

# **Peer Review Report**

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

## **Peer Team:**

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## **Area 1. Service Area Description**

### Findings:

The Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (DIRPE) is currently composed of three positions: a director, a research analyst (campus funded), and a research technician (grant funded). The three positions are organized in a bottom-up hierarchical structure. The director's position is supervisory and focuses largely on planning, the research analyst position is responsible for research and effectiveness, and the research technician position focuses on effectiveness. However, the positions overlap, and each position is involved in all three areas. There is one exception: the research analyst position is not involved with planning.

The mission of the Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness relates to the AVC Mission Statement and considers the three areas in its title. The department supports Antelope Valley College's data driven model by providing "high quality timely research" and serving as a "reliable source of comprehensive and accurate information" to aid in institutional effectiveness, assessment of this effectiveness, and planning. The department carries out the mission statement by providing timely and accurate data to a wide variety of constituent groups on campus as well as outside agencies. The office works closely with all campus entities to provide accurate data that is used to make data-driven decisions. Using analytical tools, the data is evaluated enabling decisions to be founded on facts.

The peer team found that the detailed descriptions for the three service areas clearly show how well the Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness is meeting its mission and the growing research needs of Antelope Valley College. The quantitative data provided in this section, as well as the high satisfaction survey ratings that are part of the department's ongoing evaluation process, confirm the integral role this service area plays on campus. The peer team found the department to be well-organized and aligned with the mission of the college.

## Area 2. Self-Evaluation

### Findings:

It was clear to the peer team that all members of the Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness staff were instrumental in the peer review process. While each member played a different role in preparing the document, they all read the report and agreed on its contents. They all agree that the report provides an accurate representation of the department.

The self-evaluation area indicates that the current three full-time employee model is not sufficient. The research needs of the campus have steadily grown every year since 2006.

This year, the department has grown to include institutional effectiveness. The workload of this area was previously folded into related projects and the research analyst's duties. Furthermore, the research technician position, which is grant funded, is only contracted until September 2011 at which time the position will be reduced to 50%. As the trend toward evidence-based decision making continues, the department will see more research requests in addition to the research needs necessary to meet accreditation standards and 100% course Student Learning Outcome implementation. The data provided in the program review clearly indicates that without additional staff, it is likely that the current high level of research cannot be maintained. There are many competing factors, and the department states that since 100% SLO assessment by 2012 is an external requirement, the staff will need to focus its resources here, resulting in less time and resources for planning and research.

The peer team found that the Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness is active in professional organizations; however, additional funds would allow the entire staff to participate in professional conferences, such as the PR Group Summer Institute. The department has a large presence on campus and participates in many crucial committees and faculty presentations, including Welcome Back Day. They also communicate their services well by attending department meetings and publishing a yearly Fact Book and monthly Notes from the Researchers. In addition to providing data and research to support, for example, Institutional Operational Outcome and faculty working on Student Learning Outcomes, which indirectly supports instruction and student success, they are also active in community outreach. Considering the breadth of their work on and off campus, it is clear that the department needs to hire more staff and keep the research analyst position full-time. To avoid further cuts to the research analyst position, it should be a district funded position. While the department did not indicate plans for space improvements citing budgetary uncertainty, the peer team suggests that the department include this in the next program review to reflect the short term and ten year vision for the department.

### Area 3. Planning

#### Findings:

The Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness was commended by the accreditation visiting team for the work they do providing research and data to the college. Two of the accreditation team recommendations apply to the department. The Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness is working with the program review coordinator, Strategic Planning & Budget Council, and administration to address the recommendations. In addition, the department has made progress toward implementing agendas published in the most recent Accreditation Self-Study Report.

The self-study outlines clear goals, plans, and strategies for the Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness. They are actively involved in creating a campus culture where Student Learning Outcomes and Operational Outcomes are used as the basis for planning. WEAVE training provided by the department has helped improve use of learning outcomes in the planning process.

The Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness has a clear vision for the next ten years, which includes hiring additional staff. However, the most pressing staffing goal involves the research technician position. If the grant funded position is reduced to 50%, the decrease will affect department's ability to provide the high volume of quality research it presently supplies. The department suggests changing this position to district funding at 100%. The peer team concurs. If the director and research analyst have to absorb the duties of the research technician, the department's productivity will suffer.

#### Area 4. Summaries and Recommendations

##### Findings:

The self-study report acknowledges that The Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness has been successful at implementing a highly effective research and planning agenda. This success has been confirmed by Antelope Valley College faculty and staff as well as the Accreditation Visiting Team. However, with the upcoming goal of 100% Student Learning Outcome assessment, a significant portion of the department's resources will be shifted to effectiveness, leaving the other areas lacking in staffing resources.

The Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness recommends hiring a full-time research and effectiveness manager, transitioning the research technician position from grant funded to district funded, and moving all non-administrator positions from classified to confidential/management staff.

After interviewing The Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness staff, the peer team feels confident that the self-study report is balanced and accurate; it represents the department well. The peer team found that the statements made in the self-study were supported by quantitative data. The department has clear short and long term goals based on operational outcomes. The ongoing evaluation of the department and the work they conduct is an integral part of the department. Discussions in the interview lead the staff to believe a grant writer should be added to their long term plan. The Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness staff agrees that their shared vision is one of their greatest strengths. The staff is productive and collaborative. They all work to provide research requests in a timely fashion; in addition, they strive to make the data usable, which has encouraged the campus to adopt a data-

driven model. However, with the growing demands of effectiveness, the staff is overloaded. As the campus requests more data, the demand sometimes gets to be too much for the current staffing model.

Considering the report and interview, the peer team makes the following recommendations:

1. The research analyst position should transition from grant funded to district funded.
2. The research analyst position should be full-time.
3. To meet the SLO assessment deadline and to help manage the overall research needs of the campus, the department should hire a research/planning manager as proposed in the self-study.
4. In the next program review cycle, the department should include a plan to expand facilities to accommodate the proposed staffing needs in the short and long term plan.
5. A grant writer position should be included in the department's long term plan.
6. The Department of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness should use all funds allocated to the department. For the last two years, the department was left with a significant balance in the department budget.