Skidmore College
Office of Institutional Research

Mission Statement

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) at Skidmore College conducts research that supports the College's mission of preparing liberally educated graduates. Research informed by the College's goals, aspirations, and strategic priorities assists the College's administrative and faculty leadership in planning, decision-making, resource allocation and policy development. The findings from OIR studies and assessments support continuing efforts to sustain and improve the educational quality and operational effectiveness of Skidmore College.

[As OIR is a recent addition to the administrative structure of the College, the information that follows is intended to clarify the role of OIR. It is expected that the guidelines below may evolve over time.]

The Office will accomplish its mission through the following:

A) **External & Internal Reporting**:
   a. **Reporting externally:** Collects, analyzes and provides data to comply with regulations, enhance visibility of the College, or fulfill data sharing agreements. Although a good deal of this reporting focuses on compliance, the efforts of this work should have value beyond fulfilling accountability requirements. OIR will ensure such work is used for internal understanding when possible.
      i. **Mandatory:** Federal, State and Accreditation reporting (IPEDS, NYSED, Middle States, NCAA, etc.)
      ii. **Voluntary:** Publisher guidebook surveys and associations (US News, Princeton Review, NAICU UCAN, CDS, etc.)
      iii. **Associations:** Consortia or data-sharing agreements (NAICU, CICU, New York 6, etc.)
      iv. **Other compliance:** Miscellaneous compliance reporting (bonds, license fees, etc.)

      Note: Mandated or voluntary reporting related to one administrative area, should be fulfilled by that area (e.g., NACUBO Endowment Survey, CAE Voluntary Support of Education Survey, CUPA Human Resources Survey, etc.).

   b. **Reporting internally:** Produces official enrollment numbers, routine reports, and fulfills requests.
      i. **College facts and IR web site:** A standard set of data elements made available to the Skidmore community or the world. The IR website is actively viewed by faculty, staff, prospective/current students and parents. It contains the official enrollment figures of the College.
      ii. **Ad hoc or routine requests from college constituencies:** This is largely an informational or monitoring function. For reports that require historical trends, analysis, or cross administrative structures, OIR should be involved.

      Note: Requests for lists, mailing labels, and simple summaries within an individual administrative area should be fulfilled by the appropriate administrative area (e.g., Registrar, Admissions, Res Life, OCSE, etc.).

B) **Special Projects & Planning:** Conducts specialized research studies in support of campus priorities and goals that inform the concerns of the senior administration, college committees, etc. An emphasis is placed on long-term planned or exploratory strategic research and analysis that cannot be performed by other areas of the College. OIR assigns priority to research that may be useful rather than simply interesting to know.

Examples include peer comparisons & benchmarking, decision support studies, white papers, department & program review assistance, teaching load reports, admitted student research, teaching evaluations, pilot teaching evaluations, etc.

C) **Research & Development:** Conducts research and provides support to ensure institutional effectiveness.
   a. **Strategic survey research:** Conduct, coordinate, and report on survey research. It may be intentional, planned or even exploratory.
        i. **Surveys fully administered by IR:** NSSE, CIRP, Withdrawn Survey, ASQ, HEDS Alumni Survey, etc.
        ii. **Support for other institutional surveys:** COACHE, CHAS, etc.
   b. **Institutional effectiveness & assessment:** Generates data and reports to document and support assessment for internal use and external reporting.
        i. Provides technical support, guidance, and consultation to assist departments, programs, student support services, and administrative offices in assessment of student learning outcomes, general education outcomes, and administrative objectives.
        ii. Guides, coordinates, and supports Middle States accreditation activities (provides data, data analysis, research, and writing).
        iii. Supports and facilitates faculty-driven program reviews.
   c. **Grant support:** Works with various offices and constituencies to provide accurate data for grant applications (e.g., Teagle Grant for the Sophomore Initiative, HHMI, etc.).

D) **Data Management & Support:** The IR staff must spend time understanding and managing data to complete all reports and studies. It is essential that OIR data are correct, accessible and maintained properly. OIR routinely works with other offices (e.g., Registrar, IT, Admissions, etc.) to ensure data are accurate. An understanding of reporting software and proficiency with College databases is equally important. OIR maintains the data warehouse for census reporting and several other internal databases for tracking retention, tracking projects, etc. It also draws data from other databases (e.g., DOF Main Access Database, Admissions, etc.).