

# Annual Report

For the year ending: 6/30/2003

Student Affairs

Institutional Research

Submitted by: Doherty, Francis Joseph

## **Executive Summary:**

The Office of Institutional Research had a good, but challenging year. The migration of the office from the old Division of Institutional Effectiveness to the new division went quite well. This was helped by the fact that the director had worked with Dr. Menard in IE. We successfully migrated the Web-based Planning Database to Version 2.0. By the end of this fiscal year Version 2.0 was running with the majority of desired functionality. All current users were successfully trained in the new version.

The major success in planning is that we are now able to monitor how well the university is or is not achieving its Defining Characteristics. Before the creation of the Planning Database the majority of efforts went into simply assembling all objectives into a common format before we could review what had been accomplished by DC. Because of the enormity of that effort, we were unable to address quality and analyze accomplishments by Defining Characteristic in any meaningful and timely way. Now, with the PD, we can easily create reports for senior management that show what has been accomplished. Now we are attempting to improve the quality of objectives, expected outcomes, and evaluation/assessment methods. Another success in planning was the creation of a database to deploy the university's performance measures. More than 50 specific measures can be accessed through OIR's Web site. Also in the spring the President and vice presidents adopted achievement indicators for each Defining Characteristic. During the summer and fall of 2003 the data on each indicator will be assembled and presented to the President and vice president for their review. Hopefully, efforts will be taken to develop criteria for success for each indicator. These achievement indicators are likely to be the main way JMU will demonstrate at its Centennial how well it has achieved its Defining Characteristics.

All of OIR's reports were completed on time. Two major studies of the economic impact of JMU on the local community and an historical study of the changes in students prior to their enrollment were completed. The office's Web site was updated to be more consistent with the division and the university. The site receives more than 30 visits daily. Our major publications such as the Statistical Summary are viewed frequently. Our quarterly newsletters are viewed by more than 300 persons. We migrated the majority of our major databases from Access to SQL, a major accomplishment that is already having a major impact on our ability to generate data for the university community. We gained knowledge in using the Web to deploy data from databases.

The office continues to save JMU a significant amount of money with its Web-based surveys. This year we helped Affirmative Action, the Center for Multicultural and International Student Services, and Orientation with four major surveys. If these surveys had been done via paper the cost would have exceeded \$25,000.

The quality of the objectives, expected outcomes, evaluation/assessment strategies, and documented use of results for the majority of offices at JMU is a major concern for us. We have knowledge and skill in training/assisting offices to improve, but we have been unable to make much progress to date. In 2003-04 the office plans to work with a group of representatives across the divisions to develop a strategy to train staff. UPA and OIR staff also have significant skill and experience in program evaluation, but have not been successful in gaining access to offices to help them improve these skills. We have offered assistance to several areas, but the offers have not been accepted. Therefore, several important areas of the university are not in compliance with the stated policy on program reviews.

We believe that 2003-04 presents challenges to the office, but the quality of the staff in the office and support from our AVP and Vice President will help us to achieve the major objectives of the unit.

## **Unit Mission Statement:**

The Office of Institutional Research assists the university in the pursuit of its mission by dynamically and efficiently supporting decision-making, accountability and planning.

Our primary functions are:

- developing, collecting, and communicating measures of institutional effectiveness
- providing management information and policy analysis
- promoting the university's planning process
- compiling and reporting mandated information

We value honesty, integrity, accuracy, timeliness, responsiveness, community, innovation, accountability and foresight.

**Changes in the Mission Statement:**

In July the office's mission statement was slightly changed to bring it more into line with our new division: Student Affairs, University Planning and Analysis.

**Personal & Professional Accomplishments:**

This was a year of significant professional accomplishments in OIR.

The director and his administrative assistant took a course in VB Script and ASP in order to help the office automate major processes via database applications. This helped with the deployment of significantly more data to our customers.

The assistant director served on the Virginia Association for Management Analysis and Planning board and was responsible for that organization's planning for the spring conference that occurred at JMU. The conference was very successful.

The director conducted a workshop on evaluating administrative units at the annual conference of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in San Antonio, Texas.

The director served as an evaluator for SACS in Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at the University of South Alabama in November. He also served as a consultant on evaluation for the University of Southern Mississippi.

**Major Accomplishments (Objectives and Results) by unit for the past fiscal year:**

**Characteristic:** The university will follow a planning process that emphasizes accountability and ties resource allocation and initiatives to the concepts of institutional effectiveness

**Objective:** Provide for, and train users in, a functional and usable Planning Database.

**June Exec:** Version 2.0 of the PD has been released and all users are being trained. We are working with the division heads to identify users who should be added for 2003-04. The goal is for all unit heads, including instructional, to use the PD for their annual report for 2003-04. This will necessitate a significant amount of time and training for next year.

