In the last newsletter, the lead article talked about the Strategic Reporting Initiative. That project wrapped up its nearly year-long effort in August, with a presentation to SGG recommending an effort to improve executive and management level reporting. This new project is called the Stanford Management Information Project (SMIP). The project was approved by SGG in September and is now underway. Rana Glasgal is the business sponsor of this project, with Vijay Gandra as the technology sponsor.

The goals of this project are:
- Train “virtual team members” to carry out the work of creating value from Stanford’s data resources
- Leverage data already in the EDW to develop 8-10 integrated dashboards with which to monitor Stanford’s performance from a University, School, or Department level
- Create a roadmap for the future migration from our many reporting silos to OBIEE, eventually resulting in one reporting tool.

This project recognizes that there are many roadblocks to the achievement of these goals, for example:

- The use of disparate reporting tools delivers information in separate re-
Business Objects Upgrade Coming

DSS has been using the same version of Business Objects, 6.5, for a couple of years now, and it is no longer a supported version. In addition, ReportMart3, which is also a Business Objects product, is using a later version, called XI (ex-eye) Release 2, aka BOXI R2. We realized we could combine the DSS license with the RM3 license, and save the University about $40,000 per year. But that savings means we need to upgrade to be able to piggyback on the RM3 license.

As is often the case during an upgrade, this means that DSS users will have to perform a new installation of Business Objects to get BOXI R2 on their desktops. We will make this installation available to users starting on January 11, 2010. However, we will give users some time to make the switch. The old version will continue to work until March 1. But by March 1, if you have not upgraded, Business Objects 6.5 will no longer work.

DSS will be giving a demo on December 16, 2009 at 10:30 in Turing Auditorium to show our users how the installation will work, how to get to BOXI R2, and what the new version looks like (actually, it looks just like the old one). We hope you can attend! Please RSVP to Elizabeth Gardiner (bethgard@stanford.edu) if you plan to attend.

NRC Assessment of Doctoral Programs

Throughout much of 2006-07, the NRC collected extensive data about research doctoral programs at universities throughout the United States. Many delays have ensued, but the latest information about the project indicates that the NRC will publish a report and distribute data this winter, perhaps in February or March. To prepare for this release, a meeting of the NRC School Coordinators was held on November 19 to go over methodology, communication, and data.

As more information becomes available regarding the NRC’s timetable, I will let our NRC School Coordinators know. If you don’t know who your School Coordinator is, please ask Rana.

In the meantime, prepare for a possible release of NRC ranking data in February or March of 2010.

Stanford Management Information Project, continued

(Continued from page 1)

reporting tools and databases, preventing data integration from reaching users and discouraging true management and executive reporting.

--Changes in the vendor landscape and changes in Stanford’s information needs require a re-examination of Stanford’s use of reporting tools.

--Previous efforts to achieve tool convergence, data integration, and management and executive reporting have been hampered by lack of an overall plan and/or the structure to support it.

--Without sustained participation and support from the “business” community, efforts to improve reporting and information delivery have been confined to specific areas with little attention paid to integration or long-term planning.

Clearly there are challenges to achieving the project’s goals, and a methodic approach is necessary. First, to create long-term sustainability, a new “virtual” organization is necessary. This organization is called a Business Intelligence Competency Center (BICC).

BICCs are common in industry and exist in many of Stanford’s peer institutions. Randy Livingston and Tim Warner have agreed to serve as the BICC’s co-executive sponsors, providing long-term guidance and support. On a more day-to-day level, Rana Glasgal is the Business Intelligence Program Manager, and Vijay Gandra is the Information Technology Program Manager. A Steering Committee will be named shortly. This committee will oversee the activities of the BICC, helping to set priorities and provide advice and insight.

Because a BICC is a new concept for Stanford, those involved (from the executive sponsors through the technical team) will receive information and training from a recognized higher education Business Intelligence expert. These informative sessions will take place on campus the week of January 11. Planning for these sessions is underway now, and we are excited to learn more about how to properly implement BI here at Stanford.

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Survey Tidbits

IR&DS staff spend a lot of time surveying students and alumni to give decision-makers the information they need to evaluate their programs and the success of their students. This data is often quite sensitive so it doesn’t make its way into the hands of a broad audience. However, some of the data is not quite as sensitive, and is very interesting, so we would like to share some of this information.

