

# Decision Support News

A Publication of Decision Support Services

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### WASC ACCREDITATION UPDATE

The Stanford University accreditation proposal has been submitted to WASC for review. Stanford will receive feedback in late June from the WASC committee assigned to review the proposal. At that time, you will be able to view the proposal and supporting documentation at [wasc.stanford.edu](http://wasc.stanford.edu).

This document will explain the themes of Stanford's accreditation, the various projects that will be part of our self-study, and the process used to create the proposal. The document also has numerous appendices that round out the proposal.

## Re-Organization of Institutional Research at Stanford

Provost John Etchemendy announced on April 30 his intention to centralize the Institutional Research function at Stanford. He chose to move three Institutional Researchers from their current departments to DSS, so that all IR functions will be run out of one coordinated office. To reflect this change in business practice and focus, DSS will be renamed Institutional Research and Decision Support (IR&DS). The name change and transfer of personnel will occur officially on July 1, 2008, although preparations have been underway since the Provost's initial announcement.

The idea behind centralization is to provide a clear "one-stop shop" for campus managers who need data to inform decision-making or provide context for strategic planning. It was sometimes diffi-

cult for occasional users of IR data to know who to go to for what kind of data. In the future, there will be one office to go to for any and all types of information.

In addition, a clear advantage of a centralized approach to IR is the enhanced ability of those of us who practice IR at Stanford to leverage complementary skills and knowledge. IR&DS is well-positioned to provide increased methodological and technological support to IR ana-

lysts, which in turn allows for greater responsiveness to our clients' requests for information.

The personnel affected by this re-organization are Paddy McGowan and Lynn Kaiser in the Registrar's Office, and Pinar Basim from Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid. IR&DS

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*"All Institutional Research functions will be run out of one coordinated office."*

## When is the Close?

Many DSS users are also ReportMart3 users and Oracle Financials users, so they can receive several "month-end close" emails every month—from Oracle Financials, from ReportMart3, and from DSS. It is important for DSS users to know what the typical DSS schedule is, and how it flows from the Oracle Financials close and EDW/ReportMart3 processing.

Once Oracle Financials closes (let's call this Day 0), that evening the EDW (Enterprise Data Warehouse) month-end build takes place. This multi-hour process

takes the raw transactional data from Oracle Financials and creates a reporting-friendly database structure in the EDW. Thus, the next morning (Day 1) ReportMart3, which uses the EDW as its source, has the month-end data available for reporting.

However, DSS cannot take data directly from the EDW. DSS gets its data from what is called the EDW Copy, and it isn't until the evening of Day 1 that the EDW team begins to copy the month-end report-

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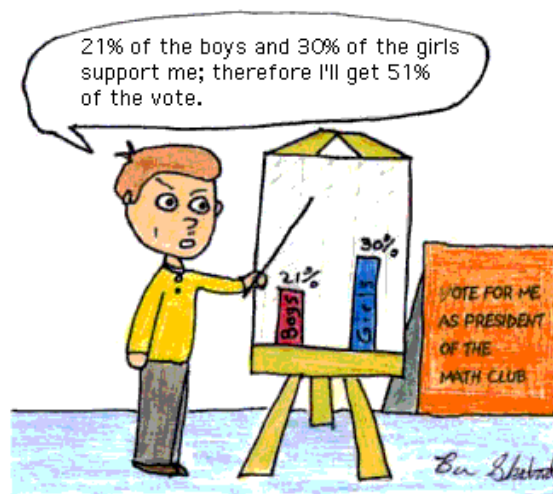
## Department Profiles for FY07 Released

The Department Profiles for fiscal year 2007 have been distributed to the Provost, Vice-Provost for Budget, Vice-Provost for Graduate Education, and the School Deans for Earth Sciences, Education, Engineering, Humanities & Sciences, Law, and the Graduate School of Business. The purpose of the Department Profiles is to provide information regarding the performance of the academic departments in the schools mentioned above.

