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

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 few days for new positions. Point your browser to the following URL: www.airweb.org (look under "Jobs").

For further information regarding the Association for Institutional Research, contact Randy Swing, Executive Director, AIR, Suite 211, 1435 Piedmont Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32308; Telephone: 850-385-4155, Fax:850-385-5180 or via e-mail: (rswing@airweb.org).

Announcements & Information

Call for Nominations for AIR Awards
AIR Office (air@airweb.org)

AIR recognizes its most outstanding members through a collection of awards sponsored by various committees. We announce the opening of nominations for three awards.

The AIR Sidney Suslow Award

The Association for Institutional Research (AIR) Sidney Suslow Award was created in 1987 to honor the contribution of Sidney Suslow to AIR publications and scholarship. While it may be awarded based on a single piece of work (e.g., monograph, book, software package) that makes a significant contribution to the development of institutional research, planning, or administrative decision-making, the Suslow Award is primarily in recognition of distinguished scholarly contributions to institutional research over a period of time. Nomination reviewers pay careful attention to a nominee's cumulative scholarly efforts to keep institutional research on the cutting edge of practice, policies, and procedures in higher education.

The Suslow Award, although not necessarily an annual award, is presented at the AIR Forum.

For more information on eligibility/criteria for selection and procedures for nominations and selection, please visit http://www.airweb.org/sidneysuslowaward.

The AIR John E. Stecklein Distinguished Membership Award

The AIR John E. Stecklein Distinguished Membership Award is awarded to AIR members or former members who have made distinguished contributions to institutional research. Distinguished Membership should be a meaningful recognition given only to those who have made significant and substantial contributions to the IR field. Distinguished Membership is not used to recognize persons retiring from active service in institutional research who may have earned "emeritus" rather than "distinguished" membership. Distinguished Membership status is awarded for the lifetime of the individual.

Nominations for Distinguished Membership are made to the Membership Committee Chair. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Board of Directors is required for awarding Distinguished Membership.

For more information on criteria for selection and procedures for nominations and selection, please visit http://www.airweb.org/membershipawards.

The AIR Outstanding Service Award (OSA)

The AIR Outstanding Service Award (OSA) was created to recognize members or former members who have provided exemplary service and professional leadership to the Association for Institutional Research, and who have actively supported and facilitated the goals and constitution of AIR for a period of at least five years. The OSA may be awarded posthumously.

Nominations for OSA are made to the Membership Committee Chair of the Association. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Board of Directors is required for the award.

The Outstanding Service Award differs from the Distinguished Membership Award in that it is restricted to members/former members who have exhibited outstanding service to the Association. The Distinguished Membership Award is awarded to members or former members who have made distinguished contributions to the broad field of institutional research. A member can be eligible for both awards.

For more information on criteria for selection and procedures for nominations and selection, please visit http://www.airweb.org/outstandingserviceaward.

The AIR Code of Ethics: Our Guiding Principles

Every day, we all make a series of choices -- some large, some small. As we make these decisions, we draw upon our own life experiences as well as the experiences and guidance of others. As a profession, institutional research is not immune from having to make such choices. In fact, many of the decisions we have to make, as institutional researchers, on a daily basis have an ethical component to them. We are obligated to protect human subjects; to honor confidentiality and anonymity; to report and present data accurately; to not misuse information and ensure that others don't as well; to abide by not only the letter but the spirit of the law; and to treat our colleagues, institutions, and peers in an ethical, respectful fashion. Indeed, one might argue that having a code of ethics defines the very nature of a profession. Such is the case in institutional research.

The Preamble of the AIR Code of Ethics, first approved by the membership in 1992 and updated in 2001, begins with the following paragraph, which nicely summarizes the intent and scope of our professional code:

"The Code of Ethics of the Association for Institutional Research was developed to provide members of the Association with some broad ethical statements with which to guide their professional lives and to identify relevant considerations when ethical uncertainties arise. It also provides a means for individuals new to the profession to learn about the ethical principles and standards that should guide the work of institutional researchers."

One of my responsibilities as Vice President of AIR is to oversee the work of our Ethics Committee. In turn, I would encourage all AIR members to read or revisit our Code and to use the principles stated in this important document to guide our work on a daily basis. The AIR Code of Ethics can be found at: http://www.airweb.org/CodeOfEthics.

James F. Trainer
Vice President, AIR
james.trainer@villanova.edu

AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey 2009-10

As has been announced in previous issues of *Electronic AIR*, we are working with a software designer to renew the Web interface for our 2009-10 survey. Unfortunately, the new Web site is not yet ready to accept data. We will notify survey contacts directly by e-mail when the site is ready. In the meantime, survey contacts may download a 2009-10 data prep file from the existing Web site at https://research.aaup.org/fcs/default.aspx, along with instructions and definitions (unchanged from previous years). There will be no significant changes in reporting categories or definitions, but the process for submitting and reviewing data will change.

Since the opening of data collection has been delayed, we will set the initial deadline for data submission at December 23, but will continue to accept data throughout January. As always, we encourage you to submit your data as soon as possible, so that we have time to work through any verification issues that develop. Thank you for your patience, and we apologize for the delay.
If you know that the survey contact person or other information about your institution will be changing, please send an e-mail to aaupfcs@aaup.org.

As always, we appreciate your participation and welcome your comments, suggestions, and questions—and we will do our best to respond in a timely manner.

AAUP Research Office
John Curtis, Director of Research and Public Policy
Michael Kinsella, Research Assistant
aaupfcs@aaup.org

Watch Out for Email Scams!

Dr. Leslie Wasson, Director of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment at Lynn University in Boca Raton FL (lwasson@lynn.edu), brought the following e-mail scam to our attention. Leslie's office recently received the e-mail shown below, which Lynn's IT folks determined to be a scam. This is just a reminder to exercise caution – the scammers are everywhere.

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From: Karen Miller [mailto:research@ncrb.net]
Sent: Monday, November 02, 2009 2:30 PM
To: [IR staff member's name]
Subject: 2009 Lynn University student enrollment request

Hello [staff member's first name] – just wanted to verify that you received our annual request and wondered if you could provide me with an approximate time frame as to when you think you'll be able to send…. ?

NCRB would like to thank you for your participation last year. This year we are again requesting an e-mail attachment of the 2009-2010 Lynn University student roster including such information as: student's full name, address, phone number, class year, and major field of study (if available). If it is more convenient for you; you may instead mail a directory, printout or diskette to: 330 Old Country Rd Mineola NY 11501.

