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

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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 Randy Swing, Executive Director, AIR, 1435 E. Piedmont Drive, Suite 211 · Tallahassee, FL 32308; Telephone: (850) 385-4155 or via e-mail: (rswing@airweb2.org).
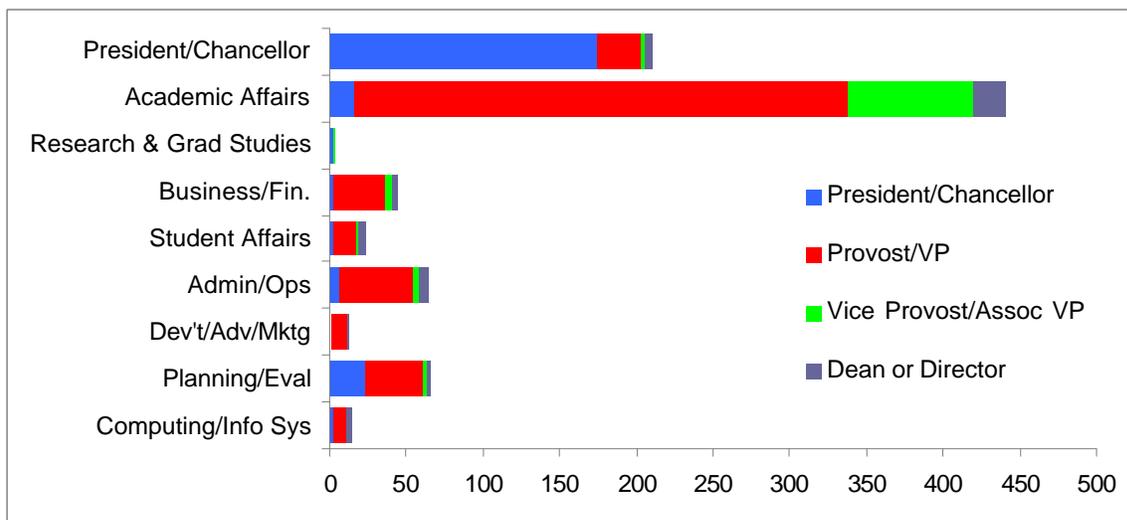
AIR Survey Fact

AIR Survey Fact: IR Reporting Relationships

This month, another fact from the AIR Survey being conducted and analyzed by Fred Volkwein (volkwein@psu.edu) and Jim Woodell (jkw168@psu.edu) at Penn State. Previous summaries included information about IR office titles, staff size and organizational location. This report builds on those by focusing on reporting relationships.

The survey responses from campus institutional research, analysis, planning, and assessment offices indicate that half are located in Academic Affairs and another 24% in the President's Office. Moreover, across all operational areas, 84% of IR offices report to someone with the title of Vice President, Provost, or President/Chancellor. This is shown in Figure 1 by noting the blue and the red portions of each bar.   In those cases where there are dual reporting relationships, we chose the person with the highest title. Thus, only 16% of campus IR offices report to someone below the level of Vice President.

We noticed few differences in this pattern by region of the country. There is a moderate tendency for larger offices to report to higher organizational levels, especially when IR is combined with other analytical functions like planning, enrollment management, and assessment.   In the 1990 Volkwein survey, fully one-third of IR Offices reported below the VP level.   This suggests to us that institutional research is increasingly penetrating the highest campus policy levels.

Figure 1.   Number of campus IR Offices by reporting relationship within each organizational function.

Table 1. Number and percentage of IR offices by reporting relationship within each organizational function.

Organizational Function	President/ Chancellor	Provost/ Vice Pres	Vice Provost/ Assoc. VP	Dean or Director	Total
Computing/Tech/Info Sys	3	8	0	4	15
	20%	53%	0%	27%	
Planning/Eval/Effectiveness	24	37	2	3	56
	36%	56%	3%	5%	
Dev't/Advancement/Marketing	1	10	0	1	12
	8%	83%	0%	8%	
Administration/Ops	6	49	3	6	64
	9%	77%	5%	9%	
Student Affairs/Services	3	14	1	5	23
	13%	61%	4%	22%	
Business/Finance	3	33	5	3	44
	7%	75%	11%	7%	
Research & Graduate Studies	2	1	1	0	4
	50%	25%	25%	0%	
Academic Affairs	16	322	82	20	440
	4%	73%	19%	5%	
President/Chancellor	175	28	3	4	210
	83%	13%	1%	2%	

What is IR?

