

Institutional Research at Goucher College

The mission of the Office of Institutional Research is to provide the Goucher College community (top administration, board of trustees, staff, faculty, and students) with accurate, useful and timely data and information that supports decision-making. The Office currently comprises two and one half positions: a full-time Director of Institutional Research (Dr. Gail Wisan); a full-time Research Analyst (Dr. Edward Duggan); and one half-time Research Analyst (Ms. Tina White). All of Goucher College's official numbers emanate from the Office of Institutional Research. This chapter focuses on six of the Office's current activities:

1. To report officially to external agencies;
2. To produce the annual Fact Book;
3. To produce Dashboard Indicators for Board of Trustee meetings three times a year;
4. To assess the outcomes of College programs;
5. To provide analytic services, such as enrollment projections, to the Enrollment Management Division;
6. To use environmental scans to support strategic planning;
7. To consult on the conversion to a new student information database system.

1. Official Reporting:

The Office of Institutional Research (IR) is responsible for the College's official reporting. Institutional Research completes or in a few cases oversees federal reporting.

The IR Office completes the Department of Education's Integrated *Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)* surveys (i.e., fall, winter, and spring), the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) surveys, the Maryland Independent Colleges and Universities (MICUA) surveys, and the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) surveys, and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's (MSCHE) annual profile data questions.

2. Fact Book

Dr. Wisan joined Goucher College as Director of Institutional Research in August 2001. In Winter 2002, Institutional Research produced the College's first Fact Book, *Goucher College Fact Book, Fall 2001 and Fiscal Year 2001* (49 pages), followed in Spring 2003 by an expanded edition covering fall 2002 and fiscal year 2002 (64 pages), and a third edition in Spring 2004 covering fall 2003 and fiscal year 2003 (83 pages). To the established sections on Enrollment, Degree Data, Graduation Rate and Retention Rate, Faculty, and Institutional Data, the Office added the following for the 2004 edition:

- a. A new section on Full-Time Equivalent Students;
- b. A chart on first-time full-time first-year cohorts by SAT, ethnicity, gender, admissions status of the cohort at various stages;
- c. New charts and tables on graduation rates by race and gender;
- d. A table on class by gender for the current year;
- e. Tables on multiple majors;
- f. An expanded appendix including more national data on enrollment by major and gender;

- g. An expanded Faculty section, now also including staff data.

The annual Fact Books provide much more than just the current year's data. The majority of tables and charts include five to ten years of trend data. Please see the Appendix to this report for a copy of the current edition of Fact Book, *Goucher College Fact Book Fall 2003 and Fiscal Year 2003*. A copy of last year's Fact Book is also included to illustrate how the Fact Book has grown and developed. Also, at the end of this chapter, you can review selected Goucher College trend data: Goucher's undergraduate headcount enrollment broken down by ethnicity and gender, full-time equivalent student counts for both undergraduate and graduate students, graduate headcount broken down by ethnicity and gender, bachelor's degree recipients by program and division, graduate degrees awarded, retention and graduation rates for all undergraduates and broken down by ethnicity and gender. For a deeper and wider view of Goucher's statistical data, please see the Fact Books in the Appendix.

3. Dashboard Indicators

Sanford Ungar became Goucher College's president in July of 2001. The next month, he tasked the new Director of Institutional Research to create a Dashboard Indicator for the College. Dr. Wisan's Dashboard Indicator shows the highest, lowest, and current value for a period of six years for each of over 30 indicators. The Dashboard is currently under revision in order to make it an even more useful tool for strategic management. Please see the Winter 2004 and January 2002 Dashboard Indicators in the Appendix to this chapter.

4. Assessment

a. Alumnae/i Survey

The Career Development Office has done short surveys on jobs and postgraduate education in the past. Since 2002, however, the Office of Institutional Research has conducted an alumnae/i survey that included all the core questions required by the state of Maryland through the Maryland Higher Education Commission. In 2002, Institutional Research (IR) surveyed all bachelor's degree recipients in the class of 2001, and in 2003 IR surveyed all the bachelor's degree recipients in the class of 2002.

See the Appendix to this chapter for the 2003 Alumnae Survey; profiles of the classes of 2002 and 2001 which includes Goucher College students' outcomes data related to jobs and graduate school and related alumnae/i satisfaction items.

b. National Survey of Student Engagement

The Office of Institutional Research oversees the administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement and interprets the resulting data. NSSE has been administered to freshmen and seniors in the spring of 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003. The NSSE data has provided Goucher with various types of information including academic engagement and student satisfaction. The IR Office has generally worked closely with the Vice President and Dean of Students who has presented this data at the Board meetings and at faculty chair meetings.

c. Cooperative Institutional Research Program and the College Student Survey

Goucher College has participated in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Survey for decades. In spring 2004, Dr. Wisan and Dr. Edmonds (Vice President and Dean of Students) decided to participate in the College Student Survey (CSS) for the first time. Dr. Wisan and Dr. Edmonds selected a survey tool that could be linked to the CIRP data and which would facilitate assessing the impact of Goucher's programs, activities, and culture on four cohorts of first year students. UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) will link student's responses to the CSS to their prior CIRP survey data and provide an analysis of how the cohorts have changed over time. HERI will also provide Goucher with comparative data on the changes experienced by comparable cohorts at other liberal arts colleges. The CSS will be linked to Goucher College's CIRP survey data for four cohorts (first-time full-time first-year students in 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003). The CSS survey will be sent out from Dean Edmonds but the Office of Institutional Research will administer the CSS and provide further analysis beyond the reports provided by HERI. The IR Office also plans to use the CSS data, the linked CIRP data, and data from the National Clearinghouse (i.e., on students who leave) for further analysis of retention and attrition.

d. The IR Office has also contributed to assessment of individual departments and occasionally divisions. The Office has contributed headcount data on majors, degree recipients, and enrollments.

e. The IR Office has gathered peer data for Goucher College. Some data has been gathered from publications such as U.S. News, which provides some basic data on

Goucher's peers. A considerable amount of data has also been gathered by using the IPEDS peer analysis tool. IR has gathered data using the IPEDS peer analysis tool on both the "traditional" set of peers, which was assembled prior to the existence of the current IR Office and also on potential peers who have emerged using the IPEDS peer analysis tool. The IR Office plans to continue to update the peer data. Both the Dean of Students Office and the Office of Enrollment Management have used this peer data.

5. Enrollment Management

Dr. Wisan generates enrollment projections for the Vice President of Enrollment Management Roberto Noya and the Vice President of Finance Tom Phizacklea. Using past patterns of retention and current class size, her projections have closely approximated actual class sizes. Her tables and charts focus on cohort retention and graduation rates overall as well as on retention rates and graduation rates by ethnicity and gender. See the Appendix to this chapter for trend data on retention and graduation rates.

6. Environmental Scans to Support Strategic Planning

The Office of Institutional Research supports strategic planning by providing environmental scans on strategic topics. For example, when the Strategic Planning Committee and President Ungar wished to explore the 4-1-4-calendar system, the IR Office supported this effort by gathering and charting information on which schools had implemented such a calendar. Other options were also documented.

7. Student Information System Implementation

Institutional Research staff serve on committees related to the implementation of the new Student Information System. The Institutional Research Office is contributing to the database implementation in many ways, especially with regard to data mapping, coding requirements, and reporting needs.