**Objective:** Improve the usability of OIR's 2002-03 Web site by integrating it with the Division of Student Affairs, University Planning and Analysis, integrating the information from the old Division of Institutional Effectiveness, redesigning the interface, adding pages, studies and functionality.

**June Exec:** The revised OIR web site was deployed in April 2003. We have had many positive comments about the site. Will continue to seek feedback about how to improve the site and additional information to add.

**Objective:** Increase the knowledge of the university community about major achievement indicators for the Defining Characteristics and other important measures.

**June Exec:** A performance measures Web site was completed in the fall. More than 500 visited since October 30. It contains sections on current performance measures of JMU and peer institutions. It also has financial measures traditionally requested by the President.

The President and vice presidents also developed achievement indicators for the university in the spring. Data are being collected to provide a summary of accomplishments for each indicator. These will be provided to senior management during the summer for their review. Additional data may be required at that time.

OIR also developed a list of approximately 40 major changes that occurred since the early 1990s. These were provided to senior management and a Research Notes has been developed.

**Objective:** Improve the quality, quantity, and accessibility of University data from OIR's databases

**June Exec:** The SCHEV databases have been added to the new data server. These databases contain unit record data since 1992 for all students. Plans are under development for sharing the data via the Web with the university community.

The prototypes for entering student aggregates for the data warehouse are complete and ready to move to the server for delivery via the Web. A new Web: oir.jmu.edu, has been requested and will be used for interactive Web pages that access the data server. The old SCHEV B8-format (applied, accepted, enrolled by gender and ethnicity) will be the first data delivered.

**Objective:** Evaluate the economic impact of JMU on the local community by completing the economic impact study.

**June Exec:** The impact study was completed in the fall. It received wide publicity, including in the local news organizations.

The study found over \$278 million in local economy were related to spending by students, employees and university operations. Between 1,763 and 2,723 full-time jobs outside the institution and within the City of Harrisonburg/Rockingham County were attributed to this spending.

**Characteristic:** The university will involve the entire campus community in a well-defined, consistently-used and commonly-understood process for planning and decision-making

**Objective:** Provide useful, accurate, and timely information through the creation, deployment, and analysis of major university surveys and requested surveys for program reviews, evaluation, and major policy questions.

**June Exec:** OIR continued to work with offices on the development and analysis of surveys. This year we worked with CMISS and Affirmative Action. We consulted with several other offices. Next year OIR will conduct the Freshman Survey and Employment Survey.

OIR continues to save the university a significant amount of money by using Web-based surveys. This year we save the university the following:

Faculty and Administrator Recruitment and Retention Survey: \$2,500  
CMISS surveys: \$18,000  
Freshman Survey: \$4,000  
Total: Approximately \$25,000

**Characteristic:** The university, long characterized for its continuous enrollment growth, will stabilize residential enrollment

**Objective:** Revise JMU's enrollment plan for the university community and SCHEV

**June Exec:** The revised enrollment projection was sent to SCHEV in April. The President, VP for Student Affairs, VP for Administration & Finance, and OIR director went to SCHEV to discuss the projections. Awaiting official approval from SCHEV.

Expect the final fall enrollment to exceed the projections due to an increase in the number of new freshmen and a larger percentage of new freshmen from out-of-state. These changes will be reflected in next year's projections.

A most critical role of the office is the annual enrollment projections that are used for budget estimates for the university. Over the last five years OIR's projections have been accurate with one percent for undergraduates, total students, and FTES. This means that OIR's estimates are typically off by less than 100 students. In virtually every instance, OIR's projections are typically low, which means that more revenue is generated than anticipated. While the annual variation can be slightly different due to unanticipated changes (like enrolling more freshmen than the target), the office's projections are known to be accurate by the President and vice presidents.

**Remaining objectives and results of the Unit for the past fiscal year:**

**Characteristic:** The university will be a diverse community whose members share a common JMU experience

**Objective:** Increase information for senior management about trends in campus diversity.

**June Exec:** OIR is completing the first section of a major historical study of changes in JMU's students since 1990. The first section contains significant data on diversity. Also, OIR provided to the VP for Student Affairs, University Planning & Analysis a summary of data on retention, graduation data, and enrollment of various ethnic groups and by gender.

OIR assisted CMISS with two major surveys this spring for their program review. This helped them to gain additional information about their services and the groups that use their programming.

