Institutional Effectiveness:
Culture & Tools Rubric

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MATTHEW C.BRONSON, PHD AND VERONICA CHUKWUEMEKA, EDD

EDVALUATORS, LLC & SPOL   CSU-MONTEREY BAY

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IR Data become knowledge only when they are used by stakeholders to support decision-making in a social context. Knowledge that is institutionalized becomes, ideally, a form of wisdom that outlasts individual champions and informs future generations. Any desire to re-center educational practice on student thriving and success must address both technical and cultural elements on the campus. Those who are collecting, curating and disseminating data to advance the mission of serving students are implicated in both lanes. A social science and ecological perspective can clarify the challenges that are common to professionals working at this intersection of technology and people, regardless of their disciplinary background.

This rubric synthesizes data gained from six in-depth interviews with directors of institutional effectiveness (IE) and research (IR) at institutions of higher education in the US regarding the connection between technical tools, culture change, and their goals in that role. The findings were aggregated to create a cline of development that spanned the sample, profiling the key patterns that emerged from the narratives. The dimensions selected are by no means exhaustive, are fairly high-level, and deserve much more granular treatment in separate rubrics. Culture is implicated throughout as the shared language, stories, artifacts, values and patterns of behavior for this area of practice on each campus. The rubric is offered in draft form to aid professionals working in this and related areas (e.g., academic assessment, which may or may not formally be included in IE) to reflect on their current orientations, capacities and desired impacts. More importantly, it foregrounds how a robust IR/IE that "leans in" could help to activate a more student-centered culture among staff and faculty. As an informal diagnostic and tool for reflection in unique contexts, there is no expected rating.

Institutionalization: The degree to which IR/IE practices are organically integrated into normal workflow and collaboration as part of campus culture. This stands in contrast to a competing strategy of compliance and compartmentalization more typical of campus cultures.

Leadership: those who are in charge in your campus-could encompass the Board of Trustees, C-suite, VP, dean and director levels.

Leaning in: The degree to which IR/IE function is passive and reactive, rather than proactively engaging stakeholders in meaningful inquiry and use of data across campus..

Stakeholders: The members of the community who have a direct interest and role in the IR/IE process (students, staff, faculty and administrators in most cases, but may extend to include employers and community members as appropriate).

Tools: technical platforms and software that you use on your campus to accomplish your work. This may encompass your data warehouse, components of your LMS, SIS and ERP platforms, and visual and text-based reporting tools. The dimension is focused on the overall adequacy of your current solution set vis-à-vis your mission and goals.

How to use the rubric: Based on your sense of all available evidence, rate your campus or system on each dimension (no ½ scores, must meet all criteria in the cell.). How effective is your office in achieving its current aims? Where are the pain points, opportunities and strengths? Consider these questions and suggestions:

1. **In what ways can points of strength be leveraged to address less developed dimensions?**
2. **What practical steps could you take now and in the near and medium-term to move towards your goals?**
3. **Revisit the rubric as you progress and share with others as a key performance indicator or metric for evaluating your progress. Correlate with other data sources as a dashboard element in your reporting cycle.**

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4. **Add dimensions or adapt the indices to suit what is possible within your context. (Please send your comments and a copy to matthew@edvaluators.com and we will compile and share with the group)**

Dimension	1 Initial	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Developed	5 Highly Developed
Leadership	No or little use of data to drive decisions and planning apparent. Low profile for IR/IE at Executive and Board levels.	Some use of data to drive some planning and decisions by some campus leaders. IR/IE has some direct connections and visibility.	IR/IE function is visible and actively consulted for ad hoc projects and routine decision-making, while still not central.	IR/IE is central to planning and decision-making. Leaders use and refer publicly to dashboard of KPIs with current data.	IR/IE is fully embedded in leadership culture. Leaders openly value a culture of evidence and hold themselves accountable for results.
Student Voice & Experience	Data sets are not explicitly and/or are inconsistently connected with student experience. Student survey and focus group data are sporadically collected and/or not used to highlight pain points and opportunities.	Some basic connections between data collection and use to represent basic satisfaction and aspects of student experience at institutional level. Pockets of student-centered data collection and disaggregation to identify disparate impacts on different demographic groups.	Data sets based on surveys and focus groups are widely in use and effectively deployed as direct indices of student experience. Student voice and experience is engaged in program review for many curricular and co-curricular units with appropriate data.	Data sets and reports are used by almost all units to answer burning questions about the student experience. On campus initiatives and programs routinely include student input and participation in collecting and interpreting data. Focus groups and surveys have high response rates and are valued by the community	All components of Developed met and students are included in program and institutional level assessment as focus group leaders and/or consultants. IR is a student advocate, integrated optimally with academic and co-curricular assessment to maintain centrality of the human stories behind the numbers.
Trust	No trust in current systems and integrity of data/reporting. Rogue actions without IR oversight. Hard questions avoided.	Some trust in current systems and integrity of data/reporting. Pockets of good practice, with some units still rogue. Initial attempts to grapple with gaps or challenging findings.	Threshold of trust achieved. Comprehensive data warehouse, data dictionary, protocol for producing, vetting and approving reports in place. Some rogue action and some inquiry.	High level of trust in standard protocols and reporting from IR/IE. No rogue actions apparent. Challenging questions are engaged and negative findings are shared and discussed.	Very high level of trust. Results are shared even when they do not meet expectations. Challenging questions are addressed routinely and openly.

