

IRC Minutes

Friday, October 30, 2015

1. Updates from meeting with US News (Colin Chellman, OIRA)

- OIRA and Macaulay had a meeting with US News. The goal was to see if US News was open to having an Honors' College category.
- Questions about the feasibility of counting the number of programs/colleges may be added to the 600 item survey.
- Ryan Sparrow from the Law School attended.
- There was a long discussion of the reputation ranking. US News is not interested in changing the rankings on the main list. CUNY believes there is a systematic disadvantage for CUNY, but they are working for improvements on the specialized list.
- Missing data on high school rank is apparently imputed by US News based on the mean/standard deviation. We now have greater access to raw high school GPA through the research alliance with the DoE, and may be able to help improve this.
- They have a comparison tool for colleges by subscription. OIRA is looking into this.

2. Dashboard demonstration and discussion (Elisa Hertz, Guttman)

- Guttman selected to buy a private Tableau server so that only those with secure access can review it.
- City Tech and BMCC are also using Tableau and shared some of the public versions. So far, City Tech is using the free version while BMCC has two desktop clients and a server. The discussion followed concerned issues about data stewardship, and who will be using the dashboard software. This also brings up the discussion of whether IT, IR, or the registrar is responsible for the data or the dashboard.
- Data feeds from the 805 never match, but at Lehman, they now have an IR Enrollment Dashboard from CBIL that is uploaded to the same OBIEE dashboard.
- Lehman's fact book will be up on Tableau by the end of the week. (Tableau Public)
- Hunter provided a worksheet called "Why don't my numbers match?" which has been helpful in explaining the data sources to others on campus.
- Tableau is not ADA compliant, so we are not sure what the ramifications of this are.

3. Access to IRDB (Eva Chan, Medgar Evers)

- Concerns were expressed that allowing too much access to CBIL or IRDB may result in having some data confusion. Are there “threats” from other users? More and more people are asking for this access.
- We are talking about the democratization of data. IR knows how to bring data together from disparate sources. As IR professionals, we need to be able expand our role so that we understand each area. We provide the story, not just the data.
- Data governance is important to establish across the campus. The Wiki tries to include all the rules and definitions for IRDB.
- This is a broader issue concerning the role of IR in research and reporting. Central OIRA has developed criteria for accepting data requests. They will distribute this.
- Are we doing real research? Or just counting and descriptive statistics. We do have the advantage that we have data on the entire population and not just a sample. What does IR “research” look like? Is it more of a portrait or a study? We have a harder time proving causality, but we do trend analysis, for example.
- Chris Efthimiou knows of a typology of research that is done. He will distribute it to the listserv or put it on the Wiki.
- Zun shows an example: a study of course availability. We don’t know why students have trouble getting the courses they want, and we can take this data to the registrar, to the students, and raise hypotheses. It is a team process.
- Idea: Bring our best research project to share with the group.
- There was also a call for more campus presentations at IR meetings.
- Princeton review: They have requested Hunter to give a survey to everyone, they did not have IRB, and Hunter did not get to own the data. Can we refuse? There was general agreement that this survey is not particularly good, and that too many surveys are problematic.

Next Council Meeting

November 20, 2015