



The Electronic Newsletter of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR)

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Serving Institutional Research Professionals and Those Engaged in Management
Research, Policy Analysis & Planning Since October 22, 1986

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The newsletter welcomes news items related to management research, policy analysis and planning; persons changing jobs or retiring; requests for help or suggestions from readers; announcements of professional meetings and conferences; comments about recent publications; abstracts of papers which authors are willing to share; job announcements; philosophical and/or humorous thoughts; and more. This online publication is available free to anyone interested in institutional research.

If you wish to subscribe, change your subscription address, or unsubscribe, go to <http://www.airweb.org/page.asp?page=133>

If you would like to submit articles, requests or information for consideration and inclusion in the newsletter, please contact Meihua Zhai, Editor, at: (mzhai@gmu.edu).

Persons seeking jobs in institutional research, planning, or policy analysis should plan to check the AIR web page every couple of days for new positions. Point your browser to the following URL: <http://airweb.org> (look under "Jobs")

For further information regarding the Association for Institutional Research, contact Terrence Russell, Executive Director, AIR, 222 Stone Bldg., Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4462; Telephone: (850) 644-4470 or via e-mail: (air@mailier.fsu.edu).

AIR News

James F. Trainer, AIR Membership Committee Chair

The AIR Membership Committee invites nominations for the AIR John E. Stecklein Distinguished Membership Award and the AIR Outstanding Service Award. The deadline for nominations for these awards for presentation at the 2006 Annual Forum in Chicago, Illinois, is January 31, 2006.

As a matter of policy, the Distinguished Membership is awarded for a lifetime and should be a meaningful recognition bestowed sparingly and only to those persons who have made significant and substantial contributions to the field of institutional research. Distinguished Membership should not be used to recognize persons retiring from active service in institutional research, who perhaps may have earned "emeritus" rather than "distinguished" membership status.

The Outstanding Service Award is meant to recognize members or former members who have made extraordinary and sustained contributions to the Association for Institutional Research for a period of at least five years. This award may be awarded posthumously.

Nominations for both awards shall be made to the Membership Committee Chair of the Association. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Board of Directors shall be required to grant either of the awards.

To view the list of past AIR John E. Stecklein Distinguished Member Award and the AIR Outstanding Service Award winners, please go to: <http://www.airweb.org/page.asp?page=500>

Additional information on these awards and the processes and criteria related to each can be found at: <http://www.airweb.org/page.asp?page=79>

Please submit your nominations online at: <http://www.airweb.org/page.asp?page=226>

Sincerely,

James F. Trainer
AIR Membership Committee Chair

AIR Publication News

IR Applications: Linking Student Precollege Characteristics to College Development Outcomes: The Search for a Meaningful Way to Inform Institutional Practice and Policy

Gerald McLaughlin, IR Applications Editor

In this issue of IR Applications, Jiali Luo and David Jamieson-Drake of Duke University examine the link between students' traits upon entry to college and their college development outcomes in various areas as measured at the exit point. Using freshman survey data, and employing factor and cluster analyses, the researchers identified five distinctive types of freshmen entering private, highly selective institutions: Hedonists, Success Strivers, Artists, Uncommitted Individualists, and Scholars. Results from regression analysis indicate this typological schema is predictive of student outcomes in terms of self-reported gains and future plans

This article contributes to our knowledge in several areas. Perhaps most importantly, study findings suggest the need for institutions to be mindful of the extent to which their mission, policies and practices meet the distinctive needs of diverse groups of students.

The full article is available at: <http://www.airweb.org/page.asp?page=266>

Applications of Intermediate/Advanced Statistics in Institutional Research

Mary Ann Coughlin, Editor

In March of 1999, the Association for Institutional Research offered the first Applied Statistics Institute. The Professional Development Services Committee in conjunction with the Publications Committee undertook the development of the current Resources in Institutional Research monograph. The goal of this document is to provide a resource for institutional research professionals concerning the application of intermediate/advanced statistics in institutional research settings, as well as provide a resource document to participants attending the Applied Statistics Institute.

As a result, the curriculum of the Applied Statistics Institute has served as the basis for the content of this monograph. The Institute offers five specialized modules. Each module provides a theoretical context with practical applications, exercises, and interpretive and presentation techniques for each statistical approach. The five modules focus on: non-parametric statistics, regression analysis, analysis of variance, identifying and analyzing group differences, multilevel models, and multivariate statistics. Each chapter is authored by the faculty member who has described these applications and techniques. Additional data sets and exercises are available on the AIR Web site.

