



XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA
Office of Planning and Institutional Research
One Drexel Drive • Box 4
New Orleans, Louisiana 70125-1098
(504) 520-7566

Environmental Monitoring Focus Report

By: Treva A. Lee, Ph.D.

A critical facet of Institutional Effectiveness is to monitor our environment. This report is prepared as a tool for the University Planning Council and the budget committee in setting priorities and allocating resources and for the University community. This report reviews monitoring activities since Hurricane Katrina. Subsequent reporting will have an annual perspective.

Scope of Effort and Activity

Institutional Research monitors the environment by way of multiple internal and external surveys; internal reports for academic, as well as, administrative support units; analyses of current and historical data; course evaluations; production of an annual University and Competitor's profiles; as well as fulfilling requests from external entities for information; and subscriptions to electronic and print media as a resource/reference. Examples of the scope of our efforts include, nationally normed surveys that provide benchmarks to peer groups and the national population, targeted local surveys that address specific issues or concerns of our institution, the collection and analysis of data and information and the monitoring of publications and reports for insight into important trends, issues, and activities that impact the institution and the higher education environment. Various tools and methods are used to collect, analyze and integrate these activities. The following is a sketch of activities conducted within the Office of Planning and Institutional Research (OPIR).

Nationally Normed Surveys

The Office of Planning and Institutional Research has a rich history of participation in national surveys. Since 2005 the institution has been a participant in a myriad of surveys. Comparative data of national norms has been used as a gauge with annual freshmen surveys (CIRP, CSVB, and BCSSE), student surveys (NSSE and CSS) and a faculty survey (FSSE). The following reports illustrate a sample of some of the national surveys in which the institution regularly participates.

The Freshmen Survey (CIRP) - Xavier has a long participant history dating back to the mid 1970's with the CIRP Freshmen Survey. The annual national survey has an array of demographic characteristics regarding the incoming freshman class that include: parental income and education, ethnicity, and other demographic information; financial aid; high school achievement and activities; educational and professional aspirations; and values, attitudes, beliefs, and self-concept. The results of the CIRP survey

give comprehensive insight into the incoming freshman class as well as comparative data of norms with other entering freshman across the United States, including those attending other Catholic and historically Black colleges and universities. At Xavier the results of the survey are shared as an opportunity to learn more about the incoming freshman class. Periodically, trend analyses are prepared to inform the university community on changing values, beliefs, and self-concepts of past freshmen classes. The annual CIRP Institutional Summary is posted on the OPIR website.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) - The NSSE is an annual survey that gathers information from four-year colleges and universities nationwide about student participation in campus programs and activities available for learning and personal development. The survey is in its tenth year and Xavier has participated five of the ten years it has been in production. Results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. NSSE results are posted on the OPIR website as well as shared with campus various campus entities such as the Academic Planning Council.

The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) and Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) are supplemental surveys that accompany the NSSE. Their purpose is to provide in-depth analysis of student engagement opinions from various avenues within the institution. At Xavier, the BCSSE has been used for three years. The BCSSE collects data about entering college students' high school academic and out of classroom experiences, as well as their expectations for participating in educationally focused activities during the first college year. Results of the BCSSE are shared with the Office of Academic Enhancement. As an institution, Xavier has a vested interest in the level of engagement its students has with the institution. The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) was designed to complement the NSSE. The faculty version focuses on: faculty's perceptions of how often students engage in different activities, the importance that faculty place on various areas of learning and development, the nature and frequency of faculty-student interactions, and how faculty members organize their time, both in and out of the classroom (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2009). Annual reports of findings from the BCSSE are shared with the Office for Academic Enhancement and Dean of Freshmen Studies, to aid academic departments with advising.

NSSE Trend Analyses

The Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment has recently prepared a comprehensive summary of historic results from the NSSE. That report has been shared with administrative leaders, department chairs, and members of the SACS Quality Enhancement Plan Committee. Several key findings emerged from the NSSE 2001-2008 Assessment Report based on Xavier University of Louisiana's participation during those years. Those findings include: (1) (1) institutional benchmarks of effective educational practice show that on average both Xavier freshmen and seniors score at or above the national norm in all five NSSE clusters. (2) In recent years (2005-2007-2008), Xavier University freshmen and seniors scored significantly higher than the national norm regarding "institutional contributions very much to students' development of a sense of spirituality." (3) More than 50% of Xavier freshmen and seniors reported that Xavier University "experiences have contributed very much to their skills in thinking critically and analytically".