To improve the utility of the Department Profiles, new data about course evaluations has been added this year. This is in addition to the new data added last year: faculty counts by gender, senior survey satisfaction measures, advising counts, and enrollment data for courses taught in the department. Adding new data makes the department profiles more useful by providing a more complete picture of departmental activities, and gives Deans additional benchmarks for assessing departments.

The course evaluation elements are “2006-07 Average Overall Teaching” and “2006-07 Average Content Quality”. The scale is from 1 through 5, with 5 being the highest score. All fall, winter, and summer courses with three or more student responses were averaged together to arrive at the overall score for a department. To see a full-page sample of a Department Profile with this new data, go to our website (type “decisionsupport” in your browser) and click on “Institutional Research” and then “Analytical Reports” and finally, “Department Profiles”. If you are reading this electronically, click [here](#).

If you have a need for the raw data behind the Profiles, send an email to Rana (rana@stanford.edu) and she can provide an Excel spreadsheet with the data for your departments.



*A little statistics humor.....*

## Re-Organization of Institutional Research, cont'd

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is very happy to welcome their knowledge, skills, and expertise into the group. They will remain physically located where they are now, as they will continue to provide specialized service to their home organizations. In this sense, although Institutional Research will now be organizationally centralized, it will be physically distributed. Paddy, Lynn, and Pinar will have a “dotted line” relationship to their current offices. All current DSS staff will remain with IR&DS after the reorganization and remain in their current location in Building 60.

The Provost also asked the group to take on a new function, that of learning assessment and program evaluation. Although this is a growing field in higher education, Stanford has not had a concerted, university-wide effort to clearly assess what its students are learning and whether or not Stanford’s incredible array of student programs are accomplishing their stated goals. Therefore, IR&DS will be hiring a Manager of Assessment and Program Evaluation this summer. (See related story, “Assessment and Program Evaluation” on Page 3.)

Please be assured that after the re-organization and name change, IR&DS will continue to provide the Decision Support tools and reports we currently provide. We plan to enhance these capabilities, and all of our users will benefit.

So, you can now think of IR&DS as having three core capabilities:

1. Decision Support: use of data collections and tools for users to access management reporting information
2. Institutional Research: reports and analysis to inform decision making
3. Learning Assessment and Program Evaluation: assessing what our students learn and how well our programs accomplish what they set out to do

Look for the DSS website to be updated in the next few weeks with our new name, new staff, and new mission statement. We’ll also keep you updated via this newsletter.

## Tips for the Business Objects Upgrade

As you know, on April 14 DSS upgraded Business Objects and changed the source of its data to the EDW. At that time, we sent out an email with some solutions to common questions or problems. Since then, we've enhanced that advice. Here is a list of advice we hope you find useful:

1. After you have installed the new Business Objects, if you launch the program but DON'T get a login screen, you will need to do the following:
  - a. Close Business Objects
  - b. Go back to the web installation screen
  - c. Click on New Document

This will force a file to be downloaded to your computer, which will allow you to log into Business Objects.
2. Any report that is using the OF Revenue and Transfers universe should be checked. The report now needs to have a condition added to choose Revenue, Transfers or Expenses, or you will get a very large number that includes data you might not have wanted. This is because this universe now contains *all* GL data not just revenue. The universe has now been renamed to **OF GL DATA**.
3. Any report from our previous version of Business Objects and Oracle Financials that uses the OF Budget and Actuals Exp universe (OF\_BDEXP) will no longer work. This universe is now gone. Please send us the reports and we will repoint them to use the OF Expenditures universe.
4. If you compare a report that you ran last month and find differences, one possibility is because the PTA attributes may have changed between runs. We have found that owning orgs, award types, and maybe other attributes can change from month to month. These changes will cause your report to have differences.
5. If you run a DSS report, you may find that the numbers don't match Reportmart3 reports. Some of the reasons for this are as follows:
  - Timing: DSS only updates data once a month after the month end close. Reportmart3 gets updated daily.
  - GL vs. GA: Expenses from the Fund Statement may not match a report written from the OF Expenditure universe. This is because the Fund Statement comes from GL and the OF Expenditures comes from GA (more on that below).
  - Stuck transactions: Stuck transactions in GA will not get into the system until they get unstuck, even if it is for a closed month. However, they go into GL without a problem.
6. Expenses from the Fund Statement may not match a report from the OF Expenditures Universe. This is because capital expense is not classified as an expense in the GL, and the Fund Statement comes from the GL. The OF Expenditure universe comes from the GA, where capital expense shows up with other 5xxxx expenses/expenditures. In the GA, capital expense uses an expenditure type that begins with a 5. In the GL, capital expense might roll into a "transfer" GL object code that begins with a 4 or a 1.
7. If you have questions about differences between a ReportMart3 report and a DSS query, in order to help you, we

