About Us > Institutional Effectiveness > Institutional Research > Fact Books*
- **Graduation/Transfer Rate Report** – shows the graduation and transfer rates for degree or certificate seeking students who started in the fall semester three years prior (150%) to the graduation/transfer date. Available for Full-Time students and Part-Time students from Fall 2011 – Fall 2015. *About Us > Institutional Effectiveness > Institutional Research > Graduation/Transfer Rate Report*

- **Fall 2017 Program Dashboards** – highlights enrollment, demographic, and outcome information for the various programs available at Bergen Community College. Developed and prepared using IR's new Blackboard Analytics Data Warehouse. *About Us > Institutional Effectiveness > Institutional Research > Program Dashboards > 2017 Program Dashboards*
- **Cohort Outcomes by Race/Ethnicity** – a RAV Report (showing Recycled data in an accessible and visual way) that presents persistence, graduation, and transfer rates for students who started in either Fall 2014 or Fall 2015. *About Us > Institutional Effectiveness > Institutional Research > Quick Facts*
- **Spring Enrollment Trends Report** – presents ten-year trend analyses for Spring enrollments and credit totals. *About Us > Institutional Effectiveness > Institutional Research > Quick Facts*
- **Retention Rate Charts** – calculates the retention rate from semester to semester of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking student cohorts as well as first-time, part-time, degree-seeking student cohorts from Fall 2010 to Fall 2018. *About Us > Institutional Effectiveness > Institutional Research > Quick Facts*
- **Data Boxes Report** – includes enrollment information for the past five fall semesters, number of degrees awarded for the past five academic years and number of students who transferred from the program to another 2 or 4 year college over the same five year period. *About Us > Institutional Effectiveness > Institutional Research > Reports*
- **The CCSSE Series** – highlights key themes from the Spring 2018 administration of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement including students' perceptions on college, their interaction with support services, and their financial burdens. *About Us > Institutional Effectiveness > Institutional Research > Surveys*
- **The Stop-Out Survey Report** – is administered to students who had enrolled at Bergen Community College in a given semester who had not re-enrolled in a following semester. The intent of the survey is to learn the various reasons why these students failed to return to Bergen. *About Us > Institutional Effectiveness > Institutional Research > Surveys*
- **The Graduate Transfer Experience Report** – presents data collected from a ten-question survey sent to graduates of Bergen who had transferred to a four-year institution. *About Us > Institutional Effectiveness > Institutional Research > Surveys*
- **The New Student Survey Report** – is an entrance survey that seeks to understand the educational journey of our new students. Questions focus around college perceptions, college preparation, early college experience, future plans and high school experiences. *About Us > Institutional Effectiveness > Institutional Research > Surveys*
- **Fall 2018 STEM Majors** – is a RAV report that shows basic demographic information, enrollment trends, and outcomes information for the students enrolled in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) programs in Fall 2018. *About Us > Institutional Effectiveness > Institutional Research > Quick Facts*

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