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A descriptive study of offices of institutional research in VirginiaÃŠÂ¼s public senior colleges and universities

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INFORMATION TO USERS

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF OFFICES OF
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH IN VIRGINIA'S
PUBLIC SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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by

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APPROVAL SHEET

We the undersigned do certify that we have
read this dissertation and that in our indi-
vidual opinions it is acceptable in both
scope and quality as a dissertation for
the degree of Doctor of Education.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Context of the Study

In light of developments in the economic, social, and
political arena coupled with the pressures for accounta-
bility from various state and federal agencies, the role
of institutional research has become increasingly signifi-
cant. At the time of this study, the external environment
was an important determinant of the nature and scope of
the activities in which an institutional research office
was engaging. State legislators and coordinating boards
were demanding that these institutions be accountable to
their publics.

Accountability was translated into such concepts as
program budgeting, cost-benefit analysis, faculty workload
analyses, and space utilization. These subjects, among
others, constituted the operations-management side of insti-
tutional research. They were concerned with the housekeeping
problems of higher education administration.

One philosophy of institutional research purported
that an office of institutional analysis should be an

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administratively oriented office and focus on "studies needed for the making of important decisions about policy and procedures (Russell, 1965, p. 284). Thus, the institutional researchers was viewed as a servant of the administration and the institutional research activities were expected to be applied rather than theoretical. The primary goal of the institutional research office was to find out how "to save money that can be used to better advantage" (Russell, 1965, p. 284).

Others contended that institutional research agencies should be concerned primarily with academic questions. They argued that institutional research offices should focus on such investigations as studies of student admissions, curriculum, student characteristics, student performances, teaching techniques, and faculty characteristics. Under this conception, the work of institutional researchers was expected to focus on the teaching-learning processes. Dressel (1974b) surmised, however that many offices of institutional research had almost completely bypassed studies of this nature and were concerned only with "direct budgetary and management problems." He noted that his office was spending more time on the mere accumulation of data with too little time "to assimilate its meaning for internal decisions."

Rourke and Brooks (1966) conducted a nationwide study of institutional research agencies in 1964. The results

indicated that the activities of the agencies that participated in the study were primarily academically oriented. However, in 1970, Roney reported that the results of his national survey gave evidence that the majority of the responding institutional research agencies were performing a management service (Roney, 1970). As a result of a national survey of 159 colleges and universities, Larkin (1972) concluded that almost 2 out of 3 of the studies reported by the institutional research agencies were management in orientation.

Several other researchers investigated the functions and emphases of offices of institutional research. It was not clear, however, whether these offices were designed to perform a management service or whether they were devoted to questions of "academic effectiveness."[1]

This problem provided the context for the present study. In an environment characterized by scarce resources, operations-management research, as it is usually defined, gives little or no attention to the purposes and values of the institution. An institution must be concerned with ensuring its solvency, but it must also ask what purposes are being served by keeping the institution solvent. It has been suggested that institutional research must integrate its

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1. See Rourke and Brooks, 1966, p. 48.

management and academic concepts if it is to have a positive and enduring impact on institutional quality (Dyer, 1966, Fenske, 1970).

In part, this study described the functions and emphases of certain offices of institutional research; and, in part, described the interpretation given to the concept of institutional research by these offices.

The Problem

The concept of institutional research is based on the premise that judgements can be made more credible by systematic fact-gathering and analysis. "No institution can know how to improve itself without knowing in some detail how it has been and is operating" (Dressel, 1971, p. 16). It was the purpose of this study to describe the structures and activities of offices of institutional research in certain institutions of higher education. In particular, this investigation focused on the status of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities. Five basic questions were investigated.

First, what were the structures and functions of the offices of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities? The primary functions of an institutional research office are often determined by its location in the administrative structure. Moreover, its role in university operations is usually shaped by the

needs and inclinations of the official to whom the institutional research officer is responsible (Rourke and Brooks, 1966). In addition, the scope of the activities undertaken by some institutional research offices may well be a function of the personnel available to the office.

Second, what were the nature and the frequency to which studies were conducted on academic policies, programs, and issues? A diversity of functions are often performed within offices of institutional research in accord with the specific needs of the given institution and the interests and competencies of the personnel involved. Hence, the array of services performed by the institutional research office may change over time. In an environment characterized by pressures from various external agencies, it was deemed appropriate to ask what some institutional research officers were doing with respect to the academic side of the institutional research effort.

Some of the colleges or universities included in this investigation could be considered old, traditional, rather stable institutions, while others could be characterized as emerging institutions striving to define their mission in a setting complicated by scarce resources. Still others could be regarded as basically urban institutions seeking to cope with their concomitant problems. Institutions exist in different environments and some of their constituents probably have different views of institutional

research. The third question investigated in this study
was: what were the opinions of selected administrators
toward the role and functions of the offices of institu-
tional research?

The fourth question investigated was: How did the
perceptions of selected administrators toward the role
and functions of institutional research compare with the
perceptions of the directors of the offices of institutional
research? While the overall coordination and direction of
institutional research activities are usually centralized,
an office of institutional research cannot operate in iso-
lation (Brumbaugh, 1960). Institutional research offices
must often request data and information from other adminis-
trators within the institution. The spirit of cooperation
exhibited by these administrators may often be a function
of their attitudes toward the institutional research office
and/or its director. Horizontal, as well as vertical
communication is essential for the effective and efficient
operation of any organization.

The relationship of an office of institutional research
with faculty groups and other agencies and constituents of
a college or university can often have an impact on the
whole decision-making process. Thus, the final question
investigated was: what were the potential problems and
points of conflict between the offices of institutional
research and other units and agencies of the institution?

PROCEDURES

This investigation was a descriptive study employing the survey technique. It was designed to obtain knowledge of the existing status of institutional research in certain colleges and universities and to determine perceptions of desired conditions. The study did not begin with a well-defined set of hypotheses, but rather was confined to a few specific questions geared toward providing a comprehensive overview of institutional research developments in selected colleges and universities. The nature of institutional research -- "a variegated form of organizational self-study" (Rourke and Brooks, 1966, p. 44) -- made it practical to conduct a study of this type, the assumption being that such a study would provide more insight and understanding than a highly technical theory-based investigation.

In order to maximize the depth of the study and to have direct contact with some institutional research personnel, the study focused on a small segment of the institutions of higher education--the public senior colleges and universities in Virginia.

Parsimony was one of the reasons the Virginian institutions were selected as the subjects of this investigation. More importantly, even though the very concept of institutional research was relatively new, the Virginian institutions recognized the growing need for institutional research. All

of the public senior colleges and universities in Virginia had personnel designated to coordinate institutional research activities.

Since pressures from the external environment often have tremendous impact on the patterns of organization and management in public institutions, this study was limited to colleges and universities in the public sector. Moreover, Rourke and Brooks (1966) asserted that public and private institutions are virtually indistinguishable with respect to purely internal administrative problems.

Population. The population for this investigation consisted of the directors of institutional research and five groups of selected administrators in the fourteen (14) public senior colleges and universities in the state of Virginia. There were fifteen public senior colleges and universities in the Commonwealth, but one institution of this type was a branch of one of the other institutions, and its institutional research activities were coordinated by the parent institution.

The six categories of administrators selected for the study were as follows:

1. Director of Institutional Research
2. President
3. Chief Academic Officer
4. Dean of School of Arts and Sciences

5. Dean of School of Business

6. Dean of School of Education

The individual at each institution who held the designated title or a similar one was selected for that particular category. This procedure was not followed, however, in selecting administrators from the schools of arts and sciences since only one-half of the institutions in the study had designated schools of arts and sciences. If an institution did not have a school of arts and sciences, administrative heads of departments and/or divisions of the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities were selected for participation in the study.

The names of the fourteen institutions included in this study are listed below:

Christopher Newport College

George Mason University

Longwood College

Madison College

Mary Washington College

Norfolk State College

Old Dominion University

Radford University

University of Virginia

Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Military Institute

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Virginia State College

College of William and Mary

Methodology. Data were collected primarily through
questionnaires and interviews in order to answer the speci-
fic descriptive questions posed in this study. Other data
were obtained from organizational charts and letters sent
to the investigator by some administrators.

To determine the structures and functions of the offices
of institutional research in Virginia's public senior col-
leges and universities, a personal interview was conducted
with each of the institutional research directors at his
respective institution. An interview guide (Appendix A)
containing both closed and open-ended questions was used to
obtain information on the structures and functions of these
offices and to obtain general impressions of their operating
practices. In some cases, organizational charts were used
to get a picture of the placement of the institutional
research office in the total structure of the college or
university.

The nature and scope of this study were first intro-
duced to the directors of institutional research at an
informal meeting of the directors that was held on May 30,

1975 in Richmond, Virginia. During the first week of June, 1975, a formal letter was sent to each of the fourteen directors for the purposes of soliciting his cooperation in the study and establishing procedures for scheduling the interview. Interview dates were subsequently established by means of telephone with all of the directors.

Since respondents were encouraged to give spontaneous accounts of events and situations, all interviews were tape recorded. Each respondent was told in advance that the interview was to be taped and that the tape was to be erased following the extraction of data needed for this study. All respondents consented to have their interviews taped.

To determine the functions of these offices, the directors were asked to describe both the routine and non-routine activities in which their offices had participated during the last three years. Each director was given a list of job responsibilities that were often assumed by offices of institutional research (Item 3, Interview Guide). Each director rank-ordered the areas listed in terms of the priorities established in his or her office.

Following each interview, the recorded tape was reviewed by the researcher. This was done in an attempt to determine the effectiveness of the procedure, as well as, to gain insights into ways of improving subsequent interviews.

Upon completion of all the interviews, each tape was again reviewed--followed by extensive note taking.

Questions from the interview guide were used to elicit both forced-choice and free response type answers from the respondents. For the most part, the directors were notably forthright in their answers to posed questions. Although, in general, a uniform schedule of questions was utilized, during each interview it was necessary to depart from the interview guide due to variations in organizational structure and institutional research practices.

A summary of the main points related to the structures and functions of the offices of institutional research was compiled. It was assumed that this information was factual, hence no attempt was made to corroborate the data. Organizational charts and "fact books", when available, were used to verify, as well as, clarify some of the data.

The second question raised in this study concerned the nature and the frequency with which studies were conducted on academic policies, programs, and issues. The directors of institutional research served as sources of data relevant to this question. A questionnaire, "Directors' Perceptions of Institutional Research," was developed to collect descriptive information about the directors of institutional research and their offices, some of their perceptions of the role of institutional research at their

respective institutions, and the nature of studies undertaken by the offices.

The directors were asked to place check marks to indicate which ones of the thirty-three listed studies in Part II of the questionnaire their offices had conducted during the past three years, with a beginning date of January 1, 1972. Descriptions of these studies were obtained from the research reported in the literature. The studies listed on the questionnaire were those most frequently referred to in annotated bibliographies of institutional research, reports of papers presented at institutional research conferences, and other compendia that reported institutional research activities.

This questionnaire was sent to the directors along with the letter that requested the scheduling of an interview. All questionnaires were returned to the investigator during the interview.

The information gathered relevant to the nature of studies conducted by the offices of institutional research was based primarily on the recollections of the directors In a few instances, it was possible to corroborate some of the recollections with evidence exhibited in the various reports obtained from the directors. However even in these limited situations, most of the "studies" were actually statistical reports rather than research investigations. Thus, most of the data obtained in this connection

were treated as opinions rather than as facts.

What were the opinions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of offices of institutional research? To obtain data to provide an answer to this question, a questionnaire was sent to the chief administrative officer, the chief academic officer, and the deans of the schools of arts and sciences, business, and education in each of the fourteen institutions. The questionnaire, "Administrators' Perceptions of Institutional Research," was an expanded form of the questionnaire administered to the directors.

A cover letter accompanied each questionnaire sent to these selected administrators (Appendix A). The letter, mailed during the first week of June, 1975, explained the purposes of the study and solicited the cooperation of the administrators. A stamped, addressed, return envelop was also provided. A follow-up personal letter was sent as a reminder to those who had not responded to the initial request after approximately four weeks (see Appendix A). The responses obtained to this third descriptive question were treated as opinions.

The fourth descriptive question concerned comparing the perceptions of the role of institutional research of selected administrators with the perceptions of the directors of the offices of institutional research. Data were collected from the two questionnaires that were administered

to the directors of institutional research and the five
selected administrative groups.

Items #2 - #5 on the questionnaire sent to these
administrators were identical to Items #1 - #4 on the
directors' questionnaire. The items were designed to
elicit the respondent's perceptions of institutional
research at his particular college or university. Each
administrators was asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5
the extent to which he thought the office of institutional
research on his campus should be involved in each of
thirty-three listed studies. These opinions may serve
as indicators of the general future direction of insti-
tutional research activities in Virginia's public senior
colleges and universities.

The final question posed in this investigation was:
what were the potential problems and points of conflict
between the offices of institutional research and other
units and agencies of the institution? In seeking an
answer to this question, data were obtained primarily
from the directors of institutional research. During the
interview, directors were asked to discuss some of the
chief obstacles to optimum development of the institu-
tional research program on their campuses. In addition,
the directors were asked to assess the perceptions and
attitudes of certain groups, such as the faculty and the

administrative staff, toward the role and functions of institutional research on their campuses.

Such descriptors as bias, subjective, fixed attitudes, and personal loyalty often characterize some interview findings. Since the directors in general were enthusiastic about their institutional research activities, allowances were made for subjectivity. Even allowing for such subjectivity, however, the data obtained represented little more than perceptions. Thus additional evidence was needed.

One way to determine potential problems and points of conflict between two agencies is to compare the agencies' perceptions and goals relative to the same area. Thus, the investigator compared responses to selected items on the two questionnaires in order to gain a general impression of potential problems and points of conflict between the institutional research office and other units of the institution. While such comparisons do not provide precise data, they suggest lines of inquiry which otherwise might not have been exposed.

Summary

Pressures for accountability and demands from state and federal agencies have made it necessary for offices

of institutional research to direct much more attention
to data collection in order to meet such external demands.
It was within this setting that "A Descriptive Study of
Offices of Institutional Research in Virginia's Public
Senior Colleges and Universities" was undertaken.

The study investigated the existing status of insti-
tutional research and the perceptions of selected adminis-
trators and directors toward the role and functions of
institutional research in fourteen institutions of higher
education. While the study did not begin with a set of
well-specified hypotheses, five basic questions served as
the focal point around which they study was organized.
What were the structures and functions of the offices of
institutional research? What were the nature and the fre-
quency of studies that were conducted on academic policies,
programs, and issues? How did the opinions of selected
administrators compare with the perceptions of the direc-
tors of institutional research? What were the potential
problems and points of conflict between the offices of
institutional research and other units and agencies of the
institution?

The population of the study consisted of the director
of institutional research, the chief administrative offi-
cer, the chief academic officer, and the deans of the
schools of arts and sciences, business, and education from

each of the fourteen colleges and universities.

Data were collected primarily by means of two questionnaires and interviews with the directors. Except for basic descriptive data, most of the data collected were judgemental in nature. Thus, many of the findings may reflect bias, subjectivity, and fixed attitudes. The directors for the most part were very enthusiastic about their institutional research programs, and although many of them were relatively new to the institutional research endeavor, they had already formed rather fixed conceptions of what institutional research was all about. Allowances must be made for such personal views and the resulting subjectivity.

It was not expected that the findings would furnish precise, generalizable data concerning the various aspects of institutional research in the Virginia colleges and universities. It was expected, however, that the research would provide a comprehensive overview of institutional research activities in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities and indicate major trends and developments.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Introduction

The institutional research officer was a relatively
new addition to the formal organizational charts of insti-
tutions of higher education. Although Cowley (1960)
traced the concept of institutional research back to the
founding of Yale University in 1701, it was not until
the late 1950's that the term "institutional research"
came into general usage in higher education (Saupe and
Montgomery, 1970). By 1970, however, Tetlow (1970) noted
that there were hundreds of administrative staff offices
in colleges and universities in the United States with
the words "institutional research" in their job title
and/or job description. Thus by the time of this study,
institutional research was being viewed by many colleges
and universities as a continuing process requiring the
full energies of at least one or more specialized staff
persons.

It was argued that the term institutional research
was misleading because of the "easy confusion between
it and on-going programs of academic research within the
institution," (Miller, 1967, p. 5). In an attempt at

clarification, Dressel and Pratt (1971) asserted that institutional research differed from general research in higher education because it focused on studies which "are at least in part specific to the problems of a specific institution or a system of higher education in a state or region" (p. 11).

Actually, there was considerable disagreement in higher education as to what institutional research really was. Even Dressel (1971) admitted that some of his colleagues did not agree on a precise definition of institutional research. Part of this difficulty was attributed to differing views of institutional research. Often one's view of institutional research was directly related to how institutional research came into being at a given institution. Thus the nature and scope of institutional research activities varied from campus to campus, depending on whether investigations focused on students, faculty, operating costs, or space utilization.

It was assumed that the set of activities engaged in by an office of institutional research was consistent with its view of institutional research. Hence, in reviewing the literature, two questions seemed particularly relevant. First, what is institutional research? Second, what were the major areas of emphasis in institutional research?

What Is Institutional Research?

In spite of the substantial growth of formalized institutional research, there was no consensus on a definition of institutional research. A. J. Brumbaugh (1960) called it "research designed to improve institutions of higher learning," while Rourke and Brooks (1966, p. 44) suggested that institutional research was "a variegated form of organizational self-study designed to help colleges and universities gather an expanding range of information about their own internal operations and the effectiveness with which they are using their resources."

It was often pointed out that institutional research was as diverse as the institutions it was supposed to serve. Dyer (1966) added that institutional research was probably also as diverse as the institutional researchers who served it.

The range of definitions in the literature spanned the continuum from purely administrative to purely academic emphases. Often cited was John Dale Russell's view of institutional research as an agency facilitating "studies of operational problems" (Russell, 1965, p. 284).

At the opposite end of the continuum, was the view of Sanford Nevitt who expressed a need for a research agency to ensure that "intensive, theoretically-oriented, long term studies of students and intensive, probably

also long-term studies of the inner workings of educational institutions" (Nevitt, 1962, p. 1013) be conducted using the scientific approach.

Dyer (1966) advanced the thought that if institutional research were to be viable and effective, some method had to be found for integrating these two views. He noted that institutional researchers should both look for "better ways to balance budgets and keep students and faculties happy" (p. 456).

One institutional researcher predicted that institutional research was evolving into a third force in higher education - "into an interface role in the structure of higher education" (Perry, 1972, p.6). He viewed institutional research as the "locus of activity" which would enable the academic and non-academically oriented person to better understand each other. Suslow (1972) elaborated further on this third force role of institutional research. He viewed institutional research as serving a mediator role between the force of the educators whose "basic interests, goals, motivations and philosophies differ from the force of the management scientists, systems analysts, and similar technologies" (p. 16). Suslow (1972) argued that institutional research was neither purely management oriented nor purely academically oriented but was a special kind of educational research in colleges

and universities focused on the institution, and its products were largely directed toward academic planning and administrative activities" (p. 17).

The National Laboratory for Higher Education (1971) described contemporary institutional research as follows:

> Institutional research is the means by which a college or university searches for the truth about itself; what it is accomplishing and why; what its resources are now and how effectively they are being used; what potential resources are now being tapped; what changes should be made in policies, procedures, and programs; and what methods for making these necessary are feasible. For greater simplicity, institutional research provides information for assessing where the institution is, where it is going, and how, if necessary, its direction might be altered. Institutional researchers conduct applied research, interpret research results, and prepare research reports designed to aid decision-makers (p. 10).

