Section 1 and 3 - Analysis of Unit PIE & Updates on Goals

PIE - Research & Institutional Effectiveness Division Manager

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2019-20

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Division Mission Statement: The Mission of the RIE Office is to increase Mt. San Antonio College's (Mt. SAC's) capacity for data-driven decision making by:

- Providing resources and research expertise to support the College to use collaborative inquiry.
- Improving effective information delivery systems and integrity.
- Training the College to use excellent research and evaluation practices.
- Providing comprehensive program and services evaluation based on key performance indicators.

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Summary of Notable Achievements: The RIE Office operates as a centralized office under the Instruction Team. All researchers on the campus are hired by and report directly to the RIE Director. The Director assigns researchers to work with the project teams who funded their salaries or who ask for RIE services. In order to improve efficiencies, the same researcher will typically be assigned to the same project team. RIE staff work collaboratively with others in the office to improve their efficiencies and learn from each other. Progress on projects is tracked by the staff and manager. Special effort is made to closely track time and effort on federal grants. Time is allocated and re-allocated according to needs of the projects and the priorities of the College.

 RIE Staff members were asked to note their proudest moments. Their main areas are outlined below:
- COVID-19 research,
- working on projects as part of a team,
- internal/external dissemination,
- dealing with complex topics,
- having their research be used,
- giving the College more access to data,
- completing professional development,
- improving processes,
- creating project tracking systems,
- tracking students (cohort model),
- learning from each other, and
- collaborating with others across the campus.

Committees*
RIE team members have excellent opportunities to engage in College-wide and project-specific decision making through COMMITTEES and INITIATIVES as noted below. The RIE Team member is responsible for providing research and evaluation expertise.

 Governance Committees
Accreditation Steering Committee
Institutional Effectiveness Committee
President's Advisory Council (guest)
President's Cabinet (guest)

 Academic Senate Governance Committees

Outcomes Committee
Student Equity Committee
Student Preparation, Equity, and Achievement Council (guest)
Student Success and Support Program Advisory Committee

 Operational Committees
Institutional Review Board

 Other Committees/Groups
Arise Steering Committee
Administrative Systems Advisory Group (ASAG)
Apportionment Performance Workgroup
Common Assessment Implementation Team
Instruction Team
Pathways Workgroup
Student Services Team
Title V Steering Committee
Multiple Hiring Committees

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Closing the Loop - Analysis of Progress on College Goals: RIE continues to provide many opportunities for dialogue across campus, within committees/groups, and
related to specific projects. Data Coaching and collaborative inquiry are standard practices within the RIE Team that allows others to take ownership of their data and be part of the process from start to finish. While the RIE Team is excellent at working with those who request their services (either via pre-decided funded projects (e.g., Student Equity and Achievement Program, Grants) or ad hoc research requests), there is still a need to advise the broader campus as to what the RIE does and the important findings from specific projects. This work will be developed via the web page re-design, branded communications, and specialized-focus on projects (e.g., COVID-19 research). In 2019-20, the Research Team coordinated with the Academic Senate President to provide brief research before many meetings.

The College continues to support RIE Team in its endeavors whether it be funding permanent research positions, funding operational resources (supplies, software), or inviting the RIE Team to be at the table for major events. RIE Team members are considered invaluable members of groups and committees. Their input and insights are valued by the College and sometimes sought before major decisions are made. Future endeavors of the College to support Data Coaching (Title V Grant) and diver further into Data Visualization (Power BI Dashboards in PIE) are clear indicators that the RIE Team has a pulse on the needs of the College. The RIE Team's Institutional Effectiveness Goal is one that will never end.

RIE works with IT to ensure its data security is on target. RIE also works with IT when outside entities are requesting data transfers via projects already agreed upon by administration and already approved by the Director of RIE. The efficiencies of the RIE team will be improved once more standardized data views/blocks are used by the RIE Team. In the future, the addition, from IT, of a Data Engineer will help to ensure that the data warehouse is up-to-date and will also help build more consistent data views for RIE as well as data extracts to the Chancellor's Office for the Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF).

The needs of the RIE team for professional development are varied and unfortunately nowhere near adequate or predictable. The support provided the team is helpful, but as of now it is based on who knows who and which funding will fund which activities for which research. Researchers funded by grants have a wider access to funds than those paid by District funds. In any one week, the Director and Administrative Specialist III may spend several hours asking for and getting permission from others to fund researchers for activities that are required of them to excel at their jobs. A more consistent, predictable funding stream is needed to improve efficiencies and increase opportunities. It is hoped that these funds could be found in categorical budgets (Student Equity and Achievement Program) and eventually provided from the District funds.

