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

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

Editor:

Meihua Zhai
University System of Georgia
(meihua.zhai@gmu.edu)

Associate Editor:

Marne Einarson
Cornell University
(mke3@cornell.edu)

Job Editor:

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

Subscription Mgt:

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

Current Subscribers: 6643

Next Issue Copy Deadline:
4/27/2006

Next Issue Target Publication Date:
4/23/2006

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: (meihua.zhai@usg.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@mailer.fsu.edu).

From Your 2006 Forum Chair

Effectiveness Through Diversity - Something for Everyone
Bill Knight, 2006 Forum Chair

This year the Forum Committee has ensured there is something for everyone.

Prior to the opening plenary session Monday evening with Jeremy Lacroix from WIRED magazine are the Poster sessions.   There are 42 Posters this year representing all the Forum tracks. Posters provide an advertisement for research, project or a program. In addition, the Poster can be very detailed or general, each inviting viewers to engage in further discussion. Posters will also be repeated on Tuesday from 5:00-5:40.

On the fun side, the Chicago Cubs and Washington Nationals play Wednesday, May17th at 7:05 PM and AIR has reserved two blocks of tickets. These are in two different sections and prices are $34 and $14. Baseball tickets can be ordered online beginning Wednesday March 29th.

Remember the Tuesday Night Event - Mardi Gras on Michigan Avenue, the Katrina Benefit Event. This is your chance to support the ongoing efforts to rebuild the Gulf Coast region. You may want the item(s) to represent the uniqueness of your spot on the globe, such as a local wine or beer, food items that can be found no where else, merchandise from your institution or local sports teams, just to name a few. To pledge and view items, please visit http://www.airweb.org/page.asp?page=783.

If you have any questions, please contact AIR at 850-644-4470 or send an e-mail to air@mailer.fsu.edu

See you in Chicago!

Bill Knight
2006 Forum Chair

2006 Best Forum Visual Presentation Award

AIR Best Forum Visual Presentation Award – 2006
By Trudy Bers, Best Visual Award Committee Chair

The AIR Publications Committee is proud to announce the fourth year of the Best Forum Visual Presentation Award. Previous awards went to Martin Carroll from the Australian Universities Quality Agency, and Nick Roberts from Kennesaw State University and Soham Bhatt from George Mason University. View their presentation to assist you with putting together your award-winning visual presentation. You will find them at http://www.airweb.org/forum04/547.ppt and http://www.airweb.org/forum03/648.ppt respectively. In addition, you may

want to review an IR Applications: Best Visual Presentation - Observations from the Award Committee for additional information and tips. It is available at http://www.airweb.org/page.asp?page=748

This year's committee members are: Trudy Bers, Sr. Director of Research, Curriculum & Planning, Oakton Community College, Des Plaines, IL; Susan Broyles, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC ; Martin Carroll, Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency, Melbourne, Australia; Robert Daly, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Institutional Planning, University of California, Riverside, CA; Eric Dey, Associate Dean for Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI; Donald Quirk, Director of Institutional Research and Planning, McHenry County College,Crystal Lake, Illinois; and Andreea Serban, Associate Vice President of Information Technology, Research and Planning, Santa Barbara City College, CA.

This award acknowledges the contributions made through new ways of professional communication, in addition to those made through more traditional scholarly formats. Fueled in part by advanced technologies, as well as by changing notions of organizational decision-making processes and individual learning, visual presentations are increasingly important in enhancing our understanding of issues relevant to the higher education enterprise. The ability to develop effective visual presentations is an important addition to the narrative and quantitative techniques more traditionally employed in scholarly and professional settings. Visual presentations are important for communicating with various audiences. This award recognizes expertise in this area, and is expected to help elevate professional norms surrounding this important institutional research function.

In addition, a presentation on Designing and Creating Excellent Visual Presentations is scheduled on Wednesday, May 17, from 2:40-3:20. Bernard Krule, Professor of Art and Chair of the Graphic Design Program at Oakton Community College, will be the featured speaker. Members of the audience will then be invited to participate in a general discussion of what makes a good visual presentation.

More details on how to submit presentations for consideration of the AIR Best Visual Presentation Award are available at http://www.airweb.org/page.asp?page=425

E-AIR Announcement

Results of the e-AIR Limerick Contest
Marne Einarson, Cornell University(mke3@cornell.edu)

We received 12 entertaining entries for the inaugural e-AIR Limerick Contest. After much debate about artistic merit, professional relevance and rhyming schemes, and perhaps influenced by the recent Winter Olympics, our panel of

judges came up with the following slate of medal winners:

The *Gold Medal* is awarded to **Viktor Brenner**, Institutional Research Coordinator at Waukesha County Technical College (vbrenner@wctc.edu) for this limerick:

> The numbers from IPEDS say seven
> The datasys spits out eleven
> The folks at the state
> Say the number is eight
> Which is right is known only in heaven

There are three *Silver Medal* winners:

Richard Heck, Director of Alumni and Parent Relations at Binghamton University (rheck@stny.rr.com) for:

> It's this elder researcher's impression
> That to avoid psychological compression
> It's simply a must
> And oh so robust--
> Run your data through multiple regression

Amanda Udis-Kessler, Director of Institutional Research and Planning at The Colorado College (audiskessler@coloradocollege.edu) for:

> Just look at this great set of data
> Analysis makes it much greata
> But all these statistics
> Just make me sadistic
> Perhaps I'll interpret them lata

