SOUTHWESTERN INDIAN POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

SIPI

ROAD TO ACCREDITATION
ACCREDITATION NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Professional development activities such as workshops in how to more effectively turn data into information to enhance employee knowledge and decision making processes.

- Action plans which are derived from assessment data specify detailed strategies, timelines and responsibilities, as part of closing the loop, are intended to address the issues raised by reviewers.

DATA DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING AND ESTABLISHING A CULTURE OF EVIDENCE

While all information is data, not all data is informative. The most challenging part of data-driven decision-making is understanding how we take raw data and turn it into informative insights that can drive decisions. To support higher education initiatives, the process of turning data into information is quite simple. We don't normally need complex mathematical models to tell us what the numbers tell us – we need only to "eyeball" the numbers and filter them through our own expertise to create effective "big pictures" of data.

"Data-driven decision-making" is often cited in higher education literature alongside terms like "culture of evidence." Establishing a culture is a large-scale task that involves setting up norms and working our way through challenges together. To create a culture of evidence and become comfortable with data-driven decision-making, it is essential that we share ideas, experiences and resources for turning data into information. This is why SIPI offers total transparency in Weave Online (which is where we store assessment, accreditation and strategic planning data). It is important that we all can see how other departments are taking data and turning it into information for planning and decision-making. Our goal is to use this tool to create an internal learning community.

As an institution that is just getting started on establishing a culture of evidence, we face challenges that are common in higher education institutions:

- Lack of experience working with data for decision-making,
- Lack of established standards for turning data into information,
- Lack of training for analyzing data.

Programs and departments have started out using the most basic of approaches for incorporating data into decision-making. We have started assessing outcomes and objectives with single, simple data sources. As we work our way through subsequent assessment cycles, we will be expected to use multiple data sources for our assessment. By sharing ideas and "best practices" for our assessments, our internal learning community will provide us with experience and we will begin seeing standards (Ex: how to interpret rubric data) emerge. Other suggestions for using data are to: 1) focus on using the minimum amount of data for the maximum impact – noting that "more data" is not always "better data"; and 2) review data and results to ensure that they are free of errors.

The most important issue SIPI faces in establishing a culture of evidence is making data an integral part of our everyday activities. How do we incorporate hard data into everyday decision-making processes, and make it a habit? This is key to making better, more informed decisions.

Edward Hummingbird, SIPI Institutional Effectiveness Specialist

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM REVIEW

CURRICULAR IMPROVEMENT THROUGH ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

The purpose of academic assessment is continuous improvement of curriculum and pedagogy based on data analysis. This process works on an annual cycle. The process involves defining student learning outcomes (indicating what students should get out of a degree or certificate program) and proving that students are achieving those outcomes. The process requires collection of data on student performance and thorough analysis of the data. From this analysis, recommendations for curricular improvement are made and worked into specific action plans. Action plans are developed to bridge performance gaps, bridge resource gaps, clear bottlenecks, and protect best practices that contribute to student learning. While action plans do not have to solve problems immediately, they do show how a program is moving in the right direction.

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT THROUGH NON-ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

The purpose of non-academic assessment is continuous improvement of key processes based on data analysis. This process works on an annual cycle. The process involves defining performance objectives (or value-added functions) and proving that the departments are achieving those objectives This process usually involves focusing on key performance measures that usually already exist, often in the form of activity logs, audits or compliance reports. By analyzing this data, departments can make recommendations for process improvement and work them into action plans. As with academic assessment, action plans are developed to bridge performance gaps, bridge resource gaps, clear bottlenecks, and protect best practices that ultimately contribute to student success. While action plans do not have to solve problems immediately, they do show how a program is moving in the right direction.

