



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).

Editors' Note

New E-Mail Format for E-AIR

We are trying out a new format for the monthly e-mail that contains the links and table of contents for the Electronic AIR. We welcome your comments on the look and functionality of this new e-mail format.

Marne (mke3@cornell.edu) and Gayle (gfink@usmd.edu)

AIR FYI: Net Price Calculator

AIR FYI: Net Price Calculator Will Be Required on Institutional Web Sites

Valerie Martin Conley, Chair HEDPC (air@airweb.org)

Check the online AIR FYI Web site (<http://www.airweb.org/?page=1900>) for information about (a) a template being developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for the net price calculator that institutions will have to post on their own web sites, and (b) information about the multiyear tuition calculator that NCES will be required to post this summer.

Each Title IV, HEA postsecondary institution must post a net price calculator on its Web site starting in August 2011. An institution may use either the net price calculator developed by the NCES that will be posted in August 2009, or, alternatively, one the institution develops on its own, as long as its calculator includes "at a minimum the same data elements" found in the NCES calculator. Although institutions will have two years after the NCES calculator template is posted to develop their own calculator, they may wish to begin discussions among financial aid, admissions, finance, institutional research, and IT departments about how they wish to estimate net price.

In addition, starting in August 2009, the College Navigator Web site must display a multiyear tuition calculator that projects tuition and fees for the expected length of the typical academic program offered by each postsecondary institution. Representatives from many of these same institutional offices should be made aware of this new source of tuition information for prospective and current students.

IR officers may wish to forward the AIR FYI link to relevant individuals on their campuses. They should also watch for an AIR announcement that the NCES calculator has been made public.

Coordinated by the Higher Education Data Policy Committee. All opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Association for Institutional Research.

Valerie Martin Conley
HEDPC Committee Chair

AIR Survey Fact

AIR Survey Fact: Centralized and Shared IR Office Responsibilities

Fred Volkwein (volkwein@psu.edu), Jim Woodell (jkw168@psu.edu) and Ying Liu (yx1226@psu.edu), Pennsylvania State University

In this feature, Fred Volkwein, Jim Woodell and Ying Liu of Pennsylvania State University share selected findings from the AIR survey of IR, Assessment and Planning offices conducted in 2008. The editors thank Fred and his colleagues for this contribution. Comments and questions about this feature are welcome and may be addressed to Fred at volkwein@psu.edu.

This month, we analyze the tasks and work activities of IR offices from the AIR Survey of IR offices. On the survey we asked offices to indicate the analytical tasks that they conducted throughout the year on a scale that indicates the extent to which these activities are centralized in IR versus shared with some other office or offices. For the survey, we developed an inventory of 77 analytical responsibilities grouped into six categories as follows:

- 14 types of General Reporting Responsibility
- 9 types of Technology and Database Administration
- 7 types of Academic Affairs Research and Analysis
- 12 types of Administration and Finance Analysis
- 12 types of Strategic Planning and Enrollment Management Studies
- 23 types of Assessment, Effectiveness, Evaluation, and Accountability Studies

Analysis of responses from over 1,100 offices in 2008 reveals that there is a core of relatively centralized analytical tasks that are conducted by the majority of IR offices around the country. The following tables show responses for all survey respondents.

Table 1 summarizes the top 12 centralized tasks. The majority of these centralized IR activities relate to collecting and reporting campus and national data [coordinating national survey data collection (77%), using the IPEDS peer analysis system (74%), maintaining/producing the campus factbook (73%), responding to guidebooks (67%) and federal/state data requests (67%), exchanging data (62%), reporting student characteristics (63%), enrollments (49%), and degrees awarded (58%)].