Suslow (1972) countered, however, that institutional research was neither applied nor pure research; that it inevitably "will involve a lot of both" (p. 17).

In analyzing the results of his interviews with sixteen "recognized institutional research leaders," Tetlow (1974) found it interesting that these persons were inclined to include a description of an "operational philosophy" in the scope of their definitions of institutional research (p. 8).

Stickler (1959), one of the early pioneers in the field of institutional research offered the following:

> Institutional research refers to research which is directed toward providing data useful or necessary in the making of intelligent administrative decisions and/or for the successful maintenance,

operation, and/or improvement of a given
institution of higher education. It includes
the collection and analysis of data used in
appraising the environment or "setting" in
which the institution operates, in preparing
the budget, in planning new buildings, in
determining faculty loads, in admitting stu-
dents, in individualizing instruction, in
planning the educational program and the
like. It is needed to facilitate efficient
operation, but it is also needed to promote
qualitative improvement. (p. 542)

Dressel (1966) summarized institutional research

thusly:

Institutional research involves the collec-
tion of data or the making of studies useful
or necessary in (a) understanding and inter-
preting the institution; (b) making intelli-
gent decisions about current operations or
plans for the future; (c) improving the
efficiency and effectiveness of the institu-
tion. (p. 8)

To answer their own query concerning institutional

research, Saupe and Montgomery (1970), using Dressel's

definition as background, stated that "institutional

research consists of data collection, analyses, reporting,

and related staff work designed to facilitate operations

and decision-making within institutions of higher educa-

tion" (p. 3).

While Grout (1964) referred to institutional research

as a "tool in the administrator's tool kit" (p. 34), John

Stecklein (1970) of the University of Minnesota opined

that a broad institutional research program served not

only administrators, but faculty, students, and coordinating

boards and other unifying agencies as well. Stecklein (1970)

indicated that institutional research

1. assisted faculty members:

   a. to learn by controlled experimentation the potentialities, outcomes, or limitations of their instruction.
   b. to obtain a better understanding of the purpose of a course or curriculum.
   c. to determine a basis for comparative judgements concerning instruction and curriculum building.
   d. to obtain a better understanding of admissions practices, examinations, procedures, grading practices, and work loads.
   e. to obtain a better understanding of the role of the faculty member in the administration of the college or university, e.g. of the pressures and forces causing certain administrative problems and/or actions, or of the desirability of a faculty voice in administrative policy making.
   f. to develop a better understanding of the factors that influence costs of instruction and other functions of an institution of higher education.
   g. to obtain an understanding of the way in which curricular decisions can affect such things as space utilization, building costs, and various routine operations of an institution.

2. assisted the administration:

   a. to serve most of the purposes listed above.
   b. to identify and analyze factors that influence costs of efficiency of operation.
   c. to obtain overall pictures of the characteristics of the undergraduate and graduate student body, of the faculty, and of the curriculum.
   d. to provide continuous up-to-date data on institutional characteristics such as size, rank of staff, available space, number of research contracts, amount of staff effort expended upon research, public and professional services, etc.
   e. to bring to the attention of the administrators trends taking place in any of the characteristics mentioned above.
   f. to provide data and information useful in obtaining financial support.
   g. to provide data useful in explaining the mission and achievements of the institution. (p. 254).

According to Stecklein (1970), an institutional research program could serve students by providing assistance to student organizations in the form of advisory help and by making surveys or analyses relating to problems of concern to them. He added further that the role of institutional research relative to coordinating agencies and other external groups was to organize data collection procedures and definitions in order to accurately represent the institution to such agencies.

This comprehensive description of institutional research placed emphasis on both the management and academic concerns of an institution. Tetlow (1974) noted that seventy-five per cent (twelve) of the respondents in his study favored an operating philosophy of institutional research that encompassed both of these concerns. In addition, the same respondents indicated that they had adopted a definition of institutional research sufficiently broad that there had been no need to change it within the past ten years. However, the respondents agreed unanimously that the primary or sole emphasis was focused on central administrative issues and that instructionally related issues were receiving scant attention "in most institutions in 1970" (p. 41).

Although Miller (1967) agreed that institutional research should focus on both administrative and academic issues, he asserted that the term "institutional research" was misleading because of the "easy confusion

between it and on-going programs of academic research within the institution" (p. 6). He thought the term "management research" or "analytical studies" was more descriptive of this field of endeavor. Regardless of the name used to describe this enterprise, Tetlow (1974) concluded that the consensus of the sixteen "recognized institutional research leaders" in his study would include the following elements in a definition of institutional research:

-- consists of data collection, analysis, and reporting
-- is designed to provide useful factual information for the decision-making process
-- is aimed at improving the understanding, planning, and operation of higher education (p. 142).

Areas of Emphasis in Institutional Research

Several investigators organized institutional research activities into specific categories. Brumbaugh (1960) suggested eight categories into which institutional research studies could be classified: goals, students, faculty, curriculum, facilities, administration, finance, and public relations.

Peterson (1971) proposed the following model for categorizing institutional research activities:

Policy Research
    Long range studies of organizational goal achievement and resource utilization
    Comparative research for other higher education institutions

Studies of overall structure and func-
tioning of the institution
Research on environmental conditions
affecting the institution
Forecasting alternative futures and their
impact on the institution
Operating Research
Devising forecasting and simulation models
of institutional and environmental dyna-
mics
Evaluating alternative program and resource
strategies and specific decisions
Evaluation Research
Assessment of program input, process, and
output. Variables overtime
Measures of goal achievement and uninten-
ded effects of programs
Cost and productivity measurements
Descriptive Research
Analysis and reports of current operations
(p. 38)

Larkin (1972) asserted that a meaningful way to cate-
gorize institutional research activities was to classify
the studies according to the way they were used, either
primarily to support administrative decision-making or
to improve the academic program. He delineated each of
these areas to include variations of the categories pre-
sented by Peterson (1971). Larkin (1972) suggested the
following typology:

Policy Studies
1. Institutional goal-setting
2. Inter-institutional comparison and/or
cooperation
3. Organizational structure and/or social
functioning
4. Analysis of economics and/or social con-
ditions affecting the institution
5. Institutional long range plan
6. Management by objectives
Operational Relationships
1. Devising simulation models of institutional
dynamics
2. Planning near term alternatives for program
development or resources allocation

3. Strategies to increase income or effective funds utilization
4. Enrollment projections, or enrollment sources
5. Cost-effectiveness studies
6. Space utilization and/or needs

Outcomes of Evaluation Studies

1. Academic accreditation or multi-program mission achievement
2. Program or curriculum evaluation (individual curricula)
3. Student success or failure (academic achievement)
4. Teaching effectiveness
5. Student follow-up studies
6. Effectiveness of media, materials, or methods

Descriptive Studies

1. Information supporting the budgeting process
2. Student characteristics profiles
3. Faculty characteristics, faculty load, student-teacher ratio, or class size studies
4. Salary/fringe benefit studies
5. Descriptions of applications, attrition, graduations, or the equivalent
6. Opinion samplings (p. 58).

Gunnell (1973) proposed classifying Larkin's categories into two broad areas: (1) institutional operations (operationally related models and descriptive studies) and (2) program planning and/or modification (policy and planning studies and evaluation studies).

One of the first studies of institutional research activities was undertaken by Sprague (1959) for the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. The 209 Western colleges and universities that participated in the survey described the studies that they were conducting. Based on the nature of the studies, Sprague (1959) defined ten categories. He totaled the studies, eliminated some

(0.2 per cent) considered inappropriate, and then reported the percentage of acceptable studies falling in each category: students (24 per cent), faculty (15.7 per cent), curriculum (15.5 per cent), enrollment (8.3 per cent), physical plant (11.4 per cent), administration and organization (7.8 per cent), admissions policy (5.3 per cent), teaching models (6.5 per cent), finance (4.5 per cent), and relations with outside agencies or other institutions (0.8 per cent).

Stickler (1959) conducted a similar investigation using the member institutions of both the American Association of Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities and the State Universities Association. Stickler (1959) catalogued the studies by institution and listed all topics that were reported. He found that the problems studied by these institutions tended to focus on immediate, specific topics rather than on long range educational planning. The studies dealt with problems of the individual college or university rather than with groups of institutions on state, regional, or national levels.

Few of the studies reported in either of these investigations were conducted by persons who considered themselves institutional researchers. Sprague (1959) reported that usually a president, vice president, or dean had the responsibility for research activities. Many of the authors of the studies listed by Stickler (1959) were

described as budget officers, registrars, personnel direc-
tors, and even graduate students.

Rourke and Brooks (1966) noted that prior to 1955
there were only ten institutions of higher education in
the United States with formal offices or bureaus of insti-
tutional research. By the time they conducted their own
study of institutional research activities in 1964, however,
they concluded that there were at least 115 such agencies
charged with the responsibility of institutional research.

Rourke and Brooks (1966) sent questionnaires to 361
four-year state supported colleges and universities, to
a sample of 36 nonstate public institutions and 36 private
colleges - receiving almost an 80 per cent response. In
addition, they conducted interviews at 33 colleges and
universities and central governing boards in 16 states.
Each institutional research agency in the colleges and
universities was asked to describe its primary work orien-
tation by ranking several areas: financial studies,
faculty studies, and student studies. Of the 124 agencies
responding to the questions, 40 per cent indicated stu-
dents were of major importance of their office, while 24
per cent listed faculty studies as their primary concern.
Rourke and Brooks (1966) concluded that the work of insti-
tutional research agencies in 1964 was primarily concerned
with academic problems. They noted that 29 per cent of

all the responding agencies indicated that the study of housekeeping (studies of finance and studies of physical planning) was their chief concern, while almost two-thirds of the agencies were primarily academically oriented.

When Roney (1970) conducted a national survey of offices of institutional research regarding the relative emphasis the offices placed on academic and management projects, he observed that in a majority of the institutions surveyed a large percentage of the institutional research studies undertaken were management oriented. He noted, however, that, in general, small, undergraduate institutions placed greater emphasis on academic problems.

Roney (1970) sent questionnaires to all colleges and universities in this country which had personnel who held active membership in the Association for Institutional Research. His sample consisted of the directors of institutional research and selected administrators at each of 220 institutions. The questionnaires completed by the directors listed 24 types of research projects; one-half of these were judged in advance as primarily academic types while the other half of the projects were essentially management types. The types of studies most often undertaken by offices of institutional research that participated in this study were: (1) enrollment projections, (2) coordination and completion of questionnaires, (3) faculty loads, (4) space utilization, (5) studies at the request

of faculty groups, and (6) the development of data collec-
tion systems.

In addition to Roney, several other investigators
of institutional research activities conducted studies of
institutional research utilizing the members of the Asso-
ciation for Institutional Research as the population.
The Association, a professional organization of institu-
tional researchers, was legally incorporated in 1965 as
an outgrowth of a series of annual conferences on insti-
tutional research (Saupe, 1967). The constitution of
the Association defined a full member as a person actively
engaged in institutional research, and an associate mem-
ber as one interested in the methodology and the results
of institutional research but who was not actively engaged
in such research (Tincher, 1970).

Stecklein (1966) made an analysis of the backgrounds
and characteristics of the 382 members of the Association
of Institutional Research (AIR). Using the AIR Charter
Membership Application Form as the source for his data,
Stecklein (1966) reported that more than fifty per cent
of the members indicated the study of students as one
of the primary areas of responsibility associated with
their existing positions.

In 1970 a similar study of the active members of the
Association for Institutional Research was conducted
(Tincher, 1970). Questionnaires were distributed to 796

such persons and were returned by 696--a response rate
of 84 per cent. While Stecklein (1966) used an open
ended question to elicit responses regarding the duties
and responsibilities of the members, Tincher (1970)
asked members to rank order their primary areas of empha-
sis on a pre-selected list. "Planning and Coordination"
was ranked as number one choice, followed by "Studies
of Students" and "Faculty Studies." Curriculum studies
and studies of teaching received the least emphasis.

In the spring of 1973 Morstain and Smart (1974)
sought to determine the degree to which institutional
research priorities had shifted since the period of Tin-
cher's investigation. They distributed a questionnaire
to the 1048 active members of the Association for Insti-
tutional Research. Usable questionnaires were returned
by 706 (67 per cent) of the respondents. Members were
asked to rank-order eight areas of job responsibilities
on both an actual and a preferred basis. Planning and
coordination activities were ranked highest.

Table 1 shows a comparison of these three studies.
It gives a general indication of how institutional research
emphases have shifted during the past few years. Caution
must be exercised in interpreting the table, however,
since the methodologies of the three studies were not
the same.

TABLE I

Actual Duties and Responsibilities as Ranked by AIR Members

	1966 Survey[1]	1970 Survey[2]	1973 Survey[3]
Studies of Students	1	2	3
Planning & Coordination	2	1	1
Space Utilization	3	7	8
Faculty Studies	4	3	5
Curriculum	5	8	7
Budget & Finances	6	4	2
Organizational Studies	7	5	4
Data Systems & Computers	8	6	6
Teaching	9	9	**

1. Stecklein

2. Tincher

3. Based on data reported by Morstain and Smart

** This category was not included in the 1973 survey

Planning and coordination received high emphasis in all the studies - being ranked the highest in both the 1970 and 1973 surveys. On the other hand, studies of teaching ranked the lowest in 1966 and 1970 and was dropped as a category in 1973. While there was a decreased emphasis noted for space utilization and

curriculum studies, organizational studies and budget and finances received an increased emphasis. Studies of students apparently declined in emphasis, however, data systems and computers seemed to gain in emphasis.

In analyzing their 1973 survey, Morstain and Smart (1974) reported that respondents in private, four-year colleges and universities placed greater emphasis on activities in the areas of planning-coordination and budget-finances. These institutions placed relatively less emphasis on organizational studies. Institutional research personnel in public, four-year colleges tended to devote more time to studies of faculty, space utilization, and data systems. This group spent a relatively smaller percentage of their time on planning-coordination activities, studies of students, and curriculum studies (Morstain and Smart, 1974).

To prepare for a session at the 1970 Association for Institutional Research Forum, Charles I. Brown conducted a study entitled, "Some Characteristics of Institutional Researchers at Predominantly Black Institutions." Brown (1970) sent a questionnaire based on the form used in Tincher's study to ninety predominantly black senior colleges and universities. The questionnaire was returned by sixty-eight per cent of the sample; twenty-nine (48 per cent) reported having personnel actively

engaged in institutional research. The respondents were asked to rank order eleven institutional research activities that commanded the greater portion of their time. The activities listed were: budget and finances, collecting information to assist day-to-day decision making, conducting studies conceived and designed by institutional research personnel, conducting studies for long-range planning and decision making, curriculum studies, filling out HEGIS and other forms, planning/coordination/development, space utilization, and student studies (Brown, 1970). An analysis of the findings indicated that black public senior colleges and universities spent the greatest amount of their time on space utilization activities. Budget-finances and conducting studies for long-range planning and decision making also received high rankings, while student studies commanded the least portion of their time. Their private counterparts put the greatest portion of their time on data systems and computers, budget and finances, and space utilization activities. Planning/coordination/development and collecting information to assist day-to-day decision making received the lowest rankings.

It is worth noting that more than ninety-one per cent of the private colleges that participated in Brown's survey had an enrollment of 2100 or less.

During the Spring of 1972 Larkin (1972) conducted
a study on institutional research priorities for the
National Laboratory for Higher Education. A national
sampling of 220 public colleges and universities yielded
a response rate of seventy-two per cent.

His findings indicated that long-range planning was
"far and away the most frequent type of policy study
reported" (Larkin, 1972, p. 13). Further, both two-year
colleges and four-year colleges and universities placed
highest priority on long-range planning. The most fre-
quent type of operational study reported by the partici-
pants was enrollment projections--closely followed by
studies of space utilization or needs.

Among the outcomes or evaluation studies, curriculum
evaluation was most frequently mentioned by the respon-
dents. In fact, ninety-five per cent of the senior insti-
tutions reported involvement with this type of study.
Student achievement (59 per cent) and student follow-up
studies (59 per cent) came next in order. The most fre-
quently mentioned descriptive studies were faculty studies
(71 per cent) and student profiles (70 per cent). It must
be noted that faculty studies were much more frequent at
senior institutions (95 per cent) than at the two-year
institutions (59 per cent) (Larkin, 1972).

Comparing the four categories relative to percentage
distribution of studies, descriptive studies, operational
studies, evaluation studies, and policy studies claimed
the attention of the participating institutional researchers,
in that order. Taken together, descriptive and operational
studies accounted for sixty-three per cent of the studies
undertaken. In other words, nearly two out of three stu-
dies were concerned with institutional operations rather
than with planning level studies (Larkin, 1972). These
data seem to be contradictory to the trend indicated in
Table I. Whether a contradiction exists depends upon the
interpretation of the data. Such an interpretation must
be exercised with extreme caution due to the variations
in methodologies.

Summary

A review of the literature indicated a range of defi-
nitions in the evolving field of institutional research,
as well as, varying patterns of research emphasis.

Differences in the definition of institutional research
accounted for basic differences in the view of institutional
research. There were two major points of view regarding
the function of institutional research. Some argued that
institutional research ought to be concerned with opera-
tional problems. In this view, institutional researchers

were expected to deal primarily with such administrative
or housekeeping problems as budgetary requests and space
utilization. Others advanced the thought that institu-
tional research ought to be essentially academic in
orientation, with attention being devoted to questions
of academic effectiveness. Those that supported this
view felt that institutional researchers ought to be
concerned with the purposes and values of an institution,
and that they should not be involved in day-to-day opera-
tions.

Several authors asserted that institutional researchers
ought not be involved exclusively in either administrative
or academic activities, but should be concerned with both
efficiency and effectiveness.

During the past fifteen years, several researchers
investigated the activities in which various institutional
research agencies engaged. Two of the first studies were
conducted by Sprague (1959) and Stickler (1959). Few of
the studies reported in either of these investigations,
however, were conducted by persons who considered them-
selves institutional researchers. Sprague (1959) reported
that usually a president, vice president, or dean had the
responsibility for research activities. Many of the authors
of the studies listed by Stickler (1969) are described as

budget officers, registrars, personnel directors, and even graduate students.

A landmark national survey of institutional research activities in four-year colleges was conducted by Rourke and Brooks in 1966. They attributed the growth of institutional research to the modernization of managerial practices in higher education. Rourke and Brooks concluded that the work of institutional research agencies in 1964 was primarily oriented toward academic problems.

Six years later, as a result of another national survey, Roney (1970) reported in his doctoral dissertation that the majority of the studies undertaken by institutional research agencies was management oriented.

Several researchers used the members of the Association for Institutional Research as the subjects of their studies (Tincher, 1970; Roney, 1970; Morstain and Smart, 1974). While there were variations in the methodologies used in these studies, they served to indicate the areas of emphasis in institutional research. The trend was away from the academic emphasis found by Rourke and Brooks (1966). Rather, institutional researchers were involved primarily in operations-management types of activities.

The results from another national survey were supportive of this trend (Larkin, 1972). The data indicated that the majority of institutional research activities were

management oriented versus instructionally oriented.

