Introduction

The Office of Academic Planning (OAP) provides vision and leadership for evidence-based decision-making at the University of Georgia and leads the effort for reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). A key unit of the OAP is the Office of Institutional Research (OIR), whose central mission is to collect, organize, and analyze institutional and other data to support institutional management, operations, decision-making, and planning functions. This report includes the activities and accomplishments of both OAP units.

a. Highlighted Achievements

OAP/OIR Combined

- Hired a director for OIR. Following a lengthy national search, OAP hired Meihua Zhai to replace former Institutional Research Director Denise Gardner. During the process, we brought four candidates to campus, each for a series of meetings with various stakeholders. Dr. Zhai brings to the director role significant experience in IR at the national and regional levels, as well significant expertise in institutional data analysis. She is focused on developing the strategic decision-support function of the office and will play a key role in helping OAP/OIR achieve its mission to provide leadership for evidence-based decision-making at UGA.

- Improved communication with campus. Leveraging both internal and external resources, we developed inter-related logos for the two offices with tag lines to better communicate our mission to campus. OAP incorporated this into the overhaul of its entire website,
including a significant content revision designed to give users more direct access to useful information. OIR began a corresponding revision of its web presences (office website, FACTS, Factbook) late in the year to create a consistent look and feel for a more seamless user interaction.

- Developed a Unit Profile System. In a major step toward the strategic goal to provide real-time data in accessible online formats, OAP and OIR collaborated to develop and pilot a Unit Profile System to provide a core set of trend data for academic units on an ongoing basis. The Unit Profile System is based on the data sets historically supplied for program reviews every seven years. It integrates unit data from multiple sources and includes direct links to the Academic Planning System for historic review and assessment documents, as well as the Facilities Management database for data access to unit floor plans.

- Presented at state, regional, and national professional conferences and meetings. During 2012, OAP and OIR staff members presented at the SACSCOC Leadership Orientation; the SACSCOC Annual Meeting, the Association for Institutional Research Annual Conference; the Southern Association of Institutional Research Annual Meeting; the Regents Administrative Committee on Effectiveness and Accreditation; the Regents Advisory Committee on Institutional Research and Planning; USG Banner Summit; and the Georgia Association of Institutional Research, Planning, Assessment and Quality Conference.

**OAP**

- Revised the University’s 2020 Strategic Plan. We assembled a team of “Champions” who reviewed the original plan, refined it, and prioritized its elements in preparation for the plan’s use as a starting point for UGA’s upcoming Capital Campaign.

- Further streamlined the program review process. In response to feedback from the provost and others, we implemented a new process to work with heads of units under review to set clear, prioritized agendas for program review follow-up meetings and ensure that the needed campus constituents attended the meetings. This led to richer, more focused discussion on units’ priorities for development. In addition, we revised all the program review surveys and the survey administration protocols to significantly streamline the work of the faculty review teams and reduce duplicative efforts in our office.

**OIR**

- Responded to federal, state, internal, and external surveys and data requests. Although short several positions for all of 2012, OIR fulfilled reporting functions and responded to internal requests supporting decision-making, including providing comparative data on
tuition and fees for peer and aspirational institutions, academic credit hour production, diversity profile tracking, academic Unit Profile enhancements and maintenance, and contributed to the development of the campus’s Complete College Georgia plan.

- Developed and implemented a data request “ticket system” that enables staff to track and categorize ad hoc data requests. This system gives office leaders the ability to manage the breadth of office activity, assess the amount of time needed to answer various types of questions, and plan more efficiently for future data delivery.

- Supported UGA’s implementation of Banner. A number of OIR staff engaged in Banner-related activities and training sessions that are critical to the success of its implementation. OIR’s participation in this major project is particularly important to ensuring ongoing access to mission-critical data about the University’s students.

- Upgraded infrastructure. To comply with on-going campus security measures and other IT requirements, OIR made hardware and database upgrades that allow continued access to accurate and timely data in support of primary OIR mission.

b. Aligning Unit Strategic Goals with UGA’s 2020 Strategic Plan

Check list attached. OAP expects to revise its Strategic Plan during 2013.

c. Unit’s Diversity Planning

In direct support of UGA’s Diversity Plan, in 2012 OAP worked with the associate provost for Institutional Diversity to incorporate reporting on diversity and diversity planning into the annual reporting process. In addition, in collaborating with the faculty Program Review and Assessment Committee to revise the UGA Program Review Guidelines, we worked to ensure that program reviews increasingly highlight how units being reviewed further the goals of UGA’s Diversity Plan.

As a unit with increasingly integrated functions, OIR/OAP continues to enjoy the benefits of having well-diversified staff with respect to educational attainment, age, gender, race, ethnic background, length of service to UGA, and varying ranges of prior service to UGA. Staff members are encouraged to reach out, learn, and enrich themselves through interaction with each other in a variety of ways. For instance, late in 2012 we initiated a unit-wide brown bag series to encourage productive interaction among the staff, as well as provide low-cost opportunities for professional development.

Finally, for all open positions in the unit, OAP/OIR continues to advertise both locally, regionally, and nationally in order to attract a diverse pool of qualified candidates. Hiring decisions are made in accord with EOO specifications in all cases.
### d. Assessing Effectiveness

Below are five significant examples of ways in which assessment efforts in our unit have resulted in specific changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Process</th>
<th>Findings from the Assessment Process</th>
<th>Actions Taken in Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback on Program Review process</td>
<td>Follow-up meetings are sometimes unfocused, do not address prioritized issues, and stakeholders do not always attend.</td>
<td>Revised protocols to set meeting agendas with unit heads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback on Program Review process</td>
<td>Development and administration of program review surveys is inconsistent and makes inefficient use of faculty effort better spent on evaluation.</td>
<td>Developed standard survey and revised protocols for administering surveys and delivering data to faculty teams for evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group discussion of Learning Outcomes Assessment processes</td>
<td>Campus understanding of the purpose, practice, and requirements of student learning outcomes assessment is inconsistent.</td>
<td>Revised communication plan and created faculty development plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Assessment</td>
<td>Data gaps between users’ needs and OIR online data reports and features.</td>
<td>Implemented monitoring of website to better track patterns of campus data use so that feature development is based on user needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Assessment</td>
<td>Lack of systematic data on ad hoc information requests and the time needed to respond to them.</td>
<td>Implemented “ticket system” to allow tracking, prioritization, and analysis of response times for data requests. Data collected from the “ticket system” will also guide OIR’s development of online information services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>