The report also highlights some areas of concern. First, both Xavier freshmen and seniors scored a significantly lower than the national average regarding the quality of students' relationships with administrative personnel and office. Second, on average, 81% of Xavier freshmen and 74% of Xavier seniors have never written a paper or report of 20 pages or more. Third, on average, 52% of the Xavier freshmen and 44% of Xavier seniors never participated in a community project as part of a regular course. Finally, on average, 52% of Xavier freshmen never worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework, such as on committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.

College Senior Survey (CSS) – The CSS is used at Xavier as the senior “exit” survey alternately with the NSSE. It assists the university to identify whether it has met the established outcomes for its graduates. It is designed as a comparative tool to complement the freshman CIRP survey while also identifying academic or career plans of its projected graduating class. Results of the CSS are shared with various academic and support units to assist them with assessment outcomes monitoring. Spring 2009 was the most recent administration of this national survey and results are currently being analyzed. Specific findings from the surveys' local questions have been shared with the Core-Curriculum Assessment committee, Student Services, and Alumni Relations.

Local and Institutional Surveys

In addition to our participation in nationally normed surveys, Xavier also conducts on-going local surveys and evaluations that are used to compliment and support specific issues and/or concerns of our campus clients. Annually, the OPIR conducts three surveys, the Freshmen and Parent Orientation evaluations and the Institutional Effectiveness Survey. In recent years as more campus units have become more at ease in formalizing assessment plans, there is an increased demand for indirect assessment to support direct measures of assessment. A few of the ad hoc surveys that have occurred recently include: Xavier Faculty and Staff Morale and Quality of Life, Student Quality of Life, Campus Ministry surveys, COP faculty survey, Dining Services Satisfaction survey, Professional Development Needs Analysis for Human Resources, Human Resources New Hire Survey, QEP topic selection, Freshmen Seminar survey, Deciding Majors survey, and Counseling Services survey.

Annual surveys

Freshman Orientation & Parent Orientation Surveys – Created as evaluation tools for the Center of Student Leadership and Service to assess the degree of success in program format and content of the New Student Orientation program and its annual Freshman Orientation Week. Findings from the survey are shared with program directors as a method to receive feedback from participants on what worked and what didn't work. As a result of findings, freshmen week orientation has revamped some of its scheduling and programming, while adding other activities. For example, observations revealed less participation in midday activities, and with further review it revealed that students felt the New Orleans heat was overwhelming and preferred to attend outside and physical activity events later in the afternoon, once the temperatures decreased. Feedback provided from the parent survey has led to more campus services being available to parents and students prior to the start of regular registration. These include fee assessment, financial aid counseling, local banking information, etc.

Institutional Effectiveness survey

For over fifteen years, some form of assessment of the effectiveness of major academic and administrative support units has taken place. Findings from these surveys have been reported and shared with departments and support units. In the survey's original format, campus departments were made aware of their comparative level of courtesy and efficiency. However, there was not a specific framework for "loop closing" with this process. On-going internal feedback on the usefulness of the survey led to the conclusion that the survey did not contain actionable information.

The survey has been revised twice based on feedback from members of the community to better support a robust outcomes assessment process. The current format of the instrument now identifies specific areas that units can target for improvement when developing benchmarks for their outcome assessment.

The Institutional Effectiveness Survey is designed to evaluate the performance and related actions of administrative support service units and academic support service units of the institution in six areas: courtesy, knowledge of staff, timeliness, accessibility, effectiveness, and overall satisfaction. The survey is administered to all faculty and staff of Xavier University during the spring semester. Participation is voluntary. During the 2007-2008 year, 17 broad functional areas were analyzed. IR staff concluded that the survey, by concentrating on these broad areas, was still not fine grained enough to yield actionable results. During the 2008-2009 year, this limitation has been addressed and 69 individual functional areas have been surveyed. This survey instrument is now used as a framework for operational/administrative outcome assessment for both the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 year by a number of administrative units.

Ad Hoc Surveys

Campus Ministry Surveys

Through the OPIR, Campus Ministry has conducted two surveys. One survey's purpose was to identify the best time to offer Sunday Mass and the second survey was a needs assessment designed to identify whether the current services offered through campus ministry was meeting the needs of the Xavier community. Findings were provided to Campus Ministry for use with program planning and assessment reporting.