Are you still trying to explain to your friends and family what "IR" is? If so, check out the link below:

http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional_research

So we're curious -- how do **you** explain IR to others? We invite you to send us your (pithy, compelling, humorous, whatever...) explanations.

We'll publish your submissions in the next newsletter.

From Your 2009 Forum Local Hosts

Atlanta…World Class City for World Class Institutional Research!

Sandi Bramblett, Georgia Tech, 2009 Forum Local Arrangements Chair <sandi@gatech.edu)

Greetings from Atlanta, site of the 49th Annual Forum! Your Local Arrangements Committee is excited about hosting a party for 1,800 of our friends and their families! To parallel our AIR Forum schedule, we are devising six tracks for our visitors:

Track 1: Enhancing your Economic Impact (a.k.a. Shop Atlanta!)

Track 2: Family Fun

Track 3: Developing the Historical Experience

Track 4: Get Out of Town! (Events/Points of Interest within 1 hour of the hotel)

Track 5: SportsZone

Track 6: Bright Lights and City Nights!

We will provide you with concurrent sessions for each track so you can make the most of your Atlanta experience. There are tons of things to do in this wonderful city and we are going to give you plenty of ideas to occupy your time outside of the Forum. Our sports guru, Sean Mullins of North Georgia College and State University, has found at least one very special opportunity for our baseball fans:

June 2

Tuesday: 6:00 PM - 10:00 PM SportsZone (Track 5)

Turner Field

"Atlanta Braves vs. Chicago Cubs"

Take me out to the ball game! Join us for a special evening at Turner Field where the Braves will take on the Chicago Cubs. Turner Field combines the nostalgia and the atmosphere of old-time baseball with a state-of-the-art environment unlike any other park. Check out "101 Things You Need to See and Do" at Turner Field <http://atlanta.braves.mlb.com/atl/ballpark/things.jsp > Even if you're not a baseball fan, there's enough FUN here to go around!

Watch this space in subsequent editions of the Electronic AIR for more news about Atlanta! In the meantime, if we can be of assistance to you as you plan your trip to Atlanta, please let us know.

Your Atlanta Local Arrangements Committee:

Andy Clark, Armstrong Atlantic State University <Andy.Clark@armstrong.edu>

Denise Gardner, University of Georgia < gardnerd@uga.edu >

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AIR Grant and Fellowship Applications

Applications Open for 2009 AIR Research Grants and Dissertation Fellowships

AIR is pleased to announce that the 2009 Research Grant and Dissertation Fellowship online application process is now open!

Research Grants: Faculty and practitioners are eligible for research grants of up to $40,000 for one year of independent research. (Note: These research grants are not available to students.) All grant recipients must be affiliated with a U.S. postsecondary institution or relevant nonprofit higher education organization. Research grants are issued to the applicant's sponsored research unit to be dispersed according to an approved budget.

Dissertation Fellowships: Doctoral students are eligible for dissertation fellowships of up to $20,000 for one year to support dissertation research under the guidance of a faculty dissertation advisor. Fellowships are based on a submitted budget and paid in two installments (May 1, 2009 and January 3, 2010).

Proposals may only be submitted electronically. The deadline for proposal submission is January 16, 2009. Please go to airweb.org/grants.html for full program descriptions and online applications.

Assistance is available from the AIR grant staff at air@airweb2.org or 850-385-4155 x200.

AIR Office
air@airweb2.org

Suslow Award Nominations

The Sidney Suslow Award is made by the Association for Institutional Research

both to recognize the contribution of Sidney Suslow to AIR publications and scholarship and to recognize other individuals for distinguished scholarly contributions to institutional research over a period of time. While the Suslow Award may be presented for a single piece of work (monograph, book, software package) making a significant contribution to the development of institutional research, planning, or administrative decision-making, the successful nominees will more likely be recognized for their cumulative and on-going scholarly efforts to keep institutional research on the cutting edge of research, practice, policies and procedures in higher education.