John Kalb, Director of Institutional Research at Southern Methodist University (jmkalb@mail.smu.edu) for:

> To IR or not, be it said
> Is a career to value, not dread
> It has its great times
> Even making up rhymes
> To be judged by Vic, Dawn, and Fred

And three *Bronze Medal* winners:

Matt Kulmacz, Program Assistant in Planning and Institutional Performance at Florida Gulf Coast University (mkulmacz@fgcu.edu) for:

> There once was a Master of Data
> Controlling it made him feel greater
> If you begged and you kneeled

> He would send you a field
> And the rest he would promise you later

Carol Lancaster, Associate Professor and Assistant Provost for Institutional Assessment at the Medical University of South Carolina (lancascj@musc.edu) for:

> While collecting data for AIR
> I really had a great scare
> The numbers were too big
> They weren't worth a fig
> And the answer just wasn't there!

And, again, **Viktor Brenner** of Waukesha County Technical College for:

> My heart is laden with dreads
> As I work on the counts for IPEDS
> The numbers don't match
> Unless invented from scratch
> Call the doctor, I need stronger meds!

Congratulations to our winners. Sorry, but your " medals" are just, shall we say, metaphorical? Many thanks to all who submitted limericks – they were a lot of fun to read! And thanks also to our great panel of judges – Vic Borden, Dawn Geronimo Terkla and Fred Volkwein.

AIR Webinars in April

AIR/SPSS Professional Development Series

Are you looking for new tips and techniques to help you improve the practice of institutional research? The Association for Institutional Research and SPSS have partnered on a series of exclusive Webinars designed to help you do just that! The next free session is:

Text Analysis for Surveys, **April 4**, @ 12:00 EDST

Open-ended survey questions provide valuable information, but categorizing the responses is typically time consuming, tedious and expensive. As a result, this data is often underutilized or not used at all. This new tool helps unlock the value of data by transforming open-ended responses into easy-to-analyze data for improved decision-making. Learn how to:

- Gain greater analytical value from text responses

- Save time by automating the creation and categorization of responses

- Save money by eliminating or reducing the need for outside coding services

- Make results more consistent across multiple surveys

To register today for this event visit: https://spssevents.webex.com/spssevents/

PDS/IU Professional Development Series

The AIR Professional Development Services Committee, in collaboration with the Indiana University Post-Master's Certificate Program in Institutional Research, is offering three online professional development Webinars focusing on "Intermediate Statistical Applications for Institutional Research." The Webinar series will consist of three "live" sessions, held on three consecutive Fridays - **April 7, 14** and **21** from 10:30 to 12:30 pm EDST. Descriptions of the three sessions are included below.

Analysis of Variance (Rob Ploutz-Snyder), April 7, @ 10:30-12:30 pm, EDST - ANOVA is a powerful statistical tool that can be used in a wide variety of IR applications. ANOVA can test for differences among three or more groups, and more importantly, can test for effects of multiple independent variables and interactions between two or more independent variables. Participants obtain the basics they need to start using (and learning more about) ANOVA.

Correlation and Regression (Rob Toutkousian), April 14, @ 10:30 - 12:30 pm, EDST - The module explores the foundations and uses of regression techniques to examine the relationships between two or more variables. The webinar examines how the parameters in a simple regression model can be estimated, briefly reviews the assumptions underlying the model, and offers for discussion some of the ways these models can be used. An overview of more complex models in which more than one independent variable is said to influence the dependent variable (i.e. multiple regression) will be explored, as well as, how the regression model framework can be expanded to examine non-linear functional relationships.

Identifying and Analyzing Group Differences with **Logistic Regression, Cluster Analysis**, and **Decision Trees** (Vic Borden), 21, @ 10:30 - 12:30 pm, EDST - Institutional researchers consider many issues involving the classification of students, faculty, and other constituents into groups based on identifiable characteristics. Examples include identification of peer institutions, student markets, and persisting and non-persisting students. Logistic regression, discriminant analysis and cluster analysis are among the most suitable for addressing these classification issues. This module provides participants with a working knowledge of these methods applicable to common IR topics.

Registration begins on Monday, **March 27** @ noon EDST.

To register go to: http://airweb.org/webinar-registration.htm

Attendance is limited to 50 people per session.
Current AIR Members (2005-2006): $125 per session or $300 for the series

Non-Members: $200 per session or $500 for the series

Fee includes 3 month exclusive access to session recordings via the AIR Web site.

Finally, each participant will receive a free copy of Applications of Intermediate/ Advanced Statistics in Institutional Research, Edited by Mary Ann Coughlin - a $25 value.

Workshop on Assessment

5TH Annual IEA/SNC Workshop on General Education Assessment
Eliot S. Elfner, St. Norbert College (eliot.elfner@snc.edu)

Gain hands on experience in working groups to learn about the assessment issues involved in dealing with General Education programs and values development in higher education. This workshop addresses these issues and facilitates the development of a plan for conducting the assessment of general education outcomes. It presents the mission oriented approach to assessment, describes the types of learning outcomes generally assessed in these programs, and examines how the results of assessment can be used to improve general education programs in institutions of higher education.

The workshop will be held **April 27-28, 2006** at the St. Norbert College Bemis Conference Center near Green Bay, Wisconsin. The presenters include Dr. James O. Nichols, the well known consultant and author concerning institutional effectiveness and President of Institutional Effectiveness Associates. Dr. Eliot S. Elfner and Karen W. Nichols, both of whom are charter members of the IEA staff, will also participate. IEA has conducted annual workshops nationally on developing and implementing assessment in higher education throughout the country for well over ten years.

