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

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

Editor:

Marne Einarson
Cornell University
(mke3@cornell.edu)

Associate Editor:

Gayle Fink
University System of Maryland
(gfink@usmd.edu)

Job Editor:

Gail Fishman, AIR
(gfishman@airweb2.org)

Subscription Mgt:

Gail Fishman, AIR
(gfishman@airweb2.org)

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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 Marne Einarson, Editor, at: (mke3@cornell.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@airweb2.org).

New Executive Director for AIR

AIR Announces New Executive Director

Amy Smyth, AIR Office (asmyth@airweb2.org)

The Association for Institutional Research (AIR) and the AIR Board of Directors are pleased to announce that Randy L. Swing will join AIR as the organization's third Executive Director, effective January 2, 2008.

Randy L. Swing will assume the role of Executive Director, following the 17 years of outstanding service by Dr. Terrence Russell.

"I am honored by the confidence expressed by the AIR Board in selecting me as the new Executive Director," Swing said. "Terry Russell will be a hard act to follow, but I have every hope that I will be able to build on the solid foundation he has given this organization."

Prior to joining the AIR staff, Randy Swing served as Co-Director and Senior Scholar for the Policy Center on the First Year of College located in Brevard, North Carolina. Funded by major grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts, Atlantic Philanthropies, and Lumina Foundation for Education, the Center focuses on assisting colleges and universities, both 2-year and 4-year, in improving the learning and success of new college students.

Swing holds a Ph.D. in higher education from the University of Georgia and holds MA and Ed.S. degrees from Appalachian State University, and a B.A. in Psychology from the University of North Carolina – Charlotte. Dr. Swing began postsecondary education as a first-generation college student at Davidson County Community College in Lexington, North Carolina.

During his 17 years at AIR, Dr. Russell's accomplishments include implementing a new financial system, restructuring the governance of the Association, creating collaborative relationships and professional development opportunities with other associations, and working alongside IES-NCES, NSF, and NPEC to create funding for Grants, Fellowships, and IR Certificate programs to improve the quality of training for IR professionals.

In his time at AIR, Dr. Russell also successfully doubled membership and fiscal resources, and is solely responsible for increasing the number and quality of AIR Executive Office staff, which now is comprised of 14, including 11 professional-managerial employees.

"We are delighted to have a new Executive Director of Randy Swing's caliber," Mary Ann Coughlin, President of the 2007-08 Board of Directors stated. "Randy

was the unanimous choice of both the search committee and the Executive Board. He comes to us with leadership experience in both higher education and association management. We believe that Randy will help us to continue to provide excellent services to our membership and to provide leadership for our association," Coughlin said.

Randy Swing is expected to arrive in Tallahassee this Winter and will formally begin his work as the new Executive Director on January 2, 2008.

For more information on AIR, or the new Executive Director Randy L. Swing, please visit the AIR Web site at http://airweb.org.

Reminder about Forum Proposals

Call for Proposals for 2008 Forum
Michelle Hall, AIR 2008 Forum Chair (mhall@selu.edu)

It is our pleasure to invite you to participate in the 2008 AIR Forum in exciting Seattle Washington, May 24-28, 2008.

The Call for Proposals is now available at http://www.airweb.org/callforproposals.html. There are a variety of presentation formats offering you creative freedom and complimenting your individual styles.

The Web-based proposal submission tool is available at http://www.airweb.org/tracksubmission.html.

Proposals for presentations, workshops, special interest groups (SIG), and affiliated groups must also be submitted online. The Web-based proposal submission tools and their locations are:

- Track Proposal - http://www.airweb.org/tracksubmission.html
- Pre-Forum Workshop Proposal - http://www.airweb.org/workshopsubmission.html
- Affiliated Group or Special Interest Group Meeting - http://www.airweb.org/agsigmeeting.html

Please give serious consideration to submitting a proposal for the 2008 AIR Forum! It's a great avenue to share your research, best practices, projects, or special studies with your AIR colleagues.

The deadline for proposals is **October 1, 2007**.