Nominations for the Sidney Suslow Award are the responsibility of all AIR members. Nominations for this year must be submitted by **December 1, 2008**. For more information visit: http://www.airweb.org/sidneysuslowaward.html .

AIR Assessment Institute

Registration for the 2009 Assessment Institute for Institutional Researchers is now open. The Assessment Institute will be held March 24-28, 2009 in Annapolis Maryland. The Institute focuses on the skills and tools needed for efficient and effective assessment-related activities. It is designed for institutional research (IR) and institutional effectiveness (IE) staff who already have some level of experience in assessment (such as survey research studies, accreditation support), are "early career" assessment professionals, and/or have responsibility for organizing a cohesive, functional program.

The Institute is limited to 100 participants. Register today at http://www.airweb.org/institutes.html to reserve your space!

UNCF-AIR Research Institute

Dr. Belle Wheelan, President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools recently spoke at the United Negro College Fund-Association for Institutional Research Institute. The "Building High Performing Institutions: Using Data to Drive Effective Decision-Making at UNCF Member Institutions" Institute took place in Atlanta, Georgia this past September.

You can view Dr. Wheelan's Accountability in Higher Education presentation via the AIR Web site at www.airweb.org/Wheelan.

The capacity-building Institute was organized and hosted by the UNCF-Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute in partnership with the Association for Institutional Research. The Institute held sessions to enhance the skills and provide the tools that will enable institutional research practitioners at UNCF

member institutions to more effectively use data to drive decision-making on their campuses.

The UNCF and AIR partnership hopes to accomplish two goals: to build a community of practice among institutional researchers at UNCF member institutions, and to increase the capacity of UNCF member institutions' use of data to build institutional effectiveness.

The UNCF-AIR Institute set the stage for many collaborative efforts in the future. We are proud of this partnership and look forward to seeing it grow through the years.

AIR Office
air@airweb2.org

FAIR Annual Conference

Florida Association for Institutional Research Annual Conference

The FAIR annual conference will take place February 25-27, 2009 in beautiful Cocoa Beach Florida!

Conference planning is underway, so visit our website for hotel information and call for proposals coming soon: http://www.florida-air.org/

Or, email Sandra Archer, FAIR President-Elect, to receive email updates: archer@mail.ucf.edu

We hope to see you there!

Thank you,

Sandra

Sandra Archer
Director, University Analysis and Planning Support
University of Central Florida
archer@mail.ucf.edu

News from AAUP

AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey 2008-09
John W. Curtis, AAUP (jcurtis@aaup.org)

Data collection for the annual AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey is now underway. All survey data contacts should have received a notice by e-mail on November 4. If you are a data contact person for your institution and did not receive an e-mail notice, please contact the AAUP Research Office as described

below.

The initial deadline for data submission is **Friday, December 19**. Submitting your data in a timely fashion helps us provide you with custom reports sooner, and will make the aggregate comparisons in our published report more accurate and useful to you.

We have made a few changes to our survey Web site (https://research.aaup.org/fcs/default.aspx), mostly cosmetic and meant to clarify the steps to submitting and verifying data. There are no substantive changes in data format or definitions for this year, although the descriptions of the institutional categories have been updated and made more specific.

If you have served previously as a survey data contact, you may log in and check your contact information at Use the link for "Upload and Complete the survey." If you have forgotten your user name, you can request it there; if you know your user name but have forgotten your password, click the "Login" link and you will be able to request your password.

If you are a new survey data contact, would like to add a contact for your institution, or have other questions about the survey, please send an e-mail to aaupfcs@aaup.org. You can also call (202) 737-5900 ext. 118 for assistance.

Thanks again for participating in our annual survey.

AAUP Research Office

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

Upcoming SPSS Webinars

Webinar on Student Retention, Success at CUNY

Join CUNY's Baruch College and SPSS Inc. on Thursday, November 20, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. ET/1:00 p.m. CT/11:00 a.m. PT for the AIR Connections webinar "Data Mining to Drive Institutional and Student Success." In this presentation, Jimmy Jung, Director of Enrollment Planning and Research, will showcase a number of data mining models implemented at Baruch College to predict retention by identifying at-risk students, effectively award merit scholarships, and determine course placements. Results and lessons learned from each model will be presented. In addition, improvement to the academic planning and enrollment management process will be discussed.