COP Faculty Survey

In Spring 2008, the College of Pharmacy requested a survey of its faculty to determine course compliance with NAPLEX standards. Raw data results were provided to the College of Pharmacy for analysis, and were used toward their successful reaccreditation efforts.

Dining Services Satisfaction Survey

The Dining Services Satisfaction Survey was designed to evaluate the student satisfaction levels with the breakfast, lunch, and dinner services. The Associate Vice President for Auxiliary Services requested the

services of our office to administer the survey, as well as to collect and analyze the data. The results were shared with the Associate Vice President for Auxiliary Services and the Manager of Campus Dining Services (Sodexo). Recommendations have been made to address needed improvements. The survey will be conducted annually.

Bookstore Services Satisfaction Survey

The Bookstore Services Satisfaction Survey was designed to evaluate the student satisfaction levels with the services offered by the bookstore. The Associate Vice President for Auxiliary Services requested the services of our office to administer the survey, collect, and analyze the data. The results were shared by the Director for Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment with the Associate Vice President for Auxiliary Services and the Manager of Bookstore (Barnes and Noble). Recommendations have been made to address the problem areas. The survey will be conducted annually.

Professional Development Needs Analysis for Human Resources

In fall 2008, Human Resources contacted our office to administer online surveys to determine training desired by line and supervisory staff. Surveys were administered, and results provided to Human Resources, which then offered a group training seminar for managers, and also led to increased software training through Office of Technology Administration.

Human Resources "New Hire" Survey

A "New Hire" Survey was designed to evaluate the perceptions of "new hires" regarding their satisfaction level with the hiring process, including orientation, payroll, initial training, job expectations, supervision, and work environment. The Director for Human Resources requested the services of our office to administer the survey, as well as collect and analyze the data. The results were shared by the Director for Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment with the Director for Human Resources. Recommendations have been taken to address the problem areas. The survey is to be conducted annually.

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topic selection

In Fall 2008, on behalf of the QEP Design Committee, two surveys were administered to Xavier students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Various proposed topics were ranked by respondents. Results were analyzed by respondent type, and then the second survey further narrowed to three the proposed QEP topics: writing, critical thinking, and student engagement. These topics have been submitted to the QEP Development Committee, which is currently engaged in final QEP selection and the development of Xavier's QEP.

Freshmen Seminar survey

The Freshmen Seminar Survey was designed to evaluate student perceptions of the effectiveness of freshmen seminar courses (FRSM 1000 and FRSM 1100). The Freshmen Seminar Evaluation Committee requested that our office administer the survey as well as collect and analyze the data. The results were

shared with the Freshmen Seminar Evaluation Committee, QEP Writing Committee, the Office of Academic Enhancement, and the instructors for the Freshmen Seminar courses. Recommendations have been made by the Director for Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment to address problem areas.

Deciding Majors survey

Deciding Majors Survey was designed to evaluate the student satisfaction level with the advising and mentoring of deciding majors. The Assistant Dean of Freshmen Studies requested the services of our office to administer the survey, collect and analyze the data. The results were shared with the Office of Academic Enhancement. Recommendations have been made to address the problem areas.

Counseling Services survey

During Spring 2009, on behalf of the Counseling & Wellness Center, surveys were developed to ascertain retention of information for mental health training provided by students to peers. Student trainers self-assessed knowledge of topics before and after training; their peers whom they trained were assessed after training. Trainers showed a significant increase in knowledge after training (on a scale of 1-10, a self-reported score of 8 or more); most students trained also self-reported similarly. Results of the survey were used for grant award.

Survey and Focus Group: Student and Staff QOL Task Force

Within the same calendar year as the faculty-staff QOL focus groups, a student quality of life survey was conducted. Responses suggested a diminished quality of life on campus post-Katrina. This led to the creation of a Student – Staff Quality of Life Task Force in which focus groups were conducted. Findings indicated the need to address issues that have immediate impact as well as those that are more long term. Areas of concern were auxiliary services, residential life (contracts and visitation hours), and student life. Student members of the task force acknowledged that Xavier offers many positive services to its students, but awareness of these services and the individuals that provide the services are not easily identified. Findings and recommendations from the focus groups were shared by OPIR to respective areas in which concern arose. The Office of Student Services has addressed a number of the issues identified in the task force report and the task force report is on the docket for the August 2009 meeting of the University Planning Council.