For further information see the SNC Professional Continuing Education Web site and the description of the workshop at http://www.snc.edu/pce/assessment.htm or call (920) 403-3100. Accommodations are available at the adjacent Kress Executive Inn (see http://www.snc.edu/kressinn).

Eliot S. Elfner

Dr. Eliot S. Elfner, P.E.
Professor of Business Administration
St. Norbert College
DePere, WI 54115-2099

New Tools from the Internet

A New Web Site for Comparing Colleges by Students' Economic Status

The site, Economic Diversity of Colleges gives users access to information like the percentage of students who applied for federal student aid or received Pell Grants, family-income distribution, average educational-loan debt, and other statistics for about 2,700 institutions, including community colleges, and public and private four-year universities and colleges. Users can view individual profiles of institutions and compare institutions based on 128 different criteria.

To access and use this tool please visit:

http://economicdiversity.org/

State Tables Added to IPEDS Data Analysis System (DAS)

The National Center for Education Statistics announces the addition of the IPEDS State Tables 2003 to the Tables Library area of the online Data Analysis System (DAS). The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) is a single, comprehensive system designed to encompass all institutions and educational organizations whose primary purpose is to provide postsecondary education. The IPEDS State Tables 2003 provide state-level aggregate data on postsecondary institutions for all 50 states in areas including:

*   Percentage distribution of Title IV institutions
*   Price information
*   Degrees conferred
*   Certificates conferred
*   Employees, faculty, and graduate assistants
*   Enrollment
*   Financial aid
*   Graduation and transfer rates
*   Revenue and expenses

The tables are available in HTML and Excel file formats. In addition, Table Parameter Files (TFP) for the state tables can be downloaded and used to replicate or modify them, as needed, using the online DAS application.

To view, print, or download the tables, please visit:

http://nces.ed.gov/das/library/tables_listings/state2003_toc.asp

A New Finance Longitudinal Data Tool Added to the Education Finance Statistics Center (EDFIN) Website

The EDFIN site now has two searchable data tools. The Peer Search Tool allows comparisons of the finances of school districts with its peers based on the latest available fiscal data. Peers can be selected manually, or automatically based on total students, student/teacher ratio, percent children in poverty, district type, and locale code. The new Longitudinal Data Tool allows comparisons of fiscal and nonfiscal school district data over time from 1989-90 to 1999-2000.

To access and use either of these finance tools please visit:

http://nces.ed.gov/edfin/search/datatools.asp

NCES News

Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2004; Graduation Rates,1998 & 2001 Cohorts; and Financial Statistics, Fiscal Year 2004

This report presents findings from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) spring 2005 data collection, which included four components: Student Financial Aid for full-time, first-time, degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students for the 2003-04 academic year, Enrollment for fall 2004 and 12-month counts for 2003-04, Graduation Rates for full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students beginning college in 1998 at 4-year institutions or in 2001 at less-than-4-year institutions, and Finance for fiscal year 2004. These data were collected through the IPEDS web-based data collection system.

To download, view and print the publication as a PDF file, please visit:

http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006155

Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States: 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey

The Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) is the nation's most extensive sample survey of elementary and secondary schools and the teachers and administrators who staff them. This report introduces the data from the fifth administration (2003-04) of SASS. It is intended to give the reader an overview of the SASS data for the school year 2003-04 through tables of estimates for public, private, and BIA-funded schools and their staff. For example, one of the findings from the data is that 77 percent of public school districts required full standard state

certification in the field to be taught when considering teaching applicants. Also, 82 percent of all public school teachers reported having 4 or more years of full-time teaching experience. These highlights, and others in the report, were not selected to emphasize any particular issue, and they should not be interpreted as representing the most important findings in the data. They are simply examples of the kinds of data that are available in the 2003-04 SASS. In addition, complex interactions and relationships have not been explored.

To download, view and print the publication as a PDF file, please visit:

http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006313

Fifth Grade: Findings from the Fifth-Grade Follow-Up of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99

This report highlights children's gains in reading and mathematics over their first 6 years of school, from the start of kindergarten to the time when most of the children are completing fifth grade. It also describes children's achievement in reading, mathematics, and science at the end of fifth grade. Comparisons are made in relation to children's sex, race/ethnicity, family characteristics (e.g., family type, poverty status, primary home language), the types of schools attended (i.e., public or private), and residential and school mobility. While all children showed progress, learning gaps persisted. Certain family background variables were found to be associated with reading and mathematics achievement, for example, poverty status and mother's highest level of education. Children living in poverty in all rounds of data collection scored lower in both reading and mathematics, on average, than students who moved into and out of poverty during the same period. Children whose mothers had not completed high school scored lower than children whose mothers had a bachelor's or higher degree. Boys were more likely than girls to score in the highest third of the distribution of mathematics achievement scores. It is the fifth in a series of reports from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99.

To download, view and print the publication as a PDF file, please visit:

http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006038

AAUP News

AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey 2005-06
John Curtis, American Association of University Professors (jcurtis@aaup.org)

Thanks to all who have participated in our annual survey. We have closed the initial data collection and are now preparing tables and institutional listings for our published report, which will be released in mid-April. If your institution has

not yet submitted data for 2005-06, you may still do so. We will publish a
"Corrections and Additions" listing in July. For complete instructions on
participating in the survey, go to our survey home page at https://research.
aaup.org/fcs.

