Evaluation and Assessment of Your Organization

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Organizational Assessment

• What are we going to discuss today …
  – How do you go about assessing the organization?
  – What is the value in benchmarking?
  – Once I have my data, what do I do with it?
  – How do you communicate this to your colleagues?
  – How do we use organizational assessment in strategic planning?
Case Study Discussion
What is the value in benchmarking?

• As a leader, benchmarking will give you an idea of where your unit (center, department, college, university) stands within a certain peer group.

• Benchmarking will allow you to form a solid base on “where you are now” so that you have a good idea of “where you want to go in the future”.
Dos and Don’ts

• Do
  – Look at several data sets
  – Examine the data to see if they make any sense
  – Look at multiyear trends
  – Ask respected colleagues what they use for quantitative and qualitative comparisons

• Don’t
  – Jump to a quick conclusion
  – Get overly concerned with a single entity
Sources of Data

• University Level
  – The Center for Measuring University Performance (Arizona State U) - http://mup.asu.edu/
  – Southern Region Education Board - http://www.sreb.org/
Sources of Data

• College Level
Sources of Data

• Department Level
  – National Research Council (NRC) - U.S. Research Doctorate Programs -
    http://www7.nationalacademies.org/resdoc/index.html
  – U.S. News and World Report -
    http://www.usnews.com/sections/rankings
  – National Science Foundation WebCASPAR tool -
    http://webcaspar.nsf.gov/index.jsp
  – Chronicle of Higher Education (subscription required) -
    http://chronicle.com/special/
  – Vanguard College Rankings (subscription required) -
    http://www.postmaterial.org/collegerankings/index.html
Example Benchmarking Information
Benchmarking Institutions

• **Peer-Plus**
  - Texas A&M University
  - University of Florida

• **Peer**
  - Clemson University
  - Auburn University
  - Louisiana State University
Data References
## Overall Research Ranking - Total Research Expenditures

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Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

- **Research University - High Activity**
  - Universities of Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi; Auburn, MSU

- **Research University - Very High**
  - Universities of Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina, Tennessee; Louisiana State University; and Vanderbilt University.
Current Carnegie Ranking

* MSU
### MSU Carnegie Rankings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>S&amp;E R&amp;D Expenditures (1000s)</th>
<th>Non-S&amp;E R&amp;D Expenditures (1000s)</th>
<th>S&amp;E Research Staff*</th>
<th>Doctorates: Humanities</th>
<th>Doctorates: Social Sciences</th>
<th>Doctorates: STEM</th>
<th>Doctorates: Other Fields</th>
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How do you communicate this to your colleagues?

- Carefully prepare your background material.
- Do thorough research - know where the data is from and what it represents.
- Balance your presentation with data and summary information.
- Be optimistic in your presentation - not “gloom and doom”.
- The larger the group - the less detail in the message.
Department Level Assessments

- Can be done at a retreat setting or a set of faculty meetings.
- Provide materials in advance to allow some time for people to look over them.
- Be sure to provide some sort of summary - don’t get lost in the data.
College Level Assessments

• Can use a variety of forms of communication -
  – Direct email to faculty and staff members
  – Presentations to various groups (departments or specific centers)
  – Don’t assume that a presentation made to your leadership team will “percolate” downward - this will NOT happen uniformly
University Level Assessments

• Must use all forms of communication - email, meetings, and possibly print media.
• Cannot over-communicate.
• Remember - it is not how you want to present the information which is important - but rather what will be the most effective way to reach your audience.
Example - Communications

- Email - Dear Colleague Letters done by ORED

April 2007

Dear MSU Faculty and Staff:

Greetings from the Office of Research and Economic Development! We are in the “home stretch” for the end of this academic year, and I know how busy everyone gets. I remember well all of the grading that had always accumulated by the end of the semester, and I wish you luck getting everything done in preparation for graduation in early May.

One of the things I really like about working at a university is the opportunity to attend a wide variety of different events. This weekend, in conjunction with other Super Bulldog Weekend events, the Library held its annual Charlie A. Tompkins Reggae Music Festival on campus. During the festival, world-class musicians come to campus for a weekend to play reggae music – which featured several outstanding piano players playing upbeat music (think of Scott Joplin and music from the movie the Sting!). So, next year, when the Reggae Music Festival comes around I would encourage you to participate in some of the program and hear some exceptional musical performances.

One of the major roles of the Office of Research and Economic Development is to provide research services that will allow each of you to pursue your scholarly work. In order to do this well, it is important that we find creative ways to obtain feedback from you on how well we are doing. In an attempt to figure this out, we have initiated a two-step process that we hope will help us to identify both areas of excellence in ORED and areas for improvement. In the first step, we identified those small (10 persons each) focus groups that represented a broad cross-section of the university research community. Dr. Jay Richardson, Dean of the College of Business and Industry, developed a set of questions that the sent with each focus group to assess knowledge of and quality of various support services offered by ORED. We took the notes from these meetings, and are using these to develop a campus wide survey to obtain more focused feedback.

The Social Science Research Center (SSRC) is helping us to put together and administer the survey to the university research community... The SSRC will build an email list for the web-based survey, and will send out a letter to the email list on the end of April. It will be anonymous like our campus surveys. However, you will receive an email from the SSRC asking you to fill out the survey. A week later, the system will automatically send another email to anyone on the email list who has not filled in the survey, and will repeat this a couple of times. Those who are looking at the email addresses of those who have not filled in this is not a problem. Following this procedure, we will then generate a report which will be posted on the ORED website and will be summarized in a Dear Colleague Letter which describes not only the feedback, but what action items are warranted from the survey results. While I know that some of you may be “surveyed out”, I would like to encourage you to help us to do a better job by taking 15 minutes and filling this out.
Example - Communications
Case Study Discussion - Part 2
First Steps - How do you go about assessing an academic organizational unit?

• Select a data source or sources to use.
• Collect the data and put it into an easy to manipulate format (spreadsheets work well).
• Start manipulating the data to see what trends emerge - try experimenting with different graphs to see how to best represent trends or key points.
Once I have my data, what do I do with it?

• Once you have completed your trend analysis, put it into some sort of presentation format.

• Discuss your findings with your units, and have some open discussion on where you currently are.

• Sleep on it - and look at it after a fresh start.
How do we use organizational assessment in strategic planning?

• As a leader, this is a CRITICAL first step.
• In order to do effective strategic planning, you must have a clear idea of where you are now.
• You can then use this information to help to focus on where you want to go in the future, and what things you would like to do.
Kirk’s Observations…

• Often, in academia, we (unit basis - department; college; university) tend to over estimate our standing in the academic world.

• The reality of our current standing can be very difficult for many (faculty and alumni) to accept.

• Realistic assessments/benchmarking is an often overlooked first step in strategic planning.

• Often, with certain leaders, institutional change can be like holding back a tree branch - once you let it go, it tends to return to its original place.
Questions?

More Information: http://www.research.msstate.edu/