

## **MAKING INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH MORE RESPONSIVE TO YOU**

By Sabrina Andrews, Director of Institutional Research

Four months ago, I was named to this position, having held the same post for five years at the University of Central Florida. My first priority here has been to meet with many of our clients — the deans, vice presidents, administrators, faculty members and department chairs who rely on us to provide timely and accurate data for surveys, policy formation, budget and facilities planning, enrollment management and grant submissions.

During these meetings, I have listened as you described your needs and your expectations of Institutional Research. Though it is premature to talk about new initiatives and capabilities that might be forthcoming, we are making immediate changes to strengthen our service to you.

First, we are formalizing the data-request process by asking that all projects be submitted via an electronic form available at <http://iplanmb1/irdatrequest/> (or from the main IR homepage at <http://www.uakron.edu/ir/>). This step enables us to better manage our workflow and to employ our resources more wisely. The form, along with changes we are making behind the scenes, will translate into a quicker response time for your requests.

Second, we are revising our Web site (including the aforementioned form) to improve its functionality and ease of use. You will see the start of these changes soon.

Third, you will continue to see us reach out to the groups that we serve in an effort to build collaborative working relationships. My experience in Florida taught me that such an approach, aside from being personally rewarding, often leads to the discovery of additional ways for Institutional Research to help groups and individuals achieve their goals more efficiently.

Finally, we will take steps to further enhance the integrity of our work. I am committed to providing data and analysis that is consistent and reliable. The upcoming Program Review process will highlight the collaborative approach taken to collect data, and it will most especially show the campus community the steps we are taking to provide high quality data in an easy-to-understand format. In an effort to improve access to data, these reports will be made available on the IR Web site.

One of the many qualities that drew me to The University of Akron was the administration's commitment to a vigorous Institutional Research department. I feel we are on our way, and I welcome your thoughts on how we can further improve our efforts. Write me at [sabrin7@uakron.edu](mailto:sabrin7@uakron.edu) or call ext. 6959.