Table 1. Most Centralized IR Tasks

IR Activity	% "Centralized"
1 Coordinating national survey data collection	77
2 Using the IPEDS Peer Analysis System for comparative or other research	74
3 Producing college/campus/system fact book	73
4 Responding to college guidebook surveys	68
5 Responding to federal and state requests for data	67
5 Attrition/retention/graduation analysis	67
5 Peer institution benchmarking	67
6 Analyzing national higher education databases	66
7 Reporting student characteristics	63
8 Studies of student engagement	60
9 Responding to requests for data exchange (non system, non-campus)	61
10 10. Studies of student satisfaction/opinion	59
11 Producing degrees-awarded statistics	58
12 Enrollment reporting for the current year	49

Thus, IR "owns" and is solely responsible for tasks that are mostly in the category of general reporting and involve expertise that we judge to be largely descriptive in nature (as distinct from analytical). The centralized IR activities that are perhaps more analytical than descriptive include attrition/retention/graduation analyses (67%), peer bench marking (67%), analyzing national databases (66%), studying student engagement (60%) and student satisfaction (59%).

A more complete picture of IR work appears in Table 2 where we summarize the responsibilities that IR offices share with others across the campus. Here we see not only a higher proportion of IR office involvement, but also a larger array of analytical tasks. For example, over 90% of IR offices are engaged in activities related to institutional and departmental self-study and accreditation. Over 80% of IR offices collaborate with relevant others on studies of student satisfaction and progress, performance indicators and goal attainment, and administrative policy research.

Table 2. Most Centralized Plus Shared IR Tasks

IR Activity	% "Centralized" and "Shared"
1 Supplying information and analysis for institutional self-study and accreditation	94
2 Supplying information for academic department program reviews and accreditation	90
3 Studies of student satisfaction/opinion	87
3 Compiling/reporting institution-level performance indicators	87
4 Studies of student academic performance/progress	84
5 Tracking progress toward institutional goals and objectives	83
6 Conducting research on college/campus/system issues/policies	80
7 Student tracking	79
8 Maintaining college/campus/system facts on website	78
9 Compiling/reporting unit level performance indicators	75
10 Environmental scanning (demographic, economic, social, political trends)	73
11 Maintaining IR database and hardware	72
12 Studies of the freshman year experience	68
13 Studies of students to support administrative policy making	67
14 Conducting alumni studies	58

Other areas of frequent IR collaboration include student tracking (79%), maintaining web-based facts (78%), compiling unit level performance indicators (75%), environmental scanning (73%), database maintenance (72%), and studies of freshmen (68%), students (67%), and alumni (58%).

The profile shown in Table 2 suggests that sharing analytical tasks with other offices in the institution is a valuable component of IR work. Noting in our earlier reports that over 70% of IR offices have fewer than four professional staff, these results may reflect the

need for such collaboration as a healthy coping mechanism for sparse staffing.

U.S. News Data Collection Plans

U.S. News' Data Collection Starts for the 2010 Edition of America's Best Colleges

Robert Morse, Director of Data Research, U.S. News & World Report (bmorse@usnews.com)

U.S. News would like to update AIR members on the latest U.S. News' plans for the 2010 Edition of America's Best Colleges to be published in August 2009.

DATA COLLECTION for the U.S. News main, financial aid, and finance surveys began March 17, 2009. Each of your school's statistical survey contacts should have received an email from a U.S. News Data Researcher with details on how to access the online surveys. If you are a survey contact and you did not receive the emailed survey notice, please contact Vachelle Manly, Data Collection Manager, at vmanly@usnews.com.

THE RANKINGS/GUIDE IS SCHEDULED TO BE PUBLISHED IN LATE AUGUST 2009. The new rankings are tentatively set to be published online during late August 2009. A few days prior to the online launch, U.S. News will again update AIR members on the details of the data and rankings release. Any school that completes the U.S. News Main or Financial Aid survey will get a free 12-month pass to the premium online edition of our America's Best Colleges web site. When an actual date for the launch of the 2010 edition of the America's Best Colleges rankings has been determined U.S. News will sent out clear notifications.

RANKING QUESTIONS: If you have questions about the U.S. News rankings, ranking methodology, peer assessment surveys or publications, contact Bob Morse, Director of Data Research at bmorse@usnews.com.

SURVEY DATA QUESTIONS: If you have question about the statistical surveys (technical issues, deadline extensions, etc.), please contact the U.S News researcher assigned to your school or Vachelle Manly at vmanly@usnews.com.

