NCAIR 2024 Annual Conference
Institutional Innovation

What I've Learned: Reflections on 16 Years as an IR Director

Beverly King, PhD

East Carolina University



Career Trajectory

1996

• PhD, Developmental Psychology

• Purdue University

1997

• First tenure-track position, Assistant to Associate & earned Tenure

• South Dakota State University

2003

• Second faculty position, again earned Tenure

• University of North Carolina at Pembroke

2007

• Administrative Fellowship in Provost office at UNCP

Unexpectedly took over as AVC for Institutional Effectiveness

2014

• Began at East Carolina University as Director of Institutional Research

• Will leave upon retirement in 2024

Communication

- Higher ed has always had, and probably will always have, a communication issue.
- Responsiveness is a virtue much to be desired.
- Don't be hesitant to toot your own horn (or those of your staff).
- All voices matter.
- Express your opinion softly & humbly (delicate offense vs. adamant defense).
- Always be ready to agree to disagree.
- You will never be able to explain to your family what you do for a living.

Cognition

- Your time is not your own.
- It takes time to build a knowledge base.
- You don't have to know it all.
- You will sometimes serve as the voice of reason and the "conscience" of your campus.
- (Almost) everyone works hard.
- There are multiple definitions for everything, and the numbers associated with those definitions may be correct even if they don't match.
- The answer to almost every question is "it depends."
- At the end of the day, it is just a job. A great job, a rewarding job, but a job, nonetheless.

Continuity

- Turn-over is a fact of life.
- Never underestimate the importance of crosstraining.
- For every IR task/project, assign primary and secondary responsibility.
- Document, document, document....not only tasks but also projects.
- Recreating the wheel is how leadership rolls.

Competencies

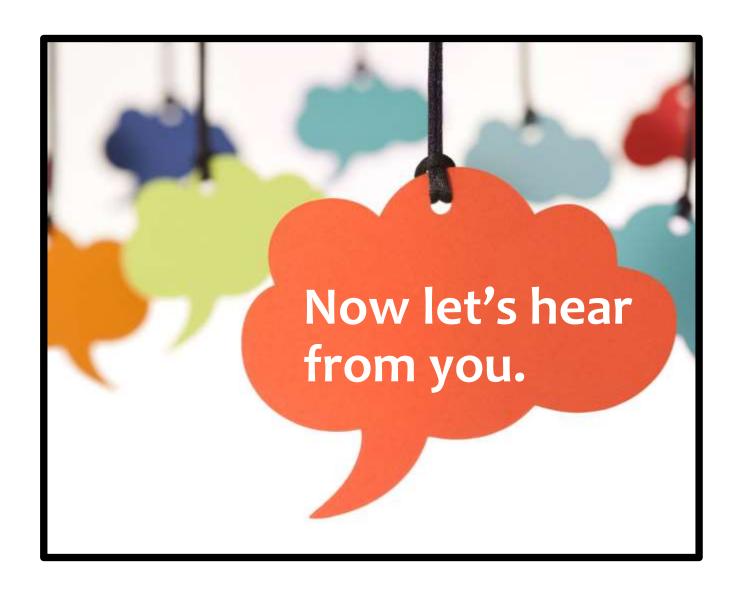
- What they say is true: Hire good people and get out of their way. The staff member who must have constant supervision is a drain on the entire team.
- You will be a project manager, whether you want to be or not.
- You can't teach motivation or critical thinking.
- The devil may not be in the details, but your sanity is....OCD-like traits are required. At the same time, perfection can be the enemy of the good.
- Never send out anything without at least two pair of eyes reviewing.
- You learn something new every day. (IR is a great career for someone with a low boredom threshold.)

Collaboration & Coworkers

- Breaking down siloes will make your life easier.
- Make sure IR has a seat (or two) at the Data Governance table.
- IR is a close relative of IT, more so now than ever.
- You serve many masters (especially if part of a state system).
- Most people don't know how to make a "good" data request.

Coordination

- Team building can be challenging (with IR introverts).
- You may have to push (i.e., encourage) team members to do "social" activities, e.g., conference presentations.
- Every IR team is greater than the sum of its parts.
- Micromanagement kills.
- No two IR offices are alike in function, structure, or responsibilities.



Reflecting on your own IR career, what professional or personal lessons have you learned?



Thank you for attending the 2024 NCAIR Annual Conference!

There's a QR code in your program for a conference evaluation form. You'll also get an e-mail following the conference with a link to the form, which will be available until 4/30.

At your earliest convenience, please take this opportunity to let the planning committee know your thoughts about this year's conference and where you would like to meet next year.