Thank you again for your participation in the past, and for sending this information at your earliest convenience.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Karen Miller

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Changing Scene

This portion of the newsletter is devoted to keeping you informed about changes among our colleagues such as moves to new positions and/or institutions, newly hired colleagues, professional recognition honors, retirements, deaths, etc. To include an announcement in "The Changing Scene," send a note with the key facts to Marne Einarson (mke3@cornell.edu).

The higher education community has lost two highly respected and well-loved scholars …

Dr. Burton R. Clark, Allan M. Cartter Professor Emeritus of Higher Education, UCLA, died on October 28 after a prolonged illness. As Ann Morey, former VP of Division J of AERA noted, "I can think of no one who has contributed to our field more than Bob Clark. His writings influenced our understanding and scholarship in higher education from its early beginnings as a field of study to today. His most recent work, *On Higher Education: Selected Writings, 1956-2006*, is a testament to his extraordinary career and achievements." Expressions of sympathy can be sent to Adele Clark at 201 Ocean Ave., Apt. 1710B, Santa Monica, CA 90402.

Dr. Eric L. Dey, Professor and Associate Director of the University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, and former Professor at the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan, died suddenly on November 5. In the words of Caryn McTighe Musil, Senior Vice president of AAC&U, "Most of us who are granted far longer professional lives than Eric's do not touch people's lives so directly and influence higher education so profoundly." Eric's commitment, compassion, intelligence, and keen wit will be deeply missed by his many colleagues and friends. Condolences can be sent to Eric's partner, Casey White, at 4631 Midway Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

IR In The Know

Welcome to the Inaugural Edition of *IR in the Know*
(irintheknow@airweb.org)

A service of the Higher Education Data Policy Committee (HEDPC), *IR in the Know* will keep you up to date on current and emerging issues related to higher education data collection, analyses, and reporting.

Each month *IR in the Know* focuses on data and policy issues relevant to institutional researchers such as accountability, assessment, accreditation, NCES, federal legislation, and national databases. Each issue will include a brief issue summary and links to more detailed information.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions! If you come across some resource or article which you think might be useful to other IR professionals, please send an e-mail to irintheknow@airweb.org.

November Highlights

IPEDS Data Feedback Report
In mid-October the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) sent each institution's Data Feedback Report to IPEDS keyholders and coordinators. The Data Feedback report provides institutional data based on the 2008-09 collection cycle for enrollment, retention, graduation rates, degrees, tuition and fees, financial aid, staff, faculty salaries, and core revenues and expenses with comparative data from the institution's custom comparison group or a group identified by IPEDS. Institutions can access and print their reports from the IPEDS Web site through the Executive Peer Tool (ExPT) (http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas/ExPT/).

College Board Pricing and Aid Reports

- ***Trends in College Pricing 2009.*** The pricing report provides detailed information on 2009-10 tuition and fees and room and board as well as pricing trend data for public two-year, public four-year, and private four-year institutions. The report focuses on both published prices and net prices that take into account grant aid to better represent what students actually pay. Trend data on institutional finances and family income also provide a measure of college affordability.

- ***Trends in Student Aid 2009***. The student aid report covers the types and sources, forms, and amounts of financial aid available to assist students in paying for postsecondary education. The report looks at both undergraduate and graduate debt. The report can be used as a resource to assess and improve the effectiveness of student aid in increasing educational opportunities. Data in this report are from the 2008-09 academic year.

Both College Board reports, including more detailed data which can be downloaded, are available at www.collegeboard.com/trends.

NPEC Report on HEA Disclosure Requirements

Released in October, the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) report is designed to help institutions successfully identify and meet their obligation to disclose the information required under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA). The report includes suggestions to make the HEA-required disclosure information more accessible and understandable to consumers and more comparable across institutions. A summary of HEA institutional disclosure requirements and a list of HEA-required disclosures by the required methods of dissemination are also included. The report is available at http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2010831.

NCES Net Price Calculator Template
NCES posted its Net Price Calculator Template on October 29. The net price calculator template is provided as required under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. The Act requires that all Title-IV participating institutions provide such a calculator on their institution Web site no later than October 29, 2011. Based on information entered by the prospective student, the template calculates an estimated net price at an institution using the formula: Price of attendance minus grant aid. More information and a link to the calculator template can be found at:
http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/news_room/ana_netprice_1029.asp.

Publications

AIR Publications

Latest Edition of IR Applications

AIR Office (air@airweb.org)

Now available - IR Apps # 24, *Using Regression Analysis in Departmental Budget Allocations*.

This study by Andrew L. Luna, University of North Alabama, uses a regression model to determine if a significant difference exists between the actual budget allocation that an academic department received and the model's predicted budget allocation for that same department. Budget data from a Southeastern Master's/Comprehensive state university were used as the dependent variable, and the budget for each department consists of money used for salaries (personnel) and money used for equipment, travel, and other expenditures (non-personnel). Independent variables included in the model were the number of professors, credit-hour production, number of degrees conferred, and a market ratio variable.

To view or download IR Apps #24 as a PDF, visit http://www.airweb.org/images/irapps24.pdf.

NCES Publications

Public School Graduates and Dropouts from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2006-07

Nationwide, about 74 out of 100 students that entered high school in 2003-04 graduated in 4 years, according to the 2006-07 Public School Graduates and Dropouts Report. This First Look from the National Center for Education Statistics presents the number of high school graduates, the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate, and dropout data for grades 9 through 12 for public schools during the 2006-07 school year. State education agencies provided the data to the Common Core of Data survey. Other findings include:

- Sixteen states had a freshman graduation rate above 80 percent while 12 states and the District of Columbia had graduation rates below 70 percent.

- The high school one-year event dropout rate was 4.4 percent across the 48 states and the District of Columbia. Two states, Pennsylvania and Vermont, did not report adequate data for inclusion in this report. The rate ranged from 2 percent in New Jersey to 7.6 percent in Arizona.

To view the full report, please visit: http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2010313.

