

Session 1C:

Data-Informed Decision Making: Learning from Institutional Researchers

November
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Who We Are:

▶ Rashmi:

- ▶ **Effective** leader in higher education with more than 20 years of established expertise in Institutional Research and Planning portfolio, and deep knowledge of Ontario PSE College sector including Strategic Mandate Agreements.
- ▶ Champion turning data into direction by:
 - embedding institutional and sectoral priorities into organizational culture;
 - developing performance frameworks that ensure desired progress is measured and sustained;
 - building collaborations and impacting policy development.
- ▶ Advocates for "Tell Me Why" and "So What".

▶ Kyle:

- ▶ Brings 20 yearly ears experience from both the Registrar's Office and institutional research, connecting data to student success and operational strategy.
- ▶ Current Portfolio includes oversees data governance, enrolment and retention analytics, institutional rankings, survey strategy, and performance measurement.
- ▶ **Champions** a culture of data literacy and evidence-informed decision-making. Advocates for smart automation and AI to enhance analysis and insight generation. Focused on doing more with less

What Is Institutional Research?

- ▶ Data-informed strategic decision making.
 - ▶ *guide enrolment, program mix, and resource allocation*
- ▶ Links strategy, planning, and accountability.
 - ▶ *KPI tracking, and alignment with ministry directives and funding frameworks*
- ▶ Translates data into insight for boards, leadership, and government.
 - ▶ *Integrating research, planning, and stakeholder consultation into unified institutional strategies*
- ▶ Operates across enrolment, finance, student success, community impact, among others.
- ▶ Institutional Research = “Institutional Intelligence.”

Institutional Research - Organizational Structure

Ontario Colleges:

- Varied emphasis on strategic planning/quality assurance/accountability and reporting - report to different divisions/VPs.
- Smaller institutions may have integrated IR/Registrar/QA roles.
- Deep collaborations embedded through provincial organizational structures:
Colleges Ontario, MCURES and affiliated/advocacy organizations (e.g. OCAS; ONCAT; HEQCO)

Ontario Universities :

- University IPAP offices are strategically oriented, often reporting through planning, provost, or executive portfolios.
- Leading institutions position IR as *strategic intelligence*—directly tied to executive decision-making and foresight.
- Universities often have **broader mandates** but slower data agility due to layered governance and complexity

Institutional Research - Priorities and Deliverables

Where the similarities are likely:

- SEM: *Integrated* Enrolment Planning; Competitive Business Intelligence; Program/Credential Mix.
- Stakeholder feedback: Student, Graduate, Employer surveys and focus groups;
- Quality assurance: New program viability assessment; Comprehensive program reviews; accreditation support.
- Accountability reporting: Strategic Mandate Agreement reporting; MCU student enrolments/outcomes reporting.
- Data Governance/Technological and Risk changes, software and policy.
- Externally funded academic and survey research collaborations.

Where there could be differences:

- AI Integrations
- ITS synergies
- Data Governance/Technological and Risk changes, software and policy
- Visualization/Dashboard capability
- Automation
- Resources
- Standalone tasks (i.e., rankings)

Institutional Research - Priorities and Deliverables

Ontario's colleges and universities may operate on different timelines and priorities, but our IR offices share one mission... turning data into understanding and understanding into action!

Institutional Research - Tools, Methods & Technologies

Ontario Colleges:

- Data visualizations: Tableau/Power BI/Excel - centralized data repositories.
- Environmental scans: Labour market and regional impact assessments.
- Survey & Focus group research with internal and external stakeholders; Gap analysis.
- Performance Frameworks: Program quality and viability; Student experience and success outcomes; Benchmarking,
- Statistical analyses, scenario modelling, reports, dissemination, consultation and action planning.
- Require deep institutional and sectoral knowledge, macro-economic awareness, statistical proficiency and tech savvy.

- Ontario Universities :
- Focused on automation, dashboards, survey tools, and emerging AI use for synthesis and summarization.
- Investments:
- Prioritize educational tools that build institutional data literacy.
- Practices from the Best:
- Machine learning for predictive analytics
- Open data catalogues
- “Teach and Learn” IR academies to empower all staff tiers.

Ontario PSE Headwinds

Usual Suspects:

- ▶ Financial and Funding pressures
- ▶ Demographic Trends
- ▶ Credential Creep
- ▶ Workforce and Staffing issues
- ▶ Infrastructure and Capacity
- ▶ Policy and Coordination
- ▶ Student Experience and Equity
- ▶ Economic trends

Stealthy Suspects:

- ▶ Labor Market Projections - Facts/Myths
- ▶ Reputation Risk - Public Support
(Is Institutional Learn-to-Earn paradigm dead?)
- ▶ Social Justice/Access/Mental Health services mandate funding
- ▶ Cloud Deployment of Information
- ▶ Impact of AI
- ▶ Effectiveness of ROI Measures
- ▶ NexGen IRP Leaders - increasing repertoire of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities requirements

End of Presentation