In advance, U.S. News would like to thank AIR members for participating in the current Best Colleges data collection. We fully understand that it takes a lot of work to fill out surveys and appreciate your efforts to provide us with the most accurate data available.

Robert J. Morse
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Washington, DC 20007
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NILOA Survey

National Survey of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Launches

Your chief academic officer has been invited to participate in an institutional survey conducted by the National Institute for Learning Outcome Assessment (NILOA) co-located at Indiana University and the University of Illinois. The survey is brief, should take less than fifteen minutes, and asks about the tools and approaches your institution is using to assess student learning. With support from foundations and help from several higher education associations, George Kuh (Indiana) and Stan Ikenberry (Illinois) have sent the survey to all accredited two- and four-year colleges and universities in the United States to gain a clearer picture of outcome assessment practices nationwide. It is possible that the nature of some of the questions will prompt your chief academic officer to contact you or someone in your office for information.

For more information about NILOA and this survey visit:
<http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/>

The results of this project will be useful to us all. I appreciate your support!

George D. Kuh
Chancellor's Professor and Director
Center for Postsecondary Research
Indiana University
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E-AIR Limerick Contest

Results of the 2009 E-AIR Limerick Contest

Marne Einarson (mke3@cornell.edu)

It's time to announce the results of the 2009 limerick contest! A total of 27 limericks were submitted this year. And once again, our contributors produced creative, entertaining and sometimes sardonic rhymes about many facets of our profession -- including data requests, assessment and survey response rates. It wasn't easy but, ultimately, our panel of judges decided upon the following slate of medal winners:

The Gold Medal goes to Jennifer Brown, Director of Institutional Research and Policy Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston (jennifer.brown@umb.edu), for this limerick:

IR Conversation

I think that we might need to speak
Of the data I gave you last week.
The conclusions you've drawn
Show the use of some brawn.
You have twisted the facts till they squeak!

Our Silver Medal goes to John Nugent, Senior Research Analyst and Special Assistant to the President at Connecticut College (jdnug@conncoll.edu):

I arrived at my desk full of cheer,
When a data request did appear:
"Just need one stat ... or two ...
Oh -- for all our peers, too ...
And perhaps going back 15 years."

Our Bronze Medal winner is Amanda Udis-Kessler, Director of Institutional Research and Planning at The Colorado College (audiskessler@coloradocollege.edu):

IR is a much-needed thing.
Our talents help data take wing.
But we're not quite as smashing
When endowments go crashing:
We can't turn information to bling!

And Honorable Mentions go out to:

Gwendolyn Kuhns Black, Associate Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity at University of California Irvine (gwen.black@uci.edu) for:

We're asked to collect data galore.
Countless reports coming out, then more.
It really is easy
To feel a bit queasy
When they're put up on shelves and ignored.

Kathy Livingston, Director of Institutional Research and Assistant to the Senior Vice Chancellor at University of Nebraska at Kearney (livingstonke@unk.edu) for:

Budget cuts, assessment too.
Surveys always seem past due.
Ad hoc reports that take some time.
I'm often feeling far behind.
IR's story, sad but true!

Rana Glasgal, Associate Vice-Provost for Institutional Research and Decision Support at Stanford University (rana@stanford.edu) for:

We don't know a lot, we admit
So for months we scanned all the "lit".
We spurned CLA
(It's much too cliché)
To learning outcomes we do commit!

Debbie Zizzo, Assistant Director of Institutional Research and Reporting at The University of Oklahoma (dzizzo@ou.edu) for:

My stomach is churnin' and wrenchin'.
I just heard a casual mention –
Not meant to be mean,
Yet vaguely obscene –
"It's now time to start on retention."

Viktor Brenner, Institutional Research Coordinator at Waukesha County Technical College (vbrenner@wctc.edu) for:

The Graduate Follow-up Blues

Mailed returns are falling.
Response rates are appalling.
Because on a cell
The alumni can tell
Who it is that is calling.

And finally, from an anonymous contributor, the following limerick:

Doc rankings, we all love to tout
But their value we're starting to doubt.
We all paid to play
But can't name the day
When the NRC ratings come out.