Although the nature and scope of institutional research activities eluded precise definition, it was pointed out often that a given institution ought to tailor its definition and research activities to suit the needs of the college or university, and the philosophy of its chief executive.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

Introduction and Response Rate

As previously stated, this study focused on the offices of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities. It investigated five descriptive questions: (1) what were the structures and functions of these offices; (2) what were the nature and the frequency to which studies were conducted on academic policies, programs, and issues; (3) how did the opinions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of institutional research compare with the perceptions of the directors of institutional research; and (5) what were the potential problems and points of conflict between the offices of institutional research and other units and agencies of the institution? Two methods were used to obtain data and information relevant to this research. Interviews were conducted with each of the fourteen institutional research directors on their respective campuses. In addition, each director was mailed a two-part questionnaire, which was returned at the time of the interview; thus there was a one hundred

per cent return on this questionnaire. A similar question-
naire, "Administrators' Perceptions of Institutional Research,"
was sent to five groups of selected administrators in these
colleges and universities. Returns were received from fifty-
three of the sixty-three administrators--indicating an eighty-
four per cent response rate. In approximately eight per cent
of these returns, responses were not given for one or more of
the items on the questionnaire, resulting in differences in
the base figures used in the tabular presentations in the
forthcoming sections.

Since there was a one hundred per cent return rate on the
directors' questionnaire, Table II and Table III show the dis-
tribution of returns of the administrators' questionnaire
only. At least eighty per cent of the selected administrators
in ten of the colleges and universities returned their ques-
tionnaire. Not less than fifty per cent of the administrators
in the other four institutions returned their questionnaires.

TABLE II

Response Rate of Administrators By Institutional Size

Enrollment	Number In Group	Number Responding	Number Responding
Small (Under 3,000)	16	13	81.3
Medium (3,000 - 10,000)	27	23	85.2
Large (Over 10,000)	20	17	85.0
TOTALS	63	53	84.1

TABLE III

Response Rate By Administrative Categories

ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP	Number In Group	Number Responding	Per Cent Responding
Presidents	14	11	78.6
Chief Academic Officers	13	12	92.3
Deans			
Schools of Arts & Sciences	14	13	92.9
Schools of Business	10	6	60.0
Schools of Education	12	11	91.7
TOTALS	63	53	84.1

For the purposes of this research, institutions included in this study were classified as small, medium-size, or large according to whether their enrollments were less than 3,000, between 3,000 and 10,000 and over 10,000 respectively. Each of the three presidents who did not respond to his questionnaire represented one of these enrollment classes. Each president wrote a letter to the writer stating that the office of institutional research handled all questionnaires and thus deemed it inappropriate to respond to the questionnaire associated with this investigation. There was concern that the low percentage of responding deans of the schools of business would give a distorted picture of the perception of institutional research in the institutions being surveyed. However, the distribution of the responding deans was about the same as the distribution of the schools of business

among the institutions of different size. Thus, it was assumed that the administrators returning the questionnaire represented a typical cross section of the five administrative groups in institutions of various sizes.

The data, information, and impressions gleaned from the questionnaire and interviews are presented in the remainder of this chapter. Each of the five major sections corresponds to one of the five descriptive questions posed at the outset of this investigation.

Structure and Functions

Organized institutional research was added only recently as an activity in the public institutions of higher education in Virginia. Only since 1966 has the state formally supported such offices in its fifteen public senior colleges and universities. However, since that time all of these institutions have designated personnel to conduct or coordinate institutional research activities, with over sixty per cent of the offices being established between 1970 and 1974. This growth in the number of institutional research offices in the past few years was attributed primarily to increased demands for the reporting of data to various external agencies. In particular, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (hereafter referred to as the State Council), in its role as the Commonwealth's coordinating board, increasingly required compilations

of statistical data and analyses from the colleges and
universities. Several directors indicated that an office
of institutional research was established on their cam-
puses following a request from the State Council for an
institutional representative to serve as a liason agent.

Other specific reasons for establishing an agency
for institutional research varied from campus to campus.
Some of the first offices to be established were based
on recommendations from the Southern Association of Col-
leges and Universities, which was pressing for the estab-
lishment of such offices to serve as foci for the respon-
sibility of self-evaluation as a continuous function.
Some directors attributed the establishment of the
institutional research office on their campuses to recog-
nition on the part of the chief administrators of the
need for more objective data in decision-making. This
recognition resulted partly from the introduction of
computers into various university activities. Increasing
quantities of raw data were available, but these data were
utilized infrequently in internal decision-making. In
some cases this recognition was translated into adminis-
trative re-organization resulting in the establishment
of a formal institutional research agency. One director
observed that the rapid increase in student enrollment
(enrollment tripled in the last five years) and the con-
current lack of data and statistics on the student body

was the contributing factor that led to the establishment
of an office of institutional research on his campus as a
separate administrative function.

Several factors influenced the organizational struc-
tures and the major foci of the offices of institutional
research surveyed in this study. Among them were: size
of the institution; the needs and interests of the official
to whom the institutional research office was responsible;
the interests and philosophies of the person charged with
institutional research; and the climate in which these
institutions operated. As might be anticipated, the
existence of a formally organized institutional research
agency was related to the size of the institution. Table
IV shows the status of the chief administrative official
charged with the institutional research function in insti-
tutions of varying size and type.

TABLE IV

Status of Chief Administrative Official Charged With The
Institutional Research Function

Category	No. Full-Time Officials	No. Part-Time Officials	Totals
ENROLLMENT			
Under 3,000		4	4
3,000 - 10,000	6		6
Over 10,000	4		4
Totals	10	4	14
HIGHEST DEGREE OFFERED			
Baccalaureate		3	3
Masters	5	1	6
Doctorate	5		5
Totals	10	4	14

In ten of the fourteen institutions, formalized institutional research operations were centralized under a full-time administrative official who was designated "director". Three of the smallest colleges had no formal organization. In these institutions no central program of institutional research existed. In each instance, however, external reporting requirements were coordinated by an official who held another position. The executive officer at one of these colleges observed that his staff was "too small to permit a separate office of this nature." He added, however, that as the needs arose, research was conducted by an appropriate faculty or staff member as an additional duty or by a committee appointed for a specific purpose. In one college formalized institutional research activities were coordinated by an official who held part-time status in institutional research. This official was also the director of computer services. The actual titles of the officials charged with the institutional research responsibilities for their colleges/universities are indicated in Table V.

TABLE V

Titles Held By Institutional Research Officials

Title	Number of Officials
Director of Institutional Research	5
Director of Institutional Analysis	2
Director of Institutional Studies	2
Director of Institutional Research and Planning	1
Director of Computer Services and Institutional Studies	1
Vice President and Director of Institutional Studies	1
Administrative Assistant to President	1
Registrar	1

The size of the professional staff in the institutional research agencies was also related to the size of the institution. Table VI shows the number of professional staff members in institutions of varying size.

TABLE VI

Size of Professional Staff in
Institutional Research Agencies

Enrollment	Number of Professional Employees					Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
Under 3,000	4					4
3,000-10,000	3	3				6
Over 10,000		1	1		2	4
Totals	7	4	1		2	14

NOTE: Each entry represents the number of agencies in that given category.

In all of the small institutions, the only individual assigned to institutional research was the official designated to perform or coordinate institutional research activities. However, in the medium size institutions fifty per cent of the institutional research agencies employed one professional staff member in addition to the director of institutional research. On the other hand, all of the large institutions had more than one person assigned to institutional research, with 50 per cent (2) of the agencies consisting of a professional staff of five. All of the

professional staff in institutional research agencies located in institutions with an enrollment over 3,000 were assigned to the agencies on a full-time basis.

Institutional research was considered a staff function at all of the institutions. The offices of institutional research were designed primarily all of the institutional research officials reported to the president or one of the vice-presidents. Table VII shows the college or university administrative officer to whom the director of institutional research was responsible.

TABLE VII

Official To Whom Director of Institutional Research Reported

College or University Official	Number of Directors
President	5 (35.7%)
Academic Vice President	3 (21.4%)
Executive Vice President	2 (14.3%)
Vice President for Planning	2 (14.3%)
Director of Administration	1 (7.1%)
Dean of Faculty	1 (7.1%)

NOTE: Percentages represent per cents of the total.

In general, the purposes and functions of the offices of institutional research were not well-defined; instead the major functions of the offices evolved as the needs of the college or university expanded and changed. Central administration's responses to these needs were essential in shaping the mission of institutional research.

One director recalled that under a former president, the director participated primarily in research based on program evaluations. However, the current president was primarily management-oriented. The director noted that he stopped doing evaluative research on programs and other activities of this nature and started doing managerial research in order to supply answers for administrative decisions. When the State Council's reporting requirements became so vast that some one was needed to coordinate the reports at the college, the president decided that such coordination was to be a function of institutional research. At the time of this study this director was spending such a large proportion of his time reporting to outside agencies that he characterized himself as the "official reporting statistician" for the college.

At an institution which had experienced considerable growth in the last few years, the director of institutional research was charged with the primary responsibility for developing a management information system. The administra-

tion recognized the need for such a system to facilitate the coordination of internal operations, as well as, to respond to the State Council's attempts to improve planning mechanisms in the state as a whole.

The director at one of the medium size institutions reported that he was given a one page sheet describing the responsibilities of the office of institutional research. He noted, however, that he soon discovered the "real" duties that were to be performed. In addition to coordinating reports to outside agencies, this director had the full responsibility for preparing the college's budget exhibit to the State Council. At least two other directors, both in small colleges, were also responsible for preparing the budget exhibit. The budget exhibit was based on enrollment projections. Predicting student enrollments was a task of all the institutional research agencies, however, it seemed that most of them were required only to provide data to other offices charged with the preparation of the budget.

At one of the large urban institutions the directors said that his president expected the office of institutional research to be a "fire-fighting office." The office was expected to handle almost any kind of institutional problem--be it space assignments or questions related to parking. He remarked that his office did very

little in terms of what "most people in the country would call institutional research," that is, "what is the university as a totality." The chief executive officer at this institutional considered the office an "arm of the president," according to the director.

Although in most of Virginia's public senior institutions there was a tendency toward the centralization of institutional research functions, several other agencies shared the responsibility for conducting research into the institutions' operations. The offices of institutional research often participated in the research by supplying requested data and information or by coordinating the studies for such agencies as the registrar's office, the business office, the admissions office, and the development office. At one large institution, the registrar's office reported to the director of the office of institutional research. This arrangement seemed particularly advantageous at this institution since the tremendous quantity of student data that were generated required the close cooperation of both offices. Thus, the staff from both agencies was involved jointly in planning, conducting, and interpreting certain research projects. Another example of cooperative effort in conducting certain studies was provided by one director who described how his president initiated a given study, the counseling center designed it, the registrar obtained

the sample, and the office of institutional research ran
the statistical tests and analyzed the data generated by
the study.

Another factor which influenced the functions and
operations of an office of institutional research was the
incumbent in the position. One director, who referred
to himself as a "hard-rock number man," described his
office as being primarily involved in space inventories,
space guide applications, capital outlays, and enroll-
ment projections. He deliberately selected all of his
staff members from business and industry because "from
my point of view, higher education desparately needs
and has needed for a long time what I call the hard rock
look from the business and industry point of view, the
MIS (management information system) approach."

A director who had had considerable experience in
institutional research, reported that he selected staff
persons on the basis of their demonstrated ability to
publish. Although publishing was not a function of the
office, the director was of the opinion that offices of
institutional research should publish some of its studies.
Studies of models and descriptive studies of procedures
for developing certain types of information were given
as examples of publishable studies.

When the director at one of the large institutions assumed his position, the office of institutional research was charged to perform two major functions: (1) to serve the administration and (2) to serve as a liason agency for external reporting. However, the director was instrumental in expanding the functions of the office such that at the time of this study the staff of the institutional research office devoted a considerable portion of its efforts assisting departments and schools with internal studies or problems. In addition, the office served a planning function; it developed position papers and amassed data to assist other agencies of the institution with their planning efforts.

Demands for public accountability significantly impinged upon the functions of the offices of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities. Data presented in Table VIII show that ten of the fourteen directors interviewed indicated that preparing reports to external agencies was the major job responsibility of their offices. The State Council, in particular, required constant compilations of statistical data and analyses related to institutional efficiencies. The quantity of requests from State Council was so massive that one director alleged that institutional research in the state of Virginia was "molded by State Council." Another director referred to himself as the "house statistician" for the State Council.

TABLE VIII

Major Job Responsibilities of Offices of Institutional Research

Functions	Rank							Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Planning and Coordination		35.7	14.3	14.3	7.1	21.4	7.1	100.0
Budget and Finance	7.1	7.1	21.4	7.1	14.3	14.3	14.3	85.7
Studies of Students	7.1		21.4		14.3	7.1	28.6	92.9
Faculty Studies	7.1		7.1	14.3	7.1	14.3	21.4	92.9
Space Utilization		14.3	28.6	7.1	14.3			100.0
Coordination and Completion of Questionnaires		28.6		28.6	7.1	21.4	7.1	100.0
Adapting Reporting Mechanisms	7.1		7.1	28.6	21.4		14.3	100.0
Reports to Outside Agencies	71.4	14.3			14.3			100.0

NOTE: Entries represent per cent of total responding to each function.

While preparing reports for external agencies consumed much of the time of these institutional research agencies, several directors mentioned that doing special studies for the administration was their first priority. One director labelled such tasks "fire-fighting for the president." Another explained that priorities were often shifted to "stamp out fires" for the president. These special assignments were usually more frequent when the legislators made twenty-four hour requests for data from State Council, which, in turn, demanded immediate responses from the institution.

All of the directors in the large institutions and one director from a medium size institution rank-ordered planning and coordination as the second major job responsibility of their offices. One institutional research agency, in particular, was heavily involved in the planning function. The office was responsible for the preparation of master site plans and extensive studies of space utilization, including capital outlay projections. The other offices were involved in the planning function at least to the extent of compiling cost-analysis reports for other agencies of the institution.

Although most of the offices prepared the physical facilities report required by State Council, the staff in some offices in the medium size colleges and universities were also responsible for doing the actual measuring of

the facilities involved. Several directors were also
charged with numbering buildings and rooms, and at least one
director made recommendations for assignment of office
spaces. Space utilization studies received considerable
attention at those institutions which had space problems.
An institution was described as having a space problem
if either it were cramped for space or it had "too much
space" as defined by State Council. One director
declared that his college had "no space problem"--thus
his office had "no responsibility for physical facilities."

Further evidence that the external environment
influenced the functions of the offices of institutional
research was provided by the fact that the majority of
the directors indicated that the coordination and comple-
tion of questionnaires was centralized in their offices.
In fact, one president returned this researcher's ques-
tionnaire with the explanation that the office of insti-
tutional research was the only agency on his campus
charged with responding to such requests. In general
however, most of the offices did not have the sole res-
ponsibility for responding to questionnaires, but were
charged with editing them to assure the accuracy of the
data they contained.

All of the offices of institutional research were
essentially management oriented relative to the functions
they performed; that is, the offices concentrated on

activities designed to assess institutional efficiences. Although one director indicated that twenty-five to thirty per cent of his institutional research program focused on the academic "side of the house" and several directors prepared "studies" for internal analyses generated from faculty and student data requested by external agencies, most of the offices were minimally involved in what Saupe and Montgomery (1970, p. 8) labeled "Studies in Support of Educational Development." In general, when such studies were conducted they were conducted at the initiative of the director. Moreover, as Table IX shows, fifty per cent of the directors indicated they conducted most studies upon their own initiative, while the other fifty per cent indicated that the studies they conducted were usually assigned to the office by the administration.

TABLE IX

Initiators of Institutional Research Studies

Initiator	Number of Agencies
Director of Institutional Research	7 (50%)
Member of Central Administration	7 (50%)

Some of the directors who indicated that the studies were usually assigned by the administration noted that they had the freedom to conduct certain studies but did not

have the time to do so. A few directors alleged that in the past few years the only studies they had initiated were summary reports and grade distribution studies. The summary reports, usually consisting of data obtained from various State Council forms, presented analyses appropriate for internal use. About fifty per cent of the offices presented these summarized reports in a "fact book", which was often broadly distributed to administrators and faculty members. The director at one of the small institutions made these data available to his constituents but did not publish a "fact book."

In order to ascertain how the directors determined areas needing research or evaluation on their campuses, the directors were asked whether their offices had an advisory committee. None of the offices had a formal advisory committee. One director remarked that he had simply procrastinated in establishing such a committee, while another director described an informal committee that he utilized. This committee consisted of four or five faculty members who had expertise in statistics and research design. The committee reviewed various projects and assisted students and other faculty members in setting up certain studies. Several directors indicated that they tried to gather facts and figures related to "issues on the horizon" as perceived by the institutional

research staff. One director remarked that most of the activities performed by his office were suggested by the president; "in fact", he added, "the president literally runs things." A director at a medium size institution sent out a data needs survey form designed to determine areas needing research on his campus. He concluded that the form was not very effective since he received only one request for "trivial information". He attributed the lack of response to two factors: (1) most people needed the information but did not know what questions to ask to get it and/or (2) people simply did not take the time to request the information.

Although one-half of the directors initiated most of the studies conducted by their offices, only one director said that he had a relatively "open" policy regarding the distribution of the studies conducted by the office. Most of the directors responded that they disseminated the studies to the individuals requesting it. If the studies were of an academic nature, they were generally sent to the chief academic officer. Several officials released their studies to deans or department heads as they saw fit. One director mentioned that he released studies only on a "needs to know basis." For the most part, his studies were distributed to the president, and to line officers involved in the study who had a need to know the results of the study. One director sent most of his studies to the presidential staff,

while another director distributed studies on "the basis of their nature." All of the directors noted that certain studies, especially those containing faculty data, were generally restricted to the president.

Summary

Three forms of organizational structure were evident among the offices of institutional research in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities. In ten of the fourteen institutions, formalized institutional research operations were centralized under a full-time administrative official. In one college institutional research was under the direction of an official who held part-time appointments in institutional research and computer services. In the other three colleges no central program of institutional research existed, although external reporting requirements were coordinated by an official who held another title.

Although an office of institutional research existed in all of the medium size and large colleges and universities, institutional research activities were not conducted exclusively by the office of institutional research. Several other agencies--such as counseling centers, registrars and faculty committees--often engaged in various aspects of institutional study. In some cases there appeared to be considerable cooperation between some of

these agencies.

Administratively, one-half of the directors were responsible to a vice-president. About one-third of the directors reported to the president, while the remainder reported to other administrative officials. The professional staff of the offices in the large institutions consisted of at least two persons. One-half of the offices in the medium size institutions claimed two professionals, while in the small institutions the only person assigned to institutional research was the "director" of the office.

For the most part, the specific functions of the offices of institutional research were not well-defined; rather, the primary functions of the offices seemed to evolve as the needs of the institution expanded and changed. More than seventy per cent of the directors, however, indicated that preparing reports to external agencies was the major job responsibility of their offices. The other specific functions of these offices varied as much as the institutions themselves varied, or as much as the primary interests of the persons charged with institutional research responsibilities varied. On the whole, however, the primary functions performed by the offices of institutional research could be characterized as essentially administratively-oriented. These functions could

be classified into five categories: (1) coordinate and
respond to questionnaires; (2) prepare summary reports;
(3) predict things of concern such as student enrollments;
(4) perform a planning function; and (5) assist the adminis-
tration and various institutional agencies in conducting
certain studies. Although one director reported that his
office devoted twenty-five to thirty per cent of its effort
toward academic activities, most of the offices carried
out few studies of program evaluation or other academically-
oriented research.

In performing these various functions, fifty per cent
of the directors reported that most of the related studies
were assigned to the office by the administration. The
other directors indicated that most of the studies associated
with their offices were conducted upon their own initiative.
Policies regarding the distribution of these studies ranged
from a basically "open" policy to dissemination on a "needs
to know basis" only.