Numbers and Types of Public Elementary and Secondary Local Education Agencies from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2007-08

While the largest school districts represented less than 1 percent of all districts during the 2007-08 school year, they served 12.5 percent of public school students. The National Center for Education Statistics has released "Numbers and Types of Public Elementary and Secondary Local Education Agencies From the Common Core of Data: School Year 2007-08." This report presents selected findings on the numbers and types of public elementary and secondary local education agencies in the United States and the territories in the 2007-08 school year, using data from Public Elementary/Secondary Local Education Agency Universe Survey of the Common Core of Data survey system. Findings include:

- There were 17,775 operating local education agencies in the 2007-08 school year, and among those agencies, 13,924 were regular school districts.

- Approximately 699,000 students enrolled in the 2,012 independent charter agencies, districts in which all schools were charter schools.

- Twenty-seven of the 13,924 active regular school districts enrolled 100,000 or more students.

To view the full report, please visit: http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2010306.

Public Elementary and Secondary School Student Enrollment and Staff Counts from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2007-08

Public elementary and secondary schools enrolled about 49 million students during the 2007-08 school year, according to the report "Public Elementary and Secondary School Student Enrollment and Staff Counts From the Common Core of Data: School Year 2007-08." The report, released by the National Center for Education Statistics within the Institute of Education Sciences, also found that public elementary and secondary schools and local education agencies employed a total of 6.2 million full-time staff in the 2007-08 school year, of which 51 percent were teachers.

To view the full report, please visit http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2010309.

Other Publications

November/December 2009 Issue of Data Notes Available

Data Notes is a bimonthly newsletter that presents data from the national Achieving the Dream database. Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count, is a multiyear national initiative to help more community college students succeed. The initiative focuses particularly on student groups that traditionally have faced significant barriers to success, including students of color and low-income students.

The November/December 2009 issue of *Data Notes* has just been released, and you can view it on the Achieving the Dream Web site at: http://www.achievingthedream.org/DATARESEARCH/DATANOTESNEWSLETTER/default.tp.

***Data Notes* (Vol4No6) November/December 2009: Late Stop-Outs, Part 2:**
This issue of *Data Notes* is the second of a two-part series investigating the characteristics of late stop-outs - students who accumulate at least 30 credits within the first two years, only to stop out without completing credentials or transferring. The data show that male students were more likely to stop out (53 percent) than female students (48 percent), and students under 20 and 30 years old and over were less likely to stop out (47 percent and 52 percent, respectively) than students in their twenties (about 55 percent). Fifty-five percent of students without a declared major or program of study left the college by the end of their fifth year, compared with 53 percent of students with a terminal goal and 47 percent of students with a transfer goal. Students who had earned at least 30 credits by the end of their second academic year and were referred to developmental education courses one level below college level—regardless of subject area—had five-year outcomes (45 to 49 percent) that were not dissimilar to those for non-referred students (50 percent).

Round 1, 2, 3, and 4 Colleges, Data Facilitators and Coaches – you can also view your individual college's companion figures to this issue of *Data Notes* on www.dreamwebsubmission.org (the Achieving the Dream Web submission site). To view your college's data, sign in to the Web submission site www.dreamwebsubmission.org using your username and password, and select the month issue under the "Reports" menu.

Publication Opportunities

Call for Authors: *The Handbook for Institutional Research*

The AIR Publications Committee, in association with Jossey-Bass Publishing, is planning a 2011 publication date for *The Handbook for Institutional Research*. This 900-1000 page volume will address the key areas of the IR profession. Bill Knight, Gerry McLaughlin, and Rich Howard have agreed to serve as editors. The working outline for the *Handbook*, along with the production timeline, is available online at www.airweb.org/IRHandbookCallforAuthors.

We invite you to consider authoring or co-authoring a chapter. **The deadline for application is December 1, 2009.** As you consider this invitation, be aware that the posted deadline dates for writing, editing, and rewriting are critical for timely and successful publication.

We plan to finalize the outline and identify all authors by the end of 2009. **If you would like to write a chapter, co-author a chapter, or suggest an author** that might write or contribute to a specific chapter, please contact Rich Howard at: rdhoward@umn.edu by December 1, 2009.

Success in this high-profile project depends upon contributions from experts across the profession, and we need your help to bring these elements together.

Please contact Rich Howard (rdhoward@umn.edu), Bill Knight (wknight@bgsu.edu), or Gerry McLaughlin (GMCLAUGH@depaul.edu) with any questions, or for more information.

Call for Articles: *Quality Approaches in Higher Education*

The American Society for Quality (ASQ) Education Division announces the launch of a new peer-reviewed publication, *Quality Approaches in Higher Education,* an online supplement to the *Journal for Quality and Participation,* beginning in January 2010. The focus of this publication is to actively engage the higher education community in a discussion on topics related to continuous improvement and quality in higher education. The editorial team is actively encouraging authors to submit articles for the inaugural and subsequent issues. The Call for Articles and Author Guidelines are available at the ASQ Education Division Web site.

Cindy Veenstra, Ph.D., ASQ Fellow
Chair-elect, ASQ Education Division
cpveenst@umich.edu

Data Resources

NPSAS:08 Restricted-Use Data File - Now Available

The 2007-08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08) Restricted-Use Data File is now available for individuals who hold Restricted-Use Data Licenses issued by the National Center for Education Statistics.

The 2007-08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08) restricted-use data file contains data on a sample of 114,000 undergraduate students and 14,000 graduate and first-professional students. These students were enrolled between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008 in about 1,730 postsecondary institutions. The data are representative of all undergraduate, graduate, and first professional students enrolled in postsecondary institutions in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico that were eligible to participate in the federal financial aid programs in Title IV of the Higher Education Act. NPSAS focuses on how students and their families pay for postsecondary education, and contains a wide range of demographic information about the nation's postsecondary students.

To obtain this data file, you must be a restricted-use data license holder. Information about applying for a restricted-use data license may be found at http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/licenses.asp.

To learn more about NPSAS and to view reports and products using NPSAS data, please visit: http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/npsas/.

Research Request

Survey on Ph.D. in Higher Education Policy Research

Dear Colleagues:

The University of Arkansas-Little Rock Higher Education graduate program is developing a Ph.D. in Higher Education Policy Research.

This degree program would create a cadre of higher education policy researchers for Arkansas and other state and national organizations such as governing and coordinating boards, SHEEO offices, state and federal executive agencies and legislatures, national, specialized and regional accreditors, and foundations that focus on improving higher education outcomes.

