

**San Diego Mesa College**  
**Integrating Data in Program Review**  
**Fall, 2011**

**Data** are simply information that is systematically collected. **Quantitative data** is systematically collected information that is expressed through numbers, e.g., student diversity data, student outcomes data, enrollment/productivity data, Point-of-Service Survey results, or internally collected data on numbers of students/employees served or number of documents processed. Quantitative data are especially useful for identifying patterns or trends, examining change over time, or for comparison purposes. **Qualitative data** are systematically collected information that is expressed descriptively through words, e.g., document analysis, interviews, and focus groups. Qualitative data are especially useful for explaining phenomena, patterns or trends, or change over time. Quantitative and qualitative data are not opposites; rather, they are two ends of a continuum. For example, quantitative data should lead to qualitative investigation, and qualitative data can be summarized quantitatively. Data only becomes meaningful through **analysis and interpretation based upon professional expertise**; data in isolation is meaningless.

Basic tenets of data integration in Program Review

1. Use multiple measures, i.e., multiple types and sources of data. By integrating a blend of different types of data, programs and service areas can provide a more accurate picture of their program's / service area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. Strive to support your self-assessment and goals with quantitative data, qualitative data, SLO assessment results, and external data such as labor market information or information regarding the high school to community college to four-year college pipeline.
2. There is no such thing as "bad data". Regardless of whether your outcomes are high or low, small or large, they can be used to make the case for your program / service area if you thoughtfully analyze and interpret the data using your professional expertise. For example, "Program A", whose student outcomes increased or improved over the past five years, can make the case that they have used their resources prudently and should receive additional resources because their enrollments are increasing and their productivity is excessively high, while "Program B", whose student outcomes decreased or declined over the past five years, can make the case that based on their SLO assessment results, they know that if they receive additional resources they can improve their student outcomes by bringing a certain intervention to a larger scale program-wide.
3. Data are a program or service area's best friend –data will make your Program Review stronger.

Helpful links:

Program Review Data Integration PowerPoint from Fall, 2010:

Instruction: <http://www.sdmesa.edu/instruction/prog-rev/pdf/instruction.pdf>

Student Services: <http://www.sdmesa.edu/instruction/prog-rev/pdf/service-areas.pdf>

External data sources (Quick Facts, Labor Market, Employment Projections, K-12):

<http://research.sdccd.edu/pages/124.asp>

**The Campus Based Researcher Position is currently vacant and will be filled later this year.**

**Jill Baker, acting Research Dean, is able to assist on a limited basis in the meantime.**

**If you are interested in requesting research for your Program Review, contact her at [jibaker@sdccd.edu](mailto:jibaker@sdccd.edu).**