



## Describe Department/Unit

### Connection to College Mission

**The mission of Cerro Coso's Office of Institutional Research (OIR) is to provide comprehensive data analysis to enhance institutional effectiveness and promote student success. We strive to be the first choice for data and research needs, offering reliable and timely insights to inform strategic initiatives and drive positive outcomes across the institution. OIR is dedicated to advancing the institution's mission to improve the life of every student it serves by prioritizing equity and supporting attainment of educational goals.**

**OIR fosters a culture of inquiry and collaboration, grounded in integrity and guided by Cerro Coso's values to educate, innovate, include and serve.**

The program mission/function of Institutional Research directly supports Cerro Coso's mission to "improve the life of every student it serves by prioritizing equity and supporting attainment of educational goals." OIR accomplishes this by providing the college with accurate, timely, and equity-minded data that informs transfer preparation, workforce pathways, student support services, and institutional planning. Through evidence-based insight and data literacy support, OIR strengthens the college's ability to understand student needs, identify equity gaps, and design responsive strategies that support student attainment across Cerro Coso's rural, online, and multi-campus communities.

## Review and Planning

### Student Equity

During the past year, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) made meaningful progress in strengthening its internal processes, communication practices, and research support capacity.

- Relaunched The Progress Report newsletter, establishing a consistent publication cadence.
- Developed or expanded several dashboards, including Dual Enrollment, Multi-Ethnic Identity, Basic Needs (with two years of complete data), and Financial Aid.
- Increased cross-department collaboration, resulting in clearer project aims and more timely completion of requests.
- Provided flexible, rapid turnaround for urgent institutional needs
- Expanded survey administration, including both recurring surveys and targeted one-time surveys supporting program development and grant activities.
- Improved use of Microsoft Planner for project tracking and internal communication.
- Advanced the IR Program Review to its final stages, establishing a comprehensive account of office functions, needs, and long-term goals.
- Received consistently positive feedback from requestors regarding responsiveness and clarity of communication.

OIR experienced significant usage across research requests, dashboards, surveys, and committee support:

- More than 115 requests submitted
- At least 8 dashboards created/expanded
- More than 10 surveys administered/supported (one is distributed monthly)
- At least 8 committees/workgroups supported
- At least 9 internal presentations given
- 2 presentations at RP Conference 2025 and 1 presentation at NCORE 2025
- 6 Progress Report issues published
- 15 program reviews supported
- Built a new dashboard for site-relevant planning data
- Redesigned Strategic Plan Tracker for the 2025-30 Strategic Plan

Ten people responded to our annual OIR Satisfaction Survey for 2025.

- Requestors generally have a positive experience requesting support from OIR:
  - The process for requesting support from OIR was clear. 70% strongly agree, 30% agree
  - The support request form was easy to complete. 60% strongly agree, 40% agree
  - My IR request was acknowledged in a timely manner. 70% strongly agree, 30% agree
- While OIR is actively working on a request, we are communicating and collaborating with the requestor at a satisfactory level.
  - Communication with OIR was easy and consistent throughout my request. 70% strongly agree, 30% agree

- OIR collaborated with me to help me get the exact data that I needed. 90% strongly agree, 10% agree.
- Regarding the results of requests:
  - The results were as accurate as possible. 60% strongly agree, 40% agree
  - OIR helped me understand the results and answered any questions that I had. 50% strongly agree, 30% agree, 10% disagree, and 10% said “not applicable”
  - The deliverables (tables, lists, excel files, static reports, dashboard, presentation) were easy to read and understand. 60% strongly agree, 40% agree
  - The request was completed in a timely manner. 50% strongly agree, 50% agree
  - The data-driven insights provided by OIR were relevant. 60% strongly agree, 30% agree, 10% indicated “not applicable.”
  - The data-driven insights proved by OIR were useful. 60% strongly agree, 30% agree, 10% indicated “not applicable.”
  - The data-driven insights provided by OIR enhanced decision-making processes. 50% strongly agree, 40% agree, 10% indicated “not applicable”
- Overall satisfaction:
  - I would recommend OIR to a colleague needing research support. 80% strongly agreed, 20% agreed
  - OIR is my first choice for data, research and survey support. 60% strongly agreed, 40% agreed
  - Overall, I was satisfied with the customer service of the IR office. 70% strongly agreed, 30% agreed
- Common themes from qualitative feedback:
  - The Good: IR is regarded as being responsive and supportive.

- The Growth: Training on Tableau and data literacy, including in-person training sessions.
- Representative comments:
  - “IR always works with me to obtain the information I am needing. If I need a report refined once received..., they always work with me to ensure I have everything I need.”
  - “My reporting requests have been few, however, when I went to CC OIR with an idea, they were supportive of this idea, and helped me bring it to life. I appreciate them very much!”