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External and Internal Conditions Analysis: **External Conditions that impacted the Research Team included the following: **
• AB705: Chancellor's Office AB705 Multiple Measures Implementation guidelines new updates.
• Accreditation: ACCJC Annual data collection requirements with new time frame.
• ADA Compliance: Ensuring we understand and correctly executive ADA Compliance on documents as needed such as the Board of Trustee reports.
• Accreditation: Program-level accreditation data requests.

• Black Lives Matter: The protests and unrest which highlighted the racial inequalities in our nation prompted several requests for data from the College regarding Black or African American students' academic achievement and provided support for the Board of Trustee's Resolution to support Black Lives Matter.
• COVID: Worldwide pandemic affecting health & well-being, economic and organization operations. Pandemic has affected colleges, middle schools, elementary schools, families, and jobs as well as the College-level research that goes with it including all aspects of students going to an online platform (Canvas HUB for Arise, loaner laptops for students, early alert using EAB, structured COVID surveys across students, faculty, and classified).
• Federal, State Mandates: Legislation changes to Perkins Career and Technical Education Act increases data needs.
• Training: Training new Senior Research Analysts. All staff need to participate in ongoing training to address new federal, state, and local campus mandates.
• Personnel Funding: The department realizes a need to address the lack of professional advancement opportunities for the staff in the Educational Research Assessment Analysts positions (5 staff with 3 to 13 years' experience at Mt. SAC). As such, the ERAAs created a new RIE Team goal and activities to explore these issues further and will take action as is appropriate to do so in these difficult budgetary times.

**Internal Conditions that impacted the Research Team included the following: **
• ADA Compliance: The requirement of ADA compliance on reports added meaningfully to the time required to prepare reports.
• Budget: Working closely with Director on budget for Professional Experts and Part time employees and COVID issues.
• COVID: Getting used to the new working environment and less conversation and back-and-forth with co-workers. Adjusting to resolving issues by emails or zoom meetings only – no face-to-fact contact.
• COVID: Mt. SAC response to pandemic including campus closure and shift to remote learning and all the changing procedures that involved.
• FERPA: FERPA prompted us to be more mindful of how we share Power BI reports and making sure users don't have access to underlying data.
• Project Coordination: Spend many hours ensuring projects were progressing well and on time based on the clients' /customers' requests.
• Project Transitions: One internal condition that had a big impact on my (L. DiDonato) work during the 19-20 fiscal year was my transition from working basically 50% of my hours for Title V to Student Services. This changed the scope of my work significantly. As a result, I needed to spend time informing other researchers about my previous efforts that were no longer going to be my responsibilities, e.g. Writing Center data, and begin working with the departments and programs housed in Student Services.
• Educational Research Assessment Analysts (ERAAs): Due to lack of open positions, opportunities, ERAA employees need a different avenue for advancement in the department and on campus. Due to these funding constraints, ERAAs have not been able to advance to a higher job classification (for example Senior Research Analyst). While we recognize the current funding challenges, this goal is important to us. By creating goals and activities , we are opening lines of communication between other classified staff (Senior Research Analysts) and administrators. How do we demonstrate changing dynamics?

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Program Planning (Equity, Retention and Success): The RIE Team supports program and College planning related to equity, retention and success in numerous ways:

*COVID: The RIE Team worked strategically, collaboratively to create surveys to measure the impact of going online to the College's students, faculty, and employees. These surveys included equity measures throughout – qualitative and quantitative. These results were compiled into reports and synthesized into infographics which will be presented at numerous events fall 2020 and were highlighted in President's Cabinet notes.
*Guided Pathways: Equity is infused throughout the Guided Pathways work. The RIE supports this effort. An excellent example of this work can be found in the student voices project that had students drawing their academic pathways. This work impacted the faculty who saw their students from different perspectives and allowed faculty to guide students to the services that they needed (e.g., Mountie Fresh).
*Grants: The new Title V grant, "Creating an Equity-minded Campus Culture to Improve Student Outcomes", hired a RIE researcher to support their equity work (https://www.mtsac.edu/titlev/). The RIE Team will work with this researcher to support the work of the grant, in collaboration with faculty who will be new data coaches.
*Power BI: Power BI data dashboards are provided in program review (PIE). They provide course-level success and retention rates. The RIE Team created draft equity-focused dashboards that will be added to PIE in fall 2020 and will go beyond courselevel information.
*Student Equity: The RIE team has equity researchers specifically focused on supporting equity-funded programs as well as tracking collegewide equity metrics. A recent example of this work can be found with the Board of Trustee's June 2020 report.