The focus of this monograph is not to cover each statistical area in depth; rather it is to describe the theory and application of these procedures to Institutional Research settings. As a result, the reader should be familiar with basic statistical principles and applications. In addition, the reader may need to refer to

supplemental readings provided within each chapter to more fully understand each statistical application.

Similar to the learning objectives of the Applied Statistics Institute, the goal of this monograph is to educate the reader about: uses of non-parametric statistics for common assessment activities; applications of regression techniques to higher education problems and issues; uses of ANOVA for rating scale data, student performance data, and other IR data; applications of techniques for identifying groups and determining how groups differ; uses of advanced statistics to provide evidence of institutional effectiveness; and applications of multilevel modeling techniques to common institutional research questions. ENJOY and consider joining us for an upcoming Applied Statistics Institute.

AIR Affiliation Conference & Workshop

ALAIR Drive-in Workshop

Jon Acker, The University of Alabama (jon@oir.ua.edu)

ALAIR Drive-in Workshop will be held on January 27, 2006 at Jefferson State Community College, Scrushi Center in Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. John Harris from Samford University will facilitate a training session on The SACS Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Plans are being made to cover the development of the QEP, involving campus-wide participation, focusing on learning and including a method of assessment. Speakers will also discuss issues found by SACS reviewers. The cost of this workshop is usually set at approximately \$15.00 - \$20.00. For more information, please contact Cara Mia Pugh at 334-844-4765.

FAIR Annual Conference

Sherri Sahs, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (sherri.sahs@erau.edu)

The Florida Association for Institutional Research (FAIR) invites you to join us during our annual conference Wednesday through Friday morning, February 1-3, 2006 at the Hilton Cocoa Beach Oceanfront Hotel.

Come and join your colleagues to explore and discuss the latest IR issues, methods, and topics. The FAIR conference provides an excellent opportunity to network with other institutional researchers, planners, and decision-makers from higher education institutions and agencies throughout the state.

Please consider sharing your expertise with other IR professionals in a research presentation, a demonstration, a panel discussion, a tips session, or a best practices poster session. For those who have not presented before but would like to take the opportunity to present in a less formal manner you may want to consider a poster session.

This is an opportunity to learn from each other and build a stronger FAIR organization.

Please submit your presentation topic by Friday December 2, 2005 to Sherri Sahs (sherri.sahs@erau.edu)

Conference registration materials along with a preliminary schedule will be made available by early December. We are working out the details for a preconference workshop which will be held on Wednesday February 1st.

For those early planners, please make your room reservation by contacting:

Hilton Cocoa Beach Oceanfront
(321) 799-0003 or (800) 526-2609
Mention the code FAI when registering
Room rates are: \$112 single plus taxes until room block is filled

Please make reservations by January 6, 2006 to receive conference rate

We look forward to seeing you in Cocoa Beach February 1-3, 2006.

NCES Publication News

Changes in Patterns of Prices and Financial Aid

This new NCES report uses data from the Integrated Postsecondary Educations Data System (IPEDS) to examine median prices of attendance, financial aid, and net prices for first-time, full-time, degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates over the period 1999–2000 to 2001–02. To capture the interaction between price of attendance and financial aid patterns over time and to take into account inflation during this period, indices of changes in three different types of prices—tuition, price of attendance, and net price—were developed for this report. The major findings of the study are that during this period, both the median price of attendance and the median value of total aid increased as a faster rate than inflation at public 4-year institutions, private not-for-profit, 4-year institutions, and private for-profit, less-than-4-year institutions. However, as a result of financial aid, net prices did not rise as rapidly as price of attendance. At public 2-year institutions, net prices not only increased at a slower rate than did sticker prices, but they also increased at a slower rate than inflation.

The analysis of the price indices confirmed that examining different types of prices and net prices may lead to different conclusions. In all institutional sectors, increases in median tuition and fee levels and in price of attendance tended to be greater than increases in net prices. In most sectors, median net prices increased at a slower rate than did price of attendance over the three-year period reviewed in this report. In the public 2-year sector, net prices increased at

a slower rate than inflation or even decreased.

To download, view and print the report as a pdf file, please visit:
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006153>

The Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate for Public High Schools

NCES has just released 'The Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate for Public High Schools from the Common Core of Data: School Years 2001-02 and 2002-03.' This report presents the averaged freshman graduation rate for public high school students for school years 2001-02 and 2002-03, based on data reported by state education agencies to the National Center for Education Statistics. Rates are included for the 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Department of Defense Dependents Schools (overseas) and four other jurisdictions.