Additionally, one attendee at the Annual OIR Retreat in June 2025 said that OIR was “right there for me” whenever questions came up.

While the results are overwhelmingly positive, OIR would like to see a higher level of engagement with a broader range of members of the college community, and we want to ensure that every person who interacts with us feels that they can ask us any questions about the results of their request and get those questions answered. We would also like to see more people strongly agree that the insights provided by OIR enhanced their decision-making. **We are very proud that people who choose to use our services would recommend us to colleagues who need research support.**

At the same time, several operational and performance gaps identified in Program Review and through ongoing reflection remain to be addressed.

- **Formalized Processes and Documentation:**

OIR has improved workflow organization through an updated Support Request Form, expanded use of Microsoft Planner, and creation of an operational folder in the G-Drive. However, OIR still lacks a fully developed Procedures & Processes Manual. Workflows, documentation standards, dashboard templates, and survey processes remain in draft or conceptual form, and the office does not yet have a shared calendar for tracking ongoing requests. The recent addition of a Department Assistant III will support sustained progress on this multi-year documentation initiative.

- **Communication and Transparency:**

The Progress Report newsletter was relaunched, and new

dashboards were developed. OIR supported and participated in several high-profile presentations and conferences. However, the OIR website, a major Program Review recommendation, has not yet been developed. The college still lacks a centralized location for dashboards, reports, survey calendars, and data literacy resources. Furthermore, OIR has not established consistent communication channels with Faculty Senate, Classified Senate, and other key units and departments. One of the early projects of the DAIII will be to help us build visibility across the campus. They will be working with the Director of IR to identify avenues to pursue to improve the visibility of OIR as well as coordinate with Marketing Team , particularly the ,Web Developer, to make progress on the IR Website.

### **REMINDER OF THIS YEAR'S INITIATIVES:**

- Continue efforts to increase efficiency in OIR by formalizing functions, agendas, workflows, processes, and procedures for the office.
- Effectively use qualitative research methods to elevate student voice in improving the inclusivity and responsiveness of institutional priorities
- Develop and deploy a showcase of what OIR can do for units/ departments
- Investigate data liaison programs used by other colleges and how they can be modified to suit the needs and culture of CCCC

### **Last Year's Initiatives**

**Name: Formalize functions, agendas, workflows, processes and procedures of the office.**

#### **Action Plan**

1. Draft Part 2 Demand of Program Review – Jan-Feb 2024
  - Manual Draft: Reporting Structure
  - Manual Draft: Administrative Processes & Procedures

- Manual Draft: Regular Agenda
- i. Enrollment Management
- ii. Planning, Program Review, Outcomes Assessment
- iii. Student Equity & Achievement
- iv. Accreditation
- Manual Draft: General Research Support Requests
- Manual Draft: Survey Research and Survey Agenda
- Manual Draft: Other IR Activities
- Manual Draft: IR and Participatory Governance
- Manual Draft: Relations to Other Offices
- Manual Draft: Relations with Outside Organizations
- 2. Distribute the OIR Customer Service Survey – March 2024
- 3. Draft Part 4 Achievement of Outcomes – April 2024
  - Manual Draft: Annual Unit Outcomes
  - Manual Draft: Evaluation of IR Office
- 4. Develop tools for the office (see Operational & Performance Gaps)
  - May 2024
  - Project Tracker
    - i. Include start and completion dates.
    - ii. Improve tracking of work
    - iii. Improve timeliness of request completions
  - Consultation Forms (research and survey)
  - Shareable calendar of requests
  - Dashboard template and dashboard documentation template

- Customer Service Survey

- Updated Support Request Form

5. Develop IR Annual Agenda and Survey Agenda – June 2024

6. Draft Part 1 Definition of Program Review – July 2024

- Manual Draft: Mission Statement

- Manual Draft: What is Institutional Research?

- Manual Draft: Ethics of Institutional Research

7. Draft Part 5 Action Plans and Part 3 Needs – August 2024

- Manual Draft: Communication

- Manual Draft: Reporting

- Manual Draft: Resources for IR

- Manual Draft: Resources for IR

8. Complete IR Program Review – Sept 2024

9. Draft remaining Processes & Procedure Manual – Oct-Nov 2024

- Manual Draft: Data Infrastructure

- Manual Draft: Data Policy for Institutional Research

- Manual Draft: Official Records

- Manual Draft: Query Databases

## **Lead Measure of Success**

Operational Folder created in IR's G Drive

Tools developed:

- Project Tracker

- Consultation Forms (research and survey)

- Shareable calendar of requests

- Dashboard template and dashboard documentation template

- Customer Service Survey

- Updated Support Request Form

Documentation starts being developed and saved in the Operational Folder

IR Program Review is submitted to Program Review Committee for First Read.

