



APPLICATION PROCEDURES for 2012 CIRPA Best Practices Awards

Each applicant must be a current CIRPA member and can submit one application for these awards. Applications can be submitted electronically and must be received by July 15, 2012. Up to 3 Best Practices will be chosen by the Selection Committee. Award certificates will be presented at the 2012 CIRPA Conference and each winning team receives up to 2 free conference registrations for the 2012 conference.

To be eligible for assessment by the selection committee, a current CIRPA member must complete the following and email them to sharon.shultz@keyano.ca by July 15, 2012:

1. one electronic copy (Word format or pdf) of the full application form
2. Electronic or scanned copies of any supporting documentation

Although not required to do so, the applicant may include a more complete description of the project and supporting information, including audio-visual materials, manuals and other printed documents, and Internet site references for consideration by the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee may, at its discretion, consider part or all such additional information.

CIRPA may, at its discretion, post portions of the application and supporting documents on its web site.

***APPLICATION FOR THE
2012 CIRPA Best Practice Awards***

Information Page

1. Descriptive Title of Proposal:
Office of Institutional Analysis Structure at Bow Valley College – Inclusion of Program Planning Support
2. Date of Implementation (preference will be given to projects with implementation dates within the last 2 years):
2010-2011 Academic Year
3. Name of Institution:
Bow Valley College
4. Name and Title of Person(s) Responsible for the Idea (if more than one, underline the one to contact for information):
Sousan Rollans, Erin Green and Meaghen Boiteau

Office Address: 332 - 6 Ave SE, Calgary, AB, Canada T2G 4S6

Telephone/Fax Number: 403-410-1461

E-mail Address: srollans@bowvalleycollege.ca
5. If the project has been submitted for other awards, please indicate the organization, the name of the award and if the project was successful in obtaining the award.
N/A
6. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the information contained in this submission accurately reflects the circumstances reported. I further authorize CIRPA to publicize this information for use by other institutions of higher education in whatever way CIRPA may consider appropriate.

Signature of Senior Institutional Research/Planning Officer of the Institution

Name and Title: Sousan Rollans – Coordinator, Office of Institutional Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The abstract is a condensed description of the project consisting of 150 to 350 words.

The Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA) at Bow Valley College facilitates integrated planning and supports the advancement of strategic objectives through engagement and collaboration with the College community. As part of this mission, OIA has become a uniquely structured department within post-secondary institutions by incorporating activities specific to program planning support. Through a long time analysis and identification of data inconsistencies, missing processes, and communication gaps, it became apparent that these issues could be resolved by including an office resource to focus on bridging these gaps. As a comprehensive community college with relatively new board governance, Bow Valley College has the capacity to embrace organizational change, which in the case of OIA, led to the official implementation of a program planning support component in the 2010-2011 academic year.

The structure of OIA includes Institutional Analysts responsible for accountability reporting and institutional management information alongside a Program Development Analyst responsible for program planning support activities, reporting to the OIA Coordinator. Program planning support provides a foundation for the institution's learning departments and key stakeholders in planning and implementing new and revised programming, and includes the development of program related processes, schedules, forms, and policy. Documentation is a key component of program planning support and the roles, responsibilities and general practices of relevant stakeholders and departments at the institution are in the process of articulation. The outcome will result in an Integrated Program Development Approval Process for the entire College to follow.

As an integral component of OIA, program planning support assists the office with promoting a culture of inquiry and evidence, which the office accomplishes through institutional research and analysis, accountability reporting, and dissemination of management information. The introduction and short evolution of program planning support has led to improvements in program data integrity and accuracy, system and publication data alignment, bridging communication gaps across departments, and enhancing OIA's scope of practice. Acting as a central location for program information, it is expected that program planning support will contribute to system wide program data improvements, student's enhanced accessibility to programming, and integration of analysis and strategic planning processes within OIA.

CRITERIA

Please submit one paragraph on how the proposal fulfills each of the evaluation criteria

1. **TRANSFERABILITY** **Can the project or aspects thereof be applied easily at other institutions?**
What are the features of the project that make it transferable? What steps would you take to facilitate its transferability?