Sincerely,
Michelle Hall
2008 Forum Chair

From Your 2008 Forum Local Hosts

Going to Seattle … for the 48th AIR Forum, May 24-28, 2008!

Jerry Finch, Seattle Pacific University, 2008 Forum Local Arrangement Committee Chair (j_finch@spu.edu)

The second installment of "What is there to do in Seattle?" continues with things you must see and do in Seattle (see the July Electronic AIR for items 1-4).

The Things You MUST See & Do in Seattle…

5. **The Seattle Aquarium Pier 59:** The Window On Washington Waters, a 120,000 gallon exhibit with 39 feet by 17 feet viewing window is the centerpiece of the $41 million expansion and renovation. Meet Alki, the sea otter pup born at the Aquarium. Walk under the water in a glass dome as bluntnose sixgill sharks and other Elliott Bay creatures swim all around you. Touch a sea anemone. Learn about the lives of salmon at the world's first aquarium-based salmon ladder. Marvel at the impossibly bright-colored reef fish. And don't forget to wave at the giant Pacific octopus. www.seattleaquarium.org/

6. **The Olympic Sculpture Park:** Opened in January 2007 at the north end of the downtown waterfront, the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) transformed a former industrial site into a 9-acre outdoor sculpture garden that is FREE and open to all. With more than 80,000 plants, 554 trees and large sculptures by Richard Serra, Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder and other top names in contemporary art sprinkled around the site, the park combines culture with incredible views of downtown Seattle and the Olympic Mountains and Puget Sound. www.seattleartmuseum.org/visit/OSP/default.asp

7. **The Seattle Public Library:** Designed by world-renowned Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, the award-winning glass and steel structure of the new Central Library makes the building seem a little off-kilter and translucent – allowing passersby on the street to look in. http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/news/local/library/

8. **Bill Speidel's Underground Tour:** Seattle began in Pioneer Square. In the 1850's the city set its sights on becoming great and then got to work building and growing. Then the Great Seattle Fire of 1889 which left the business district in smoldering ruins. The city was rebuilt over the top of the ruins. This guided tour takes visitors through subterranean passages that once were the main roadways and storefronts of old downtown Seattle and tells stories of the frontier people who lived and worked there. www.undergroundtour.com/

9. **Chinatown-International District:**   One of Seattle's oldest neighborhoods, the International District was settled in the late 1890's and is possibly the only district in the nation that includes Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Aferican-American, Vietnamese, Korean and Cambodian inhabitants. A vibrant community is a melting pot of Asian restaurants, markets and specialty shops. Hing Hay Park is home to an ornate pavilion and dragon mural, as well as a memorial to fallen Chinese-American veterans of World War II. The Wing Luke Asian Museum celebrates the culture, art and history of Asian Pacific Americans. www.cidbia.org/

10. **Ferries:** The state ferry system takes passengers and their vehicles from Seattle and nearby departure points to Vashon Island, the Kitsap Peninsula, the San Juan Islands and Canada. A must is a round trip walk-on ferry ride to and from the downtown ferry dock to Bremerton. Views of the Olympic and Cascade mountains, the Seattle cityscape and the green shorelines will draw you onto the deck to feel the salt breeze on your face. www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/

AIR Publications

IR Applications: Enhancing User Satisfaction with University Computer Center Services
Gerald McLaughlin, IR Applications Editor

Customer satisfaction is an integral part of higher education's scorecards, particularly when it comes to key services. This issue of IR Applications: *Enhancing User Satisfaction with University Computing Center Services* by Chung-Tzer Liu and Fonchu Kuo of Soochow University, and Timon C. Du of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, provides a thorough discussion of the issues of user satisfaction by looking at satisfaction with computer support - unquestionably one of our key services.

Oftentimes our computing services are viewed from a broad general perspective. Perceptions of quality as general statements expressing pleasure or displeasure are interesting but generally do not help improve processes. What are the components of the service? How satisfied are users with the components? How is satisfaction with the specifics related to general satisfaction? This research addresses these questions and it is this type of data that can be used to facilitate quality improvement.