### **Lag Measure of Success**

Processes & Procedures Manual is available in G Drive

Resources for College Community about how to best utilize OIR is published on OIR Website

Future of the office, despite potential staffing changes in the office, is stable and new staff can easily pick up the threads of the work.

### **Initiative Status**

In Progress

### **Summarize actions taken on this initiative**

The updated Support Request Form was integrated with Microsoft Planner and Power Automate, improving workflow visibility and consistency in intake. A reporting calendar was developed, and an operational G-Drive folder was created to centralize work and documentation. Planner began to be used more consistently in weekly OIR meetings, although there is still room for improvement.

Despite substantial progress on OIR's part, the Program Review has not moved forward in the governance process due to delays outside of OIR's control. OIR has completed all requested revisions and is awaiting action from the Program Review Committee to advance the document after the second read. Multiple follow-up attempts have been made to obtain timelines or next steps, but no updated information has been provided. This delay has prevented OIR from using the Program Review as intended to serve as the foundation for the Processes & Procedures Manual.

This initiative will continue through 2025-26 and into 2026-27 as originally intended. Work still to be done:

- Fully institutionalize Planner and a shared calendar within the office.
- Continue documenting Procedures & Processes for inclusion in the manual.
- Develop dashboard documentation templates and standards.
- Design a survey process.

**Name: Develop a communication plan that utilizes the IR website, newsletters, other regular correspondence, opportunities to present, etc**

### **Action Plan**

1. Establish the goals of communications – Dec 2023
2. Define key audiences – Dec 2023
  - a. Who does OIR want to reach?
  - b. How can OIR reach the target audiences?
3. Identify key messages – Jan 2024
  - a. Communicating Research Results
4. Create a tactical outreach plan – Jan 2024
  - a. Develop Media List
  - b. Develop Materials
  - i. Dashboards
  - ii. Coyote Howler content
  - iii. Newsletters (Progress Report)
  - iv. Annual Updates
  - v. Presentations

5. Specify a timeline for moving forward – Feb 2024
6. Implement plan
  - a. First Coyote Howler message in Jan 2024
7. Evaluate communication efforts July 2024
8. Adjust plan as needed.

### **Lead Measure of Success**

First content posted in Coyote Howler

Dashboard template developed and template for dashboard documentation found in G: drive (Dashboards file).

Timeline for communications is readily available, including frequency of communications

Outline of content for each communication channel is developed

### **Lag Measure of Success**

At least 3 Dashboards are published on the IR Website Dashboard Repository for relevant stakeholders/users.

At least a year's worth of newsletters (Progress Report) are made publicly available

First cycle of annual updates are available to stakeholders

### **Initiative Status**

In Progress

### **Summarize actions taken on this initiative**

OIR relaunched The Progress Report and published multiple issues during the academic year, with a planned distribution calendar moving forward. Several new dashboards (Dual Enrollment, Multi-Ethnic Identity, Basic Needs, Financial Aid) were created and shared with key stakeholders. OIR contributed data and visuals for the President's presentations and presented at the RP and NCORE conferences.

Despite these gains, the OIR website, a central component of the communication plan, was not developed. No formal communication plan was drafted, and engagement with the Faculty Senate, Classified Senate, and FLEX remains limited. Dashboard documentation standards are still needed (aligned with the initiative to formalize functions, workflows, and procedures). This initiative will continue this year, as aligned with Program Review.

## **Initiatives for Next Academic Year**

### **Finalize and implement the OIR Processes & Procedures Manual.**

**Is this a multi-year Initiative?** Y

#### **Specific Action Steps to be Taken**

Purpose: Establish consistent workflows, documentation standards, and operational clarity to support continuity, efficiency, and institutional effectiveness

1. Make adjustments to make tracking work more effectively for the office through Microsoft Planner and other applications to organize and monitor current projects and on-going requests.
2. Continue drafting materials, survey procedures, and templates.
3. Finalize annual agenda.
4. Implement an update cycle.

This initiative operationalizes a major Program Review recommendation and directly supports Strategic Goal 1 (Improve Persistence) by improving the reliability and transparency of institutional data used in planning. It also supports Strategic Goal 6 (Support Employees for Success) by providing IR team members with clear, consistent processes for their work and developing resources for faculty, staff, and administrators to access and interpret data.

