SARI 2004-2005 Projects List

This document offers brief descriptions of projects that Student Affairs Research & Information (SARI) plans to complete by July 2005. As in prior years, the list is organized by four core activities: performing ad hoc student-centered research, producing informational reports on a regular schedule, developing information resources, and improving unit operations. Planned projects are an important component of SARI’s workload, but the office does much more (i.e., research in support of new issues, response to requests for factual information, research consultation, committee service).

Core Activity 1 – Perform student-centered research on an ad hoc basis to inform decision-making processes, to review postsecondary policies, to evaluate outreach activities involving the University, and to assess how important trends will affect the campus.

Research University Interview Project
Principal: Chatman (Priority=3)
To enlighten and enliven our ongoing quantitative studies of student behaviors and perceptions, SARI will undertake a series of one-to-one interviews with students on the subject of an undergraduate’s experience in the research university. Interview questions will evoke the effect and meaning of the campus status as a major public research university from the viewpoint of students, exploring its influence on enrollment, perceived content of the term ‘research,’ and the supply of and demand for opportunities for student engagement in research activities.

BUSP
Principals: Estes & Chatman (Priority=1)
The Biology Undergraduate Scholars Program (BUSP) has received federal funding to continue to provide a variety of research experience and support services to underrepresented minority students. As is also true for several University mentorship intervention outreach activities, a core element is encouraging students to progress to the doctorate. SARI was part of the proposed project and will receive support for limited release time to compile and analyze University and external records to gauge the effectiveness of BUSP.

Undergraduate Mentorship Programs
Principals: Chatman & Butler (Priority=2)
The process by which the University will either implement State reductions in funding for outreach activities or justify funding them without adequate State support should be guided by information on the success that these programs have had in encouraging students to pursue graduate and professional degrees. While not the only outcome of importance, this is a goal of all programs that can be assessed more efficiently centrally. SARI will use National Student Clearinghouse records and local alumni survey data to track student progression into graduate and professional schools and will attempt to work with the NSF to learn of doctoral degree recipients. Program leaders are now compiling participant lists.

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
Principal: Chatman (Priority=2)
As a measure of the quality of collegiate education, measures of student engagement gather information on the frequency with which students participate in activities that represent effective educational practice, such as writing papers requiring integrating information from several sources and discussing ideas from class outside of class. Using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), SARI will collect comparative data about Davis undergraduate student
involvement in learning. Comparison groups will include American Association of Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE) and national research institutions.

**General Education Breadth and Depth of Study**  
**Principals:** Chatman & Estes (Priority=1)  
SARI is currently working with the Academic Senate’s General Education Committee to follow-up on WASC visiting team recommendations regarding analysis of student GE enrollment within the context of institutional policy. A transcript analysis of EE students proved that there was sufficient cause for concern to justify a more comprehensive review. That review is underway and should be finished by the end of September.

**Core Activity 2 – Regularly collect and distribute to the University community essential information about student characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, and experiences prior to matriculation, while enrolled, and following graduation.**

**Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey (CIRP)**  
**Principals:** Park & Lehman (Priority=1)  
SARI will continue the tradition of participating in the Freshman Survey in conjunction with the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) at UCLA. CIRP is part of a national study of higher education that is sponsored annually by the American Council on Education. UC Davis data from this survey dates back to the 1970s, allowing decade-by-decade comparisons. The project will provide data on the UC Davis freshmen class of 2004, allowing comparisons of the responses of our new students with national and statewide norms. Information includes students’ academic preparation, educational and career aspirations, attitudes, values, and family background.

**Alumni Voices Report Series**  
**Principal:** Butler (Priority=1)  
In support of the comprehensive development campaign and ongoing evaluation of campus programs and activities, analysis and reports from the Summer 2003 survey of 1973, 1983, and 1993 alumni will continue. Over 4,000 alumni responded to the survey, yielding a wealth of data. Report topics will include: the long-term postgraduate educational and career accomplishments of alumni, the current and likely involvement of alumni in campus activities; the effect of undergraduate involvement and success on attachment to the campus; and the correlates of subsequent campus financial and political support.

**UCUES**  
**Principal:** Chatman (Priority=1)  
The University of California undergraduate campuses conducted a census survey of the UC undergraduate population. The project experienced technical problems, but in spite of those problems, has attained responses from over 20% of the UC student population. The 2004-2005 year will see a concerted effort to fully analyze the feedback received. Plans for a UC-wide coordinated research program are just forming.