OIR assisted the Affirmative Action Office this spring with a major survey of faculty and administrators about their reasons for accepting JMU's employment offer and the factors that affect their decision to remain at JMU. More than 50 percent responded to the survey.

**Characteristic:** The university will follow a planning process that emphasizes accountability and ties resource allocation and initiatives to the concepts of institutional effectiveness

**Objective:** Increase knowledge of the university community about important research and activities of the office through four newsletters.

**June Exec:** Three newsletters have been created. The final newsletter for the year will be published in June. On average, more than 300 persons visit each newsletter. The number of visits depends upon the interest of the users.

**Objective:** Complete the annual Statistical Summary with new tables and functionality as needed.

**June Exec:** The Statistical Summary was completed in March and put onto the Web. The document is viewed an average of 21 times per day.

**Objective:** Produce four or five Research Notes on topics of interest to the campus community and senior management.

**June Exec:** OIR published four Research Notes this year.  
August: Faculty Salaries of JMU's Peer Group  
October: The Economic Impact of James Madison University on the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County  
November: Changes In Enrollment, Fall To Spring Terms  
June: Major Trends at JMU, 1990 to 2003

**Objective:** Monitor compliance of JMU with the SACS recommendations. Ensure that all recommendations are addressed and important documents are cataloged.

**June Exec:** Am unsure what has been done with these objectives. However, will review compliance later in the summer when annual reports have been written.

OIR provided to the AVP, VP, and President a summary document of planning and evaluation at JMU. This document was to be sent to SACS as documentation of compliance with planning, evaluation, assessment, and use of results for program improvement.

The accomplishment of this objective is dependent upon the close monitoring of management. Institutional Research and Planning & Analysis have created a vehicle (Planning Database) for these objectives to be monitored and reported upon.

**Objective:** Complete the annual "Financing of Higher Education in Virginia: Analysis and Issues," for the Board of Visitors.

**June Exec:** All data provided by OIR was completed in early January. Resource Planning and the Budget Office will completed their portions and publish the document in late January. The full document was published on OIR's web site in March. Approximately 20 users have viewed the document on the Web. However, the document was distributed to the Board of Visitors and senior management.

Next year OIR will work only with the Budget Office on this document. Some decisions will have to be made about who publishes it.

**Objective:** Improve the monitoring of program reviews through training and the Planning Database.

**June Exec:** OIR has been working some with University Advancement to improve their compliance with JMU's performance measures policy. We were not allowed to work with UA in the spring. OIR continues to assist offices with surveys for program reviews. This spring helped CMISS with two large surveys. Also assisted the Affirmative Action Office with a major survey of faculty and administrators.

**Objective:** Develop specifications and a timeline for the development of the budget initiative module in the Planning Database.

**June Exec:** The main focus of the Planning Database this spring was on training users for Version 2.0. In 2003-04 OIR will work with the Budget Office to develop specifications for the budget module.

**Objective:** Increase the knowledge of members of the university community about major changes in students, faculty, staff, and the environment.

**June Exec:** The draft of Phase I of the student historical study has been completed and is being reviewed. It will be published in late June and placed on OIR's Web site. A summary will be provided to the university community in OIR's quarterly newsletter in August.

The revised study of faculty was published on OIR's Web site in May. It will be heavily publicized to the university community in the August newsletter.

**Characteristic:** The university, through its planning process, will clearly align aspirations, wills and resources to achieve its goals

**Objective:** Complete an evaluation of the planning process and make recommendations for improvement.

**June Exec:** Two focus groups were held this spring to evaluate the current status of the PD. Several important changes were made, including the ability to manage multiyear objectives. This focus group will meet several times annually to evaluate the PD and make suggestions for changes.

**Characteristic:** The university will involve the entire campus community in a well-defined, consistently-used and commonly-understood process for planning and decision-making

**Objective:** Users of the Planning Database will be able to develop high quality, measurable objectives, expected outcomes, evaluation methods, annual reports of accomplishments, and follow-up recommendations.

**June Exec:** Planning & Analysis and OIR are evaluating the quality of objectives, expected outcomes, evaluation/assessment methods in the PD. Instruction to improve quality is being built into training for Version 2.0. Would like to develop a team of staff comprising representatives from each division to help evaluate the quality of each entry. Hopefully this group will be assembled this spring. This is a critical feature in the improvement of the quality.

The accomplishment of this objective is dependent upon the cooperation of other offices. This is a long-term project that will need significant support from senior management to be successful.