We've developed a survey that will help us assess the need and the design characteristics that are important to prospective students. Please forward this invitation to complete the survey to any faculty, staff, or students you know who may be interested in this Ph.D. program. The survey contains only 20 items and will take about 5 minutes to complete. The address for the survey is: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=E6ufF8txIZXiNHq7M5Y3vQ_3d_3d.

If appropriate, please feel free to complete the survey yourself. The deadline for survey completion is **Wednesday, Nov 25th**.

Thank you for your help with this, and best wishes for the fall semester.

Jim Vander Putten
Associate Professor of Higher Education
Department of Educational Leadership
University of Arkansas-Little Rock
jvputten@ualr.edu

Meetings and Events

2010 Forum News

Mark your calendars for the 2010 AIR Annual Forum, *Charting our Future in Higher Education* being held May 29 – June 2 at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers.

We are excited to announce the addition of **Targeted Affinity Groups (TAGs)** and **White Paper Discussions** to our learning formats this year. In addition, we will be joined by plenary speakers **William G. Bowen**, author and former president of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and **Jamie Merisotis**, CEO of the Lumina Foundation. Both will deliver insightful presentations about the changing face of higher education and the future of institutional research.

Thank you to those of you who submitted a proposal to share your scholarship and knowledge during the Forum. We received over 500 proposals for presentation in Chicago, and the Forum Committee is diligently reviewing them in preparation for the **December 11th notifications**.

The 2010 Forum is an ideal time to reflect with colleagues on the history of institutional research and how each of us plays a role in improving higher education for the future. Continue to visit the Web site, http://forum.airweb.org for the most up-to-date information on the 50th Annual Forum.

I look forward to seeing you in Chicago!

Sincerely,
Julie-Carpenter-Hubin
2010 Forum Chair.

AIR 2010 Forum Call for Photos

Join us in helping to make the 50th Annual Forum a time to remember. AIR is collecting photos to incorporate into the Hall of History. Please send in your top three AIR photos of people or past events. Send your photos to AIR50@airweb.org.

Look for your photos - and many others - throughout the 2010 Forum in Chicago.

Thank you,

Fred Lillibridge
AIR50 Committee Chair

Julie Carpenter-Hubin
Forum Chair

From Your Local Arrangements Committee

Survey of Recreational Activities to Offer at 2010 Forum

On behalf of the Chicago Local Arrangements Committee, I invite you to take a brief survey about recreational activities (baseball, tours, etc.) to be offered during the 2010 Forum, AIR's annual conference. Our goal is to design offerings based on your interests as a Forum attendee. It should take only a few minutes to complete the **survey** .

Thank you for your participation; we value your time and input.

Sincerely,

Linda S. Buyer
Local Arrangements Committee Member
l-buyer@govst.edu

Theater Chicago

Linda S. Buyer, Local Arrangements Committee Member (l-buyer@govst.edu)

If theater is your pleasure, you need to know what's available in Chicago. For example, Chicago is the only city in the nation with four theaters that have received Regional Theater Tony Awards. This award is given annually to a non-profit professional regional theater that "has displayed a continuous level of artistic achievement contributing to the growth of theatre nationally." It is jointly awarded by The Broadway League and the American Theatre Wing in consultation with the American Theatre Critics Association. The four Chicago-based recipients are the Chicago Shakespeare Theater (2008), the Victory Gardens Theater (2001), the Goodman Theater (1992) and the Steppenwolf Theater Company (1985). These four theaters will be offering something for almost every taste during the upcoming AIR Forum (May 29 – June 2, 2010).

The Chicago Shakespeare Theater will be presenting *The Taming of the Shrew*. As you probably already know, this timeless play by William Shakespeare is a highly entertaining look at the battle between the sexes. For Forum attendees, a special plus is that the Chicago Shakespeare Theater is within easy walking distance of the conference hotel, the *Sheraton Chicago* Hotel & Towers.

Victory Gardens Theater will be staging the premiere of *Jacob & Jack* by ensemble playwright James Sherman and directed by Dennis Zacek. *Jacob & Jack* is a farce involving time travel and a couple of generations of one family in the theater. You not only see great theater at Victory Gardens, you can also simultaneously explore a Chicago landmark. The Victory Gardens Theater is currently housed in the old Biograph Theater where John Dillinger met his famed end on July 22, 1934, in a hail of bullets.

The Goodman Theater will also be staging a new play. Their show *The Good Negro*, by Tracey Scott Wilson, will be directed by Chuck Smith. This play is a serious attempt to explore the humanity at the core of the civil rights movement during the 1960s via individual and personal stories.

Steppenwolf Theater Company will be presenting Samuel Beckett's *Endgame,* directed by Frank Galati and starring ensemble members Ian Barford, Francis Guinan, William Petersen and Rondi Reed. Here's Steppenwolf's description of the play – "Beckett's absurd comic masterpiece follows Hamm, a blind man unable to stand, and his servant Clov, who is unable to sit, as they pass their days in a tiny house by the sea—if the sea still exists. Pestered by Hamm's parents, they move through their daily rituals, awaiting the end of everything."

I'll see you on the aisle....

10th Annual South East Asian Association for Institutional Research Conference

The South East Asia Association for Institutional Research (SEAAIR) will hold its 10th annual conference October 19 – 21, 2010, in Tagaytay City, Cavite, Philippines. The theme of the conference is "Towards Global-ASEAN Institutional Research Strategic Alliances."

Please consider submitting a session proposal. The deadline for submitting an abstract is May 15, 2010. For information on the conference, contact Dr. Don Malabanan at dsmalabanan@dasma.dlsu.edu.ph.

Rajendra Sharma
SEAAIR Liaison to AIR
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8th Annual Conference of the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students

Registration continues for the 8th Annual Conference of the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students

Keynote speakers include Dr. Jill Biden, a respected community college educator and outspoken advocate, and Dr. Freeman Hrabowski III, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and recognized leader in improving access for transfer students. The conference will be held on January 27-29, 2010 in Addison, Texas.

For more information visit the conference Web site at:
http://transferinstitute.unt.edu/conferences/2010.html or contact George Niebling at
George.Niebling@unt.edu or Christine Keller at ckeller@aplu.org.

Professional Development

SAS Webinar for AIR Connections Program

Date: Monday December 14th at 2:00 p.m. EST

Title: Work Smarter not Harder: From Data to Finished Product with One SAS Program

Presenter: Christine Kraft, Ph.D. (AIR Member)
Institutional Research and Assessment Analyst, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa

Overview: In this Webinar, you will learn how to make use of the EXCELXP tagset and its many options to create formatted tables in Excel. You'll also learn how to use Dynamic Data Exchange (DDE) to assemble a summary sheet for an At-A-Glance look at the detailed tables.