**NCAA Academic Reporting**  
**Principal:** Park (Priority=1)  
With UC Davis joining Division I Athletics, more rigorous academic performance reporting requirements are expected of the University about student athletes. These requirements are the Academic Progress Rate (APR) and the Graduation Success Rate (GSR), which in conjunction with the federal IPEDS-GRS will determine the academic progress of UC Davis’ athletes. Specifically, the NCAA will use the data from the APR, GSR, and IPEDS-GRS to calculate the incentives and disincentives placed upon UC Davis. SARI will be working with the Athletics
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Dept. to ensure data submitted to the NCAA is accurate and inline with the overall UCD academic indicators.

National Student Clearinghouse Data on Non-enrolling Students Principal: Butler (Priority=3)
A file of non-enrolling students who had been admitted by UC Davis for Fall 2004 will be submitted to the Clearinghouse to receive information about their alternative enrollments. The data will be analyzed by ethnicity, academic measures, geographic location and college of attendance to monitor the campus’s competitive strengths and weaknesses.

Recent Graduates Principal: Butler (Priority=1)
Major-level profiles for use by academic departments undergoing program review or simply interested in understanding majors better will be published in a readily accessible form at SARI’s Survey Data Monster site. The profiles will report satisfaction, postgraduate education, and initial employment of June 2002 graduates.

Core Activity 3 – Maintain and develop information resources capable of supporting the regular and ad hoc research needs of campus decision makers, workgroups, and committees and of addressing the information requirements of external requesters (i.e., federal and state agencies, accrediting agencies, reporters, AAU institutions, college guide publishers).

Exploring GIS Applications Principals: Park & Butler (Priority=2)
GIS software yields two capabilities, map-based display and census data analysis. Though most information from SARI is visually shared in graphs and charts, GIS provides a map location-based approach to support the evaluation and reporting of student data. With this tool, SARI can geographically display how students from different cities and neighborhoods progress through UCD. Additionally, GIS gives us the capability to see where our alumni settle and from which regions our alumni donors come. With any GIS data gathered, SARI plans upon making that data available to the greater UC Davis community through our website. The second capability is a linkage to U.S. Census records and these will be used as a proxy to determine whether recent and rapid fee increases are altering the SES characteristics of incoming students.

SARI Records Security, Access, Analysis and Report Delivery Principals: All (Priority=1)
This project owes its origin to three compelling forces. The first is the need for better data security and maintenance processes. The second is a need for a common programming language for all staff members because of our small number and varied interest. The third is provision of increased end-user access to survey data. Recent developments in statistical software capabilities that support interactive report delivery on the Internet have encouraged us to work toward an integrated solution.

First, on the privacy/security side, SARI faces concerns common to many offices on campus about storage of IDs, but we also have to comply with human subject protections and, in some cases, the restrictions of external bodies like the National Student Clearinghouse, CalPASS, and AAUDE. Some of these restrictions are published by providers, others are explicitly described in approved research protocols, and still others are consistent with professional practice standards and SARI’s published confidentiality policy. In addition, there will be new challenges as we

1http://www.sariweb.ucdavis.edu/survey/confidential.html
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begin to support a more concrete evidentiary base for assessment like electronic portfolios. These restrictions prohibit SARI from making unit record survey data part of integrated campus files available beyond the unit. In sum, SARI has unique privacy concerns that create constraints to wider access.

In addition to the review board and other limitations, SARI also faces special challenges that are a normal outgrowth of traditional analytical practices. The usual survey research practice is to produce a single database from a survey that includes survey results, common demographics, and identifying information. This datafile typically resides with the analyst principally responsible for that particular survey and supports one or more reports. Data might be further recoded as analytical needs dictate and there might be multiple copies as other analysts share in the study. It can be something of a mess without a clear and coherent record of all data manipulations or a unified recoding structure, but it is how survey results have usually been analyzed and reported. So, one goal for SARI is better data integrity, maintenance and security within internal and external restrictions. But can we do that and maintain or even increase access?

The second compelling interest is in a common programming language for all staff. SARI has five staff members with largely independent roles and very little backup. A programming language or single package that can bridge the needs and expertise of all staff members is attractive. We believe that SAS, with its new Internet delivery tools, fits the bill. SAS can handle data retrieval, access and manipulation demands and the statistical analysis requirements of analysts. Based on recent demonstrations attended at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, it can also handle Internet delivery of results.