## **Early Observational Data, or "Lead" Measure(s)**

- Significant policies and procedures of OIR that were identified in 25-26 are drafted.
- Dashboard template piloted.
- Shared calendar populated

## **Do you request help developing these instruments? N**

## **Institutional Performance Data, or "Lag" Measure(s)**

- The policies and procedures identified in the "early measures" are written, vetted, and easy to locate.
- Improved turnaround time.
- Clearer workflow consistency.
- The annual research agenda is easily located, implemented, and a process to update it is developed.

## **Person Responsible**

Director of IR

## **What unit gap or institutional goal does this address?**

It addresses a strategic plan goal or objective, It addresses a 2- or 5-year program review strategy, Other. Explain below

It increases the office's effectiveness and ensures it can continue to provide support to the college even during times of turnover. It also ensures that the office is ready for accreditation. It addresses an operational gap.

## **Redevelop the OIR Website**

### **Is this a multi-year Initiative? Y**

### **Specific Action Steps to be Taken**

Purpose: Create a centralized, accessible repository for dashboards, reports, presentations, survey information, processes & procedures

for IR users, and resources, including data literacy materials. Increase visibility of OIR: who we are, what we do, etc.

1. Develop a Communication Plan
2. Collaborate with Marketing
3. Design website architecture
4. Publish some “basics” of OIR
5. Develop a dashboard and report repository
6. Publish guidance documents
7. Ensure accessibility throughout.

Will need ongoing support to keep the website up-to-date and relevant.

This initiative supports Strategic Goal 1 (Improve Persistence), Goal 2 (Cultivate HSI Identity), and Goal 3 (Tehachapi Campus) by expanding access to disaggregated data and improving college-wide understanding of student needs. It also supports Goal 6 (Support Employees) by improving data transparency and reducing barriers to information. The Program Review identifies the website as a critical missing element of OIR’s communication infrastructure.

### **Early Observational Data, or "Lead" Measure(s)**

- Basics of OIR is published
- Website map is completed
- Draft content created
- Initial dashboards uploaded

### **Do you request help developing these instruments? Y**

### **Institutional Performance Data, or "Lag" Measure(s)**

- Website with most of the content posted
- Increased utilization of self-service data resources

## **Person Responsible**

Director of IR, IR DAIII, Web Developer/Marketing Team

## **What unit gap or institutional goal does this address?**

It addresses a strategic plan goal or objective, It addresses a 2- or 5-year program review strategy, Other. Explain below

Equity in data access; transparency

## **Develop a campus-wide survey process**

**Is this a multi-year Initiative?** Y

## **Specific Action Steps to be Taken**

Purpose: Improve data quality, reduce survey fatigue, and align survey work with planning cycles

- Survey methods training
- Create intake and review workflow
- Establish survey calendar
- Develop templates
- Develop best practices
- Provide training

This initiative supports Strategic Goal 1 (Improve Persistence) by improving the reliability of student feedback and reducing survey fatigue. It also advances key Program Review recommendations to develop consistent survey processes, templates, and quality standards.

## **Early Observational Data, or "Lead" Measure(s)**

- At least one IR team member is trained in survey methods.
- Draft guidelines completed
- Survey calendar populated
- Pilot units onboarded

**Do you request help developing these instruments? N**

**Institutional Performance Data, or "Lag" Measure(s)**

- Increase in survey response rates
- Reduction in redundant surveys
- Faculty, staff, and administrators know where to find guidance and information about surveys.

**Person Responsible**

Director of IR (with a lot of assistance from OIR team)

**What unit gap or institutional goal does this address?**

It addresses a strategic plan goal or objective, It addresses a gap in outcomes assessment, It addresses a 2- or 5- year program review strategy, Other. Explain below

Equity and representation

**Build qualitative research capacity and elevate student voice.**

**Is this a multi-year Initiative? Y**

**Specific Action Steps to be Taken**

Purpose: Develop tools, training, and processes needed to institutionalize quality qualitative inquiry.

- Train on qualitative software (acquiring and piloting ATLAS.ti in 25-26, will need to train and implement in 26-27)
- Develop qualitative manual
- Conduct pilot study
- Train staff on qualitative processes and procedures

This initiative supports Strategic Goal 1 (Improve Persistence) by providing deeper insight into student experiences and barriers, Strategic Goal 2 (Cultivate HSI Identity) by elevating the voices of Hispanic/Latino, first-generation, part-time, and other underserved students, and Strategic Goal 3 (Tehachapi Campus) by including the voices of students at the other campuses in strategic ways. The

Program Review identifies qualitative research as a major capacity gap and priority for institutional growth.

### **Early Observational Data, or "Lead" Measure(s)**

- Software acquired
- Drafts completed
- Staff trained

**Do you request help developing these instruments? No**

### **Institutional Performance Data, or "Lag" Measure(s)**

- Completion of formal qualitative study
- Integration of qualitative findings in planning
- Qualitative methods are institutionalized

### **Person Responsible**

OIR Team

### **What unit gap or institutional goal does this address?**

It addresses a strategic plan goal or objective, It addresses a gap in student equity, It addresses a 2- or 5- year program review strategy

## **Requested Resources**

**#99 Facilities: Office space improvements for it OIR Suite (Desk, Storage, Whiteboards, Repairs)**

**Is this a one-time request or an on-going request?** One-Time

**Amount Requested** I don't know

**Is this request supported in your initiatives or elsewhere?** Yes

Some of the items here were requested in last year's ASP – now extended to make the space work for 2 people. It also seems that the approval of new staff is also evidence of support of this request.

## **Description/Explanation**

The recent onboarding of a new Department Assistant III requires reconfiguration of the OIR office space. The DAIII currently does not have an adequate desk or storage. The OIR office space also needs storage space for general OIR use. The OIR team lacks sufficient whiteboard space for project planning, data workflow mapping, and collaborative design sessions. As the office continues to formalize processes and expand its communication infrastructure, physical workspace needs have become constraining.

Further, in the 2025-26 ASP, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) requested maintenance to repair and repaint damaged walls within the office, which remains unmet. The damage includes holes from previously mounted camera monitors and general wear and tear. This request is essential for creating a more functional and aesthetically pleasing workspace. The current condition of the OIR office has been noted by campus leadership as visibly outdated and in need of repair.

Improving the office environment will boost morale, which in turn enhances performance and supports the office's ability to meet the needs of the college.

## **Supporting Facts/Data**

- Office furniture is mismatched, outdated, or insufficient for the current staffing level.
- Lack of storage results in clutter and inefficiency.
- Whiteboards are critical for visual planning and data workflow design, both central to OIR operations.
- Adequate workspace is directly tied to productivity and employee well-being.
- Research supports that office aesthetics significantly impact productivity, motivation, and employee well-being (Scrima, 2022)

## **Impact on the Department/Unit**

Supports the successful functioning of a fully staffed research office and improves efficiency, accuracy, and coordination.

## **Impact on Operational Efficiency**

High – Improved organization decreases time spent searching for materials, increases collaboration, and supports a professional working environment.

### **#100 Information Technology: Qualitative Research Software (ATLAS.ti or NVivo)**

**Is this a one-time request or an on-going request?** Ongoing

**Amount Requested** Just over \$350/license/y

**Is this request supported in your initiatives or elsewhere?** Yes

Program review initiative

Section Plan (Initiative 4)

Strategic Plan: Goals 1 and 2

### **Description/Explanation**

OIR identified qualitative research capacity as a major gap in its Program Review and launched an initiative in 2025–26 to build this capacity. However, the office currently has no software that can handle transcription coding, categorization, memoing, theme development, or systematic qualitative analysis.

Qualitative tools are necessary to elevate student voice and support Strategic Plan Goals 1 (Improve Persistence) and 2 (Cultivate HSI Identity). Without appropriate software, OIR cannot analyze student interviews, focus groups, open-ended survey responses, or narrative data in a rigorous, ethical, and consistent manner.

### **Supporting Facts/Data**

- Strategic Plan emphasizes deeper understanding of student barriers and experiences.
- OIR has been supporting the work of Cross-Functional Inquiry Teams (CFITs), which often have qualitative components. We

would be able to do a more thorough, valid, more efficient and responsive analysis with such tools.

- Free tools lack analytic functionality and might not be FERPA-compliant.
- Using Excel or manual coding is inefficient, unreliable, and impossible to do at scale.
- Other colleges across the state rely on professional qualitative analysis tools.

### **Impact on the Department/Unit**

This allows OIR to fulfill a major Program Review goal and to offer a type of research the institution currently lacks.

### **Impact on Operational Efficiency**

Medium-High — automated coding, transcription integration, and analytic visualization reduce staff time and improve accuracy.

## **#101 Information Technology: Additional monitor, docking station, and peripherals for remote research analyst**

**Is this a one-time request or an on-going request?** One-Time

**Amount Requested** I don't know

**Is this request supported in your initiatives or elsewhere?** No

### **Description/Explanation**

The remote Research Analyst performs complex tasks such as data extraction, multi-window statistical analysis, dashboard development, and report writing. The current equipment setup limits efficiency and slows project turnaround times. Additional equipment is necessary to allow the analyst to view data, coding, and output simultaneously—an industry-standard expectation for research roles.

## **Supporting Facts/Data**

- Multi-monitor setups are standard for research and data analysis positions in higher education and significantly reduce research time.
- Analysts frequently switch between SQL queries, spreadsheets, visualizations, IR reports, and documentation.
- The position is remote, making ergonomic and efficient workstation design essential.

## **Impact on the Department/Unit**

Directly improves OIR's ability to complete research requests efficiently, maintain dashboards, and meet deadlines.

## **Impact on Operational Efficiency**

High — reduces processing time, decreases error rates, and improves analytic accuracy.

## **#102 Marketing: OIR Website Development Support**

**Is this a one-time request or an on-going request?** Ongoing

**Amount Requested** I don't know

**Is this request supported in your initiatives or elsewhere?** Yes

Program Review identifies website development as a key recommendation

This section plan (Initiative 2)

Strategic Plan: Goals 1, 2, 3, and 6

## **Description/Explanation**

The OIR website is a critical, missing component of the college's data infrastructure. At present, there is no centralized location where faculty, staff, administrators, or external stakeholders can reliably access dashboards, reports, survey guidance, research templates, or documentation about OIR processes. This limits transparency, reduces the visibility of the office, and creates barriers to data-informed decision-making.

Marketing support is necessary because OIR does not have the capacity or expertise to design professional, user-friendly, ADA-compliant web pages. The website is essential for implementing the OIR communication plan, fulfilling Program Review recommendations, and supporting Strategic Plan Goals 1 (Improve Persistence), 2 (Cultivate HSI Identity), 3 (Tehachapi Campus), and 6 (Support Employees).

## **Supporting Facts/Data**

- Many employees report not knowing what OIR does or where to find information.
- Current dashboards developed by CC OIR are distributed via email/Teams, leading to lost/outdated files.
- An accessible, organized website reduces duplicate requests and increases operational efficiency.
- Marketing (specifically the web developer) is required to make necessary changes, ensure brand alignment, ADA compliance, and long-term sustainability.

## **Impact on the Department/Unit**

A website dramatically increases OIR's ability to fulfill its core function of supporting data-informed planning, evaluation, equity work, and institutional effectiveness.

## **Impact on Operational Efficiency**

High — the website will reduce repeated requests, improve self-service access, and centralize institutional knowledge, reducing workload for both OIR and campus users.

### **#103 Professional Development: Conference travel for Director, Research Analyst, DAII, and Presenters**

**Is this a one-time request or an on-going request?** Ongoing

**Amount Requested** \$16,000

**Is this request supported in your initiatives or elsewhere?** Yes

Program Review initiative

Section Plan (all of them, but most directly Initiatives 3 and 4)

Strategic Plan: Goal 1 – Improve Persistence, Goal 2 – HSI Identity, Goal 4 – Innovate Offerings, Goal 6 – Employee Success

## **Description/Explanation**

Professional development is essential to maintain the office's capacity in research methods, compliance, equity practices, and emerging trends in institutional research. Conferences such as Strengthening Student Success, RP Conference, CAIR, and Tableau (among others that may come up as new initiatives are identified) provide critical training needed to maintain high-quality research practices and support the college's evolving strategic priorities. Conference participation directly supports Initiatives 3 and 4 by building internal expertise in survey methods, qualitative research, and data storytelling.

## **Supporting Facts/Data**

- The field of IR evolves quickly. Staying updated is necessary for accuracy and compliance.
- OIR has increased staffing. Current travel funds do not support all team members.
- Attendance at external conferences has directly improved OIR's dashboards, surveys, methodologies, and planning processes.
- We are doing good work with people, units, and committees across the college and we want to be able to support presenters sharing this work at conferences.
- Strategic goals 1, 2, and 6 emphasize capacity-building and employee success. Strategic goal 3 emphasizes innovation. Conferences teach us how to do research in better ways and sparks ideas that become innovations.

## **Impact on the Department/Unit**

Provides essential training, helps maintain data quality and analytic rigor, and supports the expansion of qualitative capacity.

## **Impact on Operational Efficiency**

Medium-High – staff work more efficiently and accurately with training, reducing rework and errors.

### **#104 Other Needs: Student Workers**

**Is this a one-time request or an on-going request?** Ongoing

**Amount Requested** I don't know

**Is this request supported in your initiatives or elsewhere?** Yes

Program Review: increasing student voice, research capacity, and office efficiency

Section Plan (Initiative 4)

It also supports the 2025-26 initiative to showcase what OIR can do for units/departments.

Strategic Plan:

- Goal 1 – Persistence: Engaging students in meaningful work provides them with a sense of belonging and connects them to the college, which will make them more likely to persist. Further, from previous research conducted through an SEAC CFIT, we know that a major barrier for students is financial, so supporting students through student worker employment will reduce this barrier so that students can continue pursuing their educational goals.
- Goal 2 – HSI Identity/Other Underserved Groups: Student workers can provide “insider perspective” when gathering qualitative data, helping to design survey questions, interpreting open-ended responses, or engaging with focus groups. They also bring their own lived experiences and cultural insights. This can lead to more accessible language, improved engagement strategies, better interpretation of equity gaps, and a more accurate understanding of student barriers. Research indicates that students, particularly those from marginalized groups, are more likely to participate in surveys, focus groups, and interviews and provide more authentic perspectives when the request comes from another student.

## **Description/Explanation**

Student workers will expand OIR's capacity, reduce workload on existing staff, and meaningfully elevate student voice in institutional research and planning. This request directly supports the college's HSI identity. OIR is requesting funding to hire two student workers or student research fellows to support qualitative and quantitative research, survey administration, data visualization testing, basic data preparation, and general operational activities. Student workers will experience meaningful applied learning opportunities that directly involve them in institutional planning, research, and decision-making.

This was requested in last year's ASP, but it is unclear if it was supported or not. It would be an ongoing request.

## **Supporting Facts/Data**

Student workers are becoming increasingly integral to the operations of IR offices at California community colleges, playing a key role in student-centered research as well as providing a direct avenue for student involvement in institutional decision-making. Given the growing demand for data-driven decisions and the continuous evolution of IR practices, adding student workers to the OIR office will significantly improve efficiency, increase capacity, and provide students with hands-on experience in research and data analysis. This initiative not only supports the office's operational needs but also aligns with Cerro Coso's commitment to increasing student voice in institutional processes, enhancing educational outcomes, and contributing to the college's mission, vision, and values.

At California community colleges, IR offices are tasked with gathering, analyzing, and presenting data that informs institutional priorities. The workload associated with these responsibilities is substantial and often outpaces the capacity of small teams. In response to this, student workers are utilized in various IR roles, including data entry, report generation, survey administration, and qualitative research assistance.

For our IR office, adding student workers is not just a way to distribute the workload, but also an opportunity to directly involve students in the research process. This involvement provides students with a unique opportunity to influence how data is collected,

analyzed, and used in institutional decision-making. It fosters a deeper connection to the college's mission of supporting student success, while empowering students to become active participants in shaping their educational environment.

Student workers will play a key role in ensuring that the IR office can keep up with the growing demand for data, both in terms of quantity and complexity. Specifically, student workers can assist with:

- **Data Collection and Entry:** Supporting routine data collection, such as administering surveys, interviewing students, and managing raw data. Their assistance in this area frees up staff to focus on more advanced analytical tasks. Importantly, including students in this phase of the process ensures that their perspectives are incorporated into the data gathering and reporting process, increasing the relevancy of the data collected.
- **Survey and Qualitative Research Support:** As OIR increases its focus on qualitative research to better tell students' stories, student workers will assist in developing research projects, coding and organizing qualitative data, and conducting literature reviews. Their participation allows for a more student-centered approach to research and ensures that the voice of the student body is well-represented in the findings.
- **Data Visualization and Reporting:** As OIR continues to expand its data visualization efforts, student workers can assist with connecting the data in dashboards to the students the data is representing, preparing reports, and testing the functionality of interactive tools like Tableau. By involving students in creating visualizations, OIR can ensure that these tools are accessible, easy to understand, and meet the needs of both internal and external stakeholders, including students. This directly aligns with Cerro Coso's mission to make data more accessible and actionable for the college community.
- **Operational Support:** Including students in the operations of the office allows them to witness firsthand how data supports decision-making at an institutional level, deepening their

understanding of the importance of data in shaping academic policies and outcomes.

- The RP Group's IRPE Student Research Internship Pilot (which we could have participated in, but, up to this point, the director has not had the time to dedicate to recruit students)
- Now that the DAIIL is onboarded, this goal feels more achievable.

## **Impact on the Department/Unit**

Hiring student workers will increase OIR's capacity, allowing the office to process more requests, conduct deeper research, support additional college work, and dedicate more staff time to complex institutional priorities. It also ensures that student voice is authentically embedded in planning, research, and evaluation activities across the college. Their presence strengthens OIR's ability to meet its core function of providing timely, accurate, and actionable data and elevating students' lived experiences in institutional conversations.

## **Impact on Operational Efficiency**

Medium – Student workers significantly enhance efficiency by reducing turnaround time for surveys and qualitative projects, allowing analysts to focus on complex statistical and methodological work, increasing OIR's ability to manage fluctuating seasonal workload, improving communication and follow-up, and providing flexible staffing that can scale to changing institutional demands.

In the long term, student workers improve consistency and responsiveness while lowering the per-hour cost of certain operational tasks. They shift routine work away from high-skill, high-wage staff members, which improves overall efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

## **Faculty Position Requests**

No requests found.

# Classified Position Requests

## Institutional Research Analyst

### Locations

Ridgecrest/IWV, CC Online, EKC Tehachapi, No Location Specified

### Justification

OIR workload has significantly expanded in volume, urgency, and complexity. Despite this growth, the office has only one full-time research analyst to support a multi-campus college with increasing grant obligations, equity analyses, dashboard development and maintenance, accreditation needs, inquiry support, surveys, and campuswide planning.

The Program Review identifies the need for additional staffing to stabilize office functions, reduce bottlenecks, and ensure continuity during turnover. A second full-time analyst is needed to support both quantitative and qualitative research functions. Further, current staffing levels make it hard for us to complete our goals and initiatives, particularly our ability to serve a wider swath of the college. Our goals also include increased visibility and improving data literacy (including the data liaisons). Without additional staffing, we risk being unable to support the very culture of data-informed decision-making the college is trying to build.

Currently, OIR supports the work of at least 8 standing committees, 2 of which have regular inquiry that requires support from OIR; at least 10 regular surveys and a lot of other one-off surveys; and at least 20 dashboards. Survey workload in particular has doubled in the last two years. Grants require rapid turnaround for data and narratives. There is a need for increased support in equity, planning, and qualitative research. Strategic Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 all require increased analytic capacity.

This is a critical need. Current staffing levels are insufficient to meet expected service levels and our knowledge base is currently unstable. This creates risk for missed deadlines or interruptions in institutional reporting. We might not be able to meet all of the research needs of the college. A second analyst will significantly reduce turnaround times, expand analytic capacity, reduce burnout,

and allow the office to meet institutional needs at scale.

The preference would be for this person to be on-ground, with the flexibility to visit the other sites. Because of the market for research analysts, the only option would likely be for this person to work remotely, which would expand the recruiting pool for a very technical/specialized position.

**Salary Grade**

50.0

**Number of Months per Year**

12

**Number of Hours per Week**

40

**Salary Amount**

\$6,925.14/month

Institutional Research ASP Budget Request Worksheet for FY27

Fund	Org Description	Account Description	Program Description	Activity	Location	2025	2025	2026	2027	Notes	Increase?	In planning document	Data?	If requesting increase of %5 or more		
						Adopted Budget	Actual Expenses	Adopted Budget	Request					Relevance?	Operational Efficiency?	
GU001	Institutional Research	Non-Inst Supplies & Materials	Other Gen Institutional Support Srv		CI	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 234.04	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 14,000.00		no					
GU001	Institutional Research	Employee Travel	Other Gen Institutional Support Srv		CI	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,538.48	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	Office staff has grown from 2 to 3 people. All will need travel support to attend professional development opportunities, including conferences, workshops, etc	Yes			Exposure to how other institutions and industries are utilizing Tableau, demonstrate use cases that can be implemented in our local office to improve Tableau dashboards, increased functionality of Tableau.		
GU001	Institutional Research	Employee Travel DO	Other Gen Institutional Support Srv		CM	\$ -	\$ 771.08									
GU001	Institutional Research	Employee Travel DO	Other Gen Institutional Support Srv		CI	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 779.20	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,500.00	Again, office staff has increased from 2 to 3 people. online workshops/courses	no					
GU001	Institutional Research	(Local) Online Training/Webinar	Other Gen Institutional Support Srv		CI			\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00		no					
GU001	Institutional Research	Food/Meetings	Other Gen Institutional Support Srv		CI	\$ 800.00	\$ 353.95	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	over the past 2 years, OIR has hosted a summer retreat that has grown from 3-4 units attending to 6-8 units attending. We expect the need to continue to grow as we open it up to more individuals. Additionally, a key Initiative/Goal of the office is to increase visibility of OIR and the work we do. This will require some meetings, workshops, retreats.	no					
GU001	Institutional Research	Institutional Dues/Memberships	Other Gen Institutional Support Srv		CI				\$ 600.00							
GU001	Institutional Research	Software Licensing/Maintenance Svcs	Other Gen Institutional Support Srv		CI	\$ -	\$ 580.00	\$ -	\$ 2,700.00	RP Group Membership for the college ATLAS.ti or Nvivo license (qualitative research tools), Vennpage (infographics that play nicely with data), other software for IR use	Yes		This has been supported by the college for years. Maybe I have the wrong account code			
											no					