Register now: http://www.airweb.org/?page=1599

Can't make the live webinar? A link to the recorded version of the presentation will be made available on the AIR Connections page following the live event.

Questions? Please contact:

Sarah Tomashek

SPSS Inc.

stomashek@spss.com

Webinar: Leverage Data Mining in your IR Office

You've heard about what data mining can do for your institutional research office, but how does this technology really work and what do you need to know to use it?

Join SPSS Inc. on Wednesday, December 3 at 2:00 p.m. ET/1:00 p.m. CT/11:00 a.m. PT for the educational webcast, "Data Mining Deep Dive for Institutional Researchers," to take a closer look at the essential data mining combination of clustering and classification techniques. Within SPSS' data mining workbench, Clementine, we will compare and contrast Kohonen Networks versus K-means clustering and C5.0 modeling versus logistic regression for classification. We will discuss how these techniques work, review their applications within higher education, and talk about what you need to know to get started using them.

Register now: http://www.airweb.org/?page=1614

Can't make the live webinar? A link to the recorded version of the presentation will be made available on the AIR Connections page following the live event.

Questions? Please contact:

Sarah Tomashek

SPSS Inc.

stomashek@spss.com

TLT Group Online Workshops

ePortfolios

Co-Sponsored by ePAC (Electronic Portfolio Action and Communication)

November 4, 11, 18 at 1pm eastern

Leaders: Darren Cambridge, George Mason University, and Steve Ehrmann, TLT Group

Course Description: Educators exploring the use of ePortfolios on their campuses often begin with two assumptions: First, they believe that using ePortfolios will require a significant departure from existing educational practice, and, second, they believe that there is little research and few documented models on which to draw. In fact, many of the most promising applications of ePortfolios build on educational activities many faculty and staff already value and are engaged in with students, and there is a growing body of research and narratives of practice that can guide them in using ePortfolios effectively to support them. It may become easier to see these connections once national and international practices for measuring the learning represented in ePortfolios are available.

This workshop will deal with three major issues:

   a) What activities are participants already invested in that ePortfolios might support?

   b) How have other campuses and programs been using ePortfolios to support these activities, and how successful have they been?

   c) How can we measure the learning that ePortfolios capture in a way that helps us make connections across disciplines and institutions?

Course outline and registration info: http://www.tltgroup.org/OLI/ eportfoliosinfo200811.htm

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Information Literacy Best Practices in Undergraduate Education

An ACRL/TLT Group Online Workshop

December 2, 9, and 11 at 1pm Eastern

Leaders: Susan Ariew, and Ilene Frank, University of South Florida

Course Description: For the past several years, seminar leaders Ariew and Frank, along with members of the ACRL's Institute for Information Literacy's Best Practices Project Team, have been working with colleagues in the field on criteria for developing, assessing, and improving information literacy programs in undergraduate education; and identifying categories and case studies of best practices in undergraduate information literacy programs.

This workshop, co-sponsored by ACRL and the TLT Group, will introduce a variety of related resources and ACRL Best Practices, discuss current trends and challenges connected with information literacy, identify key elements of model programs, invite feedback and discussion, and engage participants in activities to help them reflect on their own teaching practices, as well as advance the work of

their own Information Literacy Programs. The seminar has both synchronous and asynchronous components.

Collaboration involving librarians, faculty, and others emerged as characteristic of many successful Information Literacy programs. Consequently, while some of the activities and resources developed for this workshop will be focused on the needs and capabilities of librarians, others will be directed at interdepartmental teams that also include faculty, technology professionals, administrators, professional development experts, and others.