For those of you interested in peer comparison reports from survey data, we are
unfortunately still working on the software to process and distribute those
reports. We will send an e-mail to all survey contacts when the ordering process
is ready; please hold off on submitting your requests until then.

For more information about the survey and options for ordering data, you can
check for updates at http://www.aaup.org/research/Index.htm.

John Curtis

John W. Curtis, Ph.D.
Director of Research
American Association of University Professors
1012-14th Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005-3465

HERI Symposium

HERI Symposium & Call For Papers
Victor Saenz, Higher Education Research Institute (vsaenz@ucla.edu)

Celebrating 40 Years of CIRP Research in Higher Education

The CIRP 40th Anniversary Symposium, to be held **Wednesday, November 1st**,
2006 at the UCLA campus, will serve to spotlight selected papers indicating new
directions in research, as well as honor Alexander and Helen Astin for their
contributions as founding directors of the Institute and the CIRP. It is our goal to
assemble a renowned group of scholars, institutional researchers, alumni, and
students at this Symposium in order to commemorate 40 years of important
research in higher education. The CIRP 40th Symposium will precede the annual
conference of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), to be
held 40 miles from the UCLA campus in Anaheim, California (**Nov. 2-4, 2006**).

Up to six papers will be chosen in the review process, and the selected authors
will be required to complete their research in the summer and fall of 2006,
attend the Symposium, provide a brief of the findings that can be posted on the
HERI website, and prepare their paper for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.
Arrangements may be made to offer remote access to data files or to conduct
studies at the Institute in order to facilitate timely completion of selected papers
to be presented at the CIRP 40th Anniversary Symposium. All data access fees
will be waived and all travel expenses will be covered for selected authors to
attend the Symposium. Additional studies that are of excellent quality may be
approved that are not part of this special event. These will follow the regular

process of review and determination of costs for data access. All data users are required to sign a restricted-use agreement limited to the topic of study and use within a specified timeframe.

Call For Papers

The submission deadline for this Call for Papers is Friday, May 1st, 2006. Selected authors will be notified no later than May 15th, 2006. HERI staff will initially sort to select studies that do not overlap with ongoing areas of research or external studies already approved, make inquiries or communicate with authors, and a distinguished group of UCLA faculty affiliated with HERI will be convened to select a final group for the Symposium. Research proposals that are unique and specific stand a good chance of being selected, particularly if they do either of the following: 1)Address issues that lack empirical research in higher education, 2)Make use of advanced statistical methodologies, 3) Employ new theoretical or disciplinary approaches to test with CIRP data, and 4)Illustrate new uses of CIRP data for institutional improvement and assessment. Additional studies may be approved as HERI staff work with authors not selected as part of this event.

Submitting A Proposal

Submissions are welcomed from researchers with varied disciplinary training, including the fields of Sociology, Psychology, Education, Anthropology, Political Science, Policy Studies, Statistics, Economics, and other relevant Social Sciences. Additionally, HERI encourages institutional researchers to submit proposals that reflect innovative uses of CIRP data for institutional assessment. Unless researchers are already using current CIRP data for institutional assessment, the one limitation is that only data files between 1966 and 2003 will be available for data access requests as part of this Call. All data files within this range will be available for analyses, including CIRP Freshman data (1966-2003), HERI Faculty data (1989, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001), and CIRP longitudinal files (FUS, CSS, YFCY, and post-college follow-ups) up until 2003. An additional limitation is that all institutional identifiers and student identifiers will be stripped from the files, and access will be given for a limited set of variables relevant to each study.

Individuals interested in using HERI data must submit a proposal for data access and should demonstrate a clear idea of the specific project they wish to pursue. All individuals submitting proposals should also offer evidence of their credentials and affiliations by including short bio. Every submission must include the following information in its proposal narrative (2-3 pages):

Proposal Narrative

   A. Title.

B. Purpose. Explain the study's theoretical framework. Make reference to the literature as appropriate.

C. Research questions and/or hypotheses. Explicitly state your research questions.

D. Datasets, respondents, and variables. Specify the existing data set(s) to be used (instrument and year), if you require a particular subset of respondents (e.g., only women), and the specific variables requested in the data set(s).

E. Method of Analysis. Explain the analyses that will be performed.

F. Location of study. Explain if you will be accessing the data in-house at HERI or will need to arrange for off-site access. If you plan on-site access, estimate when and how long you would need to be on-site.

G. Dissemination. Describe the proposed dissemination of the results, including: to whom results will be released, how the results will be released, and a timetable for release.

H. References.

Review Process

When reviewing proposals, the selection team will evaluate whether:

1. HERI data adequately matches the proposed research project;

2. The study design is adequate to answer the questions being asked, theoretical grounding is evident, and the proposal provides sufficient detail about dependent and independent variables;

3. The proposal details the process by which the investigator will acquire appropriate institutional review board approval;

4. The intended plan specified by the investigator involves advancing scholarship;

5. The research is conducted in a manner that minimizes conflicts with other research conducted by HERI staff or other investigators under previously approved projects, and

6. Evidence of intention to submit study through appropriate institutional review board procedures.

Submissions & Questions:

Interested individuals should send all submission materials and a copy of their CV postmarked by **May 1st, 2006**. Submissions and questions should be sent to cirp40th@ucla.edu, or by mail to:

John Pryor
Director, Cooperative Institutional Research Program
Higher Education Research Institute
3005 Moore Hall, Box 951521
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521
(310) 825-1925 voice
(310) 206-2228 fax

For more information, visit the HERI website at: http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/CIRP40.html.