The authors found a high correlation between the service constructs and user satisfaction in a university computing center. They also found that network infrastructure, consultancy and maintenance, and system quality are the most relevant for user satisfaction. However, different users have different service

expectations.

The full article is available at: http://www.airweb.org/irapplications13.html

Resources in Institutional Research: Using Mixed Methods in Institutional Research
Edited by Richard D. Howard, University of Minnesota

AIR Member Price: $25

Non-member Price: $35

Mixed Method approaches provide institutional research professionals with tools that can often enhance the usefulness of traditional quantitative work typically performed in institutional research offices. When used in a complementary fashion, quantitative methodologies allow one to assess **what** the outcomes of a program or process are, while the qualitative methodologies can provide the researcher with insights about **why** the outcomes developed as they did.

Many institutional researchers primarily use quantitative methods in generating decision support information. Generally, the use of qualitative methods have been a more pragmatic, convenient, alternative reaction to time constraints (interviewing through focus groups instead of using a traditional survey) rather than a selected methodology based on the question to be answered.

When used as complementary methods, mixing quantitative and qualitative methodologies results in the development of decision support that addresses the effectiveness of a program and implications for needed policy or process adjustments. In this *Resources in Institutional Research* volume five case studies are presented in which institutional researchers have used mixed method approaches to create planning and decision support information.

Ordering information is available at http://www.airweb.org/?page=56

NCES Publications

Persistence and Attainment of 2003-04 Beginning Postsecondary Students: After Three Years

This First Look report provides a brief description of the persistence and degree attainment of a nationally representative sample of students who began postsecondary education for the first time in the 2003-04 academic year. T he report provides a first look at the experience of these students over three academic years, from July 2003 to June 2006, and provides information about rates of program completion, transfer, and attrition for students who first

enrolled at various types of postsecondary institutions using data from the 2004/06 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:04/06). Findings showed that among the beginning students who were recent (2003) high school graduates, enrolled full time in the fall of 2003, and had bachelor's degree plans, 70 percent were still enrolled at their first institution without a degree, 4 percent had attained a degree or certificate at their first institution, and 20 percent had transferred elsewhere without a degree by June 2006.

To download, view and print the publication as a PDF file, please visit: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/2007169.pdf

Comparative Indicators of Education in the United States and Other G-8 Countries: 2006

This report describes how the education system in the United States compares with education systems in the other G-8 countries--Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom. Twenty indicators are organized in five sections: (1) population and school enrollment; (2) academic performance; (3) context for learning; (4) expenditure for education; and (5) education returns: educational attainment and income.

To download, view and print the publication as a PDF file, please visit: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/2007006.pdf

Differential Characteristics of 2-Year Postsecondary Institutions

Two-year institutions, including community colleges and career schools, have become increasingly important in American higher education. Many classification systems for 2-year institutions use a wide array of characteristics and perspectives to differentiate between 2-year institutions. This report uses a classification system for 2-year institutions that uses number of variables available on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to identify seven groups of 2-year institutions: small publics; medium-sized publics; large publics; allied health not-for-profits; other not-for-profits; degree-granting for-profits; and other for-profits. The report presents brief profiles for each classification type, then focuses on four broad topic areas (institutional resources, student characteristics, institutional affordability, and measures of student success) to highlight the key differences that set a particular institutional type apart. The analysis found that among public institutions, small and large institutions differed in key areas; for example, large public schools tended to offer lower tuition and more services and to be located in urban areas. Private for-profit schools appear quite similar to one another with the exception of the

types of credentials offered and completed, which reflect the classification itself. In most other aspects—such as tuition, location, finances, student characteristics, and student financial aid—these institutions exhibited few differences. Other not-for-profits appeared to be similar to for-profits, but slightly more traditional. Allied health institutions differed from other not-for-profit institutions—and the other institutions in the classification system—in terms of the programs offered, funding streams, student characteristics, student costs and the types of awards granted. These schools appeared to be between public institutions and other private schools in terms of affordability and financial aid. Students at allied health institutions were more likely to be older, independent with dependents, and female than their counterparts at other 2-year schools.