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Alignment with Strategic Planning	No apparent connection between planning, IR, assessment, and resource allocation.	Outcome mapping is partial and does not articulate between levels clearly. Some alignment in some units with strategic plan goals and priorities using IR/IE functions.	Outcomes for all academic units and most other units are in place and assessed at course, program, and institutional level. Mapping between levels is used along with common data sets to align work in and across units.	All indicators for Developing met plus evidence of use of data on multiple levels for planning and improvement through at least one planning cycle.	Campus members routinely think and act towards alignment of multiple levels with strategic planning. Plans are routinely monitored and adjusted based on findings.
Tools-Technical Adequacy & IT Support	Tools for IR/IE data collection and analysis are not standard, and/or sufficient to support routine functions. IR not integrated with IT (support, tool selection, infrastructure).	Standard tools are adequate for most tasks. May require a fair amount of manual manipulation. IT provides baseline support. And infrastructure.	Standard tools are adequate for all current tasks. Some interoperability between platforms. Potential for continuing integration of otherwise disparate processes. IT and IR mostly integrated.	Tools facilitate integration, collaboration and on-demand reporting for users to do some queries without need for constant IR intervention. IT and IR fully integrated.	Tools allow for seamless integration of strategic planning, resource allocation, assessment, accreditation. Flexible on-demand reporting supported. IR and IT act in synergy, with a reciprocally valued relationship.
Tools-Institutionalization	Multiple tools used by different units without a common culture. Rogue data collection and reporting is possible without IR oversight.	Moving toward common language, processes, and culture in use of tools. Some basic training in place to onramp users. Perceived value is increasing and some integration into normal workflow. No or minimal rogue action. Some resistance to new processes.	Tools are being widely used at more than 50% of capacity. Return on investment is increasingly apparent to stakeholders. Users mostly trained and on board with pockets of excellence and creativity in how they adapt and use the system(s).	Users are trained and engaged, including new ones. Tools are very widely used at 75% or more capacity. Return on investment is unquestioned and continual improvement and adaptation is occurring.	Users and stakeholders "own" the system and would be able to continue even if there were a change in leadership (sustainable). Tools are fully institutionalized and adaptable as an integral part of a learning organization.

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Social Capital-Relationships	IR/IE is marginally connected with other units. Sparse relationships in place to advance the unit's mission.	IR/IE has at least one external champion and some visibility at leadership level. Key stakeholders may be negative or neutral re: shift to evidence and data.	IR/IE has increasing personal connections with internal clients who value the work and integrate it into their unit's operations.	IR/IE has strong relationships with key stakeholders and is routinely consulted in advance of major initiatives to inform planning, execution and follow up.	IR/IE has strong relationships with all key stakeholders. High visibility of IR/IE staff in key venues, both formal and informal.
Leaning In	**Invisible** IR engaged entirely in compliance and passive service mode. Mostly invisible and marginal. (IT culture predominates).	**Present** "Drive by" engagement at stakeholders' invitation. Some needs assessment and attempts to address gaps in process and practice. (IT moving towards IE stance).	**Active** IR engages actively with some stakeholders via "listening tour," surveys, one-on-one meetings, program meetings convened by the office. (Embedded in programs and units)	**Proactive** Regular and effective program for engaging stakeholders in place. Feedback and tuning of IR function occurs as part of regular practice. (Embedded in Assessment, Academic Affairs, Teaching, Learning and/or IE)	**Generative** IR has high profile as a leading unit, is widely appreciated and routinely called upon to address the more challenging issues on the campus at multiple levels. (Active participant at Leadership level).
Personnel and Resources	Vulnerable. IR/IE is sparsely and/or sporadically staffed to meet minimal requirements for operations and accreditation. Little or no capacity for IR in other units or offices. Existing staff underutilized and/or underqualified.	Surviving. IR/IE is staffed and equipped sufficiently to meet minimal requirements. May be some reliance on other units' staff and resources to accomplish routine tasks. Staff is adequately trained but may not be working at full potential. Resources are stable.	IR/IE is benefitting from increasingly high profile in staff and resources. Trend has been toward more rather than fewer resources. Can do more than bare minimum and begin to address systemic issues. Staff have some professional development opportunities and are reasonably satisfied.	IR/IE sufficiently staffed and resourced to proactively engage issues on campus and "create more work for themselves." Stable and content staff in place to deal with requirements with surplus of time needed to plan and evaluate impact of services and improve. Demonstrated return on	All elements of Developed met AND long-term plan in place (connected with strategic goals and campus mission) to allocate new resources as merited by increasing scale of responsibility. New requests are likely to be positively

				any increased investment over baseline.	evaluated, based on perceived return on investment so far.

Comments and possible next steps suggested:_____
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