Nature and Frequency of Academic Activities

This section presents the nature and frequency of
academically-oriented studies that were undertaken during
the past three years by the Virginian institutions. For
the purposes of this study, three categories of academi-
cally oriented studies were identified: (1) studies of

students; (2) studies of faculty; and (3) studies of
curriculum and instruction.

As indicated in Table X, attrition was the most
frequent type of student study reported. Eleven out
of thirteen directors reported an attrition study that
was recent or current.

TABLE X

Per Cent of Institutional Research Offices
Reporting Given Types of Studies of Students

| Types of Studies | Institutional Size | | | Totals |
	Small	Medium	Large	
Attrition	100	83	75	85
Transfer	100	67	75	77
Admissions	100	67	50	69
Student Characteristics	100	50	50	62
Socio-economic Factors		50	50	46
College Environment	33	50	50	46
Teaching and Learning	33	33	50	38
Studies on Values		33	50	31
Student Personality	33	50		31
Alumni		67		31
Special Themes		17		8

While attrition studies were conducted routinely at
some institutions, the director at one of the large
urban universities indicated that the current attrition
study at his institution was an outgrowth of requests
from the Office of Civil Rights pertaining to attrition
among minority students. In addition, several directors
were concerned about increasing attrition rates since
the State of Virginia allocated funds on the basis of
the ratio of freshmen to upperclassmen. Hence, it is
not surprising to learn that transfers was the next type
of student study reported in order of frequency. Notice
that all of the small colleges reported both of these
types of student studies as being recent or current.
The next two types of student studies, admissions and
student characteristics, were also major concerns of
all of the small colleges. The director at one of these
institutions viewed all of these studies as interrelated.
He was currently conducting a study on freshmen and their
adjustment to college, as well as, a study to determine
reasons students apply to his institution and then go
elsewhere.

The other types of student studies were not conducted
routinely by any of the offices of institutional research.
Faculty members often conducted such studies at the small
institutions. At one of the small colleges a psychology

professor had conducted several studies on the intellectual-
characteristics of students. The office of institutional
research staff at one of the medium-sized institutions
conducted few studies on students. Rather, by unwritten
mutual agreement, the counseling center handled such
studies. The counseling center had conducted studies
on such topics as students' attitudes, sex practices,
how freshmen perceive themselves, what freshmen want to
do after graduation, and smoking pot.

Studies of academic structure were by far the most
frequent type of faculty study reported, as shown in
Table XI.

TABLE XI

Per Cent of Institutional Research Offices Reporting
Given Types of Studies of Faculty

| Types of Studies | Institutional Size | | | |
	Small	Medium	Large	Total
Academic Structure	33	67	75	62
Recruitment		50	75	46
Tenure and Promotion Policies	33	33	50	38
Faculty-Institution Interaction	33	17	50	31
Faculty Development	33	17	50	31
Teaching Effectiveness	67	17	25	31
Faculty Participation in Governance		17	25	15
Faculty-Student Interaction			25	8

In general, these "studies" were compilations of statistics
requested by the State Council. A majority of the institu-
tions, however, routinely analyzed the grade point averages
of students enrolled in the various schools and departments.

One institutional researcher had compiled such data to depict a ten-year period. While more than 75 per cent of the offices of institutional research participated in faculty studies in a peripheral way, a staff person at one of the large institutions devoted approximately fifty per cent of his time assisting departments and colleges with their internal studies or problems. A current project entailed assisting the head of the English Department in comparing the grading patterns of the graduate teaching assistants with the grading patterns of other members of the English Department.

The next type of faculty study that was most frequently mentioned was recruitment. None of the small colleges had participated in a recruitment study, while seventy-five per cent of the large institutions had given attention to the matter. The director at one of the small institutions reported that his college had very little faculty turnover. He mentioned that the institution was moving toward a condition of steady state, and that generally faculty projects were given a low priority. Though the rate of faculty turnover was decreasing at the large institutions, concern was manifested for recruiting top-notched scholars for certain speciality programs. The next type of faculty study, tenure and promotion policies, acknowledged the lowering of the rate of faculty turnover that was evident at practically all of the institutions. The next three

types of faculty evaluation studies were mentioned with the same degree of frequency. However, the large institutions tended to place greater emphasis on faculty-institutional interaction and faculty development than the medium-sized and small institutions. The small institutions seemed more willing than the other colleges and universities to participate in studies of teaching effectiveness. The last two types of studies, faculty participation in governance and faculty-student interaction, were being undertaken by about only two in thirteen and one in thirteen institutions, respectively.

The academic calendar was the most frequent type of curriculum and instruction study reported, as Table XII indicates. Approximately forty-six per cent of the institutions had studied their academic calendar since 1972.

TABLE XII

Per Cent of Institutional Research Offices Reporting Given
Types of Studies of Curriculum and Instruction

Types of Studies	Institutional Size			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Academic Calendar	67	33	50	46
Program Evaluation	67	33		31
Effect of Graduate Education or Undergraduate		33	25	23
Effectiveness of Technology		17	25	15
Evaluation of Non-traditional Educational Programs			17	8
Pre-requisites				
Modes of Organizing Teaching and Learning				

The next most frequently mentioned study in this category,
program evaluation, was being undertaken by the small and
medium size institutions only. None of the large insti-
tutions reported current or recent studies in this area.
None of the other studies listed in this category was
mentioned by more than twenty-three per cent of the insti-
tutions. Only one director reported undertaking a study
of evaluation of non-traditional educational programs.
Two types of studies, pre-requisites and modes of organizing
teaching and learning, were not mentioned by any of the
institutions. Two basic reasons are suggested for the low
frequencies reported in this category: (1) most directors
viewed program evaluation as a function of departments
and schools and (2) the "other side of the house,"
management operations, demanded much of the time of offices
of institutional research.

With respect to academically oriented studies, directors
generally agreed that studies of students received the
greatest emphasis in their respective institutions. In the
majority of the institutions faculty studies and curriculum
and instruction were considered provinces of the faculty;
and the directors either accepted this "established tradi-
tion," reasoned that the scarcity of time did not permit such
"luxuries", or argued that studies of this nature were of no
concern to the office of institutional research. One director
observed that it was very difficult to do faculty studies
at his institution since many faculty members considered

such studies a threat and refused to cooperate. Another director bluntly stated: "I am not interested in having this office spend time in finding out how many faculty we have with purple pajamas." On the other hand, several directors saw a real need for program evaluations by offices of institutional research. The directors at a medium-sized institution alleged that some courses offered in the various curricula at his college were outdated. He perceived an inconsistency between what was being taught and what students ought to be learning. This director had devoted major efforts to program evaluation during the early years of his office, but current demands precluded such activities. A study that he conducted four years ago resulted in eliminating a course in the history of education as a requirement for all education majors.

Table XIII offers further insights into the nature of some of the studies that were categorized in this study as being academically oriented.

TABLE XIII

Selected Recent and Current Academic Studies Undertaken
by Offices of Institutional Research

Title or Description of Studies
1. Mean S.A.T. Scores of Entering Freshmen 1965-66 through 1974-75.
2. Distribution of S.A.T. Scores of Entering Freshmen by Sex, Fall 1974-75
3. Undergraduate Admissions
4. Transfer Students
5. Distribution of Undergraduate Grades by Fields of Study (A 5-year study)
6. Academic Suspensions in the College of Arts and Sciences
7. Undergraduate and Graduate Professional Admissions
8. Academic Progress of Graduate Students
9. Analysis of Grades Earned by Undergraduate Students
10. Enrolled in Regular Session (A 7-year study)
11. Self-study for National Council of Teacher Education
12. Selected Characteristics of Full-Time Faculty
13. Student Follow-up Studies
14. Fall Grade Study (Fall, 1974)
15. Status of Undergraduate Classes Entering in 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, and 1969 - Five Years After Entrance
16. Survey of Faculty Activities
17. Alumni Follow-up Study
18. Graduates Intentions and Attitudes Survey
19. Profile of Entering Freshman Class 1970-1973
20. Comparative Entrance Requirements, Undergraduate Matriculants Compared to Other Selected Universities-Fall 1973
21. Post Secondary Educational Plans of Local High Schools
22. Majors Declared by Undergraduates (3-year study)
23. Dean's List of Distinguished Students (7-year study)
24. Academic Suspensions: 1967-73
25. Educational Background of Bachelor Degree Recipients through 1973

Summary

For the purposes of this investigation, three categories of academically oriented studies were identified: (1) studies of students, (2) studies of faculty and (3)

studies of curriculum and instruction. Of eleven listed types of student studies, attrition was the most frequent type of study reported. Eleven out of thirteen directors reported an attrition study that was recent or current, as defined by a beginning date of January 1, 1972. About three out of four offices were involved in transfer studies, while more than two-thirds were doing some type of admissions study. Studies of student characteristics were being conducted by sixty-two per cent of the offices. The other types of student studies were not being conducted routinely by any of the offices of institutional research. In several institutions, however, various types of student studies were being undertaken by faculty committees and other agencies of the institutions.

Under faculty studies, about three-fifths of the directors reported studies of academic structures. Less than one-half were doing recruitment studies. About one in three reported involvement in studies of faculty development, teaching effectiveness and tenure and promotion policies.

Six types of studies were listed under the third category: curriculum and instruction. The most frequent type of study reported concerned the academic calendar. The small and medium size institutions accounted for all the studies reported on program evaluation. Less than one out

three offices of institutional research was involved in
this type of study, however. Only one director reported
doing a study on the evaluation of non-traditional educa-
tional programs. None of the offices were undertaking
studies of pre-requisites or studies of modes of organi-
zing teaching and learning.

In general, studies of students received the greatest
emphasis of the three categories of academically oriented
studies. Studies of curriculum and instruction were
reported by a minority of the institutions.

Selected Administrators' Perceptions of the Role and Functions of Institutional Research

One of the objectives of this investigation was to
ascertain the opinions of selected administrators toward
the role and functions of the office of institutional
research on their respective campuses. As previously
mentioned, obtaining knowledge from a specializaed agency
as a basis for decision-making was a relatively new
concept in Virginia. It was deemed important to first
gain some idea of the administrators' familiarity with
the role and functions of offices of institutional
research. Association with the institutional research
programs at their respective institutions was the most
frequently reported means by which the administrators
became acquainted with the role and functions of institu-
tional research, as Table XIV indicates.

TABLE XIV

Ways Administrators Became Acquainted With Role and Functions of the Office of Institutional Research

Methods	Administrators					Total
	Presidents	Chief Academic Officers	Deans, Arts & Sciences	Deans, Business	Deans, Education	
Staff Briefings	5	2	5	2	4	18
Institutional Research Publications	2	3	1	1	4	11
Workshops	2					2
Professional Reading	4	7	2		4	17
Association with Program	6	8	8	1	8	31
Get Acquainted			1	1		2

NOTE: Each entry represents the number of administrators indicating a given method.

Only two administrators reported that they were not
acquainted with the role and functions of institutional
research. These persons held administrative positions
at the same institution. Several administrators listed
other ways through which they became acquainted with
institutional research. A president wrote that he had
previous experiences at another institution. Several
administrators were personal acquaintances of the direc-
tors, while an arts and sciences dean served on the long-
range planning committee with the director from his
institution. One vice president of academic affairs had
supervised the office of institutional research at a dif-
ferent institution, while another simply stated that he
became acquainted with the office as a result of needing
its services. A school of education dean established
the office of institutional research at another college
and hired its personnel. Another dean served as chairman
of a search committee for the institutional research
director at his institution.

The kinds of institutional research activities in
which the administrators were involved offer additional
insights into their familiarity with the role and functions
of institutional research. As Table XV reveals, data
and information relating to budget preparations and
completing questionnaires and surveys were the two most

frequently reported activities. These were followed closely by long-range planning, studies of faculty, and studies of students. Developing proposals for grants and fund raising were the least frequently reported activities. It is interesting to note that one of these, developing proposals for grants, was the only activity reported by the two administrators who responded that they were not acquainted with the role and functions of institutional research. Other activities listed by the administrators included: faculty work load analyses, faculty salaries, and enrollment projections.

TABLE XV

Activities For Which Administrators Used Data Generated By The Office of Institutional Research

Activities	Presidents	Chief Academic Officers	Deans, Arts & Sciences	Deans, Business	Deans, Education	Totals
Budget	9	11	7	3	9	49
Complete Questionnaires	11	11	7	5	7	41
Long-range Planning	9	11	8	3	7	38
Students	9	9	5	3	9	35
Space Utilization	10	10	6	3	6	35
Faculty	10	9	7	1	5	32
Accreditation	5	7	2	3	7	24
Curriculum	6	5	4	1	5	21
Proposals	3	1	1	2	5	12
Fund Raising	2				2	4

NOTE: Each entry represents the number of administrators indicating a given activity.

At least sixty per cent of the administrators had
had occasion to utilize data or information generated
by the office of institutional research for six of the
ten listed activities. This probably indicates not only
that most of the administrations were familiar with some
of the functions of the office but that they perceived
the office as an information agency for the college or
university.

While most institutional research offices must of
necessity be involved in data collection and reporting,
not all offices included data analysis and interpreta-
tion in their reports. Approximately forty per cent of
the administrators viewed the major function of insti-
tutional research as engagement in data analysis and
interpretation, as well as, data collection. One adminis-
trator specifically wrote that he wanted "to see more
analysis and interpretation rather than just basic facts."
While some of the studies that were issued by the office
of institutional research were interesting, he complained
that he had had difficulty interpreting the application
of such information to the problems faced by his office.
Saupe and Montgomery (1970) surmised that increasingly
staff work was being associated with institutional
research. Staff work, among other things, involved
developing position papers on issues and problems of

institutional concern. Table XVI indicates that about
one-third of the administrators thought that the office
ought to write position papers involving specific policy
decisions. Although the opinions of the other adminis-
trators were fairly well distributed among the three
suggested functions, almost two-thirds of the presidents
conceived the office as being primarily engaged in data
analysis and interpretation, suggesting that in general,
the presidents viewed the role of institutional research
as a contributor to decision making, but not as a parti-
cipant in policy formulation.

TABLE XVI

MAJOR FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AS PERCEIVED BY ADMINISTRATORS

Percentage Distribution

Function	Administrators						
	Presidents	Chief Academic Officers	Deans, Arts & Sciences	Deans, Business	Deans, Education	(N=53) Totals	
Data Collection		33	31	33	36	26	
Analysis	64	25	46	33	27	40	
Development of Position Papers	36	42	23	33	36	34	

In some colleges and universities institutional
research focused on the development of administrative
information and related special studies; in others
the institutional research effort concentrated on gen-
eral educational concerns such as student development,
curriculum, and instruction. When the administrators
were asked to give their opinions regarding the focus
of the research studies conducted by the office of
institutional research on their campuses, seventy per
cent of them responded that the studies ought to aim
at the major concerns of the total institution. If
the total institution is interpreted to include speci-
fic administrative areas, then as indicated in Table
XVII ninety-five per cent of the administrators pre-
ferred the global role.

TABLE XVII

MAJOR FOCUS OF THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AS PERCEIVED BY ADMINISTRATORS

Percentage Distribution

Major Concerns	Administrators					
	Presidents	Chief Academic Officers	Deans, Arts & Sciences	Deans, Business	Deans, Education	(N=52) Totals
Total Institution	64	50	100	67	64	70
Specific Administrative Areas		17		17		5
Both	36	33		17	36	25

Although only five per cent of the administrators regarded the major focus of the research studies as being concerned with specific administrative areas, more than one-third of them, according to Table XVIII, regarded the office as the arm of the administration.

TABLE XVIII

ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS: TO WHICH GROUP IS THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL
RESEARCH CONSIDERED AN ARM?

Percentage Distribution

Groups	Administrators					(N=53) Totals
	Presidents	Chief Academic Officers	Deans, Arts & Sciences	Deans, Business	Deans, Education	
Total Institution	82	67	77	33	36	62
Administration	18	33	23	67	55	36
Faculty					9	
All Three						2

None of the groups of administrators considered the office of institutional research as an arm of the faculty, although a dean of one school of education considered the offices as an arm of all three: the total institution, the administration and the faculty. Differing interpretations were probably given to this question. For example, one administrators wrote that he regarded the office of institutional research as an arm of the total institution from the perspective that results from certain studies were often disseminated on a university-wide basis.

Even though a majority of the administrators regarded the office of institutional research as an arm of the total institution, Table XIX shows that more than half of them agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the director ought to be the president's "right-hand man." The presidents were practically unanimous in agreeing with the suggestion that the director ought to be their "right-hand man", while a majority of the deans of the schools of arts and sciences and the academic vice presidents were not in agreement with the idea.

TABLE XIX

ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS: SHOULD THE DIRECTOR BE THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT'S "RIGHT-HAND MAN"?
Percentage Distribution

		Administrators				
Attitudes	Presidents	Chief Academic Officers	Deans, Arts & Sciences	Deans, Business	Deans, Education	(N=49) Totals
Strongly Agree			8	17	60	16
Agree	100	36	25	50	20	45
Disagree		55	67	33	20	37
Strongly Disagree		9				2

Moreover, one academic vice-president suggested that the president's "right-hand man" ought to be the vice-president for academic affairs. Several administrators qualified their responses by adding that the president needed many right-hand men; and that the director ought to be one of them. Another administrator perceived the director as being a "member of the total senior administrative group" and "not just an aide-de-camp to the president." A dean of one of the schools of education proposed that the office of institutional research ought to function as a "third party in that it should be no one's man", rather "it should conduct research and present findings and answers that people generally don't want to hear"; it should "test sacred assumptions, raise questions."

Perceptions of administrators toward the role and functions of offices of institutional research were also ascertained by analyzing the extent to which the administrators indicated the office of institutional research on their particular campuses should be involved in certain types of studies. For the purposes of this investigation, these studies were classified as: studies of students, studies of faculty, studies of curriculum and instruction, and studies of institutional planning and space utilization.

Responses to Part II of the Administrators' Question-
naire (Table B-2, Appendix B) disclosed that a majority of
the administrators perceived the office of institutional
research as a service operation, that is, an agency that
should assist those primarily responsible for the studies--
either with design or implementation. However, with
respect to studies of students almost two-thirds of the
administrators was of the opinion that the office of
institutional research should either coordinate attrition
studies or assume primary responsibility for them. In
general, it appeared that the administrators perceived
the office as playing a more extensive role in studies
of students than in studies of the faculty. Approximately
one-third of the administrators perceived such faculty
studies as faculty-student interaction, teaching effec-
tiveness, faculty participation in governance, and tenure
and promotion policies as not being relevant to their
institutions or as not being of concern to the office
of institutional research.

The percentages of administrators indicating that
the office of institutional research should assume and
maintain primary responsibility for studies of curriculum
and instruction were small--ranging from fifteen per cent
to four per cent. These low percentages probably can be
interpreted to mean that in general, the administrators

did not perceive the office of institutional research in the role of evaluator of institutional programs. If the studies listed under Studies of Institutional Planning and Space Utilization are considered as administrately oriented studies, then an average of fifty-eight per cent of the administrators can be regarded as responding that the office of institutional research should either coordinate or assume primary responsibility for such studies. These responses suggest that a majority of the administrators perceived the office as focusing on management concerns.