Alumni Survey—Class of 1998
In the Spring of 2009, Stanford surveyed 1,581 undergraduate alumni from the Class of 1998. We asked them about their careers, family life, and their retrospective thoughts on their undergraduate education. This web-based survey yield a 45% response rate. Here are some interesting pieces of data gleaned from the survey:

- Stanford graduates pursue post-baccalaureate education in large numbers. 72% of respondents reported attending graduate school. Of these, 8% were enrolled in graduate school at the time of the survey.
- 10% of the Class of 1998 had gotten a Law degree, 14% an MD, 12% an MBA, 37% another type of Master’s degree, and about 8% a PhD.
- 76% of respondents were working full-time at the time of the survey, and 10% were working part-time. 5% were raising a family.
- 52% of respondents reported working in the same or related field as their undergraduate major. 18% said their employment was related to their minor.
- 82% reported donating money to charity in the past year.

Class of 2012 Freshman Exit Survey
In June, 2009, Stanford sent an online survey to members of the Class of 2012 as they said goodbye to their freshman year. The survey, a vital part of Stanford’s self-study for accreditation, covered many aspects of the freshman experience. The survey garnered a 73% response rate. Some interesting results from this survey include:

- 93% of the Class of 2012 has visited a country other than the United States.
- 53% of the Class of 2012 reported that the longest written paper they completed during their freshman year was 11-15 pages. Only 3% reported that their longest paper was 10 pages or fewer. 44% reported completing a paper longer than 16 pages.
- Students were asked how the difficulty of their coursework compared to their expectations before starting college. 50% said the difficulty of the coursework matched their expectations, but 24% said they expected it to be somewhat or much less difficult than it turned out to be. And 25% stated that they expected it to be somewhat or much more difficult.
- Students were asked their anticipated major. The majors cited most frequently were: Human Biology (161 students), Psychology (134), Economics (124), Computer Science (123), and International Relations (119). Although students often change their minds about majors, these 5 consistently remain some of the most popular majors on campus, as reflected by degree statistics.

Welcome to IR&DS, Kathryn Potts!

Kathryn Potts joined IR&DS as a half-time Research Analyst in IR&DS on September 1, taking the place of Missy Damon, who left the office in May to take on the challenge of being a full-time mom. Kathryn will be producing both as-needed analyses and yearly IR reports such as the Department Profiles and Statistics Books. She is also a Lecturer in Stanford’s Linguistics Department, teaching one course per quarter.

Kathryn comes to Stanford from Hampshire College, where she worked as both a Research Analyst in the Office of Institutional Research and a Visiting Assistant Professor of Linguistics. Kathryn received her PhD in Linguistics from the University of Massachusetts - Amherst in 2007. Kathryn brings to Stanford expertise in accreditation, data gathering, and general IR know-how. She can be reached at kfpotts@stanford.edu or 3-8445.
strategic plan to map out its direction over the next several years. We therefore have been seeking input on how IR&DS can best serve the needs of the Schools and Vice-President/Vice-Provost-level units.

To gather information, we have been interviewing Deans, Vice-Provosts, and Vice-Presidents, focusing on the following areas:

- Institutional Research mission and scope
- Information requirements and how best to deliver the information to those that need it
- Survey research and how it can help decision-makers understand students and evaluate programs
- Learning assessment and program review

Tim Warner, Jenny Bergeron, and Rana Glasgal are almost done with these meetings as of the writing of this newsletter. Once all the interviews have been completed, the information gained will be used to determine what needs are most prominent, and how IR&DS can best serve those needs.

One very preliminary but surprising finding is how many people prefer to get reports in hardcopy form, for “reach for it” access on a shelf or top of the desk. This is not universal, but is very common!

Also underway currently is an effort to define business requirements for executive/management reporting dashboards involving research, faculty, and/or financial data. Members of the now-retired Reporting Strategy group have interviewed potential users of this type of reporting to determine needs and “desirements”. The group gained very valuable information during these interviews and has a good foundation for creating useful dashboards. The SMIP project will further refine these business requirements and plans to release dashboards by next summer.