Quick Tips for Program Review Data Analysis

Below are some "quick tips" to help you in your analysis of the data (e.g., in the Enrollment, Successful Course Completion, Awards, FTES, FTEF, and Enrollment Per Section screens) in your unit assessments using the online Program Review system. When trying to make sense of data presented in the tables, graphs, or charts, consider the following:

1) **Trends** – Do you see overall trends in your data over time? For example, does it appear that your enrollments have been increasing or decreasing steadily over time? Why might this be? Might this be due to changes in the number of courses you have offered, changes in student demand, or both?

2) **Patterns** – Do you see patterns in your data over time? For example, is your average class size (i.e., enrollment per section) usually higher in the spring semesters than in the fall semesters? What does this suggest?

3) **Outliers** – Look for data points that appear to be quite different from the norm or what you would expect. Can you think of an explanation for these outliers, or does there appear to be a problem with the data itself? For example, if you awarded 5 times the number of degrees last year than in any other previous year, was this due to a new degree offered in your discipline? If your discipline is not offering any new degrees, could this be due to a mistake in the data, or to some other factor like increased student demand for your program?

4) **Comparison to College Average (when available)** – Where college-wide data is provided, compare your discipline to college-wide trends. Does your discipline tend to have higher/lower success rates than the college average? Why might this be so? What are unique aspects of your discipline and/or the students that take your classes that may impact the success rates in your discipline?

5) **Data Breakdowns** – Consider these same elements when looking at the breakdowns of the data as well (e.g., do you see different trends in enrollments in day vs. evening classes?). Also, consider how the outcomes for students differ based on the breakdowns (e.g., do students in online courses tend to have lower/higher successful course completion rates than students in day and/or evening classes?).

As you well know, a main purpose of reviewing our programs is to assess their performance in the pursuit of continuous improvement. Thus, based on your analyses of the data, what suggestions can you come up with for ways to improve your program(s)? For example, what do the data suggest in terms of how you schedule your classes (time of day, modality, etc.)? Do the data justify changes that may require additional resources? Are there improvements you can make that do not require resources? These data-based observations and suggestions can be the basis for objectives (and any necessary resource requests) that you create for your discipline.