An examination of the administrators' responses relative to institutional size (See Table B-2, Appendix B) gave evidence that the perceptions of the administrators in the small and medium-sized institutions were similar regarding the extent of involvement of the institutional research effort in studies of students. More than one-third of the administrators in the large colleges and universities believed the office of institutional research should not be concerned with such student studies as: college environment, special themes, and studies on values. On the other hand, less than one-fourth of the administrators in the medium-sized institutions and only from eight to fifteen per cent of those in the small

colleges held this attitude. Likewise, more than one-half of the administrators in the large institutions regarded studies of student personality and attitudes as being out of the province of institutional research; while only seventeen per cent of the administrators in the medium-sized institutions and only one out of thirteen administrators in the small institutions were of this opinion.

The patterns of responses of administrators relative to studies of faculty showed greater variation. While fifty-nine per cent of the administrators from the large institutions were inclined to let the office of institutional research coordinate or assume major responsibility for studies of faculty development, only twenty-two per cent and thirty-one per cent of the administrators in the medium-sized and small institutions, respectively, were bent in this direction. Yet, from sixty-five to seventy-one per cent of the administrators from the large institutions believed that the office of institutional research ought not be concerned with the following faculty studies: faculty-student interaction, faculty participation in governance, and tenure and promotion policies. On the average, one-third of the administrators in the medium-sized institutions and about fifteen per cent of those in the

small colleges shared this view. It is interesting to
note that while three of the twenty-three administrators
in the medium-sized colleges and universities perceived
studies of teaching effectiveness as being the primary
responsibility of the office of institutional research--
none of the administrators in the small and large insti-
tutions held this view. It must be noted, however, that
while nearly one-half of the administrators in the large
institutions thought studies of teaching effectiveness
ought not be the concern of the office of institutional
research, only about one-fourth of the administrators
in the small colleges were in agreement. In general,
administrators in the large institutions thought that
the office of institutional research should have less
involvement in studies of curriculum and instruction
than the other administrators. For example, seventy-
one per cent of the administrators in the large insti-
tutions held the attitude that studies of pre-requisites
were either not relevant to their institutions or were
not the concerns of the office of institutional research.
In contrast, an average of about one-third of the other
administrators expressed this opinion. The perceptions
of the administrators relative to studies of institu-
tional planning and space utilization were apparently
independent of institutional size.

Some interesting variations were revealed when the responses of the administrators were analyzed with respect to administrative positions. Ninety-one per cent of the deans of the schools of education specified that the office of institutional research ought to be charged with the coordination or the primary responsibility for studies of socioeconomic factors. The deans of the schools of business expressed a contrary opinion; with only one out of six deans (17 per cent) indicating that the office should coordinate such studies. None of these deans perceived the office as having the major responsibility for such studies. The response rates for the presidents, chief academic officers, and deans of the schools of arts and sciences were thirty-six, thirty-three, and forty-six per cent, respectively. On the other hand, while eighty-three per cent of the deans of the schools of business regarded studies on values as not being concerns of the institutional research effort, none of the presidents and only one school of arts and sciences dean held this opinion. Although a school of education dean from a large institution believed that such studies were not relevant to his institution, half of the chief academic officers perceived the office of institutional research as coordinating or assuming primary responsibility for studies on values. Even though

seventy-three per cent of the presidents thought the office of institutional research should play an assisting role relative to studies of student characteristics, a majority of the chief academic officers and the deans of the schools of education indicated that the office should be more extensively involved in such studies.

In general, among the various administrative groups, more agreement was exhibited within the group of presidents than any other group. Along with attrition studies, the presidents perceived the office of institutional research as being more involved in management related studies than the other categories of studies. With respect to the academically related studies, the presidents leaned heavily toward having the office of institutional research play an assisting role. It is interesting that although several administrators felt that the institutional research effort should not be concerned with studies of the role of the institution in meeting the needs of society, only one administrator --a president-- considered such studies as not being relevant to his institution.

The deans of the schools of business desired the least participation, on the part of the office of institutional research, in the academically related studies. From fifty to eighty-three per cent of them thought the office of

institutional research ought not be concerned with the eighteen (18) of the twenty-six (26) listed academic studies.

In contrast, it appeared that the deans of the schools of education preferred the most extensive involvement, on the part of the office of institutional research, in the academic studies. However, with respect to studies of students and studies of faculty, on the average a larger percentage of the chief academic officers thought the office should assume primary responsibility for such studies. The situation seemed reversed regarding studies of curriculum and instruction. A larger proportion of the deans than the chief academic officers indicated that these studies should be the primary responsibility of the office.

On the whole, the responses of the deans of the schools of arts and sciences reflected more clearly the opinions of the composite group than any other group of administrators.

Summary

Only two of the administrators polled in this survey responded that they were not acquainted with the role and functions of the office of institutional research. Most of the other administrators indicated that they were acquainted with the office as a result of association with the institutional research program (38%), staff briefings

(22%), and professional readings (21%). Thus, it was assumed that the administrators were sufficiently familiar with the office of institutional research to provide creditable responses to queries concerning its role and functions.

About one-fourth of the administrators perceived the major function of the office of institutional research as engagement in data collection and reporting. Approximately forty per cent, however, thought the major focus of the office ought to be data analysis and interpretation. More than one-third of the administrators thought the office ought to go one step further. They perceived the primary function of the office as developing position papers involving specific policy decisions.

If "total institution" is interpreted to include specific administrative areas, ninety-five per cent of the administrators perceived the office of institutional research as focusing on the total institution rather than only on specific administrative areas. Also, a majority of the administrators considered the office as an arm of the total institution. None of the administrators regarded the office as an arm of the faculty; about one-third regarded it as an arm of the administration. There was some disparity of opinions among the administrators

concerning the director playing the role of the president's "right-hand man". While practically all of the presidents agreed or strongly agreed with the suggestion that the director ought to be their "right-hand man," about two-thirds of two groups of responding administrators -- the deans of the schools of arts and sciences and the chief academic officers -- dissented.

Additional insights into the perceptions of the selected administrators toward the role and functions of the office of institutional research were gained from the analyses of the responses to Part II of the administrators' questionnaire. In general, it appeared that a majority of the administrators perceived the office as a service agency that assisted other agencies that have primary responsibility for certain studies--either with design or implementation. With respect to studies of students, however, about two-thirds of the administrators conceived the office as either coordinating or assuming primary responsibility for attrition studies. For the most part, it seemed that the administrators perceived the office as playing a larger role in student studies than in faculty studies or studies of curriculum and instruction. In fact, about one-third of the administrators thought that such faculty studies as faculty-

student interaction, teaching effectiveness, faculty par-
ticipation in governance, and tenure and promotion either
were of no concern to the office or were not relevant to
their institutions. On the other hand, the responses of
the administrators gave evidence that a majority of them
perceived the office of institutional research as being
essentially management-oriented rather than academically
oriented.

The perceptions of the administrators relative to
studies of institutional planning and space utilization
seemed to be independent of institutional size. However,
when viewed across institutional size the perceptions of
the administrators relative to the other categories of
studies showed considerable variations. Likewise, some
interesting variations were revealed when the responses
of the administrators were analyzed with respect to
administrative positions. For example, ninety-one per
cent of the deans of the schools of education indicated
that the office ought to coordinate or assume primary
responsibility for studies of socio-economic factors.
Yet only seventeen per cent of the deans of the schools
of business perceived the office as being involved to
that extent in such studies. Among the administrative
groups, the presidents exhibited the greatest degree of
within group agreement, while the opinions of the deans

of the schools of arts and sciences were most represen-
tative of the opinions of the composite group of adminis-
trators.

A Comparison of the Perceptions of Selected Administrators Toward the Role and Functions of Institutional Research With the Perceptions of the Directors

One institutional researcher may classify his office
as a basic data gathering agency, while another may see
his office as "a participant in major university decisions"
(Rourke and Brooks, 1966; p. 62). The institutional
researcher may make recommendations based on his findings,
or he may prefer to let his findings speak for themselves.
What were the perceptions of the directors of institutional
research that participated in this study toward the role
and functions of the office of institutional research?
How did these perceptions compare with the perceptions
of selected administrators in the same institution? An
overwhelming majority of the directors regarded the major
function of their offices as data analysis and interpre-
tation, as indicated by the results presented in Table
XX.

TABLE XX

Major Functions of the Office of Institutional
Research as Perceived by Directors

Percentage Distribution

| Functions | Institutional Size | | | (N=14) |
	Small	Medium	Large	Totals
Basic Data Collection and Reporting		17		7
Data Analysis and Interpretation	50	83	75	71
Development of Position Papers	50		25	21

A greater divergence of opinions regarding the major
function of institutional research was exhibited by the
administrators, as Table XXI depicts. While forty per
cent of the administrators was in agreement with most of
the directors, the opinions of the remaining administrators
were almost equally divided between the other listed func-
tions.

TABLE XXI

Major Functions of the Office of Institutional Research as
Perceived by Administrators in Institutions of Different
Sizes

Percentage Distribution

| Functions | Institutional Size | | | (N=53) |
	Small	Medium	Large	Totals
Basic Data Collection and Reporting	31	26	24	26
Data Analysis and Interpretation	38	43	35	40
Development of Position Papers	31	30	41	34

None of the directors in the large and small institutions considered basic data collection and reporting as the office's major function; yet more than one-fourth of the administrators in these same institutions regarded it as the major function. The comments of one director may help to explain some of this variation in opinions. "The major function of an office of institutional research really should be data analysis and interpretation. We shouldn't have to collect the information, but right now that constitutes the major portion of our time." This director suggested that the various offices on campus ought to collect the data and make them available to the directors. The directors could then take the data, analyze them, and come up with interpretations.

In general, as shown in Table XVI, the opinions of the presidents were similar to the directors regarding the major function of the institutional research effort. It appeared, however, that the opinions of the other administrators were independent of their respective administrative offices.

Another interesting observation is that only one (7 per cent) director in the large institutions considered developing position papers as the major function of the office. Yet, more than two-fifths of the administrators

in these same institutions regarded developing position papers as the office's major function. In addition, two of the three responding presidents from these institutions considered this activity as the major function. These data may be interpreted to mean that most directors in the large colleges and universities did not perceive themselves as playing a significant role in policy decisions. However, many administrators in these institutions thought that they were or should be.

Although most directors regarded data analysis and interpretation as the major function of the office, several of them reported that they made recommendations along with their studies. One director put it thusly: "Datum does not speak for itself; numbers don't say anything." Another added, "I don't think an institutional researcher is worth his salt as an institutional researcher if he doesn't make recommendations based on his interpretation of the data."

There was considerable consensus of opinions between the directors and administrators regarding the focus of the research studies conducted by the office of institutional research. Ninety-two per cent (Table XXII) of the directors and ninety-five per cent of the administrators (Table XVII) felt that the research studies should focus on the major concerns of the total institution.

TABLE XXII

Major Focus of the Office of Institutional Research as
Perceived by Directors

Percentage Distribution

| Major Concerns | Institutional Size | | | (N=13) Totals |
	Small	Medium	Large	
Total Institution	100	83	100	92
Specific Administrative Areas		17		8

One director who viewed the institutional research effort as
being concerned with the total institution made the following
comments:

> There isn't an area we shouldn't get
> involved in. It doesn't mean we will
> have specific responsibility for it,
> but we should be willing to sit down
> and work with somebody and to say here
> are some basic data that we've already
> collected and you should be aware of
> this; this may help you to look at it
> another way. I think that's part of
> our role.

An administrator from one of the small colleges expressed
doubt that a more active office of institutional research
would prove worthwhile on his campus. Noting that he was
not acquainted with the role and functions of such offices,
he wrote that he perceived the office of institutional
research as an unnecessary appendage of the "administrative
bureaucracy." As Table XVIII indicates, a majority of the

administrators perceived the office as an arm of the total institution. The directors, however, were equally divided in their opinions. One half of them regarded the office as an arm of the total institution, while the other one-half viewed the office as an arm of the administration. ·(See Table XXIII).

TABLE XXIII

Directors' Perceptions: To Which Group is the Office of Institutional Research Considered An Arm?

Percentage Distribution

| | Institutional Size | | | (N=14) |
	Small	Medium	Large	Totals
Total Institution	50	67	25	50
Administration	50	33	75	50
Faculty				

A director who contended that the office of institutional research should be an arm of the administration offered the following reason:

> There are three elements in the institution: the faculty, the students, and the administration. The faculty are here to teach, and the administration is here to grease the way for the faculty to teach and the students to learn. The office of institutional research can be of assistance to the administration in greasing the way for the rest of it to work. The office is not an arm of the total institution. I simply don't have time to answer to the faculty and administration. Institutional research is simply an administrative function.

Another director who described the office as a resource center for the total institution made the following comments in rebuttal:

> I think everything--anything that happens at the institution--instruction, student activities, crime, vandalism, et cetera-- comes under the domain of this office in terms of we should be able to provide services such as isolating a problem, evaluating it, and trying to find out what's causing it. Now that may be idealistic, but to me that's the way the institutional research office works.

A comparison of Tables XVIII and XXIII revealed that there was a considerable variation of opinions among the administrators and directors. In the large institutions, seventy-five per cent of the directors perceived the office as an arm of the administration, while the opinions of the administrators in these institutions were almost evenly divided between the total institution and the administration. The situation was practically reversed in the small colleges. The opinions of the directors were evenly shared by the two areas, but more than three-fourths of the administrators perceived the office as an arm of the total institution. The greatest degree of consensus between administrators and directors was in the medium-sized institutions. Approximately two-thirds of each group viewed the office as an arm of the total institution.

It was generally assumed that the closer the office
of institutional research was to the office of the presi-
dent, the greater its influence on institutional policy
was likely to be. As the data in Table XXIV indicated,
eighty-five per cent of the directors strongly agreed or
agreed that the director of institutional research should
be the president's "right-hand man." A smaller percen-
tage (1 per cent) of the administrators had this percep-
tion, as reported in Table XIX. The greatest degree
of disagreement between the directors and administrators
was evident in the large institutions. All of the direc-
tors in the large institutions agreed or strongly agreed
that the director should be the president's "right-hand
man." Yet, forty-one per cent of the administrators in
these institutions dissented to this relationship.

TABLE XXIV

Directors' Perceptions: Should the Director be the College
President's "Right-Hand Man"?

Percentage Distribution

Attitudes	Institutional Size			(N=14) Totals
	Small	Medium	Large	
Strongly Agree	25	17	25	21
Agree	75	50	75	64
Disagree		17		7
Strongly Disagree		17		7

However, the responding presidents in the large institutions
agreed with their directors. In the large institutions,
two directors reported to their presidents and the other
two reported to vice presidents. One dissenting adminis-
trator wrote that if "right-hand man" were interpreted to
mean the president's closest advisor, then he was not in
favor of the relationship because the director of insti-
tutional research should "work under a vice president".

Although the directors perceived themselves as their
president's right-hand man, they did not perceive themselves
as "yes men." One director asserted that he did not inter-
pret the president's right-hand man to mean that he was to
support the president at all times. He remarked that some-
times the findings were in opposition to the president's
proposals. In such cases, members of the office of insti-
tutional research's staff often argued with the president
to change his views--sometimes being successful and at
other times being unsuccessful.

Another director thought the director of institutional
research should "be answerable" to the president. However,
he alleged that he had told the president several times,
"You pay me to disagree with you. When everybody around
you is saying 'yes sir, yes sir,' I want to be in the

position of being able to say 'no sir.' I'd rather be a free agent and be able to say 'that stinks!'"

When the perceptions of the various groups of administrators were compared with respect to whether the director should be the president's "right-hand man", the attitudes of the deans of the schools of arts and sciences and the chief academic officers differed considerably from the attitudes of the others. About two-thirds of each of these two groups either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the suggestion. A majority of the other administrative groups, however, agreed with a majority of the directors that the director should be the president's "right-hand man."

There was a consensus of opinions on the part of the administrators and directors regarding the extent that the office of institutional research should be involved in the type of studies listed in Tables B-1 and B-2 in Appendix B. A majority of both groups agreed that the office should play an assisting role in the design, evaluation, and implementation of most of these studies. Sixty-four per cent of both groups, however, felt that the office should either coordinate or assume primary responsibility for attrition studies.

Also, it appeared that the directors perceived the office as being more extensively involved in studies of

student characteristics and studies of tenure and promotion than did the administrators. On the other hand, while none of the directors perceived the office as coordinating or assuming primary responsibility for studies of faculty-student interaction, more than one-half of the administrators viewed the office in that role.

There was a high degree of consensus regarding the role of the office of institutional research in institutional program evaluation. The mean percentage of administrators indicating that the office should assume and maintain primary responsibility for studies of curriculum and instruction was eight per cent, while the mean percentage for directors was four per cent.

Based on the responses to the types of studies classified as "Studies of Institutional Planning and Space Utilization," a majority of the directors and a majority of the administrators perceived the role of the office as studying programs and operations that were essentially management-oriented. Moreover, several directors emphatically pointed out that their offices were administratively oriented rather than academically oriented. Some directors were reluctant to get involved in academic studies because of ten such studies were not supported nor accepted by the faculty. One director stated that his staff wanted the faculty or department to want the study. He declared, "If

they don't want it we tend not to do it." He surmised
that a grade study that his office conducted had had no
impact; therefore the office would not do another such
study unless specifically requested. Some other direc-
tors argued that their offices were so laden with management
requirements that they simply did not have the time to
become involved in academic studies. One director who
described his office as a heavily quantitative one declared,
"You can't afford the luxury of sitting back and evaluating
internally on a qualitative basis; You have to sort of
focus on the quantitative and the qualitative is done in
departments, I guess." Another director suggested that
the office of institutional research should be involved
in a very limited way in any sort of evaluation of the
curriculum or the effectiveness of certain aspects of it.
"Efficiency is the problem we must address," he alleged.
In some institutions, committees or other agencies, such
as what is labeled the Academic Board in one institution,
were charged with the responsibility of studying academic
programs and policies.

With respect to institutional size, in general there
was a high degree of consensus of opinions between adminis-
trators and directors in the same institution. Some
interesting differences were apparent, however, relevant

to certain studies. For example, with respect to studies of admissions practices, seventy-five per cent of the directors in the large institutions perceived the office of institutional research as coordinating or assuming primary responsibility for such studies. Less than one-third of the administrators in the large institutions, however, held this view. In the small institutions, all of the directors thought the office of institutional research should play an assisting role with respect to alumni studies. More than one-third of the administrators in these colleges, however, viewed the office as being involved at a higher level. Fifty per cent of the directors in the small colleges and universities thought that the office of institutional research should not be concerned with studies of the effect of graduate education on undergraduates. The other fifty per cent considered such studies irrelevant to their institutions. Two of the small colleges did not have graduate programs; this probably accounted for the opinions of these directors. Yet, although twenty-three per cent of the administrators considered such studies irrelevant, more than half of them thought the office should be involved at some level in studies of this nature.

Summary

When all six groups of administrators were compared

there appeared to be few critical differences in their
perceptions toward the role and functions of institutional
research. While more than seven out of ten directors per-
ceived data analysis and interpretation as the major func-
tion of the office, the opinions of the other administrators
were almost equally divided among the three listed func-
tions: (1) basic data collection and reporting; (2) data
analysis and interpretation, and (3) development of posi-
tion papers. When the perceptions of each of the five
groups of administrators relative to the major functions
of the office were compared with the perceptions of the
directors, only the presidents seemed to be in agreement
with the directors. In contrast, there was a considerable
consensus of opinions between the directors and the
selected administrators regarding the focus of the research
studies conducted by the office of institutional research.
More than ninety per cent of each group was of the opinion
that the research studies should focus on the major con-
cerns of the total institution.