Who Should Attend: SAS programmers and analysts who use Microsoft Excel to create and/or present reports to their users.

Benefit to the IR community: Through both a programming and point-and-click approach within SAS, IR offices can output their analyses to MS Excel. This provides an easy way to transfer information to a format familiar to consumers.

About SAS: SAS is the leader in analytical software for higher education. With over 32 years' experience and a dedicated higher education consulting group, SAS can help your institution get the accurate, critical and timely analytics they need to surface the right information to the right people at the right time. For more information about SAS, visit http://www.sas.com.

Visit http://www.airweb.org/AIRConnectionsSAS09 to register now for this informative Webinar.

Seats Available for Boston IPEDS Workshops

Interested in attending an IPEDS Workshop? There are still a limited number of seats available in the Boston Consortium for Higher Education workshop, being held on December 1, 2009 in Boston, MA. The workshop features these training modules:

- IPEDS Data and Benchmarking – Module 1
- IPEDS Data and Benchmarking – Module 2

Contact the AIR IPEDS Workshops staff (ipedsworkshops@airweb.org or 850-385-4155 x200) to reserve your seat today!

Certificate in Institutional Research at Florida State University Announces Spring 2010 Courses

The Certificate in Institutional Research at Florida State University is an *online* certificate program consisting of 18 credits of graduate-level course work. The Certificate curriculum is designed to provide academic and professional development opportunities for institutional researchers, administrators, graduate students, and faculty from all areas of higher education. Students will enhance their knowledge and understanding of institutional research, have the opportunity to explore national databases, and apply their knowledge to practical applications. The course offered this spring, Outcomes of Undergraduate Education, can be taken independently or toward completion of the Certificate in Institutional Research. This course offers a great opportunity for new and existing students to add to their professional knowledge and progress toward earning the Certificate.

EDH 5068 Outcomes of Undergraduate Education (3 credits)

This course explores the basics of assessing and evaluating the outcomes of undergraduate education. It provides a historical and theoretical foundation for understanding the outcomes of a higher education both in and out of the classroom. The course explores problems and solutions in practice and policies related to outcomes of higher education.

More information is available at http://www.fsu.edu/~elps/ir/certificate.html or by e-mailing IRCertificate@coe.fsu.edu.

Jill Peerenboom
Program Coordinator, Certificate in Institutional Research
Florida State University
jpeerenboom@fsu.edu

Career Opportunities

AIR Job Listing Summary

Missy Wiggins, AIR Office (mwiggins@airweb.org)

Persons seeking jobs in institutional research, planning, or policy analysis should plan to check the AIR Job Listings web page (http://www.airweb.org/?page=574) every few days for new positions. Employers can submit job ads free of charge by using the online submission form found on the AIR Job Openings page (http://www.airweb.org/?page=2). For any questions about job ads, please contact Missy Wiggins by email (mwiggins@airweb.org) or phone (850-385-4155 ext. 103).

RESEARCH COORDINATOR - WiseChoice.com Jacksonville, **FL**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

SENIOR STATISTICAL RESEARCH ANALYST - San Jacinto College Pasadena, **TX**
Deadline Date: November 30, 2009

ASSESSMENT SPECIALIST (PROGRAM SUPPORT COORDINATOR) - University of Medicine & Dentistry Stratford, **NJ**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

RESEARCH DATA ANALYST & TECHNICAL SPECIALIST - Nevada System of Higher Education Reno, **NV**
Deadline Date: November 22, 2009

ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESERACH & ACCOUNTABILITY - University of the District of Columbia Washington, **DC**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

DATA & RESEARCH ANALYST - Morton College Cicero, **IL**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM & PLANNING - Atlanta Technical College Atlanta **GA**
Deadline Date: January 1, 2010

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE - El Camino College Torrance, **CA**
Deadline Date: November 30, 2009

RESEARCH ANALYST - National Student Clearinghouse Herndon, **VA**
Deadline Date: December 1st, 2009

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER WITH DATABASE EXPERTISE - ZogoTech Austin, **TX**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

NATURAL RESOURCES SPECIALIST - Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College Hayward **WI**
Deadline Date: December 7, 2009

RESEARCH ANALYST - University of Scranton Scranton, **PA**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

DISTANCE LEARNING MANAGER - Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College Hayward **WI**
Deadline Date: December 7, 2009

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH SPECIALIST - Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College Hayward
WI
Deadline Date: December 7, 2009

RESEARCH SPECIALIST - University of Arizona College of Medicine Phoenix, **AZ**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & PLANNING - State University of New York at Fredonia
Fredonia, **NY**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE - Seaver College of Science & Engineering - Loyola Marymount University,
Los Angeles, **CA**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR - University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse, **WI**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH SPECIALIST - Hostos Community College - City University of New York,
Bronx, **NY**
Deadline Date: December 1, 2009

RESEARCH ANALYST - College of the Mainland Texas City, **TX**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled - Application Review to Begin November 16, 2009.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT - Excelsior College Albany, **NY**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

ASSISTANT PROVOST FOR ASSESSMENT - University of Mary Washington Fredericksburg, **VA**
Deadline Date: Review of applications starts Nov. 30, 2009. Position remains open until filled.

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT - Gwynedd-Mercy College Gwynedd
Valley, **PA**
Deadline Date: December 1, 2009

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board Olympia, **WA**
Deadline Date: December 4, 2009

INSTITUTIONAL & MARKET RESEARCH ANALYST - Heidelberg University Tiffin, **OH**
Deadline Date: December 31, 2009

RESEARCH ANALYST - Vancouver Island University Nanaimo, BC, Cana**da**
Deadline Date: November 20, 2009

SENIOR DATABASE DEVELOPER - Texas A&M University-Central Texas Killeen, T**X,**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES - Briarcliffe College Bethpage, **NY**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE/FULL PROFESSOR IN EDUCATIONAL DOCTORAL PROGRAMS (2 positions) - North Dakota State University Fargo, **ND**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

SENIOR DATA & MARKET RESEARCH ANALYST- Drexel University Philadelphia, **PA**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