SUSTAINABILITY (AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT) THROUGH PROGRAM REVIEW

Program review processes allow academic programs and non-academic departments to examine their role in the institution over time. This is typically done through a self-study process that examines five years of data to examine key areas of vitality. While the self-study template is different for academic and non-academic programs, it does require both to examine their roles in the institution, their strengths and limitations, resources (financial, technological and human resources). These reviews incorporate assessment processes and data, but are less concerned with short-term continuous improvement, and are focused on longer-term sustainability. Formally reviewing programs on a regular basis allows the institution to consider possible modifications to the programs/departments and their roles in the institution.
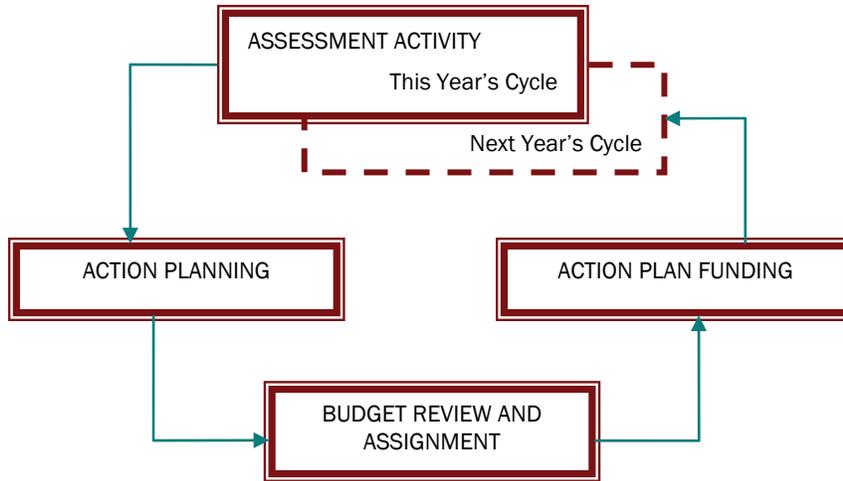
STRATEGIC PLANNING

The strategic planning process allows the institution to focus on long-term priorities that ultimately contribute to student success. Plans are formulated around a set of six broad goals and activities (which can be documented) proposed on an annual basis to show that the institution is working toward achieving those goals. It isn't enough to have strategic goals. The institution must show that it is taking action on an on-going basis to contribute to progress toward achieving those goals. The new process for managing the strategic plan involves annual review by all departments of the strategic plan and any activities they will conduct in the coming year to support the goals of the strategic plan. New initiatives may be proposed while older initiatives may be changed or deleted. Departments then identify milestones for achieving any activities that support the strategic plan, as well as timelines to reach each milestone. Departments will submit reports twice annually on their progress toward achieving their strategic activities. SIPI uses Weave Online to document activities that are taking place in support of strategic planning.

PROCESSES THE INSTITUTION IS PUTTING IN PLACE TO "CLOSE THE LOOP" ON AN INSTITUTION-WIDE SCALE

The assessment process involves a series of steps that allows us to: 1) determine outcomes/objectives that support our program or department mission, 2) collect and analyze data that determines how well those outcomes/objectives are being met, and 3) develop action plans that will help us better meet those outcomes/objectives in the next cycle. In the end, programs and departments propose action plans that help meet outcomes/objectives by closing performance gaps, closing resource gaps, clearing out bottlenecks, and refining and/or protecting processes that are working well. Action plans may involve additional resources. When this is the case, the action plan specifies budget requests that are justified by assessment data. The action plans aren't left hanging. Each year, an annual budget request report is generated in Weave Online which lists all budget requests from data-driven action plans. The report is evaluated by the President's Cabinet, and budget requests are reviewed, prioritized and assigned to different sources of available funding. When action plan items are not funded, programs and departments are provided an explanation. Through their program and departmental assessments and action plans, curricular and process improvements are made based on data. Where additional resources are needed, the institution reviews and prioritizes requests and assigns them to funding sources to close the loop on a much larger scale.