To download, view and print the publication as a PDF file, please visit: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/2007164.pdf

Obtaining U.S. News Ranking Data

Obtaining Published Ranking Table Data From U.S. News
Robert Morse, U.S. News & World Report (rmorse@usnews.com)

U.S. News will again provide, free of charge to any institutional researcher, a series of Excel spreadsheets with the data that appeared in the America's Best Colleges 2008 Edition guidebook ranking tables published on the U.S. News web site on August 17, 2007. The spreadsheets will not be posted on a web site; they will be emailed directly to each individual. These spreadsheets will only contain the data that appear in the published ranking tables, not all the data used to compute the rankings.

This information is provided for the convenience of AIR members by U.S. News to assist them in their analytical responsibilities. Data is only available from the America's Best Colleges 2008 Edition guide book ranking tables (those published in August 2007). To request these tables, or if you have questions about this offer, please send an e-mail to either rmorse@usnews.com or sflanigan@usnews.com. The e-mail request should contain a one-or-two sentence reason for the request to access the data for your school or institution. Expect a turnaround time of up to 10 business days before receiving the Excel files.

Ranking tables that were published in previous years will be available later.

This is NOT a permission to print or repost the ranking tables publicly. The data can be used for internal research purposes only.

Thanks,

Robert J. Morse
Director of Data Research
U.S. News & World Report

News from AAUP

AAUP Fall 2007 Plans

John W. Curtis, AAUP (aaupfca@aaup.org)

Although the data processing season is still a ways off, we wanted to provide some information on AAUP projects for this fall. We expect to send notices regarding our annual Faculty Compensation Survey to survey contacts in late September or early October. There will not be major changes in survey format or timelines from previous years. If you know that the contact person or e-mail address for your institution has changed, please send a note to aaupfcs@aaup.org. The e-mail address is used for access to the database, but you will be able to make changes to other contact and institutional information through our survey Web site at https://research.aaup.org/fcs.

We are planning to release updated versions of our two new reports this fall. The AAUP Faculty Gender Equity Indicators report for 2006 is available on our Web site at http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/research/geneq2006.htm. We plan to update this report using 2006-07 data from the FCS, and to add a ten-year trend. We hope to release the 2007 report in late September, and will try to send an advance copy of the data to be used to FCS survey contacts.

The AAUP Contingent Faculty Index report for 2006 is at http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/research/conind2006.htm. We also plan to update this report using IPEDS EAP 2006 data, and add ten-year trend figures. The tentative release date for 2007 will be early November.

We are working on creating peer comparison reports for both of these additional publications, which will be ordered through the Web site. We will send more information to survey contacts as the fall progresses, and watch this space for updates, as well.

John W. Curtis, Director of Research and Public Policy
Doug Kinsella, Research Associate
aaupfcs@aaup.org

2007 ASHE Conference

2007 Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference

The 32nd ASHE Annual Conference is going to be held in Louisville, Kentucky

from November 8th through the 10th. The theme for this year's conference is *Informing the Public Agenda for Higher Education: The Role & Relevance of Research*. Led by this year's President, Linda Johnsrud, Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy and Interim Vice Chancellor from the University of Hawai'i System, the conference includes nationally recognized scholars and speakers, Dennis Jones and Kenneth Mortimer from the National Center for Higher Education and Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa from the University of Hawai'i – Mãnoa and Colleen Sathre from the University of Hawai'i.

For more information on the conference please visit our conference website at http://www.ashe.ws/conf07/.

The Association for the Study of Higher Education was founded in 1975 with the purpose of engaging in a national and global dialogue revolving around issues in and effecting higher education. ASHE promotes collaboration among its members and others engaged in the study of higher education through research, conferences, and publications, including its highly regarded journal, *The Review of Higher Education*. ASHE values rigorous scholarly approaches to the study of higher education and practical applications of systemic inquiry.

