



Partnership Resource Team:

We are hoping to develop a set of best practices for institutional research at our small rural college (approx. 2800 FTES). We are in the process of hiring a research analyst whose position will reside at the college's main campus in Ridgecrest. This person will work with the centralized institutional research office at the district office. But Cerro Coso itself is an extremely distributed college, with 9 separate campus locations. Given all this, what is the best way to organize the research analyst position and integrate it into the work of our institution for improving student learning and achievement?

INDIAN WELLS VALLEY
3000 College Heights Blvd.
Ridgecrest, CA 93555-9571
Phone: 760-384-6100
Fax: 760-384-6270
TDD Only: 760-384-6110

KERN RIVER VALLEY
P.O. Box 3204
5520 Lake Isabella Blvd.
Lake Isabella, CA 93240-3204
Phone: 760-379-5501
Fax: 760-379-5547

EAST KERN CENTER
140 Methusa Ave.
Edwards AFB, CA 93524-1400
Phone: 661-258-8644
Fax: 661-258-0651

**EASTERN SIERRA COLLEGE
CENTER - BISHOP**
4090 W. Line St.
Bishop, CA 93514-7306
Phone: 760-872-1565
Fax: 760-872-5328

**EASTERN SIERRA COLLEGE
CENTER - MAMMOTH LAKES**
P.O. Box 1865
101 College Parkway
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546-1865
Phone: 760-934-2875
Fax: 760-924-1627

CC ONLINE
Phone: 760-384-6175
Fax: 760-384-6186
Toll Free: 888-537-6932

www.cerrocoso.edu



Bakersfield College
Cerro Coso Community College
Porterville College

What would be the most effective way for the position to fit into the organizational structure at the college? What best practices are out there for developing college-wide research agendas? What workflow would be most effective to get projects into the research agenda considering the multiple divisions, multiple departments, and multiple campus locations? How can faculty and staff feel they have access to the research agenda but the projects not get scattered and overloaded? How can the position effectively interact with the district institutional research office so the data is consistent? What support should the position have in terms of clerical help? What are best practices for disseminating results?

In the period 2010-2012, the college did have a research analyst on staff, but it was the college's first attempt at a position like that, and it was also a time of great management turnover. The analyst reported directly to the president, and departments and even individual faculty were encouraged to approach her with research questions. At that time, there was no centralized research function at the district level, and so the crushing weight of all the college reporting as well as the specific department research questions fell onto the position. An attempt was made to lighten the work by narrowing the research agenda and restricting access, but this seemed to slow things down even more. At the same time, the three colleges district-wide were using different data sets and generating inconsistent results on common key measures.

At this point, the chancellor created a district-wide Institutional Research office and centralized personnel. The group made tremendous strides in standardizing data-generation and reporting. But the office has never been big enough to handle the smaller college-specific projects; they get put on a priority list, but there is always something else with a higher priority. This proved dissatisfactory.

Within the last year or so the other two colleges in the district have moved ahead to resuscitate their local college research offices. This has been relatively easy because they either had such offices beforehand (Bakersfield) or had key personnel who simply returned to the campus (Porterville). This has left Cerro Coso with an important function to fill but with no history, no experienced personnel, and no effective past practice to draw from.

Corey J. Marvin
Vice President, Instruction