A majority of the selected administrators perceived the
office of institutional research as an arm of the total
institution. However, only one-half of the directors held
this view, while the other one-half saw the office as an
arm of the administration. When compared across institu-
tional size it appeared that the greatest degree of agreement

existed between the directors and the administrators in the large institutions. When the opinions of the directors in institutions of a given size were compared with the opinions of the administrators in those institutions the greatest degree of consensus was evident in the medium-size institutions.

The director of institutional research should be the college president's "right-hand man." While eighty-five per cent of the directors agreed or strongly agreed with the foregoing statement, a small proportion (61 per cent) of the administrators indicated such agreement. The largest percentage of dissenting administrators was in the large institutions. When the attitudes of the various groups of administrators were compared, those of the chief academic officers and the deans of the schools of arts and sciences differed the most from the directors and from the other administrative groups.

There apparently was a consensus of opinion between the directors and administrators regarding the extent that the office of institutional research should be involved in the types of studies described in this investigation. A majority of each group agreed that the office should play an assisting role in the design, evaluation, and implementation of most of the studies. However, nearly two-thirds of each group

thought that the office should either coordinate or assume
primary responsibility for attrition studies. In general,
the responses of the directors and the administrators
could be interpreted to mean that both groups perceived
the office of institutional research as being essentially
management-oriented.

With respect to institutional size there was general
agreement regarding the participation of the office of
institutional research in most studies. However, relative
to certain studies such as admission practices and alumni
studies, there was a disparity between the perceptions
of the directors regarding the role of the office of
institutional research and the perceptions of this role
by the responding college administrators.

Problems and Points of Conflict

The offices of institutional research that participated
in this study were not autonomous agencies existing in a
vacuum, but were dynamic organizations subject to the
physical and social environments in which they were expected
to function. Based primarily on the subjective reports
of the directors and selected administrators and the limited
observations of the researcher, this section describes
the potential problems and points of conflict between the

office of institutional research and other units and
agencies of the college or university. These problems
were categorized as: (1) problems of identity, (2)
problems of operation, and (3) problems of implementa-
tion.

First, some of the offices of institutional research
were apparently facing an identity crisis. In several
cases the functions of the office were not well-defined,
but as one director put it were "constantly evolving."
In some situations, the office was not involved primarily
in traditional institutional research kinds of studies
but was "evolving into something else." In fact, most
of the offices of institutional research were essentially
fact-gathering and reporting agencies rather than parti-
cipants in studies that focused on institutional self-
analysis. Moreover, most of these offices were so
heavily involved in meeting reporting demands from exter-
nal agencies, particularly State Council, that one direc-
tor exclaimed that institutional research in the state of
Virginia was "molded by the State Council." Another
director felt that some administrators at his institution
perceived his office as an arm, at times, of the State
Council rather than as an office within the institution.

The director offered the following explanation for this state of mind:

> I am a representative to SCHEV (State
> Council) for several things--for
> example, the pilot study of MIS, I
> am doing something for SCHEV as opposed
> to something for the institution. Some
> offices don't know I am here since my
> only contact with such offices is in
> relation to SCHEV requirement. At
> times I feel that I'm working for SCHEV
> rather than for (this College).

An administrator wrote:

> I perceive the role of an office of
> institutional research as very limited
> indeed! A glance at select items of
> required reporting by governmental
> agencies at the present time shows
> some of their inquiries approaching
> the inane--and at immense taxpayer
> expense.

Inadequate communication between the director and some fo the major users of the information generated by the office of institutional research seemed to contribute to the identity problem at some institutions. The director at one institution alleged that "institutional research could not possibly be of any meaningful assistance" to department heads relative to academic matters. "I don't initiate nor am I the prime mover for such studies."

With respect to certain studies that he had distributed to various deans, department heads and vice president, this director commented as follows:

> One thing that bothers me is that I send
> out this information which I think is
> good, but I never get any response some-
> times. Absolutely nothing! I think its
> beautiful stuff. So often I query people
> about it, and they are interested. The
> dean will take it and look through it,
> he likes it, and he puts it away, but he's
> too busy to get back to it. If I draw
> his attention to it, he will ask some
> questions about it. I don't get any real
> strong indication from them of what they
> want.

On the other hand, an administrator from the same
institution wrote:

> Being familiar with attitudes on various
> campuses as they pertain to institutional
> research, I have found the level of frus-
> tration to be very high. Most of it stems
> from the fact that in many cases there
> tends to be a lot of input and a lot of
> output to and from institutional research
> offices. However, many persons have a
> hard time in taking the information and
> doing much with it in terms of applicability
> to their own specific problems. I do
> think that the office of institutional
> research ought to be more aggressive in
> undertaking studies which they think might
> be helpful to various department heads,
> rather than waiting for specific requests
> to come. I would think it would improve
> the image of the Office of Institutional
> Research in undertaking such an issue.

Another administrator from this institution indicated
that he considered "good adequate projections of faculty
needs and analyses of current programs" one of the most
needed areas of research or evaluation on his campus.
He wrote: "It is my understanding the director of the

office of institutional research does not know he has such responsibilities; we, in fact, do get some studies that are sometimes after the fact or way underestimated."

At another institution, the director described his office as a "service oriented agency" designed to provide assistance to any constituent of the college. However, one administrator from that institution wrote: "I do not think heads of departments are made aware of the activities of the office of institutional research."

The director of institutional research at one institution noted that many faculty members at his college often confused his office with the office handling sponsored research and grants. His comments could be interpreted as further evidence that some offices of institutional research were having identity problems.

Many directors complained that their offices spent so much time responding to external requests that the offices had not developed into instruments of planning, an activity that most of the directors preferred as the major responsibility of the institutional research effort.

Table XXV shows that nine of the fourteen directors ranked "planning and coordination" as their first preference relative to job responsibilities. One director preferred doing special studies for the administration

and another director had no preference with respect to job responsibilities.

TABLE XXV

DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS: PREFERRED JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

Percentage Distribution

Functions	RANKS							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Planning and Coordination	64.3	21.4	7.1	14.3				
Budget and Finance	7.1	28.6	28.6					
Studies of Students		14.3	21.4	42.9	7.1	7.1	7.1	
Space Utilization			7.1		28.6	28.6	21.4	7.1
Coordination and Completion of Questionnaires					7.1	7.1	28.6	28.6
Adapting Reporting Mechanisms		7.1		7.1	21.4	21.4	7.1	28.6
Reports to Outside Agencies	7.1			14.3	14.3	7.1	21.4	28.6
Faculty Studies	7.1	21.4	28.6	14.3	7.1	14.3		

Table VIII indicates that ten of the fourteen directors rank-ordered "reports to outside agencies" as their first priority and none of them gave such a high ranking to "planning and coordination".   Thus, there was a high degree of incongruity between the director's preferred and actual job responsibilities.   Most of the directors, however,

accepted the "realities of the situation." In other words, although they preferred to focus on other institutional research functions, they accepted the significance of the reporting function as one of the effects of the external environment on the institution. The remarks of one director probably reflected the thoughts of several others. He pointedly stated:

> One must accept the ground rules under which the game is played or they leave that game and go into another game. I accept the ground rules and agree to play by them. When I can no longer accept the rules professionally or ethically from the standpoint of my own professional desires or interests, I will go where I can better play the game.

The most consistently mentioned operational problem involved limitations in the institutional management information systems. One director lamented that his staff had to do a study on minority students manually due to such limitations. Several directors bemoaned the poor condition or the non-existence of a data base. One director complained, "When we want the answer to a simple question such as who works for us we get seven different answers if we ask seven different people." Other directors mentioned the anguish they sometimes endured while trying to put data in a form appropriate to the task. One director

stated:

> Sometimes things are asked for in a
> different way and it's difficult to
> get it into that form. Sometimes one
> of the dean's colleagues will send
> him a questionnaire; he will fill
> out one-third of it and send the
> rest to me. I might have eighty
> per cent of the information in my
> files but it may literally take me
> days to get the other twenty per
> cent.

Most directors predicted an amelioration of some of these problems as a result of the interinstitutional WICHE management information system that was currently being set up by State Council. A few directors, however envisioned frustration as they tried to make certain institutional definitions compatible to those of WICHE.

For more than one-half of the offices data collection required for the reporting function was a serious problem. The problem was particularly acute in the small and medium-sized institutions which faced concomitant personnel limitations. In two of these institutions, the problem was further compounded by the lack of direct computer accessibility. However, the directors complained in unanimity about the time consumed in doing "so many necessary but routine reports." "Reporting is getting a bit ridiculous; it is very time consuming. We get good support from computer services, but they can't go out and arrange for the collection of data."

Another director viewed the time spend reporting
as a major limitation of his office. He described his
point of view as follows:

> I should spend the major part of my time
> doing long-range planning, cost studies,
> et cetera. Right now that comes later
> because there is a more immediate, pres-
> sing need. In a preferred situation the
> reports should be so easy to generate
> that you never have to worry about repor-
> ting. You know you can report; then you
> can spend your time doing other things--
> the more analytical, self-analysis kind
> of study. But, I've found that one of
> the big problems is that because of the
> imminent and impacting kinds of reports
> that we are called on to make, we wind
> up involved in the reporting process.
> I have now said, -- we'll do those
> analytical studies when I have time.

In at least one institution the director implied
that the office was not operating in keeping with his
institutional research philosophy nor its original
purposes. The director suggested that the major emphasis
of the office ought to be directed toward planning.
However, he perceived "an individual unwillingness to
commit to the planning effort." He attributed this
unwillingness "partially to education and partially to
personal biases and management styles." Although this
director reported to the vice president for planning,
the director remarked that "a great many of the things
that come up from the president--the president literally
runs things."

Scarce resources contributed to a lessening of the effectiveness of the institutional research effort at practically all of the institutions. An insufficient budget often resulted in limited personnel, inadequate computer facilities, and/or engagement in a rather narrow range of studies. These problems produced somewhat critical outcomes in some situations. In sixty per cent of the small and medium-sized institutions, the directors were required to wear several hats. In some cases, the directors did not possess the training nor the confidence to perform effectively at all the tasks to which they were assigned. One director who was competent in research techniques and appeared to have a comprehension of issues in higher education disclosed:

> I'd like to hire a person to do my cost
> analysis for me. I am not a financial
> man to begin with. I took a couple of
> courses in college in connection with
> my degree. Essentially I am not a cost
> and analysis man. The things I've done
> I just had to dig down and get them.

Although all of the directors in the small institutions wore more than one hat, a potential point of conflict was particularly manifested in one of these colleges. The vice president of the college served also as the institutional research coordinator. In addition to handling the staff functions of institutional research

this director was in a position to make critical line
decisions concerning such matters as appointments, pro-
motions, and budget allocations. It is conceivable
that the objectivity of the institutional research efforts
could come under attack, especially if the office were
to expand its activities.

An item on the questionnaire concerned the admin-
istrators' satisfaction with the scope and nature of the
problems and issues investigated by the office of insti-
tutional research on their campuses. Although an admin-
istrator from a large institution characterized the office
on his campus as "a good outfit," a majority of the
responding administrators expressed a negative attitude.
As Table XXVI indicates, a larger percentage of the
administrators in the medium-sized colleges were dissatis-
fied with their offices of institutional research than
those in the other colleges and universities. The deans
of the schools of arts and sciences were apparently the
most dissatisfied group of administrators in all the
institutions. One such dean wrote that the activities
of the office were too limited. An administrator for a
large institution thought the office on his campus needed
to be more responsive to communication, while a dean from
a medium-sized institution surmised that the role of the

office was not clearly established. He perceived an urgent need for the office to indicate its importance. An administrator from a small institution predicted that the institutional research efforts at his college would "grow in future years, particularly with respect to long range planning."

In general, the administrators who wrote comments were those who indicated that they were not satisfied with the scope and nature of the problems and issues investigated by the office of institutional research on their campuses.

TABLE XXVI

ADMINISTRATORS' SATISFACTION WITH THE SCOPE AND NATURE OF
PROBLEMS INVESTIGATED BY THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL
RESEARCH

Percentage Distribution

	Attitudes	
	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
ADMINISTRATIVE GROUPS		
Presidents	55	45
Chief Academic Officers	56	44
Deans, Arts and Sciences	25	75
Deans, Business	50	50
Deans, Education	45	55
INSTITUTIONAL SIZE		
Small	50	50
Medium	28	72
Large	59	41
Totals (N=47)	45	55

Most of the directors indicated a desire to expand in such areas as planning, program evaluation and fiscal analysis.

However, given the limitations in personnel and support systems under which they operated, all of the directors said that they were basically satisfied with the scope and nature of the problems investigated by their offices.

In response to a query concerning some of the chief obstacles to optimum development of the institutional research program on his campus, one director declared, "One is limited by one's imagination." Yet, it was apparent that this director recognized that attitudes toward institutional research and the acceptance of its findings were significant factors in the implementation of an institutional research program. Evidence of this awareness was manifested in the following remarks:

> An individual must find the politics
> of getting acceptance of whatever
> the facts and figures are. I have
> inches, no literally feet of studies
> adorning shelves, which have not been
> acted upon. They have not been acted
> upon because I don't understand the
> politics of the institution--I have
> no clout.

Another director who felt he did not have the necessary clout to get things done believed that he was further handicapped in his efforts since the person to whom he reported did not have the title of vice president. This director experienced considerable difficulties in conducting a faculty activities study. He noted that although

he tried to make it clear that he had the support of the president, he did not obtain adequate faculty participation until he received the active support of the vice president for academic affairs.

Several other directors complained about faculty attitudes toward various institutional research activities. A director who conducted a faculty perceptions study concluded that "there is a certain uneasiness on the part of the faculty relative to certain kinds of surveys." Another director argued that being a part of central administration was not an advantage sometimes. He made the following statement in support of his position:

> Since this operation is a part of 'the administration,' anything that smacks of the administration creates a natural aversion on the part of some faculty. That hinders us sometimes. I know that there are a few people who deliberately ignore anything that comes out of this place.

The director at a rather traditional institution regarded resistance to change primarily on the part of the faculty as the chief obstacle to optimum development of the institutional research program on his campus. He felt that many faculty members were "anti-institutional research" because they perceived the office as an agency of change.

In about one-third of the colleges and universities, some of the administrators were blamed for impeding the implementation of certain institutional research efforts. The director in a large institution was especially critical of the attitudes of some of the administrators in his institution:

> It's just too much bother, particularly
> for the older ones; they would rather
> fly by the seats of their pants. They've
> been making decisions for years; they
> know what they want to do; they don't
> want anybody to show them anything that
> they're doing wrong or that they could
> do better.

A dean from a small college, noting that institutional research was very limited on his campus, alleged that the president and the Board of Visitors had not yet realized the importance of an office of institutional research relative to decision-making. A director indicated that his president acknowledged the importance of the office in those areas related to the management of the institution. However, he implied "the administration" was not interested in the office playing a role in academic areas such as evaluating programs, evaluating the quality of instruction, and examining new modes of teaching.

Although this section focused on some of the potential problems of the institutional research offices investigated in this study, caution must be exercised

in making generalizations and comparisons. The existence of a problem depended upon several factors. Among them were: size of the institution; the age of the office; the length of time the director had been at the institution; the rapport of the director with other constituents; and the location of the office in the organizational structure. Hence a potential point of conflict at one institution was non-existent at another. For example, one would probably expect it to be a difficult task to get a study to gain wide acceptance in a large, complex institution. Yet, the reports and studies disseminated by the director at one of the large institutions were generally well accepted. This director, however, was a tenured faculty member, was a former administrator, and was thoroughly familiar with the personnel and organizational characteristics of his institution.

Summary

To facilitate discussion, the potential problems and points of conflict described in this section were placed in three categories: (1) problems of identity, (2) problems of operation and (3) problems of implementation. These categories, of course, were not mutually

exclusive. Problems of identity, which can be loosely
translated as problems resulting from role definitions,
no doubt influenced the operation of the office of
institutional research. Moreover, role conflict and
operational problems such as organizational placement
impeded the successful implementation of certain insti-
tutional research projects.

The functions of the office of institutional research
at the various colleges were not well-defined. They were
evolving in accord with the given institutional climate
and the demands being made upon the office by various
external agencies. The State Council, in particular,
was the prime determiner of the functions performed by
the office. Most of the institutional research offices
was so heavily involved preparing reports and partici-
pating in various State Council projects that they have
few resources remaining to devote to institutional self-
analysis--the traditional raison d'etre of an office of
institutional research. Thus, most of the offices could
not be identified as essentially participants in "a
variegated form of organizational self study" (Rourke
and Brooks, 1966, p. 44), but rather as official repor-
ting agencies for their colleges. The majority of the

directors were not satisfied with the primary orientation
of their offices as manifested by the large proportion of
them who preferred to focus on planning and coordination
instead of the reporting function.

In three colleges certain operating procedures contri-
buted to the identity crisis that the office of institu-
tional research faced. A comparison of comments made by
the director and certain administrators from the same
institution suggested that there was inadequate internal
communication between the director and various college
administrators and faculty members. Although one would
probably expect communication to be a problem in the
larger and more complex institutions, the largest propor-
tion of administrators expressing dissatisfaction with
the institutional research program was in the medium-
sized colleges and universities.

A potential area of organizational malfunctioning
was evident in one of the small institutions in which
the vice president of the college also served as the
coordinator of institutional research. Since this direc-
tor was in a position to make critical line decisions
concerning such matters as appointments and promotions,
it is conceivable that the objectivity of the office
could come under attack--especially by various faculty

and administrative groups. The impact of such an arrange-
ment could be considerable in view of the fact that many
directors attributed their limited involvement in certain
types of activities to the attitudes of certain faculty
members and administrators. In most institutions, certain
academic studies were considered to be the province of
the faculty; hence many faculty members looked askance
at academically related reports issued by the office of
institutional research.

Such attitudes hampered the implementation of certain
institutional research efforts at some colleges and uni-
versities. In addition, about one-third of the directors
complained that the attitudes of certain administrators
lessened the effectiveness of the institutional research
program at their institutions. One director asserted
that some of the older administrators at his institution
did not recognize the role of institutional research in
decision making--they preferred, he alleged, to "fly by
the seat of their pants."

The potential problems and points of conflict were
dependent upon many factors which related to the given
institution, hence caution must be exercised in making
generalizations and comparisons. Although all of the
offices of institutional research were operating under

constraints of staff and budget, many other problems were peculiar to the institutional environment and organizational structure of the given college or university.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

At the outset of this investigation, it was stated
that this study did not begin with a set of well-defined
hypotheses, but rather focused on five basic descriptive
questions designed to provide a comprehensive overview
of the development of institutional research in Virginia's
public senior colleges and universities. The specific
questions posed in this study were: (1) what were the
structures and functions of the offices of institutional
research in Virginia's public senior colleges and univer-
sities; (2) what were the nature and the frequency to which
studies were conducted on academic policies, programs and
issues; (3) what were the opinions of selected adminis-
trators toward the role and functions of the offices of
institutional research; (4) how did the perceptions of
selected administrators toward the role and functions of
institutional research compare with the perceptions of
the directors of the offices of institutional research; and
(5) what were the potential problems and points of con-
flict between the offices of institutional research and

other units and agencies of the institution? Two techniques were used to obtain data and information relevant to this investigation. During the summer of 1975 an interview was conducted with each of the fourteen directors at his institution. In addition, questionnaires were mailed to the directors and five other groups of administrators (presidents, chief academic officers, and deans of the schools of arts and sciences, business, and education) in the same institution. A return rate of eighty-four per cent was obtained from these other administrators with one hundred per cent of the directors responding.

For the purposes of this investigation, institutions included in this study were classified as small, medium-sized, or large according to whether their enrollments were less than 3,000, between 3,000 and 10,000 or over 10,000 respectively.

Structure and Functions

Organized institutional research was a relatively recent activity in the public senior institutions of higher education in Virginia. Although the first such office was established in 1966, more than sixty per cent of the offices came into existence between 1970 and 1974. These offices were established for several different

reasons. Most of the newer offices were established in response to increased demands for the reporting of data to various external agencies. In particular, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia--the State's coordinating board for state-supported institutions of higher education--increasingly required compilations of statistical data and analyses from the colleges and universities.

There was a tendency toward the centralization of formal institutional research operations in the institutions surveyed. In ten of the fourteen institutions a full time administrative official was assigned to institutional research. In one institution the official designated to perform and coordinate institutional research activities held part-time status in both institutional research and computer services. In the other three institutions, the person who coordinated institutional research projects held another title.

In general, the offices of institutional research were designed to serve the central administration. Approximately eighty-six per cent of the directors reported to the president or a vice-president. One-half of these directors was responsible to one of the vice-presidents.

For the most part, the specific functions of the office of institutional research were not well-defined.

The primary functions of the offices evolved as the needs
of the institution changed. In spite of the lack of
formal descriptions of the functions of these institutional
research agencies, more than seven out of ten directors
indicated that preparing reports to outside agencies was
the major job responsibility to their offices. The other
specific functions performed by these offices were depen-
dent upon several factors such as: size of the institu-
tion, the needs and interests of the official to whom the
office was responsible, the director of institutional
research, and the institutional climate in which the
offices operated. In general, these functions could be
classified into five categories: (1) coordinating and
responding to questionnaires; (2) preparing summary reports;
(3) predicting events of concern such as student enroll-
ments; (4) performing a planning function; and (5) assisting
the administration and other institutional agencies in
conducting certain studies.

One-half of the directors reported that most of
the related studies associated with these functions were
assigned to the office by the administration. The other
directors indicated that most of the studies generated
by their offices were conducted upon their own initiative.

The policies in effect regarding the distribution of these studies ranged from a basically "open" policy to dissemination on a "needs to know basis" only.

Nature and Frequency of Academic Activities

Although the major emphasis of the offices seemed to be directed toward management-related activities, most of the offices participated to varying degrees in academically-oriented activities. For the purposes of this study, three categories of academically oriented studies were identified: (1) studies of students, (2) studies of faculty and (3) studies of curriculum and instruction. A majority of the directors reported that studies of attrition were the most frequently conducted type of student study. Approximately seventy-five per cent of the offices was involved in studies of transfer students while about two out of three offices were involved in some type of admissions study. Studies of student characteristics were being conducted by more than sixty per cent of the offices. The other types of student studies listed on the questionnaire were not being conducted routinely by any of the offices. It must be noted, however, that in several institutions, various types of student studies were being conducted by faculty committees and other agencies of the institution.

The most frequent type of faculty study reported
by the directors was research on academic structures.
The other types of faculty studies in order of frequency
as reported by the directors were: (1) recruitment;
(2) tenure and promotion policies; (3) faculty-institu-
tional interaction, faculty development, and teaching
effectiveness, (4) faculty participation in governance;
and (5) faculty-student interaction.

Studies of students was the most frequently reported
category of the academically-oriented studies, while stu-
dies of the curriculum and instruction was the category
reported least often. In fact, the most frequently men-
tioned type of curriculum and instruction study--the
academic calendar--was reported as being recent or current
by less than one-half of the directors. Moreover, only
fifteen per cent and eight per cent of the directors
reported involvement in studies of the effectiveness of
technology and studies of the evaluation of non-traditional
educational programs, respectively. None of the offices
were undertaking studies of pre-requisites and modes of
organizing teaching and learning.

Selected Administrators' Perceptions of the Roles and Functions of Institutional Research

According to the responses to the questionnaire by
five groups of administrators, it appeared that one in

four administrators perceived the major function of the
office of institutional research to be engagement in
data collection and reporting. About four in ten direc-
tors, however, viewed the major focus of the office
to be data analysis and interpretation. Another one-
third perceived the primary function of the office to
be developing position papers involving specific policy
decisions. While there was an apparent divergence of
opinions regarding the major function of the office of
institutional research, the administrators were almost
in complete accord that the office of institutional
research ought to focus on the total institution rather
than on specific administrative areas. In addition, a
majority of these administrators perceived the office
as an arm of the total institution, while about one-
third regarded the office as an arm of the administra-
tion and none viewed it as an arm of the faculty.

A disparity of opinions was evident relative to
whether the director of institutional research should
be regarded as the president's "right-hand man."
Although nearly all of the directors thought the director
ought to be the president's "right-hand man," only about
one out of three of the responding deans of the schools

of arts and science and about the same proportion of
the chief academic officers were in agreement.

The groups of administrators clearly agreed that
the office of institutional research ought to func-
tion as a service agency--assisting other agencies of
the institution with certain studies either with design
or implementation. While the administrators, in gen-
eral, perceived these other agencies as having primary
responsibility for most studies, about two-thirds of
the administrators thought the office of institutional
research should either coordinate or assume primary
responsibility for attrition studies. Of the three
categories of academically-oriented studies, a majority
of the administrators perceived the office as playing
a more significant role in studies of students than
in studies of faculty and studies of curriculum and
instruction. In fact, about one in three administra-
tors perceived such faculty studies as faculty-student
interaction, teaching effectiveness, faculty partici-
pation in governance, and tenure and promotion either
as being of no concern to the office or as not being
relevant to their particular institutions.

There was general agreement among the groups of
administrators that the office of institutional research
ought to play a larger role in management-oriented studies
than in academically-oriented studies. When viewed
across both institutional size and administrative group-
ings, no clear variations in the perceptions of the
various groups of administrators were apparent with
respect to studies of institutional planning and space
utilization. However, several differences resulted when
the responses of the administrators were analyzed rela-
tive to certain academically-oriented studies. For
example, while ninety-one per cent of the deans of the
schools of education indicated that the office of insti-
tutional research ought to coordinate or assume primary
responsibility for studies of socio-economic factors,
only seventeen per cent of the deans of the schools of
business held a similar perception. In general, the
group of presidents showed the greatest degree of within
group agreement, while the perceptions of the deans of
the schools of arts and sciences were most similar to
the perceptions of the total group of administrators.

A Comparison of the Perceptions of Selected Administrators Toward the Role and Functions of Institutional Research With the Perceptions of the Directors

A comparison of the perceptions of the five groups of

administrators with the perceptions of the directors of institutional research revealed no fundamental differences. Approximately seventy per cent of the directors perceived the major function of the office of institutional research to be data analysis and interpretation, while the opinions of the selected administrators were almost equally divided among the three listed functions: (1) basic data collection and reporting; (2) data analysis and interpretation; and (3) development of position papers. On the other hand, there was a consensus of opinion between the directors and the administrators regarding the focus of the institutional research studies conducted by the office. About ninety per cent of each group perceived the office as focusing on the major concerns of the total institution rather than on specific administrative areas.

A majority of the selected administrators and fifty per cent of the directors perceived the office of institutional research as an arm of the total institution. The remaining directors viewed the office as an arm of the administration.

When viewed across institutional size, a greater proportion of the administrators in the large institutions than those in the other institutions perceived the role and functions of the office of institutional research

from the same point of view as the directors. It must be noted, however, that a comparison of the perceptions of the directors toward the role and functions of institutional research with the perception of the selected administrators disclosed that the greatest degree of agreement existed in the medium-sized institutions. A comparison across administrative position of the perceptions of each of the five groups of selected administrators with the perceptions of the directors relative to whether the director should be the college president's "right-hand man" revealed that the perceptions of the deans of the schools of arts and sciences and the chief academic officers differed the most from the directors and from the other groups of administrators.

There was agreement among the selected administrators and the directors regarding the extent that the office of institutional research ought to be involved in the types of studies listed in the questionnaires used in this investigation. A majority of each group was apparently in agreement that the office should play an assisting role in the design, evaluation, and implementation of most of the studies. About two out of three members of each group indicated that the office should either coordinate or assume primary responsibility for attrition studies.

Both the directors and the selected administrators perceived the office of institutional research as playing essentially a management-oriented role in the institutions in which they operated.

Problems and Points of Conflict

The potential problems and points of conflict treated in this investigation were placed into three non-mutually exclusive categories: (1) problems of identity, (2) problems of operation, and (3) problems of implementation. It was conjectured that problems of identity, which can be loosely translated as problems resulting from role definition, influenced the operation of the office of institutional research. By and large, role conflict and operational problems probably impinged upon the implementation of certain institutional research projects.

For the most part, the functions of the offices of institutional research were not clearly defined. Instead, the functions were evolving in accord with the particular institutional environment and the pressures being exerted by various external agencies. Thus, at least on the surface, the offices were devoting so much time to preparing reports and participating in special projects for State Council and other agencies that little time remained to

do institutional self-analyses. Hence, in most institutions the office of institutional research was viewed apparently as an arm of State Council rather than as an agency designed to improve institutional effectiveness. In some colleges and universities, certain operating practices probably contributed to the identity crisis that the office of institutional research faced. Inadequate internal communication, in particular, seemed to create confusion concerning the function of the office.

A potential point of conflict in the organization of the office of institutional research was disclosed in one institution in which the vice-president of the college also served as the coordinator of institutional research. Since this director functioned in both staff and line capacities, this arrangement could come under attack by various faculty and administrative groups. The possible impact of such an arrangement is especially important since many directors attributed their limited participation in certain types of activities to the attitudes of certain faculty members and administrators. For example, in most of the colleges and universities certain academic studies were the domain of the faculty; hence some faculty members resisted the office of institutional research's efforts to delve into such areas.

These attitudes potentially interfered with the implementation of certain institutional research projects and recommendations in some colleges and universities. Moreover, about one-third of the directors complained that the attitudes of certain administrators diminished the effectiveness of the institutional research program at their institutions. The potential problems and points of conflicts seemed to be related to the nature and structure of a particular institution.

Conclusions

Although all of the public senior collegs and universities had personnel designated to coordinate or perform various institutional research activities, the offices of institutional research activities, the offices of institutional research were primarily liason agencies for the State Council rather than agents of institutional self-study. Moreover, the findings of this investigation seemed to confirm the conjecture of Dressel (1974 b) that many offices were spending considerable amounts of time on the mere accumulation of data and devoting too little time to assimilating its meaning for internal decisions. The offices of institutional research at the public senior colleges and universities in Virginia at the times of this study

were essentially management oriented emphasizing institu-
tional efficiency. This finding is contrary to Rourke
and Brooks' (1966) conclusion that offices of institutional
research were primarily involved in academic studies.
However, it is supportive of Roney's (1970) and Larkin's
(1972) later investigations that the offices were pri-
marily management oriented.

The offices of institutional research surveyed in
this study were project oriented; that is, they were
engaged in studies requested of them by other offices
and agencies. Although one-half of the directors indicated
that they initiated most of the studies conducted by
their offices, few offices were engaged in a continuous
review of needed research on an institution-wide basis.

Collectively, there was general agreement between
the perceptions of the selected administrators toward
the role and functions of institutional research and
the perceptions of the directors. However, in about
one-third of the institutions, conditions of the internal
climate interfered with the effectiveness of the insti-
tutional research efforts. This suggests a need to
improve internal relations by possibly involving both
administrators and faculty in the institutional research

processes in an attempt to establish confidence in the institutional research effort.

Suggestions For Further Study

The findings and conclusions of this investigation provided a basis for the following suggestions regarding areas for further study.

1. Models of organizing institutional research agencies in small colleges might be proposed and tested. Such models could enable these institutions to effectively respond to external demands while adequately conducting the institutional studies that are necessary for internal decision-making.

2. Further investigation into the training, experiences, and characteristics of the staffs of offices of institutional research is desirable. Such a study should identify the qualifications of the institutional research staff, as well as, assist developers of programs that are designed to train both prospective and in-service institutional research personnel.

3. Since trends indicated that offices of institutional research were essentially management-oriented, a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a

separate agency to conduct research relative to academic
programs, issues, and concerns is suggested. Such an
agency would help to assure that both the management and
academic elements of the colleges and universities will
be contributors to rational decision-making at the various
institutions.

4. Studies of methods of developing plans and pro-
cedures to inform all constituents of the colleges and
universities of the role and values of institutional
research in higher education in general, and in a given
institution in particular seem to be of importance. Such
studies are necessary to enhance the creditbility of
institutional research activities, and to improve commu-
nication between the office of institutional research
and other units and agencies of the institution.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY LETTERS, QUESTIONNAIRES, AND INTERVIEW GUIDE

COPY OF LETTER SENT TO DIRECTORS

3415 Green Pine Lane
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
May 29, 1975

Dear

What is the role of institutional research in your
college or university? What are the major functions of
offices of institutional research? What kinds of stu-
dies are currently being conducted by offices of insti-
tutional research? With what kinds of studies should
offices of institutional research be concerned? What
are the sources and nature of internal resistance to
institutional research?

These are some of the questions to which I am seeking
answers as part of my dissertation for the doctoral degree
at the College of William and Mary. To this end, I need
your assistance. To contribute toward my obtaining valu-
able insights into institutional research in the public
senior colleges and universities in Virginia, I hope that
you will consent to being interviewed on your campus at
a mutually agreed upon time.

The success of this part of my study depends completely
upon the kindness and generosity of each institutional
research director. I recognize that this request comes
at a particularly busy time for you; however, I believe
the findings will be of value to you and your college or
university. A summary of the findings will be made avail-
able to each participating research director.

The enclosed questionnaire is a part of my interview
guide schedule and is similar to a form that is being sent
to selected administrators in your institution.

1

COPY OF LETTER SENT TO DIRECTORS (PAGE 2)

    In a few days I will contact you by telephone in order to schedule the interview. Your cooperation in this investigation will be greatly appreciated.

                          Sincerely yours,

                          (Mrs.) Janie C. Jordan

jcj

Enclosure

COPY OF LETTER SENT TO SELECTED ADMINISTRATORS

3415 Green Pine Lane
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
May 29, 1975

Dear

The need for public accountability and the demands for more accurate data for decision making and planning have been fundamental in bringing about the acceptance of formalized institutional research in the organization of higher education. The enclosed questionnaire is being sent to all presidents, academic vice-presidents, and selected deans of schools and department heads in the fifteen public senior colleges and universities in Virginia. It is designed to provide a picture of how selected administrators perceive the role and functions of offices of institutional research, and the extent to which they think these offices should conduct certain types of studies during the next few years.

The success of this part of the study depends entirely upon the kindness and generosity of each respondent. I recognize that this request is an infringement upon your valuable time; however, I believe the results will be of value to you and your college or university. The findings will be made available to the director of institutional research in your institution.

This research is being done to partially fulfill my dissertation requirements for the doctoral degree at the College of William and Mary.

Your cooperation in this investigation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Janie C. Jordan

EXAMPLE OF FOLLOW-UP LETTER SENT TO ADMINISTRATORS

3415 Green Pine Lane
Virginia Beach, VA 23452

Dear

A few weeks ago I mailed you a questionnaire entitled "Administrators' Perceptions of Offices of Institutional Research." I realize that this is a busy time of the year for you, however, I am also convinced that the results obtained from my study of offices of institutional research will be of value to your institution, and particularly to the person charged with the institutional research responsibility.

Since the study is confined to selected administrators in Virginia's public senior colleges and universities, the success of this part of the investigation is dependent upon your cooperation. In the event you have lost or mislaid your questionnaire, I am enclosing a duplicate. I will be most appreciative if you return it to me as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Janie C. Jordan

jcj

Enclosure

DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

NAME_____OFFICIAL TITLE_____

YEAR ASSUMED POSITION_____YEAR OFFICE ESTABLISHED_____STATUS IN THE OIR: FULL-TIME___ PART-TIME___

> PART I: Please respond to the following questions concerning the role and functions
> of the office of institutional research on your campus.

1. Some people view the proper concern of institutional research as engaged primarily in basic fact-gathering operations. Others advocate that such an office should play an important role in making institutional decisions. What do you regard as the major function of the office of institutional research?

   ☐ basic data collection and reporting

   ☐ data anaylsis and interpretation

   ☐ development of position papers involving specific policy decisions

2. In your opinion, should the research studies conducted by the office of institutional research focus on the major concerns of

   ☐ the total institution?

   ☐ specific administrative areas?

3. Do you regard the office of institutional research as an arm of

   ☐ the total institution?

   ☐ the administration?

   ☐ the faculty?

   ☐ other? (Please specify.) _____

4. It has been suggested that the director of institutional research should be the college president's "right-hand man." Do you

   ☐ strongly agree? ☐ agree? ☐ disagree? ☐ strongly disagree

> PART II: Below is a list of types of studies conducted by some offices of
> institutional research. Please indicate, according to the scale
> below, the extent to which you think the office of institutional
> research on your campus should be involved in each type of study.
> Place the appropriate numeral in the blank before each item.
>
> 1. Such studies are not relevant to my institution.
>
> 2. The office of institutional research should not be concerned with such studies.
>
> 3. The office of institutional research should assist those primarily responsible for such studies, either with design or implementation.
>
> 4. The office of institutional research should coordinate such studies or reports for internal use or reporting to external agencies.
>
> 5. The office of institutional research should assume and maintain primary responsibility for such studies.

Studies of Students

____ 1. **ADMISSIONS PRACTICES** – e.g., effect of non-intellective factors on student performance; studies of marginal students.

____ 2. **TRANSFER** – from college to college; studies of advanced placement and student-institutional "fit".

____ 3. **COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT** – the impact of academic and cultural activities on student development.

____ 4. **SPECIAL THEMES** – student participation in governance, reform movements, "activist" youth, subcultures, student leadership variables.

____ 5. **STUDIES ON VALUES** – goals and purposes of the individual relative to the institution.

____ 6. **STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS** – studies of the superior, talented or creative student; the disadvantaged and minority groups.

____ 7. **SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS** – student occupational or professional preferences, and other career considerations.

____ 8. **TEACHING AND LEARNING** – studies of academic achievement and motivation, grading practices, testing, and other criteria for evaluating students.

____ 9. **ATTRITION**

____ 10. **STUDENT PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDES**

____ 11. **ALUMNI**

Studies of Faculty

____ 12. **FACULTY – INSTITUTIONAL INTERACTION** – e.g., studies of faculty perceptions of goals and priorities.

____ 13. **ACADEMIC STRUCTURE** – includes studies of departments, schools, faculty ranks, departmental duties.

____ 14. **FACULTY DEVELOPMENT** – includes faculty evaluation policies and procedures.

____ 15. **RECRUITMENT** – e.g., kinds of staff and size of staff that will be needed for five and ten years from now.

____ 16. **FACULTY-STUDENT INTERACTION** – in the classroom and elsewhere.

____ 17. **FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE**

____ 18. **TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS**

____ 19. **TENURE AND PROMOTION POLICIES**

Curriculum and Instruction

____ 20. **PROGRAM EVALUATION** – includes individual and departmental; includes innovative courses, studies abroad.

____ 21. **EFFECTIVENESS OF TECHNOLOGY** – information transfer by video tapes, computer assisted instruction, and other media.