INSTITUTIONAL "CLOSING THE LOOP"

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        │   ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY       │
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        │                             │    ╎
        │        Next Year's Cycle    │    ╎
        └─────────────────────────────┘    ╎
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  ┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────┐
  │  ACTION PLANNING │      │  ACTION PLAN FUNDING  │
  └──────────────────┘      └──────────────────────┘
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        │   BUDGET REVIEW AND         │
        │   ASSIGNMENT                │
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EXAMPLE OF NON-ACADEMIC DATA-DRIVEN "CLOSING THE LOOP"

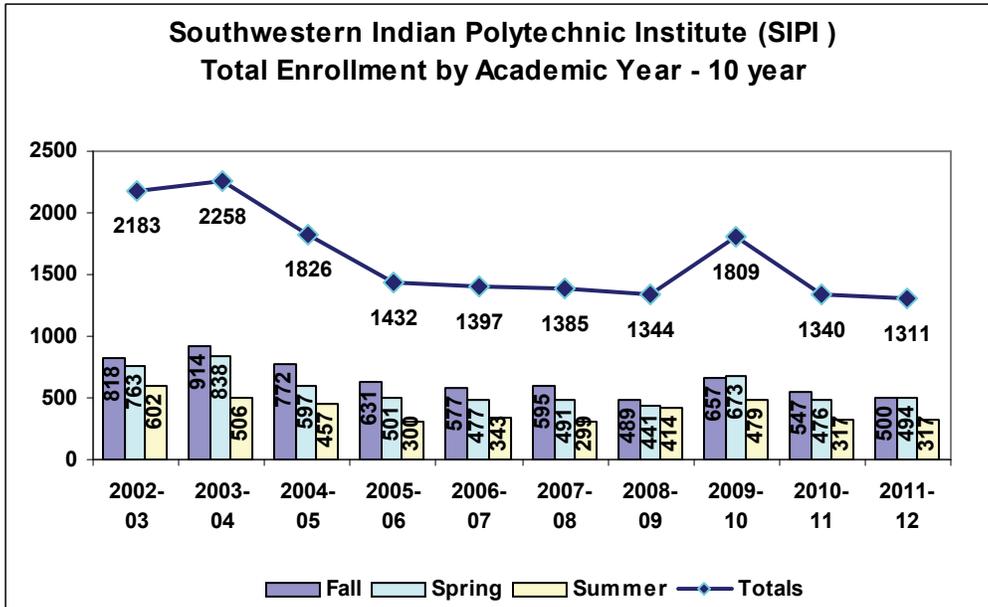**Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness and Planning**

STEP IN THE PROCESS	DATA/INFORMATION PIECES	BIG PICTURE
SIPI Mission Statement	Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) is a National Indian Community College that prepares Native American students to be productive life-long learners, as tribal members, in an ever-changing global environment...	Who we are
Departmental Mission Statement	The SIPI Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness and Planning strives to support student success by improving the quality and efficiency of information services to support fact-based decision making...	
Departmental Performance Objective(s)	Example: Support decision-making with qualitative, or focus group data.	What we do
Data Collection/Analysis/ Recommendations	Data revealed that department was unable to provide focus group analysis because of a lack of adequate software package for analyzing large text, video and audio files.	How well we did it
Action Plan	Research and locate software package that will meet SIPI's needs for analyzing and reporting focus group data.	What we need to do it better
Resource Request	$650 for an annual license for NVIVO software.	
Follow-up	How did the new software impact the department's ability to "support decision-making with focus group data"?	