Congratulations to our winners and thanks to all who submitted limericks. Your creativity and sense of humor are much appreciated! And finally, a very big "thank you" to our panel of judges – Michelle Appel, Bill Hayward and Sylvia Reed.

AIR Publications

Did you know...? Electronic AIR (E-AIR) is the single oldest, still-publishing email newsletter on the Internet, having been regularly published since October of 1986.

Now available – new Publications ordering form for 2009:
<http://www.airweb.org/images/puborderform.pdf>.

Don't miss the latest editions of the Professional File:
<http://www.airweb.org/professionalfile.html>, and IR Applications:
<http://www.airweb.org/irapplications.html>. The Professional File publishes articles that synthesize issues, introduce new processes and models, and share applied, practical knowledge with institutional research professionals. IR Applications covers articles focused on the application of advanced and specialized methodologies.

NCES Publications

Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2007; Graduation Rates, 2001 and 2004 Cohorts; and Financial Statistics, Fiscal Year 2007

The National Center for Education Statistics within the Institute of Education Sciences has released the report "Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2007; Graduation Rates, 2001 and 2004 Cohorts; and Financial Statistics, Fiscal Year 2007."

This First Look presents findings from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) spring 2008 data collection, which included four components: Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2007; Graduation Rates, 2001 & 2004 Cohorts; and

Financial Statistics, Fiscal Year 2007. These data were collected through the IPEDS web-based data collection system. Findings include:

In fall 2007, Title IV institutions in the United States enrolled a total of 18.7 million graduate and undergraduate students; 62 percent were enrolled in 4-year institutions, 36 percent were enrolled in 2-year institutions, and 2 percent were enrolled in less-than-2-year institutions.

Approximately 57 percent of full-time, first-time bachelor's or equivalent degree-seekers attending 4-year institutions completed a bachelor's or equivalent degree at the institution where they began their studies within 6 years.

During 2006-07 academic year, 73 percent of the 2.8 million full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates attending Title IV institutions located in the United States received financial aid.

To view, download and print the report as a PDF file, please visit:
<http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009155>

Digest of Education Statistics, 2008

The 44th in a series of publications initiated in 1962, the Digest's primary purpose is to provide a compilation of statistical information covering the broad field of American education from prekindergarten through graduate school. The Digest contains data on a variety of topics, including the number of schools and colleges, teachers, enrollments, and graduates, in addition to educational attainment, finances, and federal funds for education, libraries, and international comparisons.

To view, download and print the report as a PDF file, please visit:
<http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009020>

Mini-Digest of Education Statistics, 2008

This publication is a pocket-sized compilation of statistical information covering the broad field of American education from kindergarten through graduate school. The statistical highlights are excerpts from the Digest of Education of Statistics, 2008.

To view, download and print the report as a PDF file, please visit:
<http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009021>

Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2006-07 (Fiscal Year 2007)

The National Center for Education Statistics within the Institute of Education Sciences has released the report "Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2006-07 (Fiscal Year 2007)."

This brief publication contains basic revenue and expenditure data, by state, for public elementary and secondary education for school year 2006-07. It contains state-level data on revenues by source and expenditures by function, including expenditures per pupil.

To view, download and print the report as a PDF file, please visit:
<http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009337>

Other Publications of Interest

Trends in College Spending: Where Does the Money Come From? Where Does It Go?

This new report from the Delta Project on Postsecondary Education Costs, Productivity, and Accountability examines revenue and expenditure data for nearly 2,000 public and private non-profit colleges and universities (representing more than 75 percent of higher education enrollment) and analyzes recent trends, focusing on the period from 2002 to 2006. It is the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of higher education finance in the nation. As noted in the February 17, 2009 WICHE Policy Alert, the report, " ... calls for greater transparency in higher education finance. By highlighting national data and developing college spending metrics that can be adapted by institutions and states, the report seeks to help policymakers get better performance out of higher education by keeping postsecondary costs contained and tuition increases minimal."

The full report can be accessed here:
http://www.deltacostproject.org/resources/pdf/trends_in_spending-report.pdf

Editors' Publication of the Month

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

This month's book review was contributed by Gayle Fink, Associate Editor of E-AIR and the Director of Institutional Research, University System of Maryland (gfink@usmd.edu). Gayle reviews *Minding the Gap: Why Integrating High School with College Makes Sense and How to Do It*, edited by Nancy Hoffman, Joel Vargas, Andres Venezia and Marc S. Miller and published by Harvard Education Press in 2007 (ISBN 978-1-891792-45-8).

The imperative for a more educated citizenry and linking K-12 and higher education into a P-20 continuum is taking hold. As reported recently in the Chronicle of Higher Education (March 10, 2009), President Obama stressed shared responsibility for improving education and urged better systems of accountability in a speech to the

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The President "reiterated his belief today that America's long-term prosperity rests heavily on the nation's ability to do a better job of educating its people. The president urged states and school districts to create better data systems to track students' educational progress from childhood through college, told colleges and universities they needed "to control spiraling costs," and said individuals have a responsibility to themselves and to their country to "walk through the doors of opportunity."

The notion of linking K-12 and higher education data is taking hold. The Data Quality Campaign (DQC) <http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/> has been working in many of our states helping K-12 systems establish longitudinal data systems. Over the next three years, the priority of DQC is to "expand the ability of state longitudinal data systems to link across the P-20 education pipeline and across state agencies."

At the same time, higher education is involved in dialogue with high schools about aligning high school graduation expectations with college readiness. The American Diploma Project (ADP) formed by Achieve, Inc <http://www.achieve.org/> has a network of 34 states participating in policy discussions to align high school standards with knowledge and skills required for success after high school.

At some point in the near future, IR professionals may be asked to participate in researching the alignment issue and linking longitudinal data system at their sector and/or at the state level. I recommend reading *Minding the Gap: Why Integrating High School with College Makes Sense and How to Do It* as a way to prepare for these discussions.

Minding the Gap is a collection of contributed works that clearly lays out the necessity for aligning high school and college and describes where the holes are in the education pipeline. The challenges and successes involved in creating a P-20 education are shared by highlighting and describing the multiplicity of policy issues which need to be addressed to create "one" system. The pieces about early placement testing will be of particular interest to community college researchers since many two-year institutions are already engaged in this activity.

The editors acknowledge that there is not a "one size fits all" approach to creating pathways across the high school and college transition. A number of examples are provided demonstrating the variety of approaches for early college access currently in place. But more needs to be done. The authors outline the policies needed to build, sustain and further develop pathways across 9-14.

The final section addresses the need for integrated state-level data and accountability systems and financing. This is where IR professionals can add their expertise to state level policy discussions. Anyone participating in these discussions needs to have a basic understanding of the work in Texas and Florida on this issue, and the authors outline these data systems in a clear and concise manner. Elements of design specifications are also outlined by Peter Ewell. Finally there are discussions on integrating budgeting across sectors and financial aid barriers to early college access.

As someone who has spent the good part of a year discussing the issue of creating a longitudinal data system linking P-20, I wish I had read this book earlier. It clearly lays out the issues involved in aligning these two very independent systems and offers the reader the framework for moving forward. *Minding the Gap* also helped me gain a better understanding of the differences in culture between K-12 and higher education. I would

like to thank the staff of the Montgomery County P-20 Council (of which I am a member) for supplying this book as mandatory reading for our discussions on alignment.

From Your 2009 Forum Local Hosts



Track 4: Get Out of Town!

While this year's Forum will be in the heart of downtown Atlanta, there are plenty of fun things to do that are within an hour of the hotel. You'll have some down time to take advantage of fun outside of the Forum but if you're bringing your family, these activities will be especially appealing. Read on:

May 30:

12:00 PM; 1:00 PM; 2:00 PM; 4:00 PM; 5:00 PM

Chateau Elan Winery

100 Tour De France

Braselton, Georgia 30517

Phone: 1-800-233-WINE (9463)

Drive time: 45 minutes north of the Marriott Marquis

Cost: \$10.00

Château Élan Winery & Resort is a 3,500-acre resort 40 minutes north of Atlanta with lush vineyards, a 16th century style French Château, and a full production winery with tours and tastings. In addition to the AAA Four Diamond 322-room Inn, Chateau Elan is also home to the renowned European Spa, 63 holes of championship golf, seven distinctive restaurants, Culinary Studio and cooking school. Tour the winery, stomp the grapes, take home a bottle of wine with a label custom-made for you! Whether you're a wine-snob or a novice, the tours are informative and the wine tastings are fabulous. This is a unique option that will make your "Get Out of Town" time a memorable event!

Ages: 21 and older

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

May 31:

10:00 AM-9:00 PM

Six Flags Over Georgia

275 Riverside Parkway, SE

Austell, GA 30168

Phone: 770-948-9290

Drive time: 25 minutes west of the Marriott Marquis

Cost: \$30.00 per person (advance purchase online) plus parking (\$15.00 per vehicle)

Just in case you're bringing the family or if wine isn't your thing, how about a ride on the Great American Scream Machine? No, it's not a cab ride through downtown Atlanta ... it's Six Flags Over Georgia, the South's premier family theme park! Looking for thrills? Well, you'll find plenty! In fact, you'll find some of the fastest, tallest, wildest, gut-wrenchingest rides in the country — including a few record-breakers. If you've got pint-sized thrill seekers, Six Flags has the day planned for you too! They have tons of great fun for little ones to enjoy on their own and with parents. These rides spin, fly and promise to take kids on magical journeys that are perfect for their height and age.

Ages: All

<http://www.sixflags.com/overGeorgia/index.aspx>

June 1:

Dawn to Dusk (i.e. 7:30 AM – 9:00 PM)

Chattahoochee River Fun!

1978 Island Ford Pkwy

Atlanta, GA 30350

Phone: 678-538-1200

Drive Time: 45 minutes north of the Marriott Marquis

Cost: \$3.00 to enter the park; varies based on activity

Sixteen recreation areas along a 48-mile stretch of the Chattahoochee River have been designed to conserve the river and provide outdoor entertainment for the whole family. The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area offers several outdoor activities including kayaking, fishing, rafting, canoeing, kayaking, picnics and evening family programs.

Ages: All

<http://www.nps.gov/chat/>

June 2:

10:00 AM – 8:00 PM (Attractions)/ Laser Show starts at 9:30 PM

Stone Mountain Park

U.S. Highway 78 East, Exit 8

Stone Mountain, GA 30087

Phone: 770.498.5690 or 800.401.2407

Drive Time: 35 minutes east of the Marriott Marquis

Cost: \$8.00 park entrance fee per vehicle; attraction prices vary

Stone Mountain Park is home to the world's largest piece of exposed granite rock and is the state's most visited attraction. With more than 3,200 acres of natural beauty, the park offers families recreational activities, special events, lodging and camping. Plus, there's the Sky Hike, the largest family adventure course in the treetops. Also see the Skyride, Paddlewheel Riverboat, Antebellum Plantation & Farmyard, The Great Barn, Scenic Railroad, Ride the Ducks, Great Locomotive Adventure, Golf, museums and the 1870s town of Crossroads® which includes live shows, craft demonstrations, shopping and dining. The digitally-remastered LaserShow Spectacular highlights musical scores featuring well-known themes from Star Wars, Pirates of the Caribbean, Indiana Jones and High School Musical. With added displays of laser lights, graphics, characters and fireworks, this new show is bigger and better than ever!

Ages: All

<http://www.stonemountainpark.com/default.aspx>

**June 3:
10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Yellow River Game Ranch and Kangaroo Conservation Center
4525 Highway 78
Lilburn, GA 30047
Phone: 770-972-6643
Drive Time: 40 minutes east of the Marriott Marquis
Cost: \$8.00 (ages 12 and up); \$7.00 (ages 2-11); Free (Under age 2)**

Located just two and one-half miles east of Stone Mountain on Highway 78, the Yellow River Game Ranch offers a magnificent photo opportunity and a chance to meet wildlife on a close and personal basis. The Kangaroo Conservation Center is America's Aussie Adventure, home to the largest population of kangaroos outside of Australia. Explore the rustic trail where newborn fawns are a delightful favorite during the summer months — feed deer who come right up to greet you! Huge bears stand up for special treats and our overhead "catwalk" allows an extraordinary view of a very feline cougar. You'll have our animals eating out of your hand-- literally!