#### **Other accomplishments:**

#### **Uses within the Unit of assessment or evaluation results:**

In 2003-04 OIR's evaluation of its efforts indicates that the following objectives should be vigorously pursued:

1. It is imperative that the objectives in the PD be improved. Therefore, OIR and UPA will meet with a group of staff from each division to develop strategies to evaluate the quality of objectives. This should result in workshops or some other consulting with departments this year.
2. The achievement indicators were developed this spring by the division heads. Since these indicators will be one of the primary means of reporting the achievement of the university's Defining Characteristics, OIR will aggressively work with the AVP of UPA and the VP for Student Affairs to develop methods to collect and report on the achievement indicators.
3. There are major concerns about campus diversity, especially of students. Therefore, OIR will continue to work with Admissions and other offices to help them gain intelligence about why the diversity numbers have declined.
4. The PD is still a very new product and OIR needs to work with its users carefully to determine their needs and make the software as functional as possible. Continual evaluation of the software and the needs of the users is critical.
5. OIR and UPA have not been successful in gaining access to offices to train them in program review. This needs to be vigorously pursued in 0304 since some areas do not have program reviews that are required by a university policy.
6. The budget module of the PD was not completed this year. Since it is important to link planning and budgeting, UPA and OIR will pursue with the division heads the approval to develop specifications for the budget module. Hopefully this module will be functional for the 0506 budget initiative cycle.

#### Overall evaluation methods.

The evaluation of OIR's efforts this year were a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. The office monitors the number of visits to its main Web site and to the quarterly newsletters. The Statistical Summary receives more than 6,000 visits per year. The main Web page receives even more. Most Research Notes have more than 50 visits. The Economic Impact Study was a feature article in the local newspaper in the fall. More than 500 visits were made to the Performance Measures Web site since October.

The office continues to save JMU significant amount of money with its Web-based surveys. This year we helped Affirmative Action, the Center for Multicultural and International Student Services, and Orientation with four major surveys. If these surveys had been done via paper the cost would have exceeded \$25,000.

A most critical role of the office is the annual enrollment projections that are used for budget estimates for the university. Over the last five years OIR's projections have been accurate with 99 percent for undergraduates, total students, and FTES. This means that OIR's estimates are typically off by less than 100 students. In virtually every instance, OIR's projections are low which means that more revenue is generated than anticipated. While the annual variation can be slightly different due to unanticipated changes (like enrolling more freshmen than the target), the office's projections are known to be accurate by the President and vice presidents.

A major effort this year was the migration of the Planning Database from Version 1.0, an Access-based application to Version 2.0, a PeopleSoft and Oracle system that is attached to the university's HR system. Several meetings were held with our major users to make changes to the system. The input from these users resulted in significant improvements, including the development of this annual report format.

#### **Objectives for the next fiscal year (include objectives from assessment results and program reviews):**

**Characteristic:** The university will be a diverse community whose members share a common JMU experience

Increase information for senior management about trends in campus diversity.

**Characteristic:** The university will follow a planning process that emphasizes accountability and ties resource allocation and initiatives to the concepts of institutional effectiveness

**Objective:** Provide for, and train users in, a functional and usable Planning Database.

- Objective:** Monitor compliance of JMU with the SACS recommendations. Ensure that all recommendations are addressed and important documents are cataloged.
- Objective:** Increase the knowledge of the university community about major achievement indicators for the Defining Characteristics and other important measures.
- Objective:** Improve the monitoring of program reviews through training and the Planning Database.
- Objective:** Improve the quality, quantity, and accessibility of University data from OIR's databases
- Objective:** Develop specifications and a timeline for the development of the budget initiative module in the Planning Database.
- Objective:** Increase the knowledge of members of the university community about major changes in students, faculty, staff, and the environment.
- Objective:** Provide to senior management useful information on major issues identified through the monitoring of major performance measures or campus issues.
- Characteristic:** The university will involve the entire campus community in a well-defined, consistently-used and commonly-understood process for planning and decision-making
- Objective:** Users of the Planning Database will be able to develop high quality, measurable objectives, expected outcomes, evaluation methods, annual reports of accomplishments, and follow-up recommendations.
- Objective:** Provide useful, accurate, and timely information through the creation, deployment, and analysis of major university surveys and requested surveys for program reviews, evaluation, and major policy questions.
- Objective:** Ensure that the SCHEV strategic plan is complete and updates on achievements are collected and reported in a timely manner.
- Characteristic:** The university, long characterized for its continuous enrollment growth, will stabilize residential enrollment
- Objective:** Revise JMU's enrollment plan for the university community and SCHEV

**Addenda:**