DIRECTOR ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT RESEARCH - Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, **IL**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH DEMOGRAPHY & ASSESSMENT - Eastern Washington University, Cheney, **WA**
Deadline Date: November 30, 2009

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH LEADERSHIP - Northern Kentucky University Highland Heights, **KY**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

DIRECTOR POLICY ANALYSIS - California State University - Long Beach, **CA**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

DIRECTOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & PLANNING - Rhode Island College, Providence, **RI**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ANALYST - Germanna Community College Locust Grove, **VA**
Deadline Date: Upon Until Filled - Review of applications begins November 13, 2009

PSYCHOMETRICIAN CONSULTANT - Logan College of Chiropractic Chesterfield, **MO**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

DIRECTOR PLANNING & INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH - Bryant University, Smithfield, **RI**
Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

Practitioner Profile

Interview with Curt Naser

In this feature, we summarize the results of an "electronic interview" with an individual institutional research practitioner. Our goal is to foster broader knowledge and appreciation of the diverse membership of AIR, and of the different professional contexts and activities in which we are engaged. In this issue, we interview Curt Naser, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Facilitator for Academic Assessment at Fairfield University (cnaser@fairfield.edu).

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e-AIR: Please start by telling us a bit about Fairfield University.

Curt: Fairfield University has 3000 full time undergraduates and 2000 graduate and continuing education students. We are a "small comprehensive university" and offer undergraduate degrees in the Liberal Arts and Sciences, Business, Engineering and Nursing. We also offer graduate degrees (masters) in Business, Engineering, Nursing, Mathematics, Creative Writing and American Studies. We are located in Fairfield, CT just outside Bridgeport, CT and an hour train ride from New York City.

Fairfield is one of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States. The Jesuit mission of the University focuses on academic excellence and the idea of "men and women for others". So we stress not only the importance of academic work, but are very interested in practical service to the community. The Jesuit mission doesn't inform so much "what" we do as "how" we do it. Though obviously we have a strong religious and Catholic background, the University goes out of its way to welcome all faiths and perspectives in a vigorous open dialogue about the wide range of issues in scholarship and in the world.

e-AIR: You hold two positions at Fairfield: you are an Associate Professor of Philosophy and the Facilitator for Academic Assessment. Let's start by talking about your faculty responsibilities.

Curt: I am a philosopher. I wrote my dissertation on Kant and Hegel (German Idealism) at Stony Brook University. While I was writing my dissertation and reached the end of my fifth year of funding as a graduate student, I was asked to fill in teaching medical ethics at the Stony Brook Medical School. That work turned into a full time job within a matter of months and I spent four years at the medical school teaching medical ethics.

I was hired at Fairfield University primarily as a medical ethicist. Although I have done less teaching since getting involved in assessment, I continue to teach one course per semester – usually an ethics course. Most of my published work has been in the ethics of research involving human subjects – much of it oriented toward the ethics of research involving medical records, human tissue samples and genetics.

e-AIR: How did you become involved in academic assessment?

Curt: I have a rather peculiar route into assessment. Starting in 1999 I began dabbling in database to web programming. I initially built a little online quizzing system for my own classes. Over the next couple of years I built several online systems, including my own course management system. In 2003 I got introduced to Cold Fusion, a web server scripting language. I rebuilt my course management system in Cold Fusion and integrated it with a system built to manage faculty appointments to the committees they serve on.

In 2004 I provided my course management system to a faculty member in our Dolan School of Business, Professor Michael Tucker in the Finance department. It turns out he was (and still is) the chair of the Continuous Improvement and Assessment Committee for the business school. They were looking for online tools to assist them in managing their assessment program, which is required for AACSB accreditation. They wanted a method to link assignments in courses to programmatically defined learning objectives and to then be able to randomly sample student work from those assignments by learning objective. Then they wanted to apply assessment rubrics to the sample artifacts and crunch the numbers.

They talked with WebCT, Blackboard, and a number of student portfolio vendors and none of them, at that time, could do what they were looking for. So they asked me if I could make my course management system do this. Foolishly, I said yes, and commenced to rewrite my system so that it could handle 200+ courses and a thousand students. I had some major work to do to get the system to handle a lot of traffic as well as integrate the assessment methodologies into the system. I spent a summer rewriting the system, building it on top of a MySQL database. I had to write scripts to populate the system each night with downloads from Banner and I had to create functions that a lot of different faculty wanted in a course management system.

So my first introduction to assessment of student learning was through this experience of programming assessment methodology into an online course management system. What really convinced me about assessment, however, was a two day assessment seminar sponsored by AACSB that I attended with Professor Tucker. The person leading that seminar was Doug Eder of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. Doug is a biologist and I thought it was interesting that a biologist was teaching schools of business how to do assessment. After about the first half day of the workshop, I was sold. The fundamental question that assessment of student learning asks is simply, "Are our students learning what we profess to be teaching them?" This doesn't seem like an unreasonable question to ask and it seems to me that faculty have a responsibility to answer this question. So I basically learned about academic assessment from Doug Eder and the project of programming assessment methods.

e-AIR: You call your course management system "Eidos." What does Eidos mean? And what does it do?

Curt: "Eidos" is the Greek word for "idea" and is often translated as "form", as in the "Platonic Forms," those eternal ideas that are the reality behind sensible appearances according to Socrates. I used the term "Eidos" because the applications I build are interactive web systems, and the way users interact with a web system is through "forms" … I know, it's a bad (philosophical) pun. It also has the resonance of the distinction between appearance and reality, and that raises the whole question about the reality of web pages that are generated by a dynamic system.

The Eidos system is comprised of four major pieces. There is the course management/assessment system, and that is the 800 pound gorilla. But there is also a document management system, a faculty activity reporting system, and a bunch of reports and analyses of institutional data.

Though the course management/assessment system went live for our business school in the Fall of 2005, I really haven't stopped developing it. We now have over 370 courses running in the system with over 3500 students using it this semester. Courses are in all 5 schools of the University (Business, Engineering, Arts & Sciences, Education and Continuing Education) and each of the professional schools is using the program assessment features.

I first created the assessment system for the business school's AACSB accreditation. It works like this. The business school faculty input their assignments, check off which programmatic learning objectives apply to each one, and ask their students to submit their work electronically. The Eidos system archives

that student work indefinitely (we have archived over 100,000 student papers, spreadsheets, presentations, and even java programs, in Eidos since the Fall of 2005). The assessment committee can query this database and retrieve a random selection of papers whose assignments have been linked to a selected learning objective. Other parameters from Banner or the course management system -- semester, subject code, course level, student year, student major, etc. – can be used as a selection criterion.