To download, view and print the report as a pdf file, please visit:
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006601>

Participation in Adult Education for Work-Related Reasons

This new NCES report, 'Participation in Adult Education for Work-Related Reasons: 2002-03,' summarizes data collected through the Adult Education for Work-Related Reasons survey fielded in 2003 as part of the National Household Education Surveys. The survey asked a random sample of adults about their work-related educational activities and experiences over the previous 12-months. The survey defined work-related activities in terms of formal and informal learning activities that are done for reasons related to work. Formal types of work-related adult education are defined by the presence of an instructor, whereas informal adult learning activities are defined by the absence of an instructor.

Findings from the survey reveal that 40 percent of adults in the nation participated in some type of formal adult education for work-related reasons during a 12-month period in 2002-03. Thirty-three percent participated in work-related courses, 9 percent were in a college degree program, 2 percent were in a vocational degree/diploma program, and 1 percent had an apprenticeship. Fifty-eight percent of adults participated in informal work-related learning activities.

To download, view and print the report as a pdf file, please visit:
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006040>

Changing Scene

Dr. JoEllen Hopp Petri got a new position as Director of Institutional Research at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, IA. JoEllen is originally from Iowa and she was anxious to return to the state and be much closer to family and some life-long friends. Prior to her new position, Dr. Hopp Petri worked for the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. She will miss the PA State System. Home sweet home, JoEllen!

Help

Incentives or No Incentives

Hilliard Gastfriend, University System of Georgia (hilliard.gastfriend@usg.edu)

We are interested in pursuing a System-wide, web-based survey of students within the University System of Georgia (approximately 250,000 students). We normally do not use incentives for increasing participation rates, but we have recently decided to reopen and debate that position. As such I would appreciate fellow members recounting their experiences and results along those lines and, in particular, the following information: Do your institutions or systems allow for incentives and, did you run into any negative legal feedback on the use of such programs for surveying purposes? If you have successfully used incentives in the past, what types of incentives did you find most effective? Any assistance within this area would be greatly appreciated!

Hilliard

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Technical Tips from the Field

Mike Ellison, System Analyst, Office of Institutional Analysis (mike.ellison@unlv.edu)

This corner of the newsletter is reserved for readers to share practical tips, techniques and shortcuts that can make a difference in our work. Please share your technical prowess with us and send your tips to Meihua Zhai (mailto:mzhai@gmu.edu). Since this is a small corner, KISS (Keep It Short and Smart) will work the best.

XSL stands for Extensible Stylesheet Language. It is a declarative language primarily used in transforming data from one form of XML to another. XSL follows all the syntax rules of XML, so an XSL stylesheet is itself a valid XML document. An XSL stylesheet combines one or more templates, which determine how tags and attributes in the source XML document are to be transformed.

There are many applications for this type of transformation. Enabling disparate organizations to share data effectively is one. If one institution can provide another with source XML data, the second may apply its own XSL spreadsheet and transform that data into a format usable by their internal systems.

Formatting XML data for presentation is another application of XSL transformation. XSL stylesheets are often used to transform data from XML to common HTML, effectively resulting in a web-based report. This transformation may be performed manually to create static reports, or automated for dynamic reporting.

Here's a Web page I built as a proof-of-concept. I took some source data in XML format (the data in question comes from a Lotus Notes database) and created an XSL stylesheet to reformat the data into HTML. Click on "Music" events at the left to see the result of the transformation.

<http://unlvdata.nevada.edu/xml/finearts/events.aspx>

The "Music Newsletter" example on that same page shows an XSL transformation of the same XML data, this time to an .rtf format which could open in Microsoft Word.

If you wanted to compare the sample .aspx pages to the original event calendar web site (the source of the XML data) you can see the original Lotus Notes application here:

<http://domino3.nevada.edu/calendar.nsf>

To learn more about XSL and XSLT (XSL Transformation), visit the W3Schools XSL tutorial at http://www.w3schools.com/xsl/xsl_languages.asp

Editors' Book of the Month

Meihua Zhai, George Mason University (mzhai@gmu.edu)

Through the BOOK OF THE MONTH feature, we hope to acquaint you with publications that provide practical guidance on the technical or administrative aspects of our profession, offer current research and/or provoke thought and discussion on current issues in higher education.