Human Resource Office initiative in response to effectiveness survey and internal audit process

In response to results from an internal audit and effectiveness survey, the Human Resources Office has undertaken a revision in staff performance appraisal. With the assistance of human resource staff from the Entergy Corporation, the Office has moved to address low staff evaluation completion rates and to shift the underlying aims of the evaluation system. During the spring 2009 Entergy consultants facilitated a pilot program to shift the emphasis of employee appraisal to effectiveness and professional development. Training sessions were held with managers and with the more than 100 staff members participating in the pilot. Focus group sessions to garner feedback on staff reaction to the new process were conducted in early August 2009. When results are analyzed it is anticipated that a new appraisal system for the university will be launched during the 2009-10 academic year.

Collection and analysis of data and information

The collection and analysis of data and information from both external and internal sources is an additional method for monitoring the aspects of the environment which impact Xavier and higher education.

Graduate Exit Report

This report delivers post-graduate information on the institutions recent graduates. The report contains information on graduate/professional school enrollment as well as job placement, when available. Each year the report is disseminated to department chairs, academic affairs, graduate and career placement, as well as Alumni Affairs to track activities of our graduates. The report is also used by Sponsored Programs and Title III. This report is produced each fall semester.

Strategic Planning Workgroup reports

As part of the redeveloped Strategic Planning process the university community in identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Faculty, and staff were involved in a SWOT analyses that provided a first step in the University's development of a Strategic Plan. Workgroups were organized as part of the process for developing the current strategic plan. These included: Xavier University's Mission, Student Recruitment and Retention, Teaching, Scholarship, and Research Capacity, Role of Faculty in Governance, Xavier University Serving City & Region, Student Life, Facilities, and Social/Spiritual Environment, Programs as Flagships, and the Role of Technology. Each workgroup produced a report and collectively these reports were integrated into the work of Strategic Planning Committee. As a result of the workgroups and Committee effort the wording of the university's mission was revised and four areas of strategic focus were defined.

Faculty-Staff Morale focus group reports

In fall of 2006, faculty and staff were surveyed to assess morale and quality-of-life post-Katrina. A faculty and staff task force was organized in Fall of 2007, facilitated by members of Entergy Human Resources. Key areas of concern were identified: Workload / Time / Commuting, Job Security / Finance / Recognition, Cost of Living, and Safety / Environment / Benefits. Teams were formed to address these areas, to identify action items and prioritize. The report was reviewed by the University Planning Council in June 2009 and the Council endorsed a series of actions in response to the report.

Course Evaluations

Conducted each semester, course evaluations are utilized as a tool to assist faculty in receiving feedback from students to improve their quality of instruction as well as identifying if course objectives have been met. Results of the evaluations are distributed to individual faculty members, department chairs, college deans and Academic Affairs each semester.

Profiles

University and Competitors profiles are annual documents that serve as data sources for a broad range of university constituents. The profiles focus on significant academic categories, such as student enrollment trends and characteristics, retention rates, graduation rates, expenditure per student, faculty distribution, and student/faculty ratios. The reports highlight both Xavier data and comparative data amongst our competitor's. The Profiles serve as guiding documents utilized in planning, grant writing, and institutional effectiveness. Trends summarized in the reports provide the University Planning Council and other administrative bodies with important information to guide planning and decision making.

CSRDE

The Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) is a survey based at the University of Oklahoma. Xavier participated from AY 2002-03 through AY 2007-08. The survey analyzes retention and graduation rates of three groups of students, two of which are subsets of the first group:

- First-Time Full-Time (FTFT) Freshmen
- FTFT Freshmen who started as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) majors (regardless of whether they persisted as STEM majors throughout matriculation)
- FTFT Freshmen who started and persisted as STEM majors throughout matriculation

Additionally, each group was broken down by gender and ethnicity. Results at Xavier have shown slightly higher retention and graduation rates in the second group (started STEM), and have been distributed to and used by various workgroups and teams at Xavier (USPC Mission, Student Recruitment & Retention teams).