RFQ for ACSP Student Data Project

Request for Qualifications: Student Education Component, ACSP Planning School Performance Assessment Project

Bruce Stiftel, Florida State University (bruce.stiftel@fsu.edu)

The Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (www.acsp.org) seeks statements of qualifications from analysts interested in designing, collecting and analyzing student-education related data drawn from accredited university urban planning schools in North American. The RFQ asks for submissions of qualifications no later than September 7, 1007 for work to be conducted November 2007 through July 2008.

To request a copy of the RFQ, contact:

Bruce Stiftel, FAICP
Professor of Urban and Regional Planning
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
Florida State University
P.O. Box 3062280
Tallahassee FL 32306-2280 USA
direct: +1.850.6448522
fax: +1.850.6454841
bruce.stiftel@fsu.edu
http://garnet.fsu.edu/~bstiftel

Submissions of statements of qualifications, as well as any inquiries, should be directed to:

Professor Charles Hoch, Chair
ACSP Planning School Assessment Task Force
College of Urban Planning & Poplicy
University of Illinois, Chicago
412 South Peoria St.
Chicago, IL 60607
chashoch@uic.edu
P: 312-996-2156
F: 312-413-2314

Penn State On-Line IR Courses

Penn State On-Line Professional Development Courses in Institutional Research

James Fredericks Volkwein, Center for the Study of Higher Education, The Pennsylvania State University (volkwein@psu.edu)

On-line professional development courses in Institutional Research will be offered through the Penn State World Campus in 2007-08 (see below). These graduate courses for 3 credits each may be taken as singular non-degree experiences, or as elective courses toward a graduate degree, or counted toward the Graduate Certificate in Institutional Research.   For more information, see our web page http://www.ed.psu.edu/ircert/ir.html.   It gives info on admissions, registration, curriculum requirements, faculty, and a syllabus for each course by clicking on the relevant tabs.

HiEd 598i - Institutional Research Foundations and Fundamentals (Fall 2007, Sept 10 to Dec 17)

This course, designed and taught by Dr. Fred Volkwein, is an overview of the theory and practice of institutional research. Upon completion of the course, participants will be able to:

• Understand concepts, methodologies, research practices, and information systems that support campus decision making.

• Understand the diversity of the institutional research profession, including office organization and staffing, and organizational functions and activities.

• Recognize and carryout at a basic level the major Institutional Research activities including using National Datasets, Planning and Budgeting, Enrollment Management and enrollment forecasting, Faculty Studies and Instructional Analysis, Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation, Program Evaluation and

Student Outcomes Assessment.

- Utilize SPSS software, make Powerpoint presentations, and produce effective reports on selected IR topics .

HiEd 598D - Designing Institutional Research Studies (Fall 2007, Sept 10 to Dec 17)

This course, designed by Dr. Patrick Terenzini and Dr Fred Volkwein, and taught by Dr. Linda Strauss, teaches alternative research designs and necessary research skills, including sampling and basic measurement, data collection methods, survey research, interviews, focus groups, and selecting appropriate statistical tools. Pre-requisite: Working knowledge of intermediate statistics, including the concepts underlying ordinary least-squares (OLS) multiple regression such as R-square, R-square change, b-weights, and beta weights.

HiEd 598B - Strategic Planning and Resource Management (offered Spring 2008, Jan 21 to April 28)

This course, designed by Dr. Mike Dooris and taught by Dr. Linda Strauss, provides a working knowledge of strategic planning and budgeting in colleges and universities. Upon completion of 598B, participants will be able to:

- Discuss, in an informed way, the history, evolution, theory and practice of strategic planning in higher education;

- Appreciate contextual influences (such as organizational politics and culture, leadership, environmental constraints, and the like) on planning;

- Apply data and decision-support tools that can support strategic planning and resource management;

- Apply group process tools to enhance communication, consensus, and action;

- Demonstrate a pragmatic ability to help integrate strategic planning with institutional research and organizational improvement in a college or university setting.

HIED 598E - Conducting Enrollment Management Studies (offered Spring 2008, Jan 21 to April 28)

This course, designed by Fred Volkwein and Alex Yin, provides students with a working knowledge of enrollment management processes and skills. Pre-requisite: Working knowledge of intermediate statistics. Learning goals for

598E :

- To understand the basic enrollment management practices related to attracting, admitting, and enrolling students; and the necessary analytical approaches to admissions marketing, predictive modeling, and the impact of financial aid on student enrollment behavior.