Our book selection this month is:

Good, P.I., & Hardin, J. W. (2003). *Common errors in statistics (and how to avoid them)*. Hoboken NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. ISBN: 1-471-46068-0.

In today's world when high-speed computers are readily available and statistical analysis can be performed with the click of a few buttons, it becomes even more important for IR professionals to choose the appropriate statistical technique for a specific task. If you are looking for a resource to help you determine/assess whether you have chosen the appropriate statistical method for your research, you might find this book useful.

This handbook has three parts with eleven chapters: Part One deals with foundations; Part Two focuses on hypothesis testing and estimation; and Part Three deals with model building. In the Foundation section, the authors identify sources of error and provide a preliminary prescription for avoiding them. In hypothesis testing and estimation, the authors describe desirable and not-so-desirable estimators, discuss the impacts of violations of assumptions, compare different group comparison tests and review the strengths and limitations of various statistical procedures. In model building, the authors discuss assumptions and limitations of standard regression methods and data mining techniques.

Since this is a handbook, a reader can jump into any of the chapters to look for the reference he/she needs. After so many years working as an IR practitioner, I found the authors' discussion of the strengths and limitations of statistical procedures such as Bootstrapping, Bayesian methodology, meta-analysis, and permutation tests to be very helpful. I also found the chapter on graphics and rules for avoiding bad graphics very beneficial. Sometimes I select three dimensional graphics with the third dimension added for the sake of a better looking chart. Until the authors pointed this out, I didn't realize that the false dimension makes it difficult to discern values.

Besides identifying sources of error and ways to avoid them, at the end of each chapter, the authors include information for the reader to learn more regarding the specific topic. I found this feature very handy when I wanted to dig further on a particular subject.

Below are reviews of this book by other sources (taken from Wiley's Web site)

"...written...for the people who define good practice rather than seek to emulate it." (Journal of Biopharmaceutical Statistics, 2004)

"...highly informative, enjoyable to read, and of potential use to a broad audience. It is a book that should be on the reference shelf of many statisticians and researchers." (The American Statistician, November 2004)

"...I found this book the most easily readable statistics book ever. The credit for this certainly goes to Phillip Good." (E-STREAMS, September 2004)

"...useful to students and professionals in the fields of research, industry, medicine, and government." (Zentralblatt Math, Vol. 1032, No.7, 2004)

"...provides an easily understood foundation for statistical practice...clearly written and well divided into short sections" (CMRO- Current Medical Research & Opinions, Vol.20 No. 7, 2004)

"So, let me recommend 'CE' to all those who interact with statistics, whatever their level of statistical understanding..." (Stats 40, Spring 2004)

"An excellent resource. Highly recommended." (Choice, June 2004, Vol. 41 No. 10)

Meihua

Position Listing Summary

Job Listing Summary

Gail Fishman, AIR (gfishman@mailier.fsu.edu)

Persons seeking jobs in institutional research, planning, or policy analysis should plan to check the [AIR web page](#) every couple of days for new positions. There is no charge for posting a job. Follow the format posted at the [AIR Jobs website](#) and include as much information as possible. Use the online form to submit an ad. Jobs will be displayed for one month from the posting date or one week after the application deadline. Please notify [Gail Fishman](#) if you wish to repost, revise, or leave a job posted beyond the deadline.

RESEARCH ANALYST, Zayed University, Dubai, United Arab Emirates,
<http://www.zu.ac.ae>
Deadline Date: Until position is filled

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, Philadelphia University, Philadelphia, **PA**,
<http://www.PhilaU.edu>
Deadline Date: Reviews begin immediately and continue until filled

RESEARCH AND PLANNING ANALYST, Tennessee Higher Education Commission,
Nashville, **TN**, <http://www.state.tn.us/thec/>
Deadline Date: January 3, 2006

ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR, Minneapolis, Capella University, **MN**.
Deadline Date: Not provided

PLANNING ANALYST 2, University of Houston, Houston, **TX**, <http://www.uh.edu>
Deadline Date: Open until filled

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ANALYST, Harford Community College, Bel Air, **MD**,
<http://www.harford.edu/>
Deadline Date: December 7, 2005

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, Research Methods (tenure-accruing), George Washington
University, Washington, **DC**, <http://gsehd.gwu.edu>
Deadline Date: January 7, 2006

STAFF ASSOCIATE, INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH SUPPORT, Massachusetts College of
Liberal Arts, North Adams, **MA**.
Deadline Date: As soon as possible