Before selecting the student artifacts, the assessment committee writes a rubric to assess the learning objective. That rubric is entered into the Eidos system and committee members use it to evaluate each student artifact selected. Once all the artifacts have been evaluated by the rubric, the Eidos system generates a report showing the average trait score and a detailed distribution of trait scores along with an inter-rater reliability score.

As I built this system I realized the same assessment machinery could be applied at the classroom level: in short, I set it up for any instructor to define any rubric they wish and apply that rubric to electronically-archived or hard copy versions of student work. Such rubrics play a dual role: they generate a grade for the artifact and they generate classroom assessment data for that particular assignment. They also make it very clear to the students what the expectations are for the assignment, if the instructor chooses to display it to them before they write it, and of course it makes the grading criteria clear when they get the rubric scores back. The same "rubric engine" can also be used to assess student competencies and skills directly without the mediation of written artifacts. This method of assessment is employed by our schools of Engineering, Nursing and Education.

I created the document management system for our NEASC accreditation visit. It currently houses around 3000 documents…meeting minutes, policies, reports, etc. … anything that we collected for our accreditation visit, or that individual schools or departments are collecting for their own visits. One of the key features of the system is that it is based on "virtual directories or folders." Folders can be created within folders, moved to other folders, and cross-listed to other folders, as can files themselves. This allows us to easily make one file or folder appear in multiple folders, as needed.

For our NEASC self-study, we created folders for each accreditation standard and linked files and folders from all over the document system into the appropriate standards folders, thus making all of the evidence for each accreditation standard immediately available for the visiting team. We even put the accreditation standards themselves into the database and linked files and folders into each accreditation standard and sub-paragraph.

Our goal was to have a very well educated visiting team. We wanted them to do all their reading ahead of time so that we could engage them in conversations about the issues we had identified as important, either because we were successful at them or because we recognized we needed to improve on them. We gave our visiting team access to the full document system eight weeks before their visit. This strategy paid off. One visiting team member came so well prepared that when he met with our College of Arts & Sciences assessment committee he was able to report to them statistics from our own student surveys that most of the faculty present at the meeting didn't even know existed. This gave him and the visiting team instant credibility and it gave us a final report that really helped us move the institution forward.

The faculty activity reporting system is based on a bibliographic database of faculty publications, presentations, creative work, grants and service. The activity reporting system can generate annual reports, three year reports and a full CV, and aggregate reports at the department and school levels. The titles and keywords of all entries are indexed nightly so that the system is fully searchable.

The Eidos system is integrated with our Banner student information system and has a wide range of data that are refreshed nightly. There are data analysis reports such as grade analyses that look at aggregate GPA averages by school, department, subject code and down to individual courses. There are student enrollment reports, graduation reports, and a set of reports to pull individual student records based on a variety of search criteria. For instance, one report will display all the students who have "X" number of part time faculty teaching their courses in a given semester. Another report can pull all the students with X number of F's, or D's or C's from a given semester.

In addition to the above major components of Eidos, I also built some other applications for the University, including an online IRB system, jobs bulletin board, student internship management system, a Phi Beta Kappa nomination system, and a bunch of other little applications.

We have had great success with the Eidos system. It has been a central part of our accreditation efforts. Eidos was cited as a best practice by the AACSB visiting team for our most recent Maintenance of Accreditation visit, and was featured in an Advisory Board report to their Council of Provosts. I have presented on the Eidos system and assessment at a number of conferences and the repeated refrain I hear is "When will it be commercial?" I am happy to say that a Connecticut company, Axiom Group, is developing the Eidos system for commercial use; it will be marketed under the trade name "Mentor." I am a partner in that enterprise, which has put me in the odd position of negotiating to license my own software from the University and myself. We should be entertaining customers no later than the first of the year, though we are looking for a couple of early adopters to get us off the ground.

e-AIR: What do your responsibilities as Facilitator for Academic Assessment entail?

Curt: My first responsibility as Facilitator for Academic Assessment is to work with each of our schools on their assessment projects. I maintain and administer the Eidos system, and I work with each of the Dean's and their assessment committees to develop and use the assessment tools in Eidos. I do a lot of training of faculty in the course management aspects of the system and this allows me to learn about the teaching methods in a wide range of disciplines.

Each of our professional schools, because of their accreditation requirements, has had a well developed assessment program in place and so I work as a consultant to those schools. Our College of Arts & Sciences, on the other hand, has been, shall we say, a bit slower to buy into assessment. I have chaired the assessment committee for the College since 2007. We have a representative from each of the 15 departments in the College, whom we have trained in assessment methods. We started out focusing on the core curriculum and over the past two years departments have been developing and executing pilot assessment programs. Not everyone buys into assessment or moves at the same pace through the process. We have some departments that are enthusiastic and are doing very good work, and others that are dragging their feet and trying to do as little as possible.

I also work with our Student Affairs division. We started an interesting project a year and a half ago. We asked our RA's to assess their residents' engagement and their relationship to the RA using a 9 trait rubric. We gave each RA a course in the course management system. We asked the RA's to go into their course, find the links to the rubric for each student and complete the rubric. In the pilot test, we only did the freshman floors and got 675 students assessed by their RA's out of 800 first year students that year. The following semester we got over 1700 freshmen, sophomores and juniors assessed by their RA's. The beauty of an electronic assessment system is that it cost us absolutely nothing to create these courses, deploy the rubrics, collect the data, and generate summary reports. We are presently linking the data up to some of the national survey data we have to see what relationship the RA assessments have to student self-reports on surveys. An interesting benefit of this project was that the RA's loved having the tools of a general course management system at their finger tips. They get a

class email form, a place to post documents, discussion board, etc. We are now also using the Eidos system to support our FYE courses.

e-AIR: What have been your greatest challenges related to assessment?

Curt: There are a couple of challenges: First, as a faculty member and philosopher, some of my colleagues wonder about me. Why am I doing database programming and building web systems? This doesn't look like scholarship… True enough, but I have always felt that this work was just doing philosophy otherwise. I would suggest that there is only one problem in philosophy: that of "the one and the many." Database programming is, of course, all about the one and the many: one student, many courses; one course, many assignments; one school, many departments; and so on. And programming is all about inferential logic. This does not always convince my colleagues but they tolerate me because the system generates useful information. My Dean describes me as the guy who shows up at the doctor with a chicken stuck to his head. The doctor says that he can remove it, but the patient objects, citing the good eggs the chicken lays….