Community College Benchmarking Conference

Community College Benchmarking Conference
Jeff Seybert, Johnson County Community College (jseybert@jccc.edu)

Johnson County Community College is pleased to announce the first National Community College Benchmarking Conference, to be held on the JCCC Campus, **Aug. 1-3**, 2006.

A major highlight of the conference will be keynote presentations by national leaders in higher education : Peter Ewell (Vice President, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems--NCHEMS), Kay MeClenney (Director, Community College Survey of Student Engagement--CCSSE), and Derek Price (Director, DVP-Praxis, Ltd.).

In addition, the conference will feature half-day pre- and post-conference hands-on benchmarking workshops, facilitated by Gayle Fink (Director of Institutional Research, University of Maryland System) and presentations by individuals from around the country who are actively involved in an array of community college benchmarking efforts.

The conference fee is a reasonable $150 ($175 after 7/21/06) and includes two lunches (Aug. 2 & 3), and all breaks. The fee for each workshop is $25. We have arranged outstanding hotel accomodations near the JCCC campus (hotel rates from $79/night).

Please visit the conference website (www.jccc.net/benchmarking) for additional information including the call for presentation proposals (due May 1), registration form, tentative conference schedule, housing and transportation information, and more. The conference is limited to 170 participants, so early registration is advisable.

Thank you and we hope to see you here in the Kansas City area in August.

Jeff Seybert

Jeff Seybert, Director
Institutional Research
Johnson County Community College

Changing Scene

Wendell Lorang is retiring as of April 5, 2006 after thirty-six years in Institutional Research, and nearly eight as Director at University at Albany, SUNY. Wendell thanks his many AIR and NEAIR colleagues for their friendship and support over the years. Best wishes, Wendell!

Help

Developing a Communication Alert System
William E. Roweton, Chadron State College (wroweton@pipeline.csc.edu)

Chadron State is developing a communication alert system to inform students, faculty, and others in and around our college community about emergency situations. For example, does anyone use an automated/pre-recorded phone system to alert parents? to inform students and faculty? How do you use the college Web or your e-mail?

Who has developed a campus-wide instructional system (e.g., electronic delivery) if and when the campus is quarantined?

Preparing for the avian pandemic and other campus-wide situations, we wish to develop an effective communication strategy which could alert the College of developments, even on a daily basis.

Please advise.

Thanks,

Bill

William E. Roweton, PhD
Director, Office for Institutional Research &
Assistant to the President
Chadron State College
Chadron, NE 69337
(308) 432-6458

Using NSC StudentTracker Tools
Mary E. Perkins, Rock Valley College (m.perkins@rvc.cc.il.us)

I would like to find institutions who are using the National Student Clearinghouse

StudentTracker tools to track their transfer students. I am particularly interesting in talking with institutions that are using SPSS to process their NSC response files.

Thanks!

Mary

Mary E. Perkins, Ed.D.
Institutional Research Manager
Rock Valley College
(815) 921-4874 phone
m.perkins@rvc.cc.il.us

Practioner Profile

Dawit Teklu from Anne Arundel Community College
Marne Einarson, Cornell University, mke3@cornell.edu

In this feature, we summarize the results of an "electronic interview" with an individual institutional research practitioner. The goal is to foster broader knowledge and appreciation of the diverse membership of AIR, and of the different institutional contexts and activities in which we are engaged.

In this issue, we interview Dawit Teklu, Executive Director of Planning, Research and Institutional Assessment at Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold, MD (dteklu@aacc.edu).

e-AIR: Where do you work?

Dawit: I am currently the Executive Director of Planning, Research and Institutional Assessment at Anne Arundel Community College. Established in 1961, AACC is the largest single campus community college in Maryland. In fall 2005, the college's credit headcount enrollment was 14,629.

Our office is part of the Division of Learner Support Services and we report to the vice president of the division. I work with five colleagues: A Senior Research Analyst, a Technical Research Specialist, a Research Analyst, a Planning and Research Analyst and a Planning and Research Assistant. The office performs the typical IR functions ranging from responding to requests for data to conducting studies and publishing research findings in various formats.

e-AIR: Tell us something about your background.

Dawit: I was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I grew up in a large family with four brothers and two sisters. After completing high school in Ethiopia, I came to the

United States to attend college. While I was in college, the military took over Ethiopia and took away all forms of basic human rights including academic freedom and freedom of expression. Most Ethiopians my age who came to the US for further education decided not to go back.

My academic background includes a BA in economics from George Williams College, an MS in Economic Development and Fiscal Planning from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a CAGS (Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies) in public policy analysis from Virginia Tech.

e-AIR: How did you arrive at institutional research as a profession?

Dawit: I began in institutional research somewhat by accident. Throughout graduate school I was preparing myself for a career in development economics and international work. I didn't even know what institutional research was when I interviewed for my first position as a research analyst at Northern Virginia Community College. I left NOVA after 12 years to take the Director of Research position at William Rainey Harper College. After five years at Harper I moved to my current position in Maryland. Institutional research allows me to use my quantitative training and analytical skills. I grew into the field and I love it.

e-AIR: Tell us about a professional accomplishment you have achieved.