UNCF Campaign Questionnaire

The questionnaire is conducted annually by the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute. Data is gathered from member UNCF institutions identifying enrollment, financial, faculty census and salaries, and academic trends. The data include retention and graduation rates, revenues and expenditures, statistical tables and a narrative section. Specific information included in the questionnaire lists geographical distribution of students by state; regional enrollment distribution; enrollment of students from principal UNCF campaign cities; foreign students by nation; total full-time equivalent faculty by race and degrees, faculty turnover and tenure; percentage of faculty distribution by division (field); average faculty salaries; total degrees granted; degrees granted by major; financial aid allocations; institutional costs and projections for upcoming academic year; fund revenues and expenditures; percentage distribution of funds by type of expenditure; percentage distribution of funds by source of revenue; and endowments. A comparison data report of all UNCF institutions is sent by the Patterson Institute to the president. Information from this report assists with peer competitor reports.

Delaware Study

The Delaware Study is considered to be a "tool of choice" for comparative analysis of faculty teaching loads, direct instructional cost, and separately budgeted scholarly activity, all at the level of the academic discipline. The University of Delaware's Office of Institutional Research and Planning had for years been collecting detailed data on teaching workloads, instructional costs, and externally funded scholarly activity. Xavier University participated in this study in 2007 in order to do an instructional cost and productivity analysis as well as to collect benchmark data on faculty teaching loads, instructional costs, and externally funded research and service activity, all at the academic discipline level of analysis. Additional participation is needed in order to do a trend analysis.

College Guides

Data are provided to annual college guides that provide institutional information to prospective college students to assist them with college selection. Based on data provided by Xavier, many college guides rank Xavier high amongst Master's level colleges and universities in its region. Some of the college guides that Xavier annually provides data to are: US News and World Report, Fiske Guide to Colleges, US Catholic Colleges – A National College Guide, Peterson's, and the Princeton Review

Publications and Reports

Included in our efforts of monitoring the environment is the monitoring of reports and publications that give insight into important trends, issues, and activities that impact the institution and higher education.

Annual Federal Reports

Annual federal reports to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), of which IPEDS is a part, provide Xavier access to national data from all colleges and universities nationwide. The annual IPEDS surveys includes data collection and reporting on Degree Completions, Institutional Characteristics, Enrollment, Finance, Financial Aid, Graduate Rate, and Staff. Using data from NCES, Xavier has been able to do comparison analyses with institutional peers on retention, degree completion, enrollment, graduation rates, faculty salaries and financial position. The Competitor's Profile and University Profile are two campus publications that use data from NCES IPEDS. In addition, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, a biweekly publication, annually lists the Top 100 degree producers. Data from NCES is the source of these listings. Xavier has ranked #1 consistently for over 5 years in the number of African Americans awarded degrees in the Biological and Physical Sciences. The rankings are routinely cited in advertising for recruitment purposes, narratives in grant proposals, and so forth.

Ad hoc Federal Studies

Periodically, Xavier participates in ad hoc federal studies. Two recent studies are the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS: 08) and 2009 Postsecondary Education Transcript Study (PETS: 09). The NPSAS: 08 study identified characteristics of students in postsecondary education, with special focus on how they finance their education. PETS: 09, part of two studies, the 2008/09 Baccalaureate and

Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B:08/09) and the 2004/09 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:04/09), is the transcript collection component for these two studies. As participants in both the NPSAS: 08 and PETS: 09, these data can be used to benchmark Xavier with other colleges and universities nationally. Final reports are pending on each of these surveys.

Electronic and Print Media

The Institutional research office subscribes to an array of educational journals and magazines that allows the office to keep abreast of current events and relevant research with a focus on higher education. These subscriptions include: Daily Chronicle of Higher Education, Daily Diverse Issues, Daily Times Picayune, Weekly Chronicle of Higher Education, US News and World Report Best Colleges Edition, Bimonthly NACUBO E-bulletin, Monthly Diverse Issues in Higher Education, and Journal of Higher Education Research.

Software education and demonstrations

In recent years the office has participated in software demonstrations on assessment tools, course evaluations, and data analyses to keep abreast of technological advances in the areas of planning, assessment and institutional research with an aim to create a more efficient and effectively functioning campus unit. As assessment has become more institutionalized, there has been an increase in the demand for the development of local surveys. Utilizing Inquisite survey builder software has enabled the Office of Planning and Institutional Research to supply data that address many of the needs of the campus for indirect measures for outcomes assessment. The office has reviewed TracDat, Weave Online, LiveText, and TK20. Additional reviews include software that assists with data presentation, for instance, Tableau™ and Mythics™. Three electronic course evaluation packages have been reviewed-- Class Climate by Scantron, Blue Explorance, and Online Course Evaluations.