This report was used to support the equity resolution of the Board as well as the equity presentation of Dr. Eric Lara, Associate Dean of Equity at the Humanities and Social Sciences Call to Action Series in August 2020 (https://www.mtsac.edu/humanities/acalltoaction/).

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Analysis of Division's Plans, Activities, Resources and Critical Decisions: Looking forward, RIE has many future plans, activities, and resource needs:

-Data Coaching: Providing support and leadership with faculty to train the college on data sources and understanding and using data. This will include working with the group who created the Power of Our Data event that was postponed due to COVID-19. It was an opportunity for 80-100 employees to attend conference sessions on campus to engage in the following: (1) research being conducted on campus by our employees and others for their doctorate/master and (2) research being conducted on campus by our employees to improve programs and services. The sessions will use Data Coaching as well as Training from the Back of the Room techniques to engage attendees in the research and how to use the findings for action. The Day will be part of a larger series of events to engage the campus in reflective and actionable research using Data Coaching. Given that the new Title V faculty data coaches are beginning their work in fall 2020, it is anticipated that this work will be adapted accordingly.

-Collaborative Inquiry: The Research Team will continue to Infuse collaborative inquiry into their efforts.

-Data Integrity/Efficiencies: Leveraging the skills of the Senior Research Analysts and the Data Engineer, in collaboration with the RIE Team, will be used to build data warehouse tools and data visualizations for efficient operations. The addition, from IT, of a Data Engineer will also help to ensure that the Data Warehouse is up-to-date and will also help build more consistent data views for RIE.

-Professional Development: A secure, predictable funding stream will be helpful for this large team in order to plan for and take advantage of professional development opportunities. In addition, the Research Team's work will begin on new goals related to staff exploring and acquiring new skills so that they may progress in their careers. Part of this work will be an examination of the Educational Research Assessment Analysts' job classification compared to the Senior Research Analysts.

-Office Space: The highest need now is for office space that is functional for the work that the team members need to accomplish. This requires large work surfaces, large computer monitors, large storage areas, functional lighting, secure areas, and quiet locations to be efficient. The new Campus Store building will provide that opportunity.

Critical Decisions
The RIE Team made many critical decisions this fiscal year. The decisions focused on improving
the operations of the office including its customer service and its response to the pandemic as noted below:

-COVID (RIE Team): Changed office operations to adapt to the College's needs due to COVID-19. This included telecommuting, learning about how to conduct research online, conducting research online, and re-adjusting office and grant priorities, to name a few.

-ODS: Validated new ODS database system which will allow the Research Team to have more common data extractions and improve efficiencies.

-Outcomes Assessment/Personnel Transition: As done in the past, the researcher assigned to support outcomes assessment helped to train those who transitioned into the positions. This is a typical role for researchers across the campus to support transitioning of employees into new roles related to research. This is especially typical if there is no mentoring or training between the past and new leaders in these positions.

-Personnel Funding: Budget issues impacted the status of one CESA position and one Professional Expert position. This situation was exceptionally stressful for both. The Director of RIE worked for many weeks with Human Resources, Vice President of Instruction, Fiscal Services, and Professional and Organizational Development to review all job opportunities and to secure funding for both positions. In the end, a plan was approved for both positions for 2020-2021. The Director will re-review the situation in March 2021 in anticipation of securing the funding for 2021-2022.

-Data Dashboards: The move to data dashboards via Power BI, as a primary reporting platform, required learning a new tool, including various details of how to render it ADA compliant, how to effectively distribute reports written in Power BI, and how to accomplish needed modifications in the underlying dataset while maintaining data security. The College is very receptive to this

new format for reviewing data and it will be proposed to the Title V team for their work.

-Project Transition: Not being included at the beginning of projects makes it difficult to provide high-quality research support. It is important for the College to have the researchers at the table before a project begins if there is a critical need for high-level evaluation. RIE continues to encourage us being invited at the beginning of major project work.

-Project Transition : There are many times throughout the year that the Director needs to make decisions on transitioning projects from one researcher to another. Dramatic transitions usually happen when funding streams end. In September 2019, the previous Title V grant funding period ended. The funding for the 47.5% researcher on the grant was transitioned to Student Equity and Achievement Program (SEAP) under the Vice President of Student Services. The researcher has been very engaged with helping the Vice President of Student Services with her strategic research to support the impact of their support services for students. This shift has also allowed the Vice President of Student Services to begin to truly have a researcher who is dedicated to her research needs – something that we've been trying to accomplish for 20 years.

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