- To be able to analyze and evaluate those activities that surround the new student experience – orientation, advisement, curricular access, student support services, and remedial work where needed.

- To carryout IR studies of student success, persistence, academic achievement, time to degree, graduation rates, and enrollment forecasting.

- To become familiar with logistic regression and discriminant analysis.

Changing Scene

A Way to Keep Up With News About Our Colleagues

This portion of the newsletter is devoted to keeping you informed about changes such as readers who relocate to new positions and/or institutions, professional recognition awards and honors, retirements, deaths, newly hired colleagues, promotions, etc. If you become aware of a change on your campus or elsewhere which should be mentioned in "The Changing Scene," please send a note with the key facts to mke3@cornell.edu. Keep it brief, but include the information you think others would like to know.

Mark Eckstein is leaving St John Fisher College to found the Institutional Research office at D'Youville College in Buffalo, NY. D'Youville will be the third IR startup for Mark. Congratulations, Mark!

Mark C. Hampton, Ph.D. is the new Associate Dean for Management and Finance at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education. Mark was formerly the Associate Vice Provost for Strategic Planning and Director, Center for Institutional Effectiveness at Virginia Commonwealth University. Congratulations, Mark!

Dr. **Robert M Clark** passed away on August 11, 2007. Robert was one of the

pioneers of institutional research. He served as director of academic planning at the University of British Columbia from 1965 to 1977. Perhaps he is best remembered by the members of AIR as the chair of the steering committee (1970-2) that lead to the first AIR periodic publication, NEW DIRECTIONS for INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH. In the introduction to the first number of that quarterly series which continues today, the editors Sidney Suslow and Paul Jedamus refer to Robert's work as follows. "His devotion to the task, his unflagging energy to press on with the job, his zeal in charging the committee with new assignments, and his fidelity to the concept of scholarship gave the committee the necessary ingredients for a productive effort."

Help

Looking for Oracle Users of EPM
Esther Ofria, University of Massachusetts Lowell (Esther_Ofria@uml.edu)

The University of Massachusetts Lowell Reporting Service is looking for Oracle users of EPM. We encourage AIR users of EPM to contact us to form a discussion forum that could benefit all users of EPM.

Thank you for your time with this important request. We look forward to hearing from you regarding this request.

Esther Ofria
Database Administrator
Office of Institutional Research
University of Massachusetts Lowell
Esther_Ofria@uml.edu
978-934-2503 - work
978-934-4016 - fax

Editors' Book of the Month

Marne Einarson, Cornell University (mke3@cornell.edu)

This month's book review was contributed by Susan Griffith, Executive Director, Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at The University of Tex-Pan American (sgriffith@utpa.edu). Susan facilitated a discussion of this book for AIR's "Big Read" at the 2007 Forum.

The Quiet Crisis: How Higher Education is Failing America
By Peter Smith
Copyright 2004 Anker Publishing Company. Inc. ISBN 1-882982-70-3

Peter Smith is well qualified to write a book on higher education. He has a B.A. from Princeton, an M.A. in teaching from Harvard, and an Ed.D. in education, administrative planning and social policy, also from Harvard. His administrative

experience in higher education give him intimate understanding of the internal workings of academe. His positions include: founding president of both the Community College of Vermont and Cal State University--Monterey Bay, Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at George Washington University, and Director of the Office of External Programs at Vermont State College. Additionally, his national and political experiences give him the perspective to discuss higher education from an external perspective. He served as Senator, Representative and Lieutenant Governor for the State of Vermont, and as Executive Director of the National Commission on Responsibilities for Financing Post-Secondary Education. His international reputation is evidenced by his 2005 appointment as Assistant Director General for Education for UNESCO. With these credentials, it is surprising that his analysis is so disappointing.