Course outline and registration info: http://www.tltgroup.org/InfoLit/ILBP20081202.htm

RP Group Award Nominations

RP Group Issues Awards on Research, Planning, and Assessment

For the past decade, the RP Group has been issuing annual awards that recognize excellence in California community college research and planning. This year, RP's award categories have been expanded to reflect the increased emphasis on gathering, analyzing, and utilizing knowledge and data. Awards will be given in the areas of:

* Excellence in Research – Regional/Statewide Project

* Excellence in Research – College/District Project

* Excellence in Planning

* Excellence in Assessment

* Excellence in Facilitating Evidence-Driven Decisionmaking

* Dissertation/Thesis Excellence

Each of these awards is intended both to recognize worthy individuals and to set the bar for excellence in community college research, planning, and assessment. Projects should reflect work completed within the California community college system during the 2007-2008 academic year.

The nomination deadline is **Monday, December 1, 2008**. The nomination form – along with award rubrics and examples of projects – can be downloaded at: http://www.rpgroup.org/projects/awards.html

Kathy Booth
Executive Director, RP Group/Center for Student Success
KBooth@rpgroup.org

Help Request: International Students

We are investigating the pros and cons of recruiting international students to our institution and are hoping to find some kind of assessment tool that we could use with potential students to determine their needs once they are in this country as regards services we need to provide above and beyond what we typically give our domestic students. Examples: immigration support, language, ability to set up a household, banking, registering their children in school, etc.

No doubt, some institution has already set up assessment of this nature – we hope to not have to reinvent the wheel. Any help you can provide in this area will be very much appreciated.

Thanks,

Laurie

Laurie McGrath
Director of Compliance & Accreditation
& SIS Project Manager
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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.

On November 16, **Al Bloom**, former Assistant Director of Institutional Research at Virginia Tech and longtime active member of AIR, passed away in Blacksburg, Virginia. Al had been retired from Virginia Tech for several years at the time of his death.

Practitioner Profile

Gayle Fink, University System of Maryland (gfink@usmd.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.**

This month, Gayle interviewed Jacki Stirn, a consultant for IR-related projects (jstirn@yahoo.com).

E-AIR: Jacki, you are a consultant who focuses on IR related projects. Can you tell me how you arrived at this point?

Jacki: Like a lot of things that happen with institutional research, it was somewhat accidental. After getting an MPA from Penn State, I first worked for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington. I started in IR at Penn State in 1978 and later moved to Colorado as a trailing spouse. I've held a number of IR positions in Colorado: at the University of Colorado, the Colorado Commission for Higher Education, with development data and research at Regis University, with WICHE, and at the Community College of Denver. About four and a half years ago, I decided to retire. I still attended the AIR Forum that year because I had committed to make a presentation and there were a couple of opportunities mentioned to me that eventually turned into consulting work.

E-AIR: Can you describe the variety of projects you have consulted on?

Jacki: I'm a data facilitator for six community colleges participating in Achieving the Dream. I have colleges in each round of participation and the colleges in the first round will be finished the original implementation grant next summer. I have done some writing and some data analysis and reporting for a variety of organizations. I continue to serve as an external grant evaluator for another community college. I'm also an IPEDS trainer and have been since the beginning of time – well not really, but since the beginning of the web-based system.

E-AIR: Why did you choose consulting instead of continuing at an institution?

Jacki: The original choice of retirement was somewhat due to a slight case of burnout. I had a long commute and a fairly stressful project that I had completed. Once I started consulting, I liked the flexibility and control over my

workload. When I visit my Achieving the Dream colleges, I do get a little pull toward the campus but overall, I estimate I work about half time and I would like to keep it to that or less at this point in my life.

E-AIR: What are some of the benefits and challenges of being a consultant?

Jacki: The benefits are being able to choose the work. I'm also enjoying the variety of people and colleges with whom I work. I do travel a lot and the beginning of my consulting time fit with our youngest heading off to college, which also made the timing work for me. Occasionally a work trip will take me close enough to family to be able to fit in a visit. There's very much a risk versus reward balance. The pay is somewhat better but that is balanced by the lack of benefits. I'm fortunate to be covered by family health insurance through my husband. Another challenge is that there can be a significant lag before payment appears in my mailbox.

E-AIR: What are some things you like to do in your "spare" time?