Process improvement based on assessment data is actually quite simple. Note that each box is closely linked with the boxes above and below it. Each step in this process is connected. For effective assessment, there can be no gaps in the process. No action plan items and budget requests (green boxes) can be made unless supported by data (purple box). Data MUST be effective measures of how well performance objectives are being met (pink box).   Performance objectives MUST reflect how the department ultimately contributes to the mission of institution (blue boxes). This really provides direct support to key HLC items, for instance:

- ◆ Criterion 5. C. 2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting. *Note that we've evaluated the operations of the Institutional Research Office and used that assessment data for planning and budgeting purposes.*

- ◆ Criterion 5. D. 1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations. *Note that this is exactly what we are doing when we collect and analyze data to evaluate how we perform our objectives.*

VISUAL DATA ANALYSIS: (ANSWER DATA QUESTIONS)

Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI)
Total Enrollment by Academic Year - 10 year

Fall	Spring	Summer	Totals

Retention Rates for New Students by Academic Year

■ New Student Totals   ■ Withdrawals

2007-08:	2008-09:	2009-10:	2010-11:	2011-12:
41%	37%	38%	37%	42%

Graduates - Five Year View

■ Certificates   ■ Degrees

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
69	85	92	86	91

Fall 2012 Enrollment by Status

CPT 12%
CFT 26%
Dorm 62%

Fall 2012 Enrollment by Registration Type
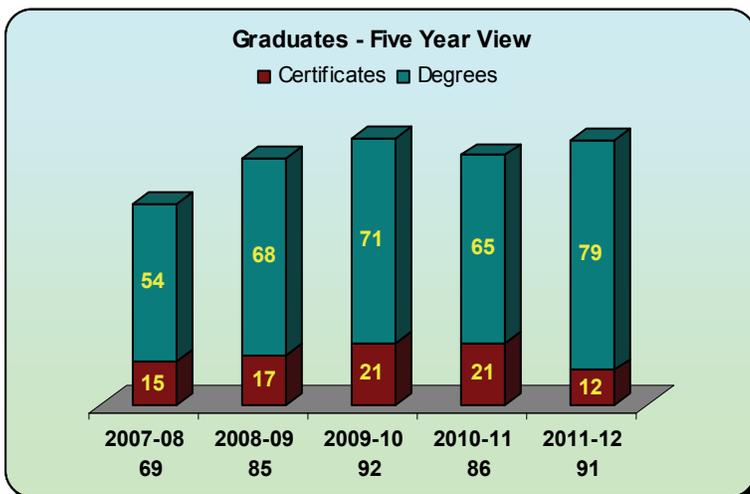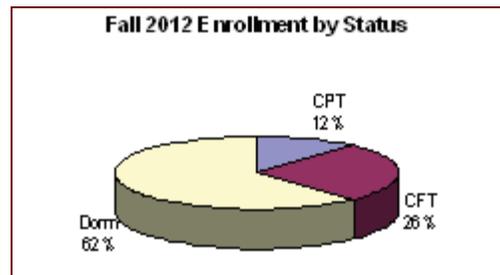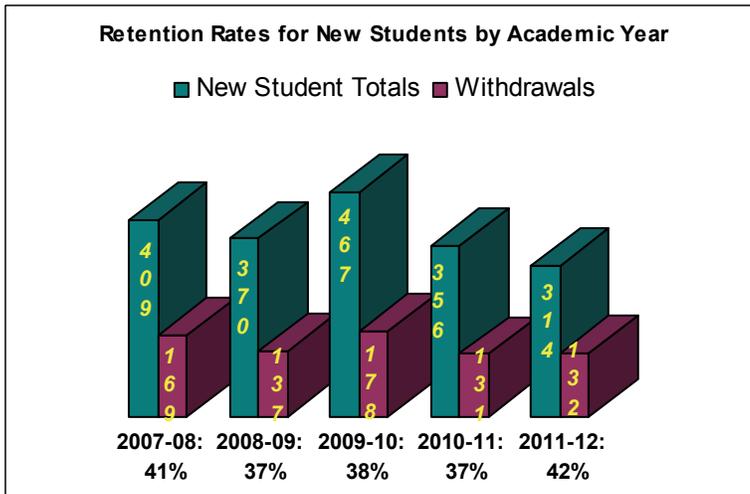

New 37%
Continuing 50%
Readmitted 13%

Data Questions:

What do you see when you look at the charts?