What is wrong with higher education, according to Smith? Very few 9th graders, never mind high school graduates, obtain a bachelor's degree. Minorities are not well served by the system. Individual learning styles are not addressed by individual learning plans. We are losing market share to proprietary and online educational enterprises. And technology is not used to solve all these problems.

He indicts the system as out-of-date, "organized around assumptions based in 14th century Europe" (xix). Hm, has anyone seen a scholar standing under a tree lately waiting for his (operative word) students to show up and pay him, only if they like the lecture? The Morrill Act, which he mentions in passing, and the community college system – of which he has intimate knowledge – have over the past 150 years increased access to higher education and changed the curriculum. Without these two movements, we would have a higher education system of private institutions that produced only doctors, lawyers and ministers.

He goes deep into the pipeline of education for data documenting higher education's failure. He cites a recent NCHEMS study (NCHEM News, May 2003) that followed a cohort of 100 ninth-graders for 10 years, after which one-third (32) had not graduated from high school, and only 18 of the high school graduates had earned a bachelor's or higher degree after six years. "Improving the completion rates for all students" (p. 16) is a goal that it is hard to argue with, but is it solely higher education's responsibility? Smith doesn't mention as a solution higher education partnerships with postsecondary education. If he had, he would have had a more comprehensive work that could have been subtitled, more correctly, "How Education is Failing America".

Smith's tome pleads for reform in higher education so that all learners can be successful. He wants to "successfully generate high quality learning not for the few but for the many" (26). Few in higher education would disagree with this high aspiration or his three main themes:

1. Access to higher education is still a matter of race and income. Being Anglo and rich still makes a big difference. (x)

2. Schools stifle learning by ignoring the "science of learning". (xi)

3. Technology is part of the solution to transforming higher education if it is "harnessed to support learning". (xii)

He cites the literature and draws on personal experience to support his conclusions, which are many.

Higher education must:

• improve completion rates for all students (16)

• find leaders to reform higher education (30)

• devote itself to learning (42)

• tailor its education to the learning skills, needs, and pace of the learners which means individualize instruction. (58)

• give college credit leading to degrees (74) to "personal learning" that "allows us to learn in whatever way we learn best". (66)

• value inclusion and diversity (86) by finding out how each student learns and develop a curriculum and delivery mode to match it.

• use technology to free educator and learner from constraints of "traditional uses of time, space," and deliver "infinitely more individualized" instruction (105)

• "become centers of learning, not teaching." (159)

Business must:

• invest heavily in the development of human capital (124) through alliances with higher education. In turn, higher education must "restate degree and certificate requirements in terms of results", i.e., outcomes needed in the marketplace.

The nation/government must:

• develop a national level of elective accreditation modeled after the Baldrige

Award (142)

- connect education and national defense to direct needed resources to higher education. (159)

Smith's conclusions emphasize individualized learning, which is laudable but how practical is it? He would have higher education apply the medical model, whereby we would diagnose each learner's style and prescribe a personal learning plan. Improving partnerships between business and higher education must happen, but must we focus on workforce preparation to do it? Smith's imposition of a Baldrige-like, albeit voluntary, layer of accreditation on top of traditional regional accreditation processes sounds very daunting – especially in light of the impending national accreditation standards being touted by the Spellings Commission. Do we want to be this accountable, perhaps to the detriment of fulfilling our primary mission – teaching students (or should I say helping students learn)? Do we really want the government to directly tie education and national defense?   Tying research to national defense has been shown to lead to distorted findings to please the funder rather that to search for truth. Tying teaching to national defense is bound to do the same.

Rather than deriving his conclusions from research, Smith offers a compilation of other authors. He candidly admitted this in a 2006 interview (Veronikas and Shaughnessy), where he states that this project involved "an enormous amount of reading, writing, compiling and assembling a lot of information." Readers aware of the work of Howard Gardner, Alexander Astin, Clifford Adelman, Peter Senge, George Keller, Tom Mortenson, Ernest Boyer -- even John Dewey – will have many "déjà vu" moments. He also relies on examples from his personal higher education experience in the 60's and his administrative experiences, much of which was in a community college. His digressions give the book an air of memoir which is disconcerting, considering its purpose. Indeed, one reading of this book could lead to the conclusion that one solution for higher education is to turn senior universities into community colleges.

