

# **Connections Between Institutional Research and Policy: Redefining the Role of the "Chief Institutional Research Officer"**

Jonathan Keller

What if years of excellent accountability do not always correspond with excellent outcomes?

What is the responsibility of the Institutional Researcher to ensure that quality institutional analyses actually lead to institutional improvements?

How do Institutional Researchers  
become more fully integrated into the  
process of making Policy decisions?

# NEW NOMENCLATURE

➤ CEO

➤ CAO

➤ CFO

➤ CIO

➤ CIRO (Chief Institutional Research Officer)

Why is it important  
to have a common  
naming convention?

# What's wrong with "CIRO" ?

Does not specifically reference the Policy aspects of the profession.

Does not seem to indicate "Solution Building",  
"Problem Solving" or "Planning"

# What's In A Name?

Vice  
President  
for Research

Coordinator for  
Institutional  
Effectiveness

Director of  
Planning and  
Assessment

Vice  
Chancellor  
for Policy  
Analysis

Deputy  
Commissioner  
for Institutional  
Performance and  
Accountability

Assistant  
Director for  
Policy  
Research

Executive  
Director of  
Policy  
Analysis  
Institutional  
Assessment

Senior Associate  
Commissioner for  
Research and  
Planning

Director of  
Institutional  
Data  
Systems

CEO

PRESIDENT, COMMISSIONER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHANCELLOR, PROVOST



ASSOCIATE, DEPUTY, VICE, ASSISTANT,



CEO  
CAO  
CFO  
CIO

CIRO



Traditional Institutional Research Director

**Data Collection,  
Programming,  
Coding/Querying &  
Data Systems  
Management**

**The most basic  
elements of  
Institutional  
Research**

**Descriptive Data  
Analyses &  
Standard  
Outcomes  
Reporting**





**CIRO**

Data Collection,  
Coding/Queries &  
Data Systems  
Management

Descriptive Data  
Analyses &  
Standard  
Outcomes  
Reporting

More Advanced  
Research,  
Forecasting &  
Evaluation of  
External Studies

Policy Analyses &  
Recommendations  
based on Feasibility  
Studies/  
Implementation  
assessments

Non-Analytic  
Functions: Grant  
Management,  
Institutional  
Collaboration, etc

# Benefits of Integrating All CIRO Functions

- Making sure that all decisions are "data driven".
- Gaining a deeper understanding of the broader aspects of institutional and agency context that might impact policies and decisions
- Aligning policy implementations with in-depth understanding of existing external research.
- Getting a better and earlier understanding of the types of data and analyses that will be required to support policy decisions.
- Enabling a more pro-active approach to planning research/analytic activities
- Increasing the possibilities for coordinating with key players/ stakeholders and having a greater influence on Policy decisions.

"Data is not information,  
information is not knowledge,  
Knowledge is not understanding,  
Understanding is not wisdom".

**Wisdom is not Policy.**

## What is policy analysis?

Policy Analysis is a process of multidisciplinary inquiry designed to create, critically assess, and communicate information that is useful in understanding and **improving** policies.

William N. Dunn

Policy Analysis is focused on Solutions

Compared with traditional Indicator Analyses or Accountability which emphasizes Summative Assessments of Performance.

How are we doing?

vs

What are we going to do about it?

## Dunn's 5 questions that should be addressed by policy analysts

- What is the problem for which a solution is sought?
- What course of action should be chosen to solve the problem?
- What are the outcomes of choosing that course of action?
- Does achieving these outcomes help solve the problem?
- What future actions can be expected if other courses of action are chosen?

## What is a Policy Problem?

**Unrealized needs** (Insufficient numbers of campus-police officers to adequately patrol campuses)

**Social inequities** (African American and Hispanic males consistently enroll and graduate at lower rates than all other student populations)

**Unacceptable performance** (80% of community college students who enroll in remediation never graduate)

**Waste or inefficiency** (Students who would be Pell eligible do not fill out FAFSA)

1)

**Problem Structuring**

2)

**Forecasting**

3)

**Deciding and Optimizing**

4)

**Implementation,  
Monitoring and  
Evaluation**

**4 Stage  
Process of  
Policy  
Analysis**





The CIRO can play a role at each phase

**Phase #1** Produce trends, descriptive analyses, correlations and enhance problem definition.

**Phase #2** Develop forecasts, predictive models and determine practical, legal or organizational barriers.

**Phase #3** Generate cost/benefit analyses help design optimal implementation options.

**Phase #4** Produce assessments and evaluations of the Policy implementation and, if necessary, support the restructuring of the of the problem.

# Personal examples of instances in which Institutional Research played a critical role in successful Policy development...

- 1) Completion Incentive Grant. (Qualitative analysis of implementation).
- 2) Alternative College Ready Assessment. (Math courses without a Math CIP, Need to continue accuplacer, Review of national research)
- 3) Tuition Discount Program. (Financial Aid packaging)
- 4) Bilingual Teacher Training. (Nominal and Operational definitions).

# Main Constraints to the involvement of the CIRO in Policy-making...

- Overburdened by other data collection and reporting demands.
- Lack of human resources and in-house expertise.
- Data limitations with regard to quality and comprehensiveness
- Lack of agency transparency and inclusiveness
- Low professional respect and recognition

# Recommendation

Creation of a new national CIRO Professional Association or "Special Interest Group" within existing Association.

Emphasis on advanced research, policy development and related administrative functions.