Dawit: I started as an entry-level research analyst and over the years have taken several leadership positions in the best community colleges in the country. I have also brought several talented researchers into the profession. I am proud to say that some have taken leadership positions around the country.

e-AIR: What are some of the most challenging aspects of your position? How do you deal with this?

Dawit: The accountability movement has created a lot of demand on IR offices and IR professionals. This is in addition to doing the other routine IR functions. Doing more with less is a major challenge. While the demand for our services has grown over the years, the resources necessary to do our job have not grown accordingly. One way I deal with this is through a project management system. I also make sure that the college leadership is aware of all the services we provide. This helps make requesting additional resources a more pleasant experience.

e-AIR: Tell us about a mistake you've made as an IR practitioner. What did you learn from this experience?

Dawit: One mistake that comes to mind is taking a position at an institution that did not value research. Be sure to do your homework before you accept a position.

e-AIR: Where do you see yourself ten years from now?

Dawit: Somewhere warm and quiet. God willing, I plan to take a part time teaching position in my native Ethiopia and spend most of my time reading all the books I have always wanted to read. On the top of my list will be books on Ethiopian history, African history, comparative religion and philosophy.

e-AIR: What do you do when you are not working?

Dawit: I spend a lot of time with my family: My wife Abenet Teklu, my son Moti age 15, and my daughter Maya age 12. We travel together; visit new places whenever we get a chance. I also like to read and ride my bike.

e-AIR: What advice would you offer to someone just starting out in IR?

Dawit: Get a mentor!! That is my first piece of advice. My second piece of advice is get involved with your state IR group. Third, take advantage of the many wonderful professional development opportunities provided by AIR. Attend the Forum whenever you can, volunteer and do your share.

e-AIR: Thank you, Dawit!

> **We welcome your feedback on this feature, including suggestions for individuals to be interviewed and questions you would like to have posed in future interviews. Please e-mail your comments and suggestions to Marne Einarson (mailto:mke3@cornell.edu).**

Technical Tips from the Field

Direct or Indirect ? (Managing Cell References in Excel)
Viktor Brenner, Waukesha County Technical College (Vbrenner@wctc.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.**

Indirect Cell References in Excel

If you use multi-sheet Excel workbooks, you might have encountered the line-insertion problem. For instance, you have program-level data entered on one sheet, then some manipulation is done or other data is added on a second sheet.

Consider the list below:

	A	B
1	Program	FTE
2	IT- Microcomputer Specialist	36
3	IT- Programmer Analyst	33

If you wanted to add a line between these, say "IT-Network Specialist," all of the references to cells A3 and B3 would be updated to cells A4 and B4—but there would be no reference to cells A3 or B3 at all on subsequent worksheets unless you went back, inserted a line, and copied your formulas over into the new line. This problem can be avoided by using indirect cell references.

Indirect cell references always point to the same cell regardless of any changes to the spreadsheet. Indirect references use the worksheet function "Indirect ()", with a cell reference being the parameter.

Thus, instead of a direct reference:

```
='Worksheet1'!$a$3
```

use the indirect reference

```
= Indirect ('Worksheet1'!$a$3)
```

The direct reference will continue to point to "IT-Programmer Analyst" when a row is added; the indirect reference will continue to point to cell A3 even after a row has been entered and the contents of the cell become "IT-Network Specialist."

Thanks a lot, Viktor, for sharing this tip!

Presentation Tips from the Field

Tips and Techniques for an Outstanding Presentation
Robert Daly, University of California, Riverside (bob.daly@ucr.edu)

(This is the third article in the series about tips and techniques to help you prepare an excellent Forum presentation. Many of the tips and techniques that have been developed by presentation experts will be discussed in this series. I will be providing links so you can watch the pros in action, showing you some different presentation styles that you can emulate, giving you some do's and don'ts for using PowerPoint, providing tips on using images and graphics, and in general helping you prepare for your Forum presentation. At any time, please feel free to write to me if you have questions or suggestions.)

Tip 3: Creating Your Presentation

Last month's article discussed how to organize your presentation using the principle of "Keep It Simple and Short" (KISS). It was recommended that you choose a presentation organization or structure that fits your style of presenting. Several traditional and non-traditional presentation structures were discussed. One should be selected and used.

This month's article will focus on helpful tips for the creation of your presentation. The design tips can be used when creating your PowerPoint slides and will enhance the quality and professionalism of the slides in your presentation. When you begin creating your slides, remember that you are making the presentation, not PowerPoint. Use PowerPoint to make a great presentation, not as the presentation itself.

Content, Content, Content

Too many presenters fall into the PowerPoint Phluff trap. Their presentations are full of fancy slide transitions, slide builds, clip art, and images and graphics unrelated to their presentation. Phluff! Great presentations are built around content. Focus on the results of your research. Your audience is there to hear about your research, not to observe your talent as a graphic artist or your skills in manipulating PowerPoint. Use PowerPoint to help you manage and display your slides. Then fill those slides full of your content.

How much content? Just the amount that is needed to make your point and to convey your research findings, that is, the "right stuff." It is difficult to decide what to include and to omit in your slides. Avoid believing that you must present all the data because your IR colleagues want to see it. Satisfy their desire by providing the data in a handout. A frequent mistake made by presenters is to "paste" SPSS or SAS output tables (crosstabs) into a slide, making the numbers too small to read. How many times have you heard a presenter say "The text is pretty small, so you probably can't read it, but…" and continue on with the presentation? Populate your data slide with only the numbers that are needed for the audience to understand you point. Keep your slides simple.