While his presentation of the problems in higher education is well documented, the problems are not new. Nor are the solutions. It is hard to see how someone in higher education could take this book and turn it into a plan for improving higher education. Maybe this is a better read for the public than practitioners in higher education, but it is clear from the book that he is appealing to us in higher education to clean up the house.

References:

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Technical Tips from the Field

The "Arithmetic IF-Statement" - Shortcut to Combinational Variables

Gayle Fink, University System of Maryland (gfink@usmd.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 (meihua.zhai@usg.edu). Since this is a small corner, KISS (Keep It Short and Smart) will work the best.

Below is a tip that I received from Dr. Karl Boughan, Director of Institutional Research, Prince George's Community College <u>many years ago</u> and I still use it today. It is an approach for showing all combinations of variables simultaneously.

Here is an example:

There are 3 student status variables in your term freeze fill that you need to show all combinations. They are:

- ENRSTAT (full-time=1 / part-time=2)
- DEVFLG   (Developmental=1 / No Developmental Requirements=0)
- RECENTHS (Recent HS graduate=1 / delayed entrant=0)

The standard approach using a statistical package would be to calculate eight IF statements:

if (ENRSTAT=0 and DEVFLG=0 and RECENTHS=0) acadstat=1
if (ENRSTAT=0 and DEVFLG=0 and RECENTHS=1) acadstat=2
if (ENRSTAT=0 and DEVFLG=1 and RECENTHS=0) acadstat=3
if (ENRSTAT=0 and DEVFLG=1 and RECENTHS=1) acadstat=4
if (ENRSTAT=1 and DEVFLG=0 and RECENTHS=0) acadstat=5
if (ENRSTAT=1 and DEVFLG=0 and RECENTHS=1) acadstat=6
if (ENRSTAT=1 and DEVFLG=1 and RECENTHS=0) acadstat=7
if (ENRSTAT=1 and DEVFLG=1 and RECENTHS=1) acadstat=8

However, your data is in Excel not in a statistical package. You can replace these IF statements by creating a simple formula in Excel:

Add a column with the heading ACADSTAT and copy/paste the formula below for each row

=(((ENRSTAT*100)+(DEVFLG*10)+RECENTHS))

The results in the ACADSTAT column will be 000, 001, 011, 010, 101, 110 and 111, exactly the pattern in the IF statements above. You can then use pivot tables to show the distribution of the combinations.

I have used this approach for such issues as enrollment in sequential courses, completion of developmental course work, course taking patterns (day/evening/combination), instructional delivery (face to face/distance education/combination), and on and off campus course taking patterns.

Karl was absolutely right - it works every time, no matter how many variables, so long as the multipliers are correct for each variable place in the summary number.

Give this a try sometime!

Position Listing Summary

Copy and paste this url into your browser to access the current job listings on the AIR website: http://www.airweb.org/?page=574.

Parting Thoughts

Marne Einarson, Cornell University (mke3@cornell.edu)

Reader contributions of possible future 'Parting Thoughts' are welcome. Send them to Marne Einarson.

The following "Parting Thoughts" are taken from "Speaking of Higher Education: The Academic's Book of Quotations" by Robert Birnbaum.

It is one thing to get things done. It is another to make them last.
~ Robert Maynard Hutchings (1899-1977), President, University of Chicago

Administration is the art of disappointing people, and those who have been disappointed do not always see administrative beauty in their tormentors...

~ James G. March (1928-), professor of sociology, political science, and management, Stanford University

[T]he status quo is the only solution that cannot be vetoed.
~ Clark Kerr (1911-2003), Chancellor, University of California, Berkeley; President, University of California

Administration may be a necessary evil, but it is at any rate necessary...
~ Samual P. Capen (1878-1956), director, American Council on Education; President, University of Buffalo

Governance is not in its essence a structure, but a shared idea about how to do higher education.
~ Robert Birnbaum (1936-), Chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh