



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

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

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

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

If you would like to submit articles, requests or information for consideration and inclusion in the newsletter, please contact 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@airweb.org).

AIR Survey Fact

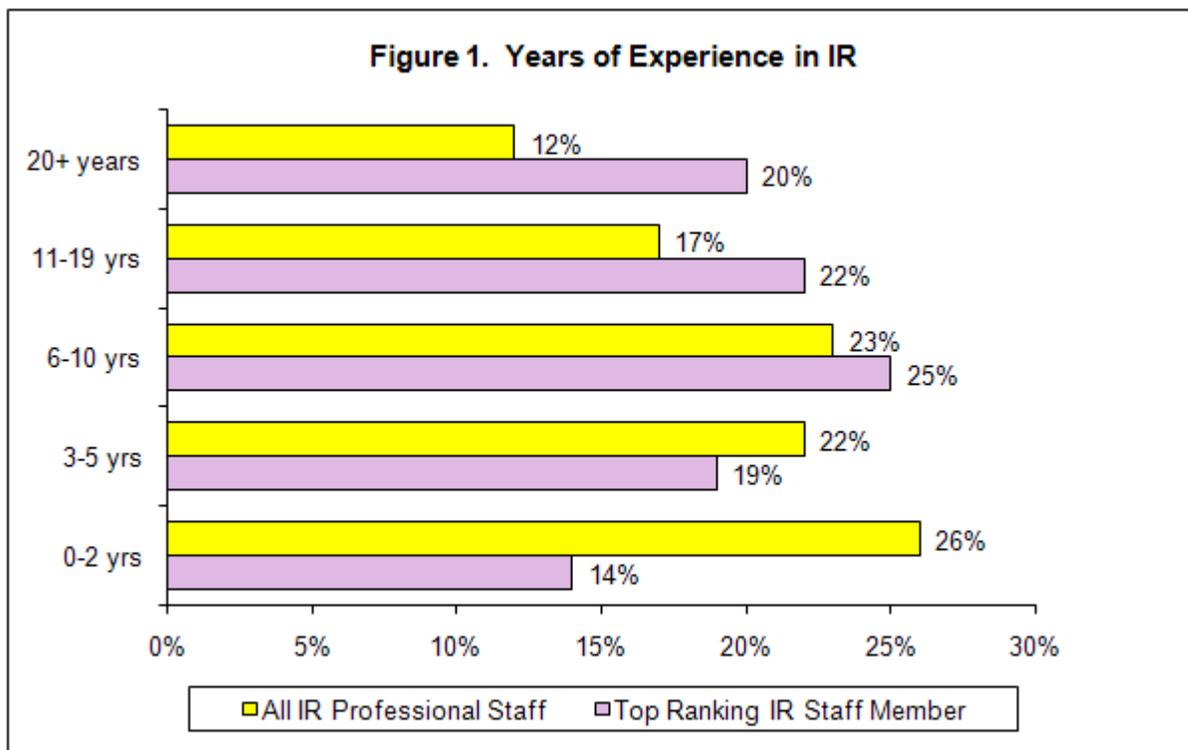
AIR Survey Fact: Years of Experience among IR Professionals

Fred Volkwein (volkwein@psu.edu)

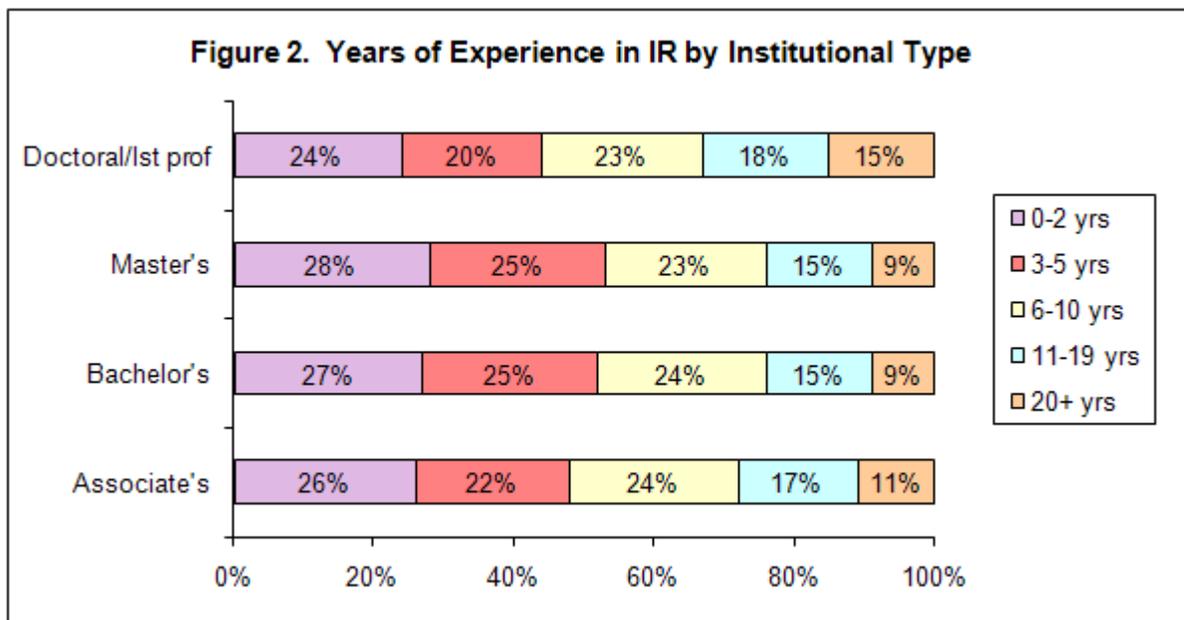
This month we analyze the work experience of IR professional staff from the AIR Survey being conducted and analyzed by Fred Volkwein (volkwein@psu.edu), Jim Woodell (jkw168@psu.edu) and Ying Liu (yxl226@psu.edu) at Penn State.

Analysis of responses from over 1,100 offices in 2008 reveals that over half of all IR professionals have more than 5 years of experience in this field (see Figure 1). Around 29% have more than ten years of experience, while nearly 12% have more than 20 years of experience. Fully one-quarter of all IR professional staff have been in the field less than three years.

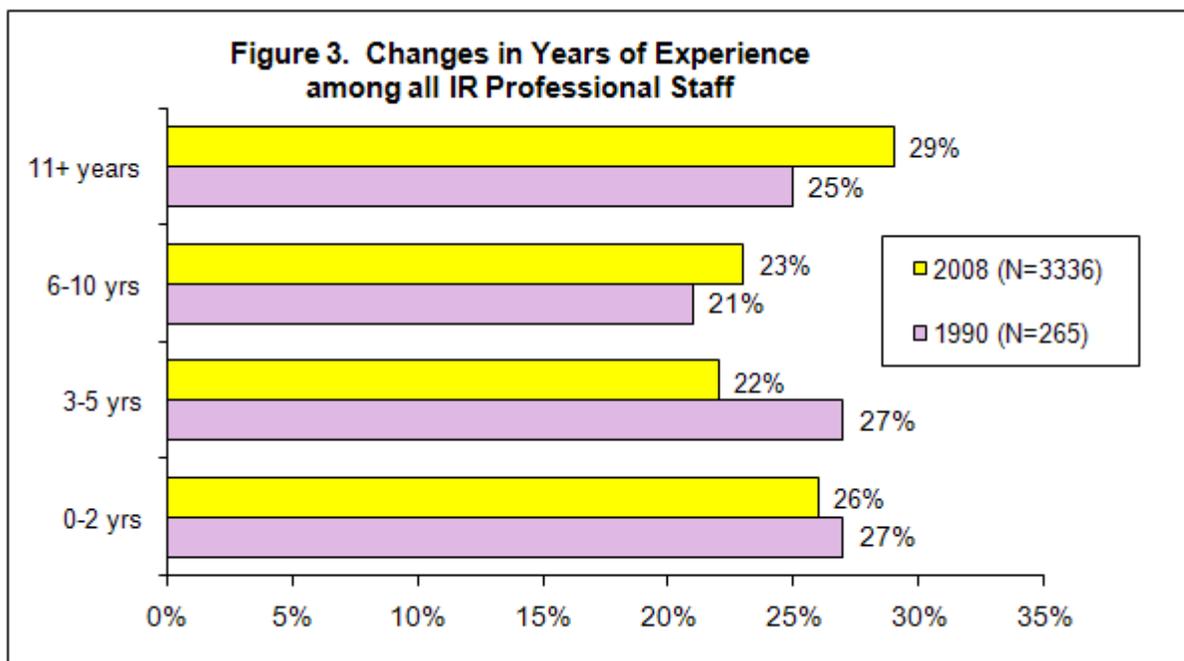
Looking at the top ranking person in each office (Director or equivalent), there is a significantly higher percentage of IR veterans. About 42% of those who head each IR office have more than ten years of experience, while 20% have more than 20 years of experience. Only 14% are relative newcomers to the field.



In all of our analyses thus far, we have examined the survey data for differences by institution type and size and have found relatively consistent patterns across various subsets of IR offices. For example, Figure 2 shows the differences in years of experience among IR staff at two-year, four-year, masters, and doctoral institutions. Although the IR staff at research universities in the aggregate appear a bit more experienced than at the other types, the differences are not very dramatic.



Although we do not have good trend data, we are able to compare these 2008 data with the 1990 study of 121 NEAIR offices (see Figure 3). The results suggest that increasing numbers of professional staff are committed to institutional research as a career. In 2008, the proportion of IR professionals with more than 10 years of experience has increased to 29%. On the other hand, almost half of institutional research professional staff still have five or fewer years of experience. This is explained in part by the continuing growth in numbers of professional staff, the majority of which are hired at entry level positions. For example, the average IR office size has increased from 2.2 to over 3.0 between the 1990 and the 2008 surveys. This profile may suggest the gradual maturing of the IR profession, and it also has implications for staff development within our field.



Register for AIR Forum

Register Today for the 49th Annual AIR Forum!

Jennifer Brown, AIR Forum Chair (Jennifer.Brown@umb.edu)

In the spirit of the E-AIR Limerick Contest, let me begin like this:

A Fine Forum

*This year you really must send
Yourself & your staff to attend
The AIR Forum
There's no chance you'll bore'em
Miss it, Oh heaven forefend!*

Heaven forefend, indeed! Don't miss your chance to attend the AIR Annual Forum -- a superlative professional development opportunity for institutional research professionals. [Register](#) now for the 2009 AIR Forum being held May 30 to June 3, 2009 in Atlanta Georgia.

The theme of the 2009 Forum is "World Class Institutional Research." Whatever your professional needs and interests, this Forum is sure to have something for you: pre-Forum workshops, posters, table topics, special interest groups, exhibitor demonstrations, panels, plenary sessions, and a host of scholarly papers and action research presentations on topics ranging from assessment and accountability to research on special populations to the comparability of higher education data around the world. The Forum also provides excellent opportunities to meet new colleagues and build professional networks.

I know travel budgets are tight. Be sure to check out the "Saving Money" link on the [49th Annual Forum website](#) for suggestions on how to keep your Forum attendance costs low. And AIR is extending a special welcome to new AIR members this year. The AIR Board is waiving the current year membership requirement for Forum registration. New members may take advantage of this opportunity by registering for the Forum and enrolling for the next year membership (2009-2010) at <http://www.airweb.org/forumregistration/>.

I look forward to seeing you in Atlanta!

From Your 2009 Forum Local Hosts



In 1837, the settlement was called Terminus to denote its newly established and important railroad link to Midwest trade routes. In 1843, it became Marthasville, so named after then-Governor Wilson Lumpkin's daughter, Martha. By 1847, because of the city's goal to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through its railroad center, it became "Atlantica-Pacific" which was shortened to Atlanta. If history is your thing, Atlanta has a proud and unique heritage and a well-preserved past.

Track 3: The Magical History Tour

Atlanta is still a relatively young city but there are so many elements of its history that are available to you when you join us for the Forum in the spring! Take note of the following opportunities to soak up Atlanta's unique heritage. Most locations are within a one-mile radius of the Marriott Marquis in downtown Atlanta or a short train-ride via the Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA).

May 30:

10:00 AM or 11:00 AM

The Fabulous Fox Theatre

660 Peachtree Street

Atlanta, GA 30308

Phone: 404-688-3353

(Less than 1 mile north of the Marriott Marquis)

According to the theatre's website, Atlanta's Fox Theatre was originally the Yaarab Temple Shrine Mosque and was designed in the late 1920's as headquarters for the 5,000-member Shriners organization. It was a beautifully outlandish, opulent, grandiose monument to the heady excesses of the pre-crash 1920's, a mosque-like structure complete with minarets, onion domes, and an interior decor which was even more lavish than its facade. The Fox stands today as a fiercely protected landmark and a nationally acclaimed theater; having survived depression, mortgage foreclosure, bankruptcy, competition, television, real estate development, and above all, age. The Fox is an impeccably intact and aggressively preserved Landmark that has been designated a National Historic Landmark (the highest national ranking), listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Fox is also a Georgia Museum Building (the most prestigious statewide ranking).

Special Note: Treat yourself to the Broadway show "Jersey Boys", the story of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. The show will be at the Fox during the Forum. Tickets start at \$22 and are available for matinees on Saturday and Sunday as well as evening shows. Stay tuned for ways to get cheap seats in future Local Arrangements' E-AIR columns!

Ages: All (For the Tour)/ Age 16 and up for "Jersey Boys"

<http://www.foxtheatre.org/index.htm>

May 31:

11:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Underground Atlanta

50 Upper Alabama Street, Suite 007

Atlanta, GA 30303

Phone: 404-523-2311

(Less than 1 mile south of the Marriott Marquis)

Located in the Heart of Downtown, Underground Atlanta is bustling with activity, day or night. From Civil War to Civil Rights is Underground's Guided History Tour. Learn about how Atlanta began and what life was like in the 1800's. Tours on Sunday are at 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM. Before the tour, get a bite to eat at The Waffle House, an Atlanta dining institution that's known for great coffee, the best waffles EVER and scattered, smothered and covered hash browns! Best of all, you won't empty your wallet to find out why it's "America's Place to Eat!"

Ages: All

<http://www.underground-atlanta.com/family-fun/guided-history-tour.html>

June 1:

9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site

450 Auburn Avenue

Atlanta, GA 30312

Phone: 404.331.6922

(1 mile east of the Marriott Marquis)

The area of Sweet Auburn served as the thriving center of Black enterprise in Atlanta from the 1890s through the 1940s, and is the birthplace of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. At the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, explore his birth home, visitor center, historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, and The King Center. This tour is "must-see" for everyone! It will quite literally leave you breathless, reflective, and so proud of the man who led the Civil Rights movement. If you must choose one thing to do in Atlanta, this is it! Afterward you tour the King site, stroll back to the hotel through the Sweet Auburn historic district, grab a cup of coffee and a piece of sweet potato cheesecake at the Sweet Auburn Bread Company. This cheesecake is so good, former President Bill Clinton made a special trip just to try it!

Ages: All

<http://www.nps.gov/malu/index.htm>

June 2:

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

The Georgia State Capitol Building

431 Capitol Avenue

Atlanta, GA 30334

Phone: 404-463-4536

(1 mile south of the Marriott Marquis)

Atlanta is the state capitol of Georgia and has its own "Capitol Hill" to prove it. As listed on the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places: "Constructed between 1884 and 1889, this monumental neoclassical structure with its gilded dome is the perfect expression and symbol for the capitol of the 'New South' as Atlanta considered itself to be after the Reconstruction. Along with many state capitols, its design and form follow architectural precedents established by the United States Capitol." Guided tours are available Monday through Friday at 10:00AM, 11:00AM, 1:00PM, 2:00PM, and 3:00PM.

Ages: All

http://www.sos.ga.gov/archives/state_capitol/

June 3:

10:00 AM and 5:30 PM

Atlanta History Center
130 West Paces Ferry Road, N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30305
Phone: 1-800-219-5112

(A 30 minute train/bus ride north of the Marriott Marquis)

Walk in wondering and walk out in wonder! Explore the history of the South through award winning exhibitions, including one of the country's largest exhibitions on the Civil War. Tour the 1845 Tullie Smith Farm and the 1928 Swan House mansion, stroll through 33 acres of beautiful gardens and trails and don't miss the new Centennial Olympic Games Museum. Jump on MARTA for this extraordinary experience. Take MARTA north to the Lenox rail station. Transfer to bus #23 to Peachtree and West Paces Ferry Road. Walk three blocks west on West Paces Ferry Road, and you will reach the pedestrian entrance in front of the Atlanta History Center. MARTA bus #23 continues north to the Buckhead and Lenox stations and south to the Arts Center station. This bus runs daily approximately every 11 minutes.

Ages: All

<http://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/>

Next month's feature in the E-AIR newsletter will be "Get out of Town!" and will highlight venues within a one-hour drive of the hotel. In the meantime, we are ready to serve you as you plan your trip to Atlanta. If you have any questions, please contact any of the members of the Atlanta Local Arrangements Team:

Your Atlanta Local Arrangements Committee:

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

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

Jonathan Gordon, Georgia Tech <jonathan.gordon@oars.gatech.edu>

Lily Hwang, Georgia Gwinnett College <lhwang@ggc.usg.edu>

Sean Mullins, North Georgia College and State University <SMMullins@ngcsu.edu>

Alice Simpkins, Paine College <simpkinsa@mail.paine.edu>

Barbara Stephens, Bainbridge College <bstephen@bainbridge.edu>

Sandi Bramblett, Local Arrangements Chair, Georgia Tech <sandi@gatech.edu>

Bill Hayward, Local Arrangements Associate Chair and Honorary Georgian, Northwestern University <bh@northwestern.edu>

AIR Grant Information

Reminder About Upcoming Grant Deadlines

The Association for Institutional Research (AIR), with support from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), sponsors the grant program *Improving Institutional Research in Postsecondary Educational Institutions*. The program provides professional development opportunities to doctoral students, institutional researchers, educators, and administrators, and fosters the use of federal databases for institutional research in postsecondary education.

SUMMER DATA POLICY INSTITUTE- March 16, 2009 is the last day to apply for a Fellowship to attend the National Summer Data Policy Institute. The Institute is an intensive introduction to NSF and NCES datasets and research methodologies using large national data sources. Funding is provided by the NSF and NCES. The Institute is open to institutional research professionals, faculty and graduate students, and staff from state and national associations. A limited number of spaces are available for postsecondary education researchers from non-U.S. institutions. Please visit <http://airweb.org/nsdpi.html> for full program description and an online application.

IR STUDIES- Apply for the Fellowship Program in Institutional Research **between February 20 and April 20, 2009**. Funding for this program is provided by NCES. Tuition and educational support is available from one to three years for graduate students and IR professionals to enroll in graduate coursework or a certificate program to develop institutional research skills. Please visit <http://airweb.org/FellowshipOverview.html> for full program description and an online application.

Dept of Education Internship

Internship Opportunity - U.S. Department of Education

Brandon D. Daniels, Office of Postsecondary Education (Brandon.Daniels@ed.gov)

Strategic Planning Staff – Policy, Planning and Innovation, Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), U.S. Department of Education (Please note that this is a non-paid internship.)

Internship Dates

June 2009 – August 2009 (Interviews will take place the first week of April)

Course Credit is available.

Qualifications

- Graduate student in the field of education (Higher Education, Educational Policy, Educational Leadership, International Education, Educational Psychology)
- Background in quantitative research
- Knowledge of SPSS and knowledge of MS Office (PowerPoint, Access, Word and Excel)

Summary of Duties

Assist Strategic Planning Staff with research and evaluation activities, analyze data and synthesize information from education research and related areas, enter Annual Performance Report data into multiple databases, and prepare summary reports of current projects.

How to Apply

Please submit the following information by **Monday, March 23, 2009** to Brandon.Daniels@ed.gov:

- 1 page letter, stating your qualifications, your research interests, and expectations for the internship
- Current CV
- 1 letter of recommendation from faculty member (does not have to be at your institution)

E-AIR Limerick Contest

Last Call for E-AIR Limerick Contest Submissions!

Marne Einarson (mke3@cornell.edu)

Time is running out to submit your entries for the 2009 E-AIR Limerick Contest! One of our previous winners told us, "I can't tell you how many doors have been opened to me as a result of winning your limerick contest." Okay, so perhaps that was said in jest. Well, how about this?: "Laughter is the best medicine." Whatever your motive -- career advancement, health promotion, or just making light of life -- take a moment to pen a limerick and send it to Marne Einarson (mke3@cornell.edu) by **February 27th**.

Entries will be judged by our esteemed panel of Michelle Appel, Bill Hayward, and Sylvia Reed. We'll publish the winning limericks in the March e-AIR newsletter.

For inspiration, here are some more samples from last year's entries:

From Kathryn Talley at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology:

New Race/Ethnicity Reporting Categories

*We've been asked to write items that catch
Both race and ethnicity, natch.
So we'll count all the bipeds
And send it to IPEDS
Hoping columns and rows will still match.*

And from Jennifer Rachford at Pomona College:

The Accreditation Blues

*Accreditors are here and we're stressin'.
"You must do more outcomes assessin'!!"
Faculty say
They will not play
'Cause their goals aren't conducive to testin'.*

So hop to it and send in your limerick(s) by February 27!

News: HEOA Summary

Summary of Higher Education Opportunity Act

In December 2008 The Department of Education issued a summary of the Higher Education Opportunity Act [HEOA] in the form of a "Dear Colleague Letter." It provides a detailed table of contents, a chart that lists the provisions of the Act by their effective date, and a summary of other laws and regulations that are referenced in the HEOA. It also provides a list of abbreviations and acronyms used in the letter.

A copy of this summary is available here: <http://ifap.ed.gov/dpccletters/attachments/GEN0812FP0810AttachHEOADCL.pdf>

News: Carnegie Classifications

Carnegie Foundation to Update Classifications

The Carnegie Foundation has announced plans for the upcoming update of the six all-inclusive classifications of colleges and universities:

- Undergraduate Instructional Program Classification
- Graduate Instructional Program Classification
- Enrollment Profile Classification
- Undergraduate Profile Classification
- Size and Setting Classification
- Basic Classification

The new edition will be released in 2010, using data from the most recent year available in spring 2009. Major changes to the existing classification methodology are not planned.

For more information see:

<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/sub.asp?key=638&subkey=2860>

News: CIRP 2008 Freshman Survey Findings

Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) 2008 Freshman Survey Findings

John Pryor, Director, Cooperative Institutional Research Program (john.pryor@ucla.edu)

College freshmen are more politically engaged today than at any point during the last 40 years, with 35.6 percent reporting that they frequently discussed politics in the last year, according to CIRP's annual survey of the nation's entering students at four-year institutions. This year's incoming class hit a number of record highs and lows on CIRP Freshman Survey measures.

The percentage of students who report attending their first-choice college is at a low, with only 60.7 percent reporting such in 2008, compared to approximately 70 percent in previous years. More than ever economics and financial aid issues are motivating students to attend second-choice schools, even when they have been accepted into their first-choice institutions. The percentage of students who expect to have a job to help pay college expenses is at 49.6 percent, the highest it has been since CIRP started asking the question 32 years ago.

The 2008 report highlights other trends, including more students reporting learning disabilities; an increased interest in engineering; college readiness, and support for "green: initiatives. Copies of "The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2008" can be ordered on the HERI website (<http://www.heri.ucla.edu>) where you may download a report summary, the press release, and a Power Point presentation of the 2008 findings.

The CIRP surveys are administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA's Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. For more information on registering for CIRP surveys, including the 2009 CIRP Freshman Survey, please visit: <http://www.heri.ucla.edu/herisurveys.php>.

News: PhD Program in Higher Ed

Seton Hall Offers New Ph.D. Program in Educational Research, Assessment and Program Evaluation

Seton Hall's PhD in Educational Research, Assessment and Program Evaluation is intended to meet the burgeoning demands for professional staff and leaders in educational organizations focused on data-driven decision making, program evaluation, assessment and testing, and teacher or faculty pedagogical development.

The program will produce graduates who can conduct research and provide leadership nationally and internationally in the area of research. It seeks to produce the following competencies over and beyond course-specific competencies for students in education settings: The ability to implement an academic or applied research program from start to completion. Assess the effectiveness of educational policies, practices, and programs. Integrate research findings into practical initiatives designed to improve the performance of students and organizations.

The higher education program concentration prepares students for a wide range of national and international professional positions, including higher education faculty and researchers. Graduates might work in universities, in federal and state agencies of higher education, and in higher education associations. Areas include institutional research, academic and instructional affairs, institutional support and administration, evaluation and assessment, planning, student affairs and services, financial affairs and services, and institutional development and alumni affairs.

For additional information about the program, please contact

Rebecca Cox at coxrebec@shu.edu or 973.761.9106

Elaine Walker at walkerel@shu.edu or 973.275.2307

NCES Web Resource

State Education Reforms Website Updated

NCES has just updated the State Education Reforms (SER) website. This website is based on the report "Overview and Inventory of State Education Reforms: 1990 to 2000," and is updated periodically to incorporate new data on state education reform activities.

The SER website, which draws primarily on data collected by organizations other than NCES, compiles and disseminates data on state-level education reform efforts in four areas: 1) standards, assessment, and accountability, 2) school finance reforms, 3) resources for learning, and 4) state support for school choice options. Specific reform areas include student and teacher assessments, adequate yearly progress, statewide exit exams, highly qualified teachers, open enrollment laws, and charter schools.

In the "State Support for School Choice Options" area of the website, three tables were updated. To locate these tables on the State Education Reforms website, please look for the "Updated!" tags next to the table titles.

To view the site, please visit: <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/>

Innovative Higher Education Journal

Looking for a publication venue? You may want to consider this journal ...

The journal of ***Innovative Higher Education*** is now in its 34th year of publication. It is a refereed scholarly journal with a distinguished and internationally known editorial review board. The goals of the journal are:

- To present descriptions and evaluations of innovations and provocative new ideas with relevance for action beyond the immediate context in higher education;
- To focus on the effect of such innovations on teaching and students;
- To be open to diverse forms of scholarship and research methods by maintaining flexibility in the selection of topics deemed appropriate for the journal; and
- To strike a balance between practice and theory by presenting manuscripts in a readable and scholarly manner to both faculty and administrators in the academic community.

We welcome manuscripts on a variety of topics in higher education, the key word being innovation. Generally manuscripts should not exceed 20-24 pages in length, and they must be submitted in APA style (APA Style Manual, 5th edition). Manuscripts should be submitted electronically to kayqi@uqa.edu as an attachment, in Word, to a cover letter in

the email.

For more information see <http://www.uga.edu/ihe/ihe.html>, where you will find the complete guidelines for submission, abstracts going back to 1989, and a topical listing of articles published.

Kay Herr Gillespie
Associate Editor
Innovative Higher Education
kayqi@uga.edu

Survey of IR Insights

Seeking Tips from IR Veterans for IR Newcomers

At the upcoming Annual Air Forum in Atlanta, three institutional researchers representing a private research university, public doctoral university, and a private liberal arts institution will share their experiences, triumphs, and trials from their first year of working in institutional research (IR). The target audience for this presentation is newcomers to institutional research, particularly those who are tasked with establishing a new IR Office.

As part of this presentation, we are asking you to share insights or tips for newcomers to IR by responding to the following survey found at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=LxxuvYDALiAZ2wVJG0CRQ_3d_3d

Your feedback will greatly benefit newcomers to the world of IR.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this survey.

Please direct any questions about this survey and/or the presentation to:

Liana Carpenzano
Assistant Director, Financial & Operational Analysis
NYC Department of Correction
lianac2006@yahoo.com
(718) 863-4093

or

Crissie M. Grove
AIR/NCES Postdoctoral Fellow
Association for Institutional Research (AIR)
cgrove@airweb.org
(850) 980-4745

or

Gordon Mills
Director of Institutional Research
University of South Alabama
gmills@usouthal.edu
(251) 460-6447

Open Doors Annual Survey

Open Doors International Student Census Deadline

Reminder: The deadline for the *Open Doors* International Student Census is February 28th. *Open Doors* is an annual survey of the international exchange activity in the U.S. and includes separate surveys on international students in the U.S.; Americans studying abroad for academic credit; and foreign scholars teaching and doing research in the U.S.

The International Student Census survey form can be accessed at <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=census2008> .

Please e-mail ieresearch@iie.org with any questions or requests for an extension.

Patricia Chow
Senior Program Officer
Research & Evaluation
Institute of International Education
pchow@iie.org
<http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/>

CC Benchmarking Projects

2009 Enrollment Open for Two National Community College Benchmarking Projects

Enrollment is now officially open for two national community college benchmarking projects: The Kansas Study of Community College Instructional Costs and Productivity (<http://www.kansasstudy.org>) and the National Community College Benchmark Project [NCCBP] (<http://www.nccbp.org>).

The Kansas Study collects and reports data on instructional workload (percent credit hours taught by full- and part-time faculty) and the direct costs of instruction, by discipline.

The NCCBP collects and reports data on a variety of student outcomes, retention, developmental education, minority participation, market penetration, contract training, student/faculty ratio, faculty load, human resources, and professional development variables, at the institutional level.

Participants in both projects receive reports of both their individual institutional and national aggregate data, as well as the opportunity to select peer colleges and create benchmark comparisons on the project websites.

For additional information, including enrollment forms and procedures, go to the respective project websites identified above. Questions may be directed to Jeff Seybert,

Director, Institutional Research, Johnson County Community College (jseybert@jccc.edu).

Jeff Seybert
Director, Institutional Research
Johnson County Community College
jseybert@jccc.edu

CC Benchmarking Conference

Benchmarking in Community Colleges--the 2009 Annual Conference: Call for Papers

"The National Benchmarking and Best Practices Conference" will be held at Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, KS, June 23-25, 2009.

Conference organizers invite proposals for 45 minute presentations on any topic related to benchmarking in higher education including peer selection; data collection instruments, methodologies, & processes; data sharing/benchmarking consortia; best practices in benchmarking and use of comparative data; national data collection/sharing initiatives, and similar issues. Proposals should include the paper title, author and affiliation, and a 50-75 word abstract.

Please send proposals and direct questions to Jeff Seybert, Director, National Higher Education Benchmarking Institute, Johnson County Community College, jseybert@jccc.edu or (913)469-8500, ext. 3442.

Jeff Seybert
Director, Institutional Research
Johnson County Community College
jseybert@jccc.edu

2009 Assessment Institute in Indianapolis

2009 Assessment Institute in Indianapolis - Call for Proposals

Dear Colleagues,

I invite you to join us for the **2009 Assessment Institute in Indianapolis** October 25-27, 2009. Please consider submitting a proposal **by March 20** using this link: <http://planning.iupui.edu/institute/callforproposals> .

We would be particularly pleased to receive proposals addressing any of the tracks listed below:

- Civic Engagement
- ePortfolios
- Faculty Development

- First-Year Experience
- Student Development And Diversity
- Accreditation
- All Major Fields
- Assessment Methods
- Community Colleges
- General Education

The Assessment Institute in Indianapolis is the nation's oldest and largest event focused exclusively on Outcomes Assessment in Higher Education. For more information, please consult our website: <http://www.planning.iupui.edu> (click on 'Assessment Institute - October 25-27, 2009') or contact me at:

Phone: (317) 274-4111; Fax: (317) 274-4651

Email: tbanta@iupui.edu

Trudy W. Banta

Professor of Higher Education
Senior Advisor to the Chancellor for
Academic Planning and Evaluation
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

HEDW Forum Conference

HEDW Forum Conference Registration is Open

Registration is open for the 2009 Higher Education Data Warehousing Forum Conference, to be held at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana on Sunday April 26 to Tuesday April 28. Go to <http://www.indiana.edu/~edss/hedw/index.html> for information and to register. The conference registration fee is \$295 for early birds who register by February 28 and \$325 thereafter.

Session topics will range from "creating cross-functional data marts" to "designing dashboards to die for." The conference agenda will also include an extended session on data modeling. Sunday's preconference training will be taught by Warren Thornthwaite of the Kimball Group, who will provide an overview of the Kimball lifecycle approach to data warehousing.

I encourage you to come to Bloomington early enough to attend the Forum's first vendor showcase. We have been fortunate to attract major firms like Microsoft as well as smaller service-based firms that provide both guidance and development resources and pre-packaged "all-in-one" reporting/database solutions. They will only be with us on Sunday to preserve the vendor-free conference environment Forum members value.

I hope to see you in Indiana. Despite tight travel budgets we anticipate a sixth HEDW Forum Conference as collegial and informative as the first five.

Emily Thomas

HEDW Forum President, 2008-09

emily.thomas@stonybrook.edu

AEA Annual Conference

American Evaluation Association (AEA) Annual Conference - Call for Proposals

The American Evaluation Association (AEA) welcomes proposals focusing on any aspect of evaluation for its annual conference to be held Wednesday, November 11, though Saturday, November 14, 2009 at the beautiful Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando, Florida, USA.

This year's conference, themed *Context and Evaluation*, is broken down into 41 Topical Strands which includes 500+ presentations. Content at the conference will span the breadth and depth of the field of evaluation—from exploring traditional and emerging methodologies, to addressing issues related to working internationally and cross-culturally, to delving into applications of evaluation to a range of disciplines.

Practitioners, academics, students, as well as others from various disciplinary backgrounds with an interest in evaluation, are invited. Past conferences have gained attendance from authors of well-known texts as well as representatives of governmental organizations, academia, foundations, and private and non-profit sectors.

All proposals must be submitted via the Internet using AEA's online forms. For more information about this process, please visit the conference website at: <http://www.eval.org/eval2009/>.

Proposals are due by midnight in the Eastern time zone, on **Friday, March 20, 2009**.

For additional information about either the AEA or the 2009 Conference, please contact Membership Director Heidi Nye via email at info@eval.org or via telephone at (888) 232.2275 or (508) 748.3326.

Heidi Nye

Member Services, Registration, and Audio-Visual

American Evaluation Association

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2nd UK IR Conference

Building a Community for Institutional Research in the UK and Ireland

Institutional Research Conference

July 8 and 9, 2009

Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom

Sheffield Hallam University invites you to the second major UK conference focusing on institutional research. The conference is primarily about building an IR community in the UK and Ireland, but we welcome submissions and delegates from around the world, presenting a variety of institutional research approaches from which we can all learn. We invite proposals for workshops, papers, works in progress and posters; the deadline for submission is **March 6th**.

More information about the conference is available at our website:
http://extra.shu.ac.uk/irconference2009/about_conference.html

Professor Ranald Macdonald
Conference Chair and Convenor
Sheffield Hallam University
r.macdonald@shu.ac.uk

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.

Mike Quarty, professor of psychology, and formerly Director of Institutional Research at Thomas Nelson Community College and president of the Southeastern Association of Community College Research, passed away suddenly January 21.

Editors' Book of the Month

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

This month, Willard Hom, Director of Research and Planning at the System Office of the California Community Colleges (whom@cccoco.edu), contributes an abstract of a study analyzing the U.S. News & World Report rankings:

Grewal, R., Dearden, J. A., & Lilien, G. L. (2008, August). The University rankings game: Modeling the competition among universities for ranking, *American Statistician*, 62(3), 232-237.

Playing the U.S. News & World Report Ranking Game

Leaders of universities recognize that the rankings issued by the U.S. News & World Report (USNWR) magazine can affect their institutions, and they tend to have an interest in how their institutions can improve their positions within that ranking, despite the frequent criticism given that instrument. A trio of quantitative researchers who analyze competition and rankings (Grewal, Dearden & Lilien) recently issued an analysis of the USNWR rankings.

Grewal, Dearden & Lilien analyzed USNWR data for the top forty-seven universities, covering the USNWR rankings in the years from 1999 through 2006 (resulting in 329 data points). They used a variety of logit models (based upon the adjacent category logit model) to explore the ability to predict a university's ranking with various explanatory variables (primarily through the lag rank and so-called subrankings for each university). From this modeling effort, they made the following points, among others:

1. "US News publishes the overall ranking of the top universities along with subrankings on key aggregated attributes: academic prestige rank, graduation and retention rank, selectivity rank, faculty resources rank, financial resources rank, and alumni giving rank (we refer to these as...subranks). US News uses predefined weights to combine the scores on the attributes in each of these six categories into an overall score. From the university management's perspective, to gain in the US news rankings, a university must invest in improving one or more of the six subranks. Even if a university takes no actions to improve one or more of these subranks, its subranks still may change. That is, a gain in overall rank for a university implies some other university is losing rank and the strategies (intentional or unintentional) that universities follow are reflected in changes in their subranks..." [pp. 233-234]
2. "...irrespective of a university's rank, it should focus on graduation and retention and should not expect much return by increasing emphasis on alumni giving more than its competition. A highly ranked university gets more leverage from growing financial resources while lower ranked universities get more leverage from improvements in academic reputations..." [p. 237]
3. "...the probabilities of change in rank...show the localized nature of rank competition among the universities, supporting our persistence hypothesis... Persistence [in ranking] also interacts in meaningful ways with the subranks, providing insights into strategies that universities might use to improve their rankings... For the university ranked 10, financial resources and graduation and retention are the top two subranks..., whereas for a university ranked 40, academic reputation and graduation and retention are the two critical subranks..." [pp. 235-237]
4. "The results from our adjacent category logit model demonstrate persistence in university ranking and localized competition. [In other words, each university tends to maintain its ranking over time, and a university primarily competes only with those institutions that have relatively similar rankings.] The persistence of ranking results show [sic] that lagged rank is a key driver of current rank and that lagged rank interacts in a strategically important manner with university attributes such as academic reputation, financial resources, and faculty resources..." [pp. 232-233]

This analysis can provide university decision makers with some guidance (i.e., a systematic approach) on how to play this specific ranking game. This analysis also indicates that a rigorous effort to play the ranking game strategically can demand a serious amount of quantitative analysis. However, some public policy analysts may find this game to be evidence of how a ranking system can focus an institution such that other priorities (i.e., the concept of contribution to the public good) may become overlooked in its planning.

Rajdeep Grewal (Professor of Marketing, Pennsylvania State University), James A. Dearden (Chairperson and Professor, Dept. of Economics, Lehigh University), and Gary Lilien (Distinguished Professor of Management Science, Pennsylvania State University) provide details in their article ("The University Rankings Game: Modeling the Competition Among Universities for Ranking") published by the peer-reviewed journal *American Statistician* (August 2008, pp. 232-237). Readers with some background in statistical analysis will find the content and style of the paper very accessible.

Many thanks to Willard for contributing this abstract.

Rankings seem to be on other researchers' minds. Here is a link from *Inside Higher Ed* about a recent study, published in the *American Sociological Review*, that uses Foucault's ideas about discipline, surveillance and punishment as a framework to explore " ... why rankings encourage educationally questionable behavior by academic leaders":
<http://insidehighered.com/news/2009/02/03/rankings>

Technical Tips from the Field

Calculating Distance Using Zip Zodes

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 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 tip is from Chris Winters, Director of Institutional Research at Williams College (Chris.Winters@williams.edu). Thanks for sending in this cool tip, Chris!

Have you ever wondered how to calculate the distance between two points in the USA if all you know are the zip codes? For example, let's say you think that an applicant's distance from your campus might be a significant predictor of whether or not she will matriculate. Or you hypothesize that distance from home is a significant predictor of whether or not a student will leave campus during short breaks. In these cases you really need the variable "distance" but often all you have is the variable "zipcode". Well, through the generosity of the US Census, the magic of geometry, and the power of MS Excel, you can approximate distance using the Great Circle calculation. This calculation assumes that the Earth is a perfect sphere (no mountains) but that assumption is OK for

our purposes.

1) Download a huge database of zip code latitudes and longitudes here. You will use this to lookup the latitude x longitude coordinates of your starting and ending zip codes: <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/tiger/zip1999.html>

2) Use this formula to calculate the distance between any two places on earth that you can define by latitude x longitude coordinates:

$$=radiusearth*((2*ASIN(SQRT((SIN((RADIANS(otherlatitude)-RADIANS(yourlatitude)))/2)^2)+COS(RADIANS(otherlatitude))*COS(RADIANS(yourlatitude))*(SIN((RADIANS(otherlongitude)-RADIANS(yourlongitude))/2)^2))))$$

Where the following named cells are:
 radiusearth=a constant of 3958.82 miles
 yourlatitude=the latitude of your campus
 yourlongitude=the longitude of your campus
 otherlatitude=the latitude of the other place
 otherlongitude=the longitude of the other place

Gayle’s Example – distance from home (zip=21075) to work (zip=20783):

Work Latitude +39.000509
 Work Longitude -076.972297
 Home latitude +39.205756
 Home longitude -076.753093

Distance from home to work=3958.82*((2*ASIN(SQRT((SIN((RADIANS(+39.000509)-RADIANS(+39.205756))/2)^2)+COS(RADIANS(+39.000509))*COS(RADIANS(+39.205756))*(SIN((RADIANS(-076.972297)-RADIANS(-076.753093))/2)^2))))=18.4 miles

Not bad – I clock it at 21.5 miles driving!

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

This month's parting thoughts are e-mail signature lines that recently caught my attention. Do you have others to share? Send them in!

Everything is data, but data isn't everything.

~ Pauline Bart, American sociologist and feminist

It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable.

~ Moliere [Jean-Baptiste Poquelin] (1622 - 1673), French playwright and actor

The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining.

~ John F. Kennedy (1917 - 1963), President of the United States

Your contributions of Parting Thoughts are most welcome! Send them to Marne Einarson (mke3@cornell.edu).