Making Decisions with Data: Showcasing Success
Facilitators: Brian Martensen & Mary Visser

How are our faculty and staff using data to improve academic quality & student success? How can we use our data to make decisions and take actions that make sense for us?

Session A attendees: Michael McLaughlin, Kristie Campana, Norleen Turensky
Session B Attendees: Christopher Mickle, Kevin Schull, Scott Page

A mixture of faculty and staff attended our table sessions, though many were in roles in the university that support data acquisition, maintenance and management. As such, much of our discussion focused on achieving access to reliable, quality data. Other aspects of the discussion included utilizing data for the purposes of analyzing trends in course enrollments and the use of predictive analytics in areas such as advising students. Utilizing data to report successes or analyze areas for improvement was also discussed.

Data Access
Issues of data access and reliability included:

- Retrieving data from ISRS requires too high of a level of expertise
- ISRS, CDS and other systems do not communicate with each other
- MnSCU has limitations on number of connections, licenses, etc. to run queries and the timeliness of results is a major concern
- Many units have implemented own solutions/databases and resulting data is inconsistent

Key Recommendation(s): (1) Utilize or develop user-friendly product that can access data (including ability to retrieve from ISRS) and (2) Collect information on systems (databases) being used throughout campus currently.

Course Enrollments and Staffing
Some prior successes in course predictions were mentioned (e.g. better information on international student course needs and movement of enrollment demand dollars to base funding based on previous staffing trends). Discussion, however, focused on the need for:

- Better analysis of course enrollment trends
- Better analysis of past use of temporary and permanent staff
- Collection of registration data to allow for comparisons of enrollments from same time in previous years
- Better alignment between student growth and staffing allocations

Key Recommendation: Develop tools for better prediction of course enrollments, including the collection of data on registration histories.

Predicative Analytics to Enhance Student Learning
Few examples of departments utilizing data to improve courses were given, but some indication was given for a greater need for:

- Course/program benchmarks and interventions
- Analysis of data relating student progress to licensure exams

Key Recommendation: The current work on program planning and mapping may help to identify individual program benchmarks and key intervention points for faculty. The fact that data is not reported from all campus programs with licensure in known and it is assumed that those programs will be included in future reports.