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## Assessment and Program Evaluation

Along with the centralization of Institutional Research, the Provost also decided that a relatively new function at Stanford, Assessment and Program Evaluation, should also be centralized in the new IR&DS organization. A new job will be created for this function, to be posted on the Stanford Jobs website in June.

Many people are not familiar with this function. But it has become more prominent in the past two years or so

due to pressure from the federal government and accrediting agencies to do a better job of assessing what our students learn and how our programs accomplish what they set out to do. Assessment and Program Evaluation will help us fulfill our obligations to WASC, streamline the process, and promulgate best practices for assessment throughout the university. Contact Rana if you'd like to hear more about this new facet of Institutional Research at Stanford.

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## DSS Advisory Group to Expand

Due to the re-organization of Institutional Research at Stanford, the DSS Advisory Group, which has been in existence since 2001, is looking to expand its membership to those who are interested in Institutional Research, the data warehouse, survey research, learning assessment/program evaluation, or cross-functional data. The group will also be renamed to reflect the department's name change. It will be called the Institutional Research and Decision Support Advisory Group (IR&DS AG).

If you (or someone else) in your department or school needs to gather data of all sorts, or provide information to a Dean at the drop of a hat, you might be interested in joining our Advisory Group. Group members act as a sounding board for our work and help prioritize projects. They also get great information from the DSS staff firsthand and have opportunities to ask lots of questions.

The group meets every other month at 3pm on the first Monday of the month. Email Rana (rana@stanford.edu) to get yourself or someone you know added to the group.

## Bus Objects Upgrade Tips

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need you to send us an email describing where you see differences, and include as attachments:

- A PDF copy of the ReportMart3 report that you ran.
- Your DSS Business Objects report document (\*.rep), which your email client should find in the directory:  
My Documents\My Business Objects Documents\userDocs (unless you've changed your default Business Objects Document directory)

Send the email to [Anita.Craig@stanford.edu](mailto:Anita.Craig@stanford.edu) and/or [Kathy.Mahler@stanford.edu](mailto:Kathy.Mahler@stanford.edu)

8. Row-Level Authority in DSS: DSS uses the same row-level restrictions for financial reporting authority as ReportMart3 does. Authorized folks in your organization, or in the Controllers Office, should grant such authority in Authority Manager. Keep in mind that DSS does not have authority to grant authority – so this has to happen through your normal channels for getting financial reporting authority in ReportMart3. Also, DSS copies the row-level authority from ReportMart3 once a week, early on Monday mornings.

## When is the close?

(Continued from page 1)

ing data to the EDW Copy. The copy process is very lengthy, and usually doesn't finish until mid-morning the following day (Day 2) -- and only then can DSS begin to extract data. However, because we want to limit the amount of time during work hours that DSS is off-line, we do not start the DSS extract until late in the day on Day 2. The DSS database extract runs until the next morning (Day 3), and at that time, DSS runs its DSS-specific collection-building jobs, which take several hours.

So, if you want to know when DSS will be available with month-end data, just add 3 days to the Oracle Financials month-end close date. For example, the May close happened in Oracle Financials on June 9, and DSS came online with May data on June 12.

Of course, DSS is dependent on two complex processes, and those processes sometimes run long or have difficulties. Anita or Kathy will keep you posted in those cases and give you a new ETA for when DSS comes online with month-end data.