Ages: All
<http://www.yellowrivergameranch.com/index.htm>

Next month, we'll visit the SportZone so whether you're a spectator or a full-on participant, you'll find out about the sports activities in the ATL. 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>
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Bill Hayward, Local Arrangements Associate Chair and Honorary Georgian, Northwestern University <bh@northwestern.edu>

NJAIR Conference

NJAIR 15th Annual Spring Conference

The New Jersey Association for Institutional Research (NJAIR) 15th Annual Conference will be held Friday, April 17th at The College of New Jersey in Ewing, NJ. The theme of this year's conference is, "Assessing Institutional Effectiveness: The Role of Institutional Researchers."

For more information about the conference visit: <http://www.njair.org/15thConference09.htm>

Robert Miller
Dean for Institutional Research
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AIR Liaison for NJAIR
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2009 College Board Forum

The College Board's Forum 2009 in New York

Forum 2009: Education and the American Future
October 21-23, 2009
New York, NY

For an increasing number of students, the dream of a college education is slowly fading away. With a new administration in place, there are new opportunities and resources to help keep these college dreams alive.

Are we adequately preparing our students for the twenty-first century? How can we increase high school graduation and college retention rates in this economically uncertain time and best serve the young and diverse minds in our charge?

The College Board Forum brings together professionals from across the educational spectrum to engage in vital discussions on the critical questions affecting education today and in the future. We invite you to submit a proposal to lead a session or workshop. Proposal submissions are due **Friday April 24**.

For complete information on the Forum 2009 Call for Proposals, please visit: <http://www.collegeboard.com/forum>

Space Management Webinar

Using Visual Analysis and Geographic Information to Manage Space for Universities

Tuesday March 31st
10am PST / 1pm EST

Managing space effectively is one of the biggest challenges universities and colleges face. In this webinar, you'll learn analytical techniques to optimize classroom allocation and research space. We'll discuss how to track your use of space more efficiently to ensure you're including all costs and optimizing your resources. Discuss how space management has changed over the past ten years, and hear one innovator's vision for where it's going.

This program will focus on the application of maps and data about university space. This will be an orientation and requires no previous experience with Geographic Information systems (GIS) or mapping. We'll look at a case study of how one University is managing

its space and will focus on real-world issues for universities.

This webinar is being offered by Tableau Software as part of the AIR Connections Program. To register visit: <http://www.airweb.org/?page=1901>

AIR Office
air@airweb.org

AIR Grant Information

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

The call for applications is now open for the 2009 Postdoctoral Policy Fellowship Program. Funding is provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for research projects that result in improvements to the quality, comparability, and usefulness of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

The research will be conducted between mid-July 2009 and the end of May 2010. In addition to conducting the research project, Fellows will be introduced to the higher education policy community through meetings, seminars, and networking opportunities to make the Fellowship a career building experience. Fellows receive up to \$65,000 in compensation. In addition, up to \$5,000 is provided for research related expenses and travel. Please note that benefits are not provided and the responsibility for reporting income and paying taxes rests on the Fellow

The deadline for proposal submission is **April 17, 2009**. Complete guidelines are available at <http://www.airweb.org/postdoc.html>.

IR STUDIES

April 20, 2009 is the last day to apply for the Fellowship Program in Institutional Research. 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://www.airweb.org/FellowshipOverview.html> for full program description and an online application.

Technical Tips from the Field

Assorted Excel Tech Tips from MdAIR

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.