Jacki: Living in Colorado gives me 300 sunny days a year and I try to make the most of them. In the winter, I downhill ski. Skiing also gives me an opportunity to see our older son who lives in Steamboat Springs. I spent a weekend last spring in a learn-to-row workshop and then a couple of days a week this summer in a coached rowing program(5:50-7 am). I'm hoping to try some racing next summer.

In April, I signed my husband and myself up for a bike trip on the Katy Trail in Missouri. He had done other rides but I was sort of starting from scratch. The trip was mid-October and I biked 199 miles in four days, including 65 miles in the rain the last day. Keep in mind that while it was a challenge, I was biking on a very flat trail at a much lower altitude than where I trained. I will probably try for something more challenging next year but this year I wanted to be pretty confident I could bike the whole thing.

I also enjoy reading and am happy to live within walking distance of a library.

E-AIR: Finally, why did you offer up your oldest child to the IR profession? Seriously, how did your daughter come to follow in your footsteps?

Jacki: You mean everyone doesn't have to give their first-born to the profession? My daughter's husband is in the U.S. Air Force and was transferred to Virginia. She had separated from the Air Force and was considering law school when he was transferred. There was an opening for a Research Analyst & Reporting Coordinator at the University of Richmond; I suggested she apply for the position and she got it. She's organized and had research methods classes as part of her bachelor's and master's programs.

If I had wanted to grow my business, I would have hired her myself. It has been surprising to both of us how much of the information she heard growing up seemed to stick. I doubt it had much of an impact but she did go to Take Your Child to Work Day when I was at the University of Colorado and at the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.

It's been great to be able to see her at conferences and introduce her to colleagues. She is likely to be the only one following me. My older son is a ski instructor and bicycle mechanic/designer. My younger son is in the career angst known only to college seniors but seems to be headed toward something in marketing.

E-AIR: Last thoughts?

Jacki: I had no idea where I was headed when I took a one-year term position in institutional research at Penn State. I had an MPA and just under two years experience with the Federal government. I was at Penn State for eight years and left with a great foundation in IR. It's been a good career choice.

E-AIR: Jacki, thank you so much for the interview!

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 (mke3@cornell.edu).

Technical Tips from the Field

Shading a Cell Until Something is Entered
Marne Einarson, Cornell University (mke3@cornell.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 Gayle Fink (mailto:gfink@usmd.edu). Since this is a small corner, KISS (Keep It Short and Smart) will work the best.**

This month's Technical Tip came from Allen Wyatt's excellent website on Excel Tips located at: http://excel.tips.net/ .

Summary: Using conditional formatting, you can shade a particular cell (or cells) until a value is entered in the cell. This is a handy way for users to tell when something needs to be entered in a particular cell. (This tip works with Microsoft Excel 97, Excel 2000, Excel 2002, and Excel 2003.)

When creating a worksheet in which information must be entered into specific cells, you may find it helpful to shade the cells if they are blank, but have the shading removed if something is entered into the cell. You can easily accomplish this task by using the conditional formatting feature in Excel. Follow these steps:

1. Select the cell or cells that you want shaded if they are empty.

2. Choose Conditional Formatting from the Format menu. Excel displays the Conditional Formatting dialog box. (Click here to see a related figure.)

3. Use the Condition drop-down to choose Formula Is.

4. In the formula area, to the right of the drop-down list used in step 3, enter the following formula, replacing A1 with the address of the active cell selected in step 1.:

    =ISBLANK(A1)

5. Click Format to display the Format Cells dialog box.

6. Click the Patterns tab. (Click here to see a related figure.)

7. Select the color you want used for shading the cell if it is blank.

8. Click OK to dismiss the Format Cells dialog box. The shading color you selected in step 7 should now appear in the preview area for the condition.

9. Click OK.

All the empty cells among those selected in step 1 should now appear shaded. When you enter something into one of the shaded cells, the shading should disappear.

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

Reader contributions of possible future 'Parting Thoughts' are very welcome. Send them to [Marne Einarson](#)

In the spirit of Thanksgiving ...

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.
~ John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-1963), 35th President of the United States

We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures.
~ Thornton Wilder (1897-1975), American playwright and novelist

A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all other virtues.
~ Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC), Roman statesman and philosopher

Thanksgiving, to be truly thanksgiving, is first thanks, then giving.
~ Unknown