

Mid-America Association for Institutional Research  
St Louis, Missouri  
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### **The Qualities of An Effective Institutional Research Director in Today's Higher Education Environment**

This session taps the perspectives of experienced institutional research directors to address the following question: What qualities and skills are necessary to effectively lead an institutional research office in today's higher education environment? Panel participant will share—based on their own background, experiences, and context in which he or she directs the institutional research office—which qualities are most important, whether these qualities have changed over the past several years, and discuss what recommendations they would have for improving any office of institutional research. Suggestions to those considering a position as an institutional research director will also be discussed.

Ron Pennington, St Charles Community College  
Julie Weissman, St Louis University  
Delores Honey, Missouri Southern State University  
Paul Langston, Missouri State University  
Mardy Eimers, University of Missouri (facilitator)

#### Questions

1. Please take a minute or two (please, no career histories) to share your career path and describe your current responsibilities, office, and institution.
2. What are the key attributes of an effective institutional research office (i.e., how would you know one if you saw one)? Having said that, what essential qualities of the institutional research director (e.g., skills, characteristics, leadership qualities, etc.) are most critical in creating or maintaining such an office?
3. As a director of institutional research, what do you feel has been one of your “secrets of success” at this stage in your career?
4. Higher education continues to evolve. What changes do you see affecting institutional research most significantly and how in turn do you see that affecting (or not affecting) the skills, characteristics, and leadership necessary to be an effective director of institutional research?
5. In general, is there a characteristic or behavior that is “almost certain to limit” the effectiveness of an institutional research director and/or someone who desires to become an institutional research director?

6. An institutional research analyst in your office has a career goal of becoming a director of institutional research. What education, training, skills, and experiences would you recommend he/she pursue to attain this goal?

7. A final word?

Optional:

8. If a *newly hired director of institutional research* from a similar institution approached you and asked for advice on how to become an effective director, what would you advise?