The inclusion of program planning support within the Office of Institutional Analysis at Bow Valley College is an organizational feature that illustrates the unique structure of the office. The OIA structure would be considered transferable to similar institutions, such as other colleges of comparable size. Becoming board governed in the 1996-1997 year, Bow Valley College is a relatively young institution, and as such it is flexible and has the capacity to adapt to organizational change and office structure shifts more readily than other established institutions. For comparable institutions that may be new, growing, and planning for the future, Bow Valley College's OIA structure including program planning support could be adopted given the level of benefit added to institutional research and planning. Features of program planning support outcomes - such as system data improvements, data standardization, and institutional integration - are common objectives across post-secondary education and the organizational model illustrated by OIA at Bow Valley College supports this. To facilitate the transferability of this organizational structure, other offices would need to gather executive buy-in and support to embrace a culture of change and recognize the long term benefits of institution wide integration. Given that this is not an overnight

process, smaller steps including an integration plan, procedure, and benefit analysis could be an initial phase for a restructuring proposal. With the existing structure at other post-secondary institutions, the details of how program planning support activities could be incorporated into institutional research and the form it could take within the office would be unique to each institution. The level of collaboration and integration involved with restructuring or developing an institutional research office are the features which dictate that this may be a unique prospect for smaller institutions.

2. **INNOVATION** What makes this project particularly innovative in the context of institutional research and planning in higher education? How does it differ from previous/current practice at other institutions?

Bow Valley College's OIA structure is an innovative model in that it is not currently found as such at comparable institutions within Canada. The incorporation of program planning support within OIA allows for a more direct link to the College's learning departments and effectively improves engagement with areas across the institution, including the registrar's office, information technology, learner resource services, human resources, marketing and communication, as well as facilities and ancillary services in the long run. Having program level data readily available in OIA enhances planning processes and reporting, particularly with enrolment projections and forecasts, academic planning, and program profiling. Enhancements to such activities allow OIA to better support strategic planning and development at the College. Not to mention that through greater integration, OIA is able to act as an ambassador for communication and engagement, resulting in improved relationships and reduction of work duplication. In being able to follow more integrated practices and by building relationships through program planning support activities, OIA will have more opportunities for growth in providing effective evidence based support and recommendations in new areas such as the health of College programs. Program planning support activities innately broaden the scope of the Office of Institutional Analysis and demonstrate innovation in office organization.

3. **QUALITY IMPACT** What were the expected qualitative outcomes? What are the results? How and over what period were the results assessed?

Initially, the expectations for the inclusion of program planning support activities within OIA were to achieve a greater level of structure, standards and guidelines around programming at the institution. Already results have been accomplished and have exceeded expectations with the level of added process, timelines, forms, and policy around new program development and program changes. Over the past couple of years, Bow Valley College has been following the implemented practices and procedures, meaning new program developments and program changes have been conducted according to schedule, and departments have demonstrated more integration and positive responses to the changes. With measured improvements to processes and deadlines, there has been an increased level of program information requests, data reporting and metrics, collaboration between stakeholders, fielded questions to OIA for solution identification, and overall affirming and validating feedback from the College community. Moving forward with the OIA structural model, it has been determined that quantitative assessments of OIA effectiveness will be required and, therefore, the office will be working to develop a feedback survey in order to create a more structured level of assessment. The survey is projected for development over the next year and will provide OIA with informative feedback from the College community on services and practices, including program planning support.

4. **TRANSFORMATIVE VALUE** Did the project have a transformative effect on institutional research, planning or the institution as a whole? Describe its impact.

The effects of the inclusion of program planning support in OIA have been felt across the institution and there are a few key ways in which the benefits of this structural model have been noted at the College. The main factor can be directly tied to student's success through improvements to the College's responsiveness to program change and

development. Additional factors include: increased accuracy of program data and alignment thereof across the College community, systems, and publications; increased efficiencies and a reduction of work duplication across the College; promotion of transparency, collaboration and data sharing agreements; enhanced integration and improved communication between stakeholders; and the identification of policy improvements and additional policy development. Effects of program planning support within OIA are illustrated by the ability of the office to move forward with a number of initiatives that were not possible before the foundational nature of the activities were put into practice. For example, OIA will be moving forward with the automation of program audit on the College's student system. As well, the office will be better equipped to assist the College in moving towards course based registration, be in a position to engage and support learning departments on the health of College programs, and have a greater capacity for facilitating decision making and strategic planning. Overall, this structural model will assist OIA in its vision to be the premiere resource for institutional management information and program planning support in contribution to the improved quality of services and resources provided to students at the institution.