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, **IL**,
<http://www.uic.edu>
Deadline Date: January 2, 2006

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH, University of California,
Irvine, Irvine, **CA**.
Deadline Date: February 2006

RESEARCH AND PLANNING ANALYST, San Diego Community College District, San
Diego, **CA**, <http://employment.sdccd.edu>
Deadline Date: November 28, 2005

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ANALYST, Neumann College, Aston, **PA**,
<http://www.neumann.edu>
Deadline Date: Immediately

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING, Southwestern College,
Chula Vista, **CA**.
Deadline Date: December 2, 2005

DIRECTOR OF SPACE MANAGEMENT, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, **VA**.
Deadline Date: Until filled

PRINCIPAL INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ANALYST, University of California, Irvine, **CA**,
<http://www.uci.edu>
Deadline Date: Not provided

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, The American University in Dubai,
Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
Deadline Date: January 31, 2006

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, AIU Online, Hoffman
Estates, **IL**.
Deadline Date: Not provided

MANAGER, INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, Western Governors University, **UT**.
Deadline Date: Not provided

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND EFFECTIVENESS, South University,
Savannah, **GA**, <http://www.southuniversity.edu>
Deadline Date: December 8, 2005

RESEARCH ANALYST I, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, **GA**, <http://www.westga.edu>
Deadline Date: December 1, 2005

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ANALYST 1, New York University, New York, **NY**,
<http://www.nyu.edu>
Deadline Date: Not provided

COORDINATOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, Montreat College, Montreat, **NC**,
<http://www.montreat.edu>
Deadline Date: December 2, 2005

RESEARCH ANALYST, Methodist College, Fayetteville, **NC**, <http://www.methodist.edu>
Deadline Date: December 7, 2005

ASSESSMENT PROGRAM MANAGER, Idaho State Board of Education, Boise, **ID**,
<http://www.idahoboardofed.org/overview/index.asp>
Deadline Date: December 5, 2005

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH,
Warren Wilson College, Asheville, **NC**, <http://www.warren-wilson.edu>
Deadline Date: November 30, 2005

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR RESEARCH, National Association for College Admission
Counseling, Alexandria, **VA**, <http://www.nacacnet.org>
Deadline Date: November 30, 2005

COORDINATOR, INSTITUTIONAL STUDIES, Auburn University, Auburn, **AL**,
<http://www.auburn.edu>
Deadline Date: November 30, 2005

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ANALYST, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, **KY**,
<http://www.eku.edu>
Deadline Date: Review begins November 15 and continue until filled

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, Dartmouth College, Hanover **NH**.
Deadline Date: Until the position is filled

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, Mt. Hood Community College, Gresham, **OR**,
<http://www.mhcc.edu>
Deadline Date: Anticipated Spring 2006

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS, University of North
Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth, Fort Worth, **TX**, <http://www.hsc.unt.edu>
Deadline Date: Not provided

MANAGEMENT RESEARCH ANALYST, Arizona State University, Tempe, **AZ**.
Deadline Date: November 30, 2005

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HIGHER EDUCATION, College of Education University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, **IL**.
Deadline Date: December 2, 2005

ASSISTANT PROVOST FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, **NC**, <http://www.uncc.edu>
Deadline Date: December 1, 2005

Parting Thoughts

Parting Thoughts

Meihua Zhai, George Mason University (mzhai@gmu.edu)

**Reader contributions of possible future 'Parting Thoughts' are welcome.
Send them to [Meihua Zhai](#).**

"It is often merely for an excuse that we say things are impossible."

— Francois de La Rochefoucauld

"We rarely think people have good sense unless they agree with us."

— Francois de La Rochefoucauld

"To listen closely and reply well is the highest perfection we are able to attain in the art of conversation."

— Francois de La Rochefoucauld

"It is the province of knowledge to speak and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen."

— Oliver Wendell Holmes

"A good listener is a good talker with a sore throat."

— Katharine Whitehorn

"Know how to listen, and you will profit even from those who talk badly."

— Plutarch

"To find a fault is easy; to do better may be difficult."

— Plutarch

"Perseverance is more prevailing than violence; and many things which cannot be overcome when they are together, yield themselves up when taken little by little."

— Plutarch

"Few things are impossible to diligence and skill. Great works are performed not by strength, but perseverance."

— Samuel Johnson

"Do not accustom yourself to use big words for little matters."

— Samuel Johnson