I put out a general call (plea actually) to my MdAIR colleagues for help with this month's Tech Tip. Below are the Excel-related ones I received. I also got suggestions like "when XYZ program crashes just reboot and pray!" and a recipe for Grilled Red Snapper Stuffed with Fresh Salsa and Cilantro. Have not tried the red snapper but I have used the other tips including talking to the ultimate being! Thank you Michelle Appel, University of Maryland, College Park; Rebecca Bell, University of Maryland, Baltimore; Lou Cox and Alan Harmon, US Naval Academy; Jean Marriott, Carroll Community College; and Selina Smith, Frostburg State University; for sharing your favorite Excel Tech Tip. If you have a favorite Tech Tip, please send it my way: gfink@usmd.edu

ASAP Utilities add-in (<http://www.asap-utilities.com/>)

"I got this tip from you at an IR director's meeting a couple of years ago and I have used it probably every day since I downloaded it!! It is great for filling in leading zeros, for finding duplicates in a list, coloring each n'th column or row in a selection, etc. And it is free!" I second this especially if you are not on Office 2007!

Custom Format for Adding Leading Zeros

"The problem was dropped leading zeros when importing data as numbers into Excel (such as IDs for example). Highlight column, left click to select format cells, under the Number tab, click on Custom, and type in a zero for each space that the ID (or whatever variable) should take up. In this case there would be 9 zeros." *Notice a trend about how to fix the leading zero issue!!!*

Text to Columns

Ever been frustrated when first and last name are imported into the same field? Check out this video from Excel 2007 help for how to use this feature. This is a keeper!
<http://www.brainstorminc.com/cbt/microsoft/help.php?file=excel15>

Concatenate

"I use MS Excel's "concatenate" function to create MySQL scripts to load up MySQL tables. Example: I'm given a list a spreadsheet of usernames and corresponding information such as phone number, address, etc. My goal is to put that into a script that can load the values into MySQL. If we have a simple table, called "students" that has 3 fields, let say "name", "phone_number", "city", in that order, the format for a simple

script would be: INSERT INTO students VALUES ('Gayle Fink', '410-XXX-XXXX', 'Annapolis'); (the semi-colon is a part of the script). What I would do is this:

Open my Excel spreadsheet with the data I need to convert to a script. Go to the first empty column – that will be my formula column. I click in the cell in the formula column that corresponds to the first row of data (if you have a header row, your first data would be in row 2, if no header row, it would be row 1). Example if column G is my formula row and I have a header row, I would click in cell G2. Next I insert function "concatenate"; I use the formulae wizard to make things easy. I then fill in the cell using a combination of text and other cell values to get the script I need for that row of data. Then I drag that formulae into the rest of that column so that I now have a formula for every row. I copy that formula column and paste "values only" into a new column. I can then copy the cells containing the 'values only' scripts into a MySQL script tab. This can be used for other database systems as well, not just MySQL." This one has saved me on several occasions!"

Using Excel to move information from one package to another

"I use MS Excel (or some spreadsheet application along with a plain text editor) when importing information/data from one software package to another when there is no 'easy way'. Example: A customer sends me a survey in pdf and I need to enter the questions as variable labels into SPSS. I open the pdf file and copy the contents. I paste that into a plain text editor and strip out all the non-question text. I then format the questions so they are each on one line. I then 'select all'; copy; and paste into the first label cell in SPSS. When I paste into the first cell, the cells below that first cell are automatically filled in; each line break that is in the plain text file is what tells SPSS to go to the cell below the current one. One may think it would be just as fast to copy each individual question straight from the pdf file and put it into an individual SPSS label cell, but that is not the case; using the plain text editor is much faster for me. Also, if you do decide to copy the questions one for one from the pdf file, when you try to paste them into SPSS, any line returns in the pdf file tells SPSS to advance to the next label field – that results in questions that span multiple lines being spread out in multiple label fields."

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>.

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.

Ralph E. Vines passed away unexpectedly on February 4th. Ralph retired from Panhandle State University in Goodwell, Oklahoma. He is the husband of Christy Vines, director of Information & Educational Services and instructor in the College of Business at the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith (cvines@uafortsmith.edu).

Parting Thoughts

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

~ Eric Hoffer (1902 - 1983), American social writer and philosopher

The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.

~ Alvin Toffler (1928 -), American writer and futurist

It is impossible for a man to learn what he thinks he already knows.

~ Epictetus (ca. 55 - ca. 135), Greek Stoic philosopher

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