Using Data for Inspiration and Feedback (and Avoiding Data-Driven Torture)

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The Department Head Council (DHC)

- All sitting department heads (DH) at Texas A&M are members of the DHC
- The DHC meets as needed to share ideas and strategies
- One DH from each College represents their College on the DHC Steering Committee
The DHC Steering Committee

- Meets monthly with the Provost regarding issues of concern for Department Heads
  - The Chair of the Steering Committee meets monthly with the Dean of Faculties
- Identifies members to represent the DHs on university-wide committees
- Works to solve problems on behalf of the DHs
  - Today’s presentation stems from work by a DHC Steering Committee subcommittee on leveraging Texas A&M data systems to empower data-driven decision-making
Presentation Outline

• What do I need to know as a new administrator?
• What data resources are available to answer those questions?
• How do I use data for change?
What Do I Need to Know?
Questions about Faculty

- Who are my most productive faculty?
  - How can I measure productivity?
- Are there salary anomalies that can’t be explained?
- Are my teaching loads distributed fairly?
- Are any of my faculty outliers with respect to student success?
Questions about Students

• Where do my students come from?
  • Which high schools?
  • What about transfer students?
  • Graduate students?
• Where do my students go?
  • Graduates?
  • Transfers out?
• Are the answers different for under-represented students?
• How diverse are my degree programs anyway?
Questions about Scheduling

• What slows time to degree?
• What electives are likely to be oversubscribed? Undersubscribed?
• Would it be better to offer this course in the spring?
• Are there any courses that push students out of the major?
• How big a room will I need?
Types of Data
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- Research Productivity
- Academic Program
- Institutional
- Financial
- Other Data
Research Productivity

- Academic Analytics
- Faculty180
- Maestro
Academic Analytics

Request access from your Dean’s office.

http://portal.academicanalytics.com
Access:
  Faculty Affairs Portal
  https://facultyaffairsportal.tamu.edu/

Use:
  Faculty annual activities reporting
  Annual performance reviews for faculty
  Promotion and Tenure
What You Can Do With the Bulk Data

Active Internal Grants

Submitted Internal Grants

Active External Grants

Submitted External Grants
Access:
Available through SSO http://sso.tamus.edu

Use:
Detailed information about sponsored projects (grants and contracts)
• Department Head Dashboards
• Banner Reports
Department Head Dashboards

Access:
http://tableau.tamu.edu

Use:
Data specifically targeted for Department Head use
Access:

http://howdy.tamu.edu

Use:

Raw data for specialized uses
Institutional Data

• TAMU by the Numbers
• Accountability.tamu.edu
• Office of Academic & Business Performance Analytics (formerly DARS)
Access:
https://facultyaffairs.tamu.edu/Data

Use:
University-wide data on
Faculty demographics
SCH and WSCH
Students/Faculty ratios
Research expenditures and budget
Access:

http://accountability.tamu.edu

Use:

University-wide data
- Student Metrics
- Faculty & Staff Metrics
- Graduate & Professional Student Metrics
Access:
http://dars.tamu.edu

Use:
University-wide student and faculty data
Financial Data

• Best sources:
  - Business Administrators
  - Dean’s office
Other Data

- Alumni Data
- Student Placement
- Gift Data
Using Data for Change
"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

J. Harris
Why Use Data?

- Accountability
- Strategic change
- Communicate value

Five flavours of decision-making with data

- data-driven
- data-inspired
- data-aspired
- data-ignorant
- data-tortured
Start with a Question

• You must set the question & priority
  - Evaluate current status
  - Look for opportunities
  - Look for challenges
Get More Specific

- “Big” differences or trends
- Predictors
Make the Change

• Communicate
• Invest
• Plan to evaluate feedback and changes
The Question

- We want to improve the research profile of the department
Where Are We Now?
Getting More Specific
Making the Change

• Communicate
  - Shared governance, strategic planning, align policies
• Invest
  - Support for development & mentoring, develop resources, hiring priorities
• Plan to evaluate feedback and changes
Evaluation

- 12 R01s, 1 R25, multiple NRSA
- Faculty apply for an average of 2 grants per year
- 42% of graduate students funded from external sources Fall 2021
- Annual expenditures (external) increased 35%
- Indirect expenditures doubled
Where Are We Now?
“Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.”
- John Maxwell