Trimester comparisons?

What other interpretations can you make?

What additional questions do you think about when looking at the charts?
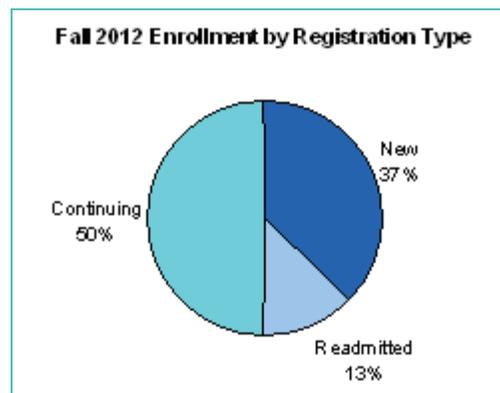
DATA GLOSSARY:

Academic Year: The period of time generally extending from September to June, for reporting purposes, Fall, Spring and Summer trimesters.

Calendar Year: The period of time generally extending from January to December, for reporting purposes, Spring, Summer and Fall trimesters.

Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB): An official U.S. federal or tribal document that certifies an individual possesses a specific degree of Native American blood of a federally recognized tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village or community.

Cohort: A specific group of students established for tracking purposes. For many types of reports the cohort is the total number of students entering the institution as full-time, first-time degree/certificate seeking undergraduate students in a particular year (usually Fall trimester). The cohort is used to calculate graduation rates and retention rates.

Degree/Certificate seeking student: Students enrolled for courses for credit and recognized by the institution as seeking a degree, certificate or other formal award. High school students also enrolled in postsecondary courses for credit are not considered degree/certificate seeking.

Duplicated count: The sum of students enrolled for credit where each student is counted for each term of enrollment during the reporting period.

Federally Recognized Tribe(s): Indian Tribal Entities within the contiguous 48 states recognized and eligible to receive services from the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Fiscal Year: The period of time used for financial management, generally different from a calendar year. For federal reporting purposes, the time period extends from October to September.

Graduates: The sum of students who completed their programs of study within a particular period of time. For reporting purposes the time frame is Summer, Fall and Spring trimesters.

Graduation Rate: This rate is calculated as the total number students entering the institution as full-time, first-time, degree/certificate seeking undergraduate students in a particular year (cohort) completing their degree/certificate within 150% of normal time divided by the cohort.

Headcount: The sum of students registered for classes at a particular point in time.

Retention Rate: The percentage of first-time degree/certificate seeking undergraduate students from the previous fall (cohort) who either reenrolled or successfully completed their program the current fall (fall to fall).

Student FTE (Full-time Equivalent): The cumulative sum of all credit hours of enrolled students divided by 12.

Undergraduate: A student enrolled in an associates degree program or a vocational or technical program below the baccalaureate.

Unduplicated count: The sum of students enrolled for credit with each student counted only once during the reporting period, regardless of when the student enrolled.

Undergraduate FTE (Full-time Equivalent): The cumulative sum of all college level course credit hours of enrolled students divided by 12.

SIPI Mission, Vision, Goals and Values:

Goal Five: Make better use of existing data and information; create new actionable information and customers for this information to support SIPI's operational and strategic planning efforts.

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Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute

A NATIONAL INDIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE THAT PREPARES NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS TO BE PRODUCTIVE LIFE-LONG LEARNERS, AS TRIBAL MEMBERS, IN AN EVER-CHANGING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT.

SIPI is committed to a process of assessment that offers assurance to the Indian communities of the college's effectiveness and appropriateness of its mission as a higher education institution. The purpose of the assessment is to improve all aspects of the operation and function of the college. The Board of Regents affirms its position that assessment is an important element in the college's overall evaluation of its academic and non-academic units. An assessment program will assist the college in making useful decisions about improving the college and in developing effectiveness.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

Comprehensive Evaluation Visit

Scheduled for:

October 7 through 9, 2013