Purpose and Usefulness of Activities

In reviewing the lists of activities conducted by the OPIR, one concludes that a high level of activity occurs and that a multi – tiered (national, local, and ad-hoc) system of data collection and reporting is available for institutional use. Traditionally, institutional research conducts activities that contribute to the mission of Xavier University by collecting, analyzing, and distributing information about Xavier for all purposes, but especially in support of the university's planning and assessment activities. The vast amount of information that has been gathered from various nationally normed surveys, local surveys, data compilations, reports and publications is geared to assist all campus units with planning and assessment.

Usefulness of Current Monitoring Practices

Many reports (annual and ad hoc) and surveys that have been conducted have led to decisions involving grant proposals, reaccreditation, and campus improvements. External monitoring beyond conducting surveys, collecting data, reporting and monitoring publications, also serves the vital function of preserving and archiving results from these activities. This function has led to a tremendous amount of

raw and analyzed data. The institutional research office serves as a repository for historical data collection and many times serves as the “go to” source within the University for further analyses and reporting. Sr. Patricia Lynch, the University Historian, has sought historical information on enrollment, degree completions, academic programs, and accreditation while completing research on the history of Xavier and illustrating its growth and impact.

Target Audience

As a measure to insure a continuous model of institutional effectiveness many surveys, reports, and other ad hoc environmental monitoring activities serve to compliment planning and assessment. Critical to the process and reporting of environmental monitoring is existing data, its summary and analysis, and the reporting of that information.

Our target audience is comprised of University leadership, academic and unit department heads, individual units and offices, individual faculty and staff, and on some occasions outside entities. Analyses and reports of various IR activities and studies are shared with requesting entities, are posted on the IR website, and are shared during a range of university administrative meetings and forums.

The addition of the VP for Planning and Institutional Research has allowed more focused ad hoc reporting to be conducted. The monitoring activities of the IR office have supported the development of the strategic plan, provided targeted data to support unit outcomes assessment, have supported a broad range of institutionally important activities including preparation for the SACS reaffirmation and the development of the QEP.

National survey data have been shared with the Office of Academic Enhancement, the Office of Resource Development, and the Core-Curriculum Assessment Committee, Human Resources, and Student Services.

Improvements and key decisions

As the University has moved to increase the importance of improving its institutional effectiveness and to develop its historic outcomes assessment process, findings and recommendation from surveys, reports, and publications, are increasingly used in a more systematic fashion. For example, in response to reporting a downward trend in first-year retention rates and the identification of the need for better academic college preparation of incoming freshmen, the University created and allocated financial resources for the Office of Academic Enhancement (OAE). This academic unit within the institution is used as a resource to help foster improved retention and graduation rates of Xavier students who are academically at-risk. This office focuses on providing new freshmen with academic support and formalized first year experiences programming. Data provided to the OAE (*BCSSE, Summer Orientation survey results, and the University Profile*) has been used to assist with academic advising and program planning. Budget allotments have been made for purchases of software to support enrollment management and academic advising (i.e., Hobson’s EMT).

Further examples of improvements and key decisions based on data provided through focus groups, analyses, profiles, and local surveys (Faculty-Staff Morale, Student-Staff Quality of Life, Faculty-Staff QOL: Cost of Living) include increased budget allocations for additional staff and space for the office of Student Financial Aid; recreational and workout facilities at Xavier South; additional greenery and tree planting and general landscape improvements in the quad; sitting and study areas across campus; and extended library hours.

In response to quality of life issues, for the past three years post-Katrina, administrative leaders have provided staff employees with a two-week paid holiday during the Christmas season and faculty research and workload issues have been partially addressed. Additionally, as a mechanism to increase morale amongst faculty, during commencement ceremonies six faculty members were presented the inaugural Norman C. Francis Faculty Excellence Awards. These awards are designed to bestow the highest honors annually to faculty members who exemplify first rate performance in the areas of teaching, scholarship and service. In addition plans are now being finalized for additional university center space to meet the requested need of students having more lounging/socialization areas that they can congregate in between classes.

Two key challenges for our office are to provide information and analysis in a form to support more intensive use of data to inform decisions and to more fully integrate the results of our environmental monitoring processes into our outcomes assessment and improvement in our institutional effectiveness.