Pointless Bullets

Tufte and other researchers state that bullet points "dilute thought." The May-June 1998 issue of the Harvard Business Review argues that bullet point outlines ignore and conceal the causal relationships of analysis. Yet bullet point outline slides still dominate presentations. For your Forum presentation, avoid using bullet point outlines. This is probably the least effective way to present

your research. Use your slides to enhance your presentation by showing causal relationships and comparisons.

One useful technique to break out of the bullet point habit is to construct slides that contain just one complete sentence. The addition of a verb in the sentence provides action to your slides and can solidify your message. A sentence like "Student retention increased 22% during the freshman year" is a powerful message. It provides a fact (22%), the study group (freshmen), the type of change (increased), and a time period (freshmen year). Compare the sentence to this possible bullet point outline:

> Student Retention
>   • Student Cohort
>   • First Year
>   • Increased 22%
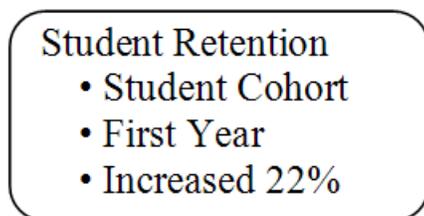
Compare these two approaches and decide which one stimulates thought.

If you want to completely eliminate bullet points from your presentation, consider studying and using the techniques described by Cliff Atkinson in Beyond Bullet Points. If you feel it is necessary to have an outline in your presentation, consider using a "graphical" outline. Outlines using flow charts or cluster charts are very powerful presentation techniques. They show relationships and connections that are difficult to display with bullet point outlines. Excellent samples are shown in the RAND Corporation's "Guidelines for Preparing Briefings."

Visual Aids

AIR's Best Visual Presentation award was initiated to encourage Forum presenters to make excellent use of visual aids in their presentation. The work of that committee continues, and it has published several articles on effectively using visual aids. An "IR Application" is the most recent publication of the committee and can be viewed at (http://www.airweb.org/page.asp?page=748). Many of the tips in this article are discussed in that publication.

  Font Size There are a few visual tips that are easy to implement and do not require you to be a graphic artist. The first is to use large-sized fonts. There is no hard and fast minimum font size rule, but every piece of text and every number should be easily readable from the back of the room. Guy Kawasaki in his "10/20/30" rule of PowerPoint states that the smallest font should be 30 points. If you find that rule too restrictive,

Kawasaki recommends that you take the age of the oldest person in your audience and divide it by two. Use the result as the minimum size for your fonts. Whatever size fonts you use, be sure all are easily readable by everyone in your audience and from the back of the room.

Typeface Large-size fonts add to visual clarity. The selection of the font typeface will also help. Generally speaking, choose a sans serif for your slides. Serif fonts (with the little curly feet) tend to look blurry when projected onto screens. Most presenters tend to use Arial, primarily since it is the default font in the Windows Microsoft Office. Consider using other sans serif fonts such as Gill Sans, Helvetica, Tahoma, Trebuchet, or Verdana. Various "fun" typefaces like "Comic Sans" should be used with caution and only when the font typeface is appropriate for your presentation. Choose a typeface that is easy to read and looks professional.

Colored-text To help emphasize key points in your presentation, use colored text. Different colors convey different types of emotions and colorized text can be a very powerful enhancement to your presentation. Red-colored text is associated with excellence or an alert. Green colored-text is generally associated with growth, and grey colors are associated with integrity and maturity. Choose font colors carefully, and then use them to your advantage. A useful chart for selecting a text color is available in "15 Minute Guide to Winning Presentations," published by InFocus.

Backgrounds Choosing a slide background can be stressful. Think of it as another graphical element and select a background that does not detract from the content of your presentation. Avoid backgrounds that add Phluff. For example, a background with cartoon characters could convey the message that you are not serious. Be careful. Solid color backgrounds, especially white, black, or a very dark blue, are probably the easiest to work with. These reside visually in the background and will not detract from the presentation's content.

Images and Graphs Add images, photos, graphs, and charts often, but only when they are related to and support the content for your presentation. The purpose of all graphical elements is to enhance your presentation and to add a dimension that is very difficult to describe with only the spoken word. For example, a line graph displaying the retention rate of each of the five colleges in your university for the last ten years quickly provides far more information than is possible with the spoken word. In the graph, you show the starting points, the end points, the degree of change, and a measure of relative change. Charts and images like these are information-rich and should be used in your presentation. Use them whenever necessary to enhance your presentation.

Data Tables Data tables dominate IR presentations. As mentioned above, avoid " pasting" output files into your slides. If at all possible, a data table should be constructed in PowerPoint. Select " Table" from PowerPoint' s " Insert" menu to create data tables in your slides. With a little formatting, you will be able to create a professional looking data table.

It is outside the scope of this series of articles to fully discuss how to display and present data. Reviewing Edward Tufte' s series of books (http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/index) on displaying quantitative information is an essential part of the training needed for any institutional researcher. Additional help on creating data tables (and graphs) can be fond in " Best Visual Presentation - Observations from the Award Committee," and IR Application published by AIR.

Next Month

The 2006 AIR Forum is just a month and a half away. This is a good time to start creating your slides, but be sure to use an outlining technique that was discussed in the second " Tip" of this series, " Planning Your Presentation." Next month' s article will give you tips and suggestions on how to practice presenting your presentation.

Position Listing Summary

Job Listing Summary

Gail Fishman, AIR (gfishman@mailer.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.

DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND POLICY ANALYSIS, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), **Washington, DC**.
Deadline Date: April 28, 2006

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT DIRECTOR, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, **FL**
.
Deadline Date: Review begins April 17 and continues until filled

SENIOR MANAGER, HUMAN RESOURCES DATA RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS, California State University, Office of the Chancellor, Long Beach, **CA**.
Deadline Date: Applications accepted until filled

ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY PROVOST FOR ENROLLMENT SERVICES, University of Louisville, Louisville, **KY**.
Deadline Date: Reviews begin immediately

RESEARCH ANALYST, University of Scranton, Scranton, **PA**, http://www.scranton.edu
Deadline Date: April 21, 2006

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, PLANNING, AND ASSESSMENT, Rogers State University, Claremore, **OK**, http://www.rsu.edu
Deadline Date: Open until filled

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ANALYST II - Req. #15315, University of Louisville, Louisville, **KY**. Deadline Date: April 1, 2006

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYST, Trent University, Peterborough, **Ontario**, http://www.trentu.ca
Deadline Date: Open until filled

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ANALYST, Ohio Northern University, Ada, **OH**, http://www.onu.eduDeadline Date: March 31, 2006

SENIOR RESEARCH ASSISTANT, Arizona Western College, Yuma, **AZ**.
Deadline Date: First review April 3, 2006

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE I, Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor, **MI**.
Deadline Date: Please reply by April 3, 2006

DATABASE & APPLICATIONS SPEPCIALIST, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, **IL**, http://www.colum.edu
Deadline Date: April 30, 2006

RESEARCH ANALYST, University of Kansas Medical Center, Kansas City, **KS**, http://www.kumc.edu Deadline Date: Open until filled

INSTITUTIONAL DATA ADMINISTRATOR, The College of New Jersey, Ewing, **NJ**, http://www.tcnj.edu/Deadline Date: Reviews begin immediately

PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, New York Institute of Technology, Old Westbury, **NY**, http://www.nyit.edu
Deadline Date: Not provided

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, Yuba Community College

District, Marysville, **CA**, http://www.yccd.edu/hr/jobs.php?type=admin
Deadline Date: April 26, 2006

RESEARCH ANALYST, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach, **FL**, http://www.erau.edu
Deadline Date: Open until filled

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS, Ogeechee Technical College, Statesboro, **GA**, http://www.ogeecheetech.edu
Deadline Date: Open until filled.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND CONTRACTS MANAGER, Association for Institutional Research, Tallahassee, **FL**, http://airweb.org
Deadline Date: Open until filled

MARKETING MANAGER, Association for Institutional Research, Tallahassee, **FL**, http://airweb.org Deadline Date: Open until filled

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR AND COORDINATOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, Ball State University, Muncie, **IN**.
Deadline Date: Open until filled

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), Reno, **NV**, http://www.nevada.edu
Deadline Date: April 7, 2006

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER/ANALYST, Prescott College, Prescott, **AZ**, http://www.prescott.eduDeadline Date: April 7, 2006

PLANNING ANALYST, Michigan Technological University, Houghton, **MI**, http://www.mtu.edu
Deadline Date: Applications accepted until the position is filled

STAFF SPECIALIST, EVALUATION, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Miami, **FL**, http://www.dadeschools.net
Deadline Date: April 21, 2006

DIRECTOR- INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, PLANNING & ASSESSMENT, Dominican College, Orangeburg, **NY**.
Deadline Date: March 31, 2006

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR ENROLLMENT PLANNING, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, **NC**, http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/
Deadline Date: Open until filled

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, The New School, New York, **NY**.
Deadline Date: Not provided

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, Smith College, Northampton, **MA**, http://www.smith.eduDeadline Date: April 2, 2006

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

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, **MA**, http://mit.edu
Deadline Date: April 1, 2006

PROJECT MANAGER - LAW SCHOOL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, Bloomington, **IN**, http://nsse.iub.edu/lssse
Deadline Date: Reviews begin immediately

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AND COORDINATION OF ASSESSMENT, Lamar University, Beaumont, **TX**, http://lamar.edu
Deadline Date: Open until filled

DEAN, INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING, (Position Number: 06-26), Rio Hondo College, Whittier, **CA**.
Deadline Date: April 7, 2006

Parting Thoughts

Parting Thoughts
Meihua Zhai, University System of Georgia (meihua.zhai@usg.edu)

Reader contributions of possible future 'Parting Thoughts' are welcome. Send them to <u>Meihua Zhai</u>.

"The secret of joy in work is contained in one word - excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it."
~ Pearl S. Buck

"It's hard to lead a cavalry charge if you think you look funny on a horse."
~ Adlai Stevenson

"Work is either fun or drudgery. It depends on your attitude. I like fun."
~ Colleen C. Barrett

"I know the price of success: dedication, hard work, and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen."
~ Frank Lloyd Wright

"Gardening requires lots of water -- most of it in the form of perspiration."

~ Lou Erickson

You do not lead by hitting people over the head - that's assault, not leadership.
~ Dwight D. Eisenhower

"In times of change, learners inherit the Earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists."
~ Eric Hoffer

"I am a man of fixed and unbending principles, the first of which is to be flexible at all times."
~ Everett Dirksen

"The only safe ship in a storm is leadership."
~ Faye Wattleton

"Whining should not be an institutional core competency!"
~ Erroll Davis