

Institutional Performance Survey

Sampling, Implementation, Data Analysis and Results

Survey Tool Selection

In early June 2004, the President's Cabinet selected the Institutional Performance Survey (IPS), developed by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). Before selecting the IPS, the President's Council reviewed six possible instruments. Over 300 institutions have used the IPS.

Appointment of Leadership Advisory Team Members

The members of the Leadership Advisory Team (LAT) were appointed by President Carter in early 2005; the Team held its first (face-to-face) meeting on March 24, 2005.

Survey Population Sampling

- A decision was made to survey approximately 50% of full-time faculty, part-time faculty who have taught at least 51 credit hours at Columbia, and full-time staff.
- The IPS was distributed to a stratified random sampling of 650 full-and part-time faculty and full-time staff members, reaching approximately 53% of each group. Two hundred and fifty completed surveys were received, resulting in a 39% return rate.

Development of Institution-Specific Questions

A list of possible Columbia-specific questions developed by the LAT co-facilitators was distributed to the LAT members before the Team's first meeting. These items were discussed and changed for the Team's approval. The Team finalized 20 institution-specific questions that were included in the survey.

Survey Distribution and Data Collection

- During April 15th – 18th, 2005, randomly selected full and part-time faculty and full-time staff received the survey with a cover letter from President Carter via campus mail. Completed surveys were mailed directly to NCHEMS.
- Several e-mail reminders and a flyer were sent to the entire list (those who received the survey), to promote the survey and increase the return rate.

Response Confidentiality

- NCHEMS only distributes aggregated survey data on each question (in our case, responses to each question were sorted by full-time faculty, part-time faculty and staff) in hard copy form – no electronic data file is transmitted. The participating institutions have no way of “drilling down” into the survey data to learn respondents' identities.
- NCHEMS typed all of the written comments and supplied the typed comments in hard copy and in a Word document so that it could be reproduced.

Survey Data Analysis

- A hard copy of Columbia's data was received from NCHEMS in late June 2005.
- Initial data synthesis was conducted by Yun Kim with assistance from Elizabeth Silk and Harold Wexler. This was put into a preliminary data analysis summary report and distributed to the LAT members before the Team's meeting on September 14, 2005.
- LAT members worked through the data and their possible meanings in two face-to-face meetings (Sept. 1 and Sept. 14) and numerous e-mail exchanges. The LAT invited Ann Wiens and Brenda Berman of Media Relations to get recommendations on how best to communicate the survey results.
- LAT members agreed to finalize the section highlights, a set of four recommendations and an executive summary via e-mail exchanges for increased efficiency. The Team agreed that the survey results must be communicated to the college community as soon as possible – ideally, before the end of the fall 2005 semester.

Survey Results (Brief Highlights)

[The entire report can be found at

http://www.colum.edu/Research_Evaluation_Planning/IPS_Survey/index.php]

- Columbia College Chicago's culture is fairly heterogeneous and has no one dominant culture; responses were somewhat evenly distributed among three of the four types – Clan (33%), Emergent System (28%) and Hierarchy (24%). Within this heterogeneity, the responses indicate that Columbia is committed to innovation and development and has an institutional passion to be “first in the field.”
- Survey respondents perceived that Columbia is an institution with a special identity and distinctive purpose to fulfill, and that its academic programs reflect its stated mission. A strong long-term plan is perceived as guiding Columbia's direction and its ability to meet new challenges and expansion.
- Columbia is perceived as expanding and rapidly diversifying its academic programs and activities (although these efforts have not yet led to a more diversified student body) in response to external forces. The data seem to suggest that a degree of moderation would provide a “buffer” from conflicting demands.
- Resource allocation decision processes are perceived as highly centralized and political; a significantly large proportion of faculty and staff answered “Don't Know” to many questions.
- Survey respondents perceived that students tend to be satisfied with their educational experiences at Columbia and with the ability of the college to prepare them for obtaining their career goals, even as they stated that the college should do more to promote students' academic development.

- While Columbia faculty and staff recognize increased competition with other institutions and are highly optimistic about the college's recruiting ability, they are uncertain about exactly what kind of external factors impact enrollment.
- Responses to the institution-specific questions often reinforced survey findings from earlier sections: the confidence felt by faculty and staff in Columbia's ability to provide academic programs that reflect advancing trends in arts and media; the perceived poor quality of internal communication, particularly about the college's resource allocation and decision-making process; agreement that the climate/energy of the college is conducive to achieving its mission and the Columbia 2010 goals.

Follow-Up Decisions and Activities:

- On January 17, 2006, President Carter made the decision to repeat the survey on a regular timetable; President Carter appointed Keith Cleveland, Stephanie Griffin, Yun Kim and Deb McGrath to examine the Leadership Advisory Team's Recommendations 1 and 2 and develop "tactical" strategies to carry out those recommendations.
- This steering committee developed three work teams under the heading of "Building a Stronger Internal Community" and recruited fifteen additional faculty and staff to participate in developing tactical strategies.
- After an extensive period of dialogue and additional data-gathering, the follow-up steering committee forwarded four tactical recommendations to President Carter on August 7, 2007 along with the three individual work team reports. Below is a brief synopsis of these four tactical recommendations:
 - The college should continue conducting the IPS and include questions that address faculty and staff concerns to improve the work environment.
 - Senior leadership should have more informal sessions (in intimate settings) with faculty and staff to promote an exchange of information and dialogue.
 - A frequently asked questions (FAQ) document on the college's financial information should be developed and widely distributed.
 - The college should expand its new employee orientation program to promote understanding of the college's mission, culture and values, in addition to providing essential information related to the college's systems, procedures and policies.