_____22. PRE-REQUISITIES - includes specific courses, programs or curricula; extent to which requirements are enforced.

_____23. ACADEMIC CALENDAR

_____24. MODES OF ORGANIZING TEACHING AND LEARNING - e.g., evaluative comparisons of structured classes and relative unstructured seminars.

_____25. EVALUATION OF NON-TRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS - includes both on campus and off campus activities.

_____26. EFFECT OF GRADUATE EDUCATION ON UNDERGRADUATES

Studies of Institutional Planning and Space Utilization

_____27. INSTRUCTIONAL COSTS

_____28. CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECTIONS

_____29. ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

_____30. TUITION AND FEES - includes studies of financial aid.

_____31. SPACE UTILIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT

_____32. HUMAN RESOURCES UTILIZATION - includes staffing; criteria for selecting part-time faculty.

_____33. THE ROLE OF THE INSTITUTION IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF SOCIETY.

ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

NAME_____OFFICIAL TITLE_____

YEAR ASSUMED POSITION_____

> PART I: Please respond to the following questions concerning the role and functions of the office of institutional research on your campus,

1. How did you become acquainted with the role and functions of the office of institutional research?

   ☐ staff briefings

   ☐ institutional research publications

   ☐ workshops

   ☐ professional reading

   ☐ association with the program at this institution

   ☐ not acquainted with its role and functions

   ☐ other (Please specify.) _____

2. Some people view the proper concern of institutional research as engaged primarily in basic fact-gathering operations. Others advocate that such an office should play an important role in making institutional decisions. What do you regard as the major function of the office of institutional research?

   ☐ basic data collection and reporting

   ☐ data analysis and interpretation

   ☐ development of position papers involving specific policy decisions

3. In your opinion, should the research studies conducted by the office of institutional research focus on the major concerns of

   ☐ the total institution?

   ☐ specific administrative areas?

4. Do you regard the office of institutional research as an arm of

   ☐ the total institution?

   ☐ the administration?

   ☐ the faculty

   ☐ other? (Please specify.) _____

5. It has been suggested that the director of institutional research should be the college president's "right-hand man." Do you

   ☐ strongly agree? ☐ agree? ☐ disagree?

   ☐ strongly disagree?

   Comment. _____

6. Please check the activities for which your office has had occasion to use data or information generated by the office of institutional research.

☐ completing questionnaires and surveys

☐ long-range planning and development

☐ budget preparation

☐ studies of students (e.g., student profiles, course loads)

☐ faculty studies (e.g., promotion, tenure, turnover)

☐ curriculum analysis and/or program evaluation

☐ fund raising

☐ developing proposals for grants

☐ accreditation

☐ space utilization

☐ other (Please specify.) _____

7. Are you satisfied with the scope and nature of the problems and issues investigated by the office of institutional research on your campus?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Comment. _____

8. With respect to academic programs, policies and issues, what do you consider to be the three most needed areas of research or evaluation on your campus?

#1. _____

#2. _____

#3. _____

8(a) Are the above areas currently considered to be within the research domain of the office of institutional research on your campus?

#1. ☐ Yes ☐ No   #2. ☐ Yes ☐ No   #3. ☐ Yes ☐ No

8(b) If no, should they be within the domain of the office of institutional research?

#1. ☐ Yes ☐ No   #2. ☐ Yes ☐ No   #3. ☐ Yes ☐ No

8(c) If yes, to the best of your knowledge, has the director of institutional research been made aware of the need for such studies?

#1. ☐ Yes ☐ No   #2. ☐ Yes ☐ No   #3. ☐ Yes ☐ No

8(d)   To the best of your knowledge, are any such studies in process within the institution?

#1. ☐ Yes ☐ No.   #2. ☐ Yes ☐ No   #3. ☐ Yes ☐ No

PART II: Below is a list of types of studies conducted by some offices of
institutional research. Please indicate, according to the scale
below, the extent to which you think the office of institutional
research on your campus should be involved in each type of study.
Place the appropriate numeral in the blank before each item.

1.   Such studies are not relevant to my institution.

2.   The office of institutional research should not be
concerned with such studies.

3.   The office of institutional research should assist those
primarily responsible for such studies, either with
design or implementation.

4.   The office of institutional research should coordinate
such studies or reports for internal use or reporting
to external agencies.

5.   The office of institutional research should assume and
maintain primary responsibility for such studies.

Studies of Students

_____ 1.   ADMISSIONS PRACTICES - e.g. effect of non-intellective factors on student performance;
studies of marginal students.

_____ 2.   TRANSFER - from college to college; studies of advanced placement and student-institutional
"fit."

_____ 3.   COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT - the impact of academic and cultural activities on student development.

_____ 4.   SPECIAL THEMES - student participation in governance, reform movements, "activist" youth,
subcultures, student leadership variables.

_____ 5.   STUDIES ON VALUES - goals and purposes of the individual relative to the institution.

_____ 6.   STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS - studies of the superior, talented or creative student; the
disadvantaged and minority groups.

_____ 7.   SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS - student occupational or professional preferences, and other career
considerations.

_____ 8.   TEACHING AND LEARNING - studies of academic achievement and motivation, grading practices,
testing, and other criteria for evaluating students.

_____ 9.   ATTRITION

_____ 10.   STUDENT PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDES

_____ 11.   ALUMNI

Studies of Faculty

_____ 12.   FACULTY - INSTITUTIONAL INTERACTION - e.g., studies of faculty perceptions of goals and
priorities.

____13. ACADEMIC STRUCTURE - includes studies of departments, schools, faculty ranks, departmental duties.

____14. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT - includes faculty evaluation policies and procedures.

____15. RECRUITMENT - e.g., kinds of staff and size of staff that will be needed for five and ten years from now.

____16. FACULTY-STUDENT INTERACTION - in the classroom and elsewhere.

____17. FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE

____18. TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

____19. TENURE AND PROMOTION POLICIES

Curriculum and Instruction

____20. PROGRAM EVALUATION - includes individual and departmental; includes innovative courses, studies abroad.

____21. EFFECTIVENESS OF TECHNOLOGY - information transfer by video tapes, computer assisted instruction, and other media.

____22. PRE-REQUISITIES - includes specific courses, programs or curricula; extent to which requirements are enforced.

____23. ACADEMIC CALENDAR

____24. MODES OF ORGANIZING TEACHING AND LEARNING - e.g., evaluative comparisons of structured classes and relative unstructured seminars.

____25. EVALUATION OF NON-TRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS - includes both on campus and off campus activities.

____26. EEFECT OF GRADUATE EDUCATION ON UNDERGRADUATES

Studies of Institutional Planning and Space Utilization

____27. INSTRUCTIONAL COSTS

____28. CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECTIONS

____29. ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

____30. TUITION AND FEES - includes studies of financial aid.

____31. SPACE UTILIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT

____32. HUMAN RESOURCES UTILIZATION - includes staffing; criteria for selecting part-time faculty.

____33. THE ROLE OF THE INSTITUTION IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF SOCIETY.

REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Please return the completed form in the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your cooperation.

DIRECTORS OF OFFICES OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

BASIC DATA

NAME_____DATE_____

1. What is the subject matter area of your professional training or background, i.e., psychology, mathematics, education?

_____

2. To what administrative officer in the institution does your office report?

_____

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

1. What circumstances led to the establishment of this office?

    What were its original purposes and functions? Were these functions well delineated?

    What changes in purposes and functions have taken place since then?

    What future developments are anticipated for this office? By whom?

2. How many staff members are employed by the office? _____

Are they full time or part time? _____

What is their educational experiences and background?

How many graduate assistants does the office employ? _____

3.. What are the major job responsibilities of your office? Rank the areas below in terms of the priority your office places on the job. (Give card to director).

☐ Planning and Coordination

☐ Budget and Finance (e.g., cost analyses)

☐ Studies of Students

☐ Faculty Studies (faculty turnover, promotions, tenure)

☐ Space Utilization

☐ Coordination and Completion of Questionnaires

☐ Reports to Outside Agencies (e.g., SCHEV, OCR)

☐ Adapting Reporting Mechanisms to Changing Needs

☐ Other

Rank the above areas in terms of the priority you prefer that the office place on the job.

4. In what specific types of studies or activities does your office routinely participate (e.g., enrollment projections, faculty and student FTE)?

5. In addition to these routine studies or activities, in what other specific studies has your office participated? (Have director describe selected studies - such as IFI, university impact on local economy; examine some of these reports; obtain copies, if possible).

6. Does your office conduct studies upon its own initiative, or are the studies usually assigned to it by the administration?

_____

7. What is your policy regarding the distribution of your studies to other constituents (administrators, faculty, students, general public) of the college or university?

   Is the circulation of some studies or reports restricted to certain administrators?

8. Please indicate the sources from which your office has received requests for data during the past three years (Give card to director).

   ☐ accrediting agencies

   ☐ central administration

   ☐ academic administrator(s)

   ☐ faculty member(s)

   ☐ staff member(s)

   ☐ faculty committees or organizations

   ☐ student committees or organizations

   ☐ governing boards

   ☐ Other (please specify)_____

9. On what college committees do you or members of your staff serve as a result of your being IR personnel (e.g., long range planning, self-study?

   What decisions have the committees made regarding institutional policies and practices?

10. Does your office have an advisory committee? If yes, how are members selected? What are the purposes and functions of the committee? If no, what formal or informal procedures are used to determine the areas of research in which faculty, staff or administrators need information or assistance?

11. To what extent has your office developed a data base system?

12. In general, how would you describe the day to day operations of your office?

ACADEMIC STUDIES

1. During the past three years, what types of studies have been conducted by your office on academic policies, programs, and issues? (Refer to the list of studies on Directors' Questionnaire).

   How often has each of these studies been undertaken?

   From what sources did the idea of the study originate?

   To what extent were others in the institution (administrators, faculty, students) involved? How were they involved?

2. With respect to academic policies, programs and issues, what do you consider to be the three most needed areas of research or evaluation on your campus?

_____

_____

_____

Are these areas within the research domain of your office?

What plans, if any, do you have for undertaking research in these areas?

3. Are you satisfied with the scope and nature of the problems and issues investigated by your office?

PROBLEMS AND POINTS OF CONFLICT

1. What are some of the chief obstacles to optimum development of the Institutional Research Program on your campus?

2. Assess the perceptions and attitudes of each of the following groups toward the role and functions of IR, in particular, and toward implications for change, in general.

    Faculty and Staff
    Alumni
    Administrative Staff
    Students
    Community Residents
    State Council of Higher Education

3. To what extent do the following areas affect attempts to conduct studies.

   Budget
   Physical Facilities
   Computer Assessibility, Capability, Costs
   Role and Functions of other offices of IR
   Staff Capability
   Institutional Characteristics

4. What factors are considered by the office in determining whether to undertake a particular research study (e.g., the nature of the research, availability of data, whether study is to be a one-time study or recurring study, whether it is limited to a single phase or narrow segment of institution or is it comprehensive, does it require specialized data-gathering techniques such as indepth interview, etc.)?

Comments and Suggestions:

APPENDIX B

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

TABLE B-1

DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH'S INVOLVEMENT IN GIVEN TYPES OF STUDIES

TYPE OF STUDY	Small Ratings					Medium Ratings					Large Ratings					Totals (N=14) Ratings				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
STUDIES OF STUDENTS																				
Admissions Practices			100					50	50									57	29	14
Transfer			75	25				67		33	50						14	64	7	14
College Environment			50	25	25			100										71	14	14
Special Themes	25	25	25	25		33		50	17		25		50	25	25		29	43	21	
Studies on Values		25	25	50				83	17		50		50	25			21	43	36	
Student Characteristics			50	25	25			33	17	50								36	36	29
Socio-economic Factors			100					50	17	33								71	14	14
Teaching and Learning			50	25	25			50	33	17								50	29	21
Attrition			25	75				33	17	50								36	36	29
Student Personality & Attitudes			75	25				67	17	17							7	64	21	7
Alumni			100					67	17	17								86	7	7
STUDIES OF FACULTY																				
Faculty-Institutional Interaction			75		25	17		33	50				50	25	25		7	50	29	14
Academic Structure			75		25			50		50			75		25			64		36
Faculty Development	25		50		25	17		33	50		50		25		25		29	36	21	14
Recruitment			75	25				17	33	50			25	25	50			36	29	36
Faculty-Student Interaction		50	50			50		50			75		25				57	43		
Faculty Participation in Governance		50	50			17		83			25		75				29	71		
Teaching Effectiveness		50	50					50	50		25		50				21	50	21	7
Tenure and Promotion Policies		50	25		25	17		33	50				25	50	25		21	29	36	14
STUDIES OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION																				
Program Evaluation		25	50	25		17		33	17	33	25		75				21	50	14	14
Effectiveness of Technology	25	25	50			17		50		33	50		50			7	29	50		14
Pre-requisites		50	50			17		67	17		25		50	25			29	57	14	
Academic Calendar		25	50		25	33		50	17		25		75				29	57	7	7
Modes of Teaching & Learning		50	50			33		50	17		50		50				43	50	7	
Evaluation of Non-traditional Educational Programs	25	50	25			17		33	17	17	25		75			14	29	43	7	7
Effect of Graduate Education on Graduates	50					17		50	17	17	25		50	25		14	29	36	14	7
STUDIES OF INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND SPACE UTILIZATION																				
Instructional Costs			50		50			17		83			25	25	50			29	7	64
Capital Outlay Projections			75		25			33	33	33			50		50			50	14	36
Enrollment Projections				25	75			17		83					100			7	7	86
Tuition & Fees	25		50	25		17		33	50				50	50			14	43	43	
Space Utilization & Assignment		25	50	25		17		17	33	33			50				7	29	29	36
Human Resources Utilization	25	25	50					50	50				75				7	50	36	7
The Role of the Institution in Meeting the Needs of Society						17		50	17	17			50	25	25		7	50	29	14

NOTE: Entries are percentages based on the responses of directors in four small, six medium, and four large institutions.

TABLE B-2

**ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL
RESEARCH'S INVOLVEMENT IN GIVEN TYPES OF STUDIES**

TYPE OF STUDY	Small Ratings					Medium Ratings					Large Ratings					TOTALS (N=53) Ratings				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
STUDIES OF STUDENTS																				
Admissions Practices			77	8	15	4	9	57	22	9		6	65	12	18	2	6	64	15	13
Transfer	8	38	23	31			22	48	17	13		18	59	12	12		17	49	17	17
College Environment	15	46	15	23			26	48	17	9		35	29	18	18		23	42	17	17
Special Themes	15	46	31	8			22	74		4	6	35	41	12	6	2	23	57	13	6
Studies on Values	8	38	23	31			13	57	17	13	6	29	41	12	12	2	17	47	17	17
Student Characteristics	8	38	8	46			4	57	22	17		18	41	12	24		11	45	15	28
Socio-economic Factors		31	46	23				52	35	13		24	47	12	18		8	45	30	17
Teaching & Learning		54	15	31			9	43	26	22		24	71		6		11	55	15	19
Attrition		15	38	46			4	30	17	48		6	47	12	35		4	32	21	43
Student Personality & Attutides		54	31	8		4	17	52	13	13		47	41	6	6	2	26	49	13	9
Alumni		54	23	15		4	17	52	13	13		18	65	12	6		11	58	11	19
STUDIES OF FACULTY																				
Faculty Institutional Interaction			77	8	15		13	74		13		29	53	12	6		15	58	15	11
Academic Structure		69	23	8			4	52	26	17		18	41	18	24		8	64	13	15
Faculty Development	8	62	23	8			17	61	9	13		12	29	59			17	49	11	15
Recruitment	8	54	23	15			13	48	17	22		18	53	12	18		15	51	17	17
Faculty-Student Interaction	8	69	23				35	43	13	9	6	59	29	6		2	36	47	13	2
Faculty Particiaption in Governance	23	46	15	15			39	43	9	9	12	59	29			4	40	40	8	9
Teaching Effectiveness	15	54	31				26	43	17	13	6	41	53			2	28	47	17	6
Tenure and Promotion Policies	23	54	23				26	39	22	13	6	65	12	12	6	2	38	34	19	8
STUDIES OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION																				
Program Evaluation			62	23	15		22	43	26	9	6	47	41	6		2	25	47	19	3
Effectiveness of Technology	8	62	8	23			22	52	17	9	6	47	35		12	2	26	49	9	13
Pre-requisites	23	62	8	8			43	39	17		12	59	24			2	45	40	9	4
Academic Calendar	31	46	15	8			43	39	13	4		41	47	6	6		40	43	11	6
Modes of Teaching & Learning	23	62	15				26	48	17	9		53	47				36	51	9	4
Evaluation of Non-traditional Education Programs	23	54	15	8			26	35	30	9	6	41	47			2	30	43	17	8
Effect of Graduate Education on Undergraduates	23	15	23	8	23	4	17	48	13	22	6	47	47			8	28	40	8	15
STUDIES OF INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND SPACE UTILIZATION																				
Instructional Costs	15		15	15	54			30	17	52			24	18	59		4	25	39	55
Capital Outlay Projections	15	23	23	38		9	30	35	26				35	12	53		8	30	25	
Enrollment Projections		23	31	46			4	13	35	48			24	18	59		2	19	28	57
Tuition and Fees		38	46	15			4	52	26	17		12	59	6	24		8	49	23	21
Space Utilization & Assignments		31	38	31				30	30	39			12	35	53		2	28	32	38
Human Resources Utilization		62	15	23			17	35	30	17		35	29	24	12	2	17	38	30	13
The Role of the Institution in Meeting the Needs of Society	8	46	23	23		4	23	26	35	13		47	29	18	6	2	26	32	26	13

NOTE: Entries are percentages based on the responses of administrators in thirteen small, twenty-three medium, and seventeen large institutions.

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ABSTRACT

A descriptive study was made of the offices of institutional research in fourteen public senior colleges and universities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The study focused on five areas of concern: (1) the structure and functions of the offices of institutional research; (2) the nature and frequency to which studies were conducted on academic policies, programs, and issues; (3) the opinions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of the offices; (4) a comparison of the perceptions of selected administrators toward the role and functions of institutional research with the perceptions of the directors of institutional research; and (5) the potential problems and points of conflict between the offices and other units and agencies of the institution.

An interview was conducted with fourteen directors of institutional research at his institution. Also, questionnaires were mailed to the directors and five other groups of administrators in the same institution. Return rates of eighty-four per cent and one hundred per cent were obtained from these administrators and directors, respectively.

Findings were:
1. There was a tendency toward the centralization of formal institutional research operations in the institutions surveyed. In ten of the fourteen institutions a full-time administrative official was assigned to institutional research. In one institution the official held part-time status in both institutional research and computer services. In the other three institutions the person who coordinated institutional research projects held another title.
2. Administratively, approximately eighty-six per cent of the directors reported to a president or a vice-president.
3. Preparing reports to outside agencies was the major job responsibility of the offices of institutional research.
4. Fifty per cent of the directors reported that most of the studies conducted by their offices were assigned to them by central administration.
5. Studies of students were the most frequently reported of the academically-oriented studies, while studies of the curriculum and instruction were reported least often.
6. The directors and the administrators perceived the office as playing essentially a management-oriented role in the institutions in which they operated.
7. Many offices devoted so much time to preparing reports and participating in special projects for State Council and other agencies that little time remained to do institutional self-analysis.

VITA

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Janie C. Jordan was born on July 13, 1936 in Norfolk, Virginia. She attended public schools in Norfolk and was graduated from Washington High School in 1953. She received the Bachelor of Science Degree in Mathematics from Virginia State College, Petersburg, Virginia in 1957.

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