The third compelling interest was in further opening access to survey data. It should be clear from SARI's previous experiments in delivering web-based tools with drill-down capabilities, that SARI's predilection is open-access--our tools are available to anyone on- or off-campus http://www.sariweb.ucdavis.edu/bsrg/BSRG1.html. We have managed to expand access to survey data by using ColdFusion applications running against tailored databases. These tools permit access, prevent display of results for small cells, and run from anonymous files. It's an OK system but it demands specialized expertise, customized applications, regular updates, and does not support secondary analyses where these data are linked to other information.

In 2004-2005, SARI will begin the processes of (1) migrating survey records to a more secure system, (2) training staff in the use of SAS, and (3) developing Internet-based report delivery tools.

California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (CalPASS) Participation/Implementation
Principal: Estes (Priority=2)

This project continues from 2003-2004 because of delays in the development of a common memorandum of understanding by the Los Rios Sacramento area coordinators. CalPASS is based on experience of a shared data exchange among K-12 and higher education institutions in the San Diego area. Under Brad Philip’s leadership, Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, and with the support of the CCC Chancellor’s Office, the project is expanding statewide. The data exchange includes demographic, academic, and transcript information and is unique among exchanges in including course level detail.
Pre-graduate and Professional School Student Program Analysis
Principal: Chatman (Priority=awaiting Graduate School director hire)
As many outreach programs are threatened with elimination under new budget restrictions, postgraduate education preparatory programs are searching for tangible proof of their effectiveness. SARI has been asked to help by searching for data on the effectiveness of pre-graduate mentorship programs and related efforts, by analyzing the rate at which attendees of these programs participate in postgraduate education. That information need has prompted SARI to consider acquisition of a variety of outcomes assessment resources: MCAT, GRE, GMAT, and LSAT, as well as data from the Survey of Earned Doctorates.

Implementing Project Management Principal: Park (Priority=1)
During 2003-2004, SARI evaluated several commercial Project Management applications on the advice of a consultant. None of these programs satisfied our needs so a Project Management solution was developed in-house. This new program works over the Internet and provides the necessary organization and management of projects coming from external and internal sources. With the software in place, the staff needs to be trained in its use and adjust to regularly documenting their progress in a project. Once the analysts have adopted the program, it will be much easier to audit the projects that have come through SARI as well as perform review of those analysts.

Encourage Davis (and UC) Participation in NSC Graduation Data Sharing Principal: Butler (Priority=2)
As part of SARI’s efforts to expand the sources of external, non-intrusive, and inexpensive data available to support campus evaluation and decision-making, the office will encourage the participation of the campus in NSC’s new program to make graduation data available to institutions of higher education. With current data, we can, for instance, track the enrollment of students who have left UC Davis (non-persisters), but we cannot assess their success in completing a baccalaureate degree. This data could provide evidence of the success of outreach and mentorship programs beyond the bounds of the campus.

Core Activity 4 – Continuously strive to make better use of the resources and opportunities with which it has been entrusted, to be active in the profession, and to develop talents and skills of staff.

Professional Skills Development

Advancement Research Techniques
To improve the usefulness of SARI’s data collection and reportage to campus development and advancement efforts, Gillian Butler will attend a three-day conference addressing “Innovative Applications of Data in Advancement.”

SAS Training
The transition to an integrated data management system will require each staff member to participate in training. The amount will vary from literature reviews and campus workshops to multi-day sessions at remote locations.

Committee Assignments
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**Gillian Butler’s Committees**
APA Student Retention and Outreach Committee
EOP/SAA
AFP Oversight Committee

**Thomas Estes’s Committees**
SARI Technical Support Coordinator (TSC)
Area Telecommunications Representative (ATR)

**Mary Lehman’s Committees**
UCD Principal Staff Assistants Council

**Steve Chatman’s Committees**
UC IR/SA Directors
Undergraduate Advising Council
UCUES Advisory Group
Enrollment Planning Workgroup
IR Work Group

**Professional Service**

**CAIR Conference**
SARI continues to serve the profession by sharing the results of local research and by the Director’s service as current President of the California Association for Institutional Research (CAIR). SARI anticipates sending at least three proposals to be considered for the annual meeting.

**AIR Forum**
AIR will be in San Diego in May 2005. This will be an excellent opportunity for staff to make professional contributions and benefit by attendance. In addition, CAIR will be expected to host an activity and the planning and execution of that activity will require a significant commitment by SARI staff members.