Recommendations, Issues, and Actions Needed

Over the course of the last five years, Xavier University of Louisiana's Office of Planning and Institutional Research have participated in a broad range of activities to monitor our environment. Keeping abreast of national norms and trends through surveys as well as developing local surveys has allowed the institution to identify areas for improvement. The current monitoring of the environment within the institution indicates a wealth of information that is readily available to assist with planning and assessment. However, broader efforts are needed to insure that that information and those activities are reported in ways useful to the broad campus community. One way to meet this challenge would be to increase awareness of what data, information, and analyses are available. But additionally we must focus on providing data and information in a form that is useful to users and to provide that information in a timely way.

Our challenge is to disseminate data in a useful format that will support a culture of effective use of large quantities of data and information that we generate. We must aim to produce data that anticipates user needs and present that data in an easily accessed venue. We are exploring Dashboards as one means to achieve these aims. Additionally, specific attention should be given to insure that the reporting of monitoring activities are routinely shared not only with administrative leaders and key committees, but a broader range of users and potential users. Our continued participation in national surveys such as CIRP, BCSE, and opinion surveys, as well as continued reporting to external entities such as UNCF, college guides, and the National Center for Educational Statistics can provide a reservoir of available data for our community. Effective distribution of this and other institutional data can assist

with the development and designing of assessment outcomes and be responsive to a broad range of data and information needs of our community.

As Xavier begins to achieve the goals and objectives in its new strategic plan, the role of Institutional Research will be critical in supporting the effort. The OPIR will continue to keep abreast of new trends within the field of planning and institutional research, as well as outside threats to the institution (declining numbers of applicants, changes in the landscape of higher education, changes in federal policies and mandates). Because Xavier University has initiated an institutional effectiveness model that relies equally on planning, assessment, and environmental monitoring it is more important now than ever before to insure the data from our findings analyses of our changing environment are broadly distributed in a timely and useful manner.

APPENDIX

Selected Activities conducted by OPIR 2005-2009

Activity	Year				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
External					
<i>Surveys</i>					
CIRP	X	X		X	
NSSE	X		X	X	
BCSSE			X	X	
FSSE			X		
CSS					x
<i>College Guides/Peer Analysis</i>					
CSRDE	X	X	X	X	
UNCF Campaign Questionnaire	X	X	X	X	X
US News	X		X	X	X
Best Colleges (Princeton Review)	X		X	X	X
ACT College Questionnaire			X	X	X
Delaware Study				X	
Peterson's	X	X	X	X	X
Diverse Issues In Hi. Ed. Top 100 Degree Producer's	X	X	X	X	X
US Catholic Colleges Guide	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Federal Surveys</i>					
IPEDS Completions Survey	Katrina	X	X	X	
IPEDS Enrollment Survey	X	X	X	X	
IPEDS Graduation Rate	Katrina	X	X	X	
IPEDS Completions Survey	X	X	X	X	
IPEDS Financial Aid Survey	X	X	X	X	
IPEDS Fiscal Survey	X	X	X	X	
IPEDS Fall Staff Survey	Katrina	X	X	X	
IPEDS Institutional Characteristics Survey	X	X	X	X	
NPSAS:08				X	
PETS: 09					X
<i>Reading Subscriptions</i>					
Electronic Daily Chronicle of Higher Education	X	X	X	X	X
Electronic Daily Diverse Issues			X	X	X
Print - Weekly Chronicle of Higher Education	X	X	X	X	X
Print - US News & World Report <i>Best Colleges Edition</i>	X	X	X	X	X
Electronic Bimonthly NACUBO E-bulletin			X	X	X
Print - Monthly Diverse Issues in Higher Education	X	X	X	X	X
Internal					
University Profile	X	X	X	X	X
Competitors Profile				X	X
SWOT Analysis /Workgroup reports (Dr. Scheye)			X	X	
Institutional Effectiveness Survey (<i>Cour. & Effic. '05</i>)	X		X	X	X
Human Resources/Entergy		X	X	X	
Freshman Orientation Survey		X	X	X	
Parent Orientation Survey		X	X	X	
Course Evaluations	X	X	X	X	X

Selected Activities conducted by OPIR 2005-2009, cont.

Ad Hoc Activities	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
COP Faculty Survey				X	
Dining Services Survey				X	
Bookstore Service Survey				X	
Human Resources Professional Development Needs Analysis				X	
Human Resources "New Hire" Survey				X	
QEP Topic Selection				X	
Freshmen Seminar Survey	X			X	
Deciding Majors Survey				X	
Counseling Services Survey					X
Quality of Life Faculty, Staff, Student Surveys			X	X	