Also, the course management system and its integration of assessment methodologies is a hybrid of teaching, scholarship and service. Operationalizing the scholarship of teaching and learning in an online system opens new doors on the assessment process and is itself an advancement of teaching methods. I won't say this is philosophical research, but it is pedagogical research in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning tradition.

The bigger challenge, however, is one that all of us in assessment of student learning face: faculty are often quite resistant to assessment. By and large, faculty in professional schools recognize that assessment is necessary for accreditation, and that assessment actually has some usefulness in their programs and teaching. Arts and sciences faculty, however, have rarely encountered accreditation more often than the once every 10 years visit from regional accreditors. They can view assessment in a variety of negative ways: something that K-12 schools do, a threat to academic freedom, an attempt by administrators to evaluate their teaching performance, uncompensated extra work, the attempt to measure what is immeasurable, and so on. And those who share these and other objections are often quite animated and vehement in their rejection of assessment.

This makes assessment hard! I think anyone who has attempted to move assessment forward in an arts and sciences faculty has some battle scars and has learned various strategies to work around, deflect, and address these criticisms. It is not easy, but with patience and kindness, and the support of the key academic administrators (Deans and Provosts), assessment can and will happen in the humanities, social sciences and sciences.

One other problem that is peculiar to me (I assume most assessment folks don't program their own database to web systems…): the work I do with the Eidos system, whether it be in assessment or collecting, analyzing and making available boat loads of institutional data, is an agent of change. It crosses traditional boundaries (IT, IR, teaching, reporting, etc…) and this makes some people nervous. The advantage I have had is that I approach my work as a scholar: I am turned on by questions and challenges and I explore a lot of things for the fun of it. I also am a teacher and bring over 20 years of teaching experience to my work in assessment, IR, and programming. That is probably a fairly unique combination. But institutional change is hard and whether it is introducing assessment or putting data that has long been hidden on dusty shelves in everyone's hands, there are always those who resist change. One needs lots of patience for those who resist the change, ears to hear their legitimate points of contention, and the support of those who embrace it.

e-AIR: What words of advice would you offer to an institution that is just beginning to launch assessment efforts?

Curt: A couple of useful tips:

1. Make sure the Dean and the Provost/AVP are on board. It is their responsibility to make assessment happen. That is why I am a "facilitator" of assessment, not a "director". As a facilitator of assessment, I do not take it as my job to convince or cajole departments to do assessment. If they are interested in doing assessment, I will work with them to the best of my ability. Ultimately, however, assessment is the responsibility of the department, and that means that it is the responsibility of the Dean. Without the Dean's buy in, support, and authority, assessment won't happen.

2. Seek out and support those faculty who support assessment work.

3. Leave those faculty who are opposed to it for the Dean to deal with… ;-).

4. Take assessment one small step at a time, but make sure to show faculty as soon as possible how assessment can be directly useful to them in their teaching.

5. Do everything possible to minimize the leg work for faculty. Reporting should be simple and not time consuming.

6. Remember that the conversation and work of doing assessment is probably more important than the data produced. Just getting faculty together to talk about and agree on expectations (outcomes) and how to improve their students' performance is half the battle.

7. Have patience, be kind and forgiving…

I want to follow up on number 4 above with an anecdote. We had a two year process to introduce our Arts & Sciences faculty to assessment. We started with a two day workshop with Doug Eder; we got faculty representatives from each department to work with their departments on articulating core learning objectives and then we worked through methods for how to assess these learning objectives. We had good conversations and bad conversations as faculty expressed their reservations but still engaged in the pedagogical issues. About 18 months into the process, we did a workshop on writing rubrics. A lot of faculty have misconceptions and prejudices about rubrics and it was a sore point with them. But we finally sat down, about 25 of us from all departments in the College, and we handed out two student papers from my own ethics class. One was decent, the other needed some work. The participants read the papers and we just had them respond to the group at large: what did they like in each paper, what didn't work well, and so on. We all do this for a living so it comes naturally! We then asked them to think about what the elements are of a good paper in this area. They came up with a variety of "traits" that they thought were important. At one point, a very skeptical faculty member raised her hand and shouted out, "We should have my whole department here, this is so useful!" That was the tipping point. Most folks present began to get a sense of the usefulness of assessing and the usefulness of the process. If I had it to do over again, I would have started out the whole process with this workshop. You don't even need to call it assessment. You don't need any theory or methods. Just get some faculty together and reflect on the quality of some concrete student work. The methods and theory can follow.

e-AIR: Let's close by talking about your life outside of work. I understand you enjoy the outdoors and are an avid hiker. Please tell us about these and other interests.

Curt: Well, last year my then 10 year old son did 180 miles of hiking. I think I was up around 210 miles, as I did some hikes when I went away to conferences that he couldn't go on. We will have hiked around 150 miles by the end of this year. I run a hiking group that was started by a teacher at my kids' school, but it has evolved over the years into more of a hiking group here at the University. We started taking

students from the University out last year and students this year are getting FYE credit for hikes. There are some glorious places in CT, MA and NY to hike. We spend a lot of time in the Shawangunk Mountains in NY. I consider it the Disneyland of hiking … it has some of the coolest rock formations, crevices and cliffs to explore.

Hiking is probably the only extended time I am away from my computer. With 4000 people using the Eidos system, I sort of have to keep tabs on things and respond to requests for help in a timely manner.

I do play guitar … a bit of a hack, but it is fun. That comes from my long history as a Grateful Dead head, having been to at least 100 Dead concerts (avid even by Deadhead standards!).

e-AIR: Curt, thank you so much for participating in this 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 at mke3@cornell.edu.

Technical Tips

Folder Short Cuts
Gayle Fink (Gayle Fink)

This corner of the newsletter is reserved for readers to share practical tips, techniques and shortcuts that can make a difference in our work. Send your tips to Gayle Fink (gfink@bowiestate.edu).

There are times when you are working on a project, doing lots of opening and saving, and you wish you didn't have to drill down to get to the folder you need. Here is a quick and easy way to add favorite folders to the "folder short cut" pane in "Open" or "Save As."

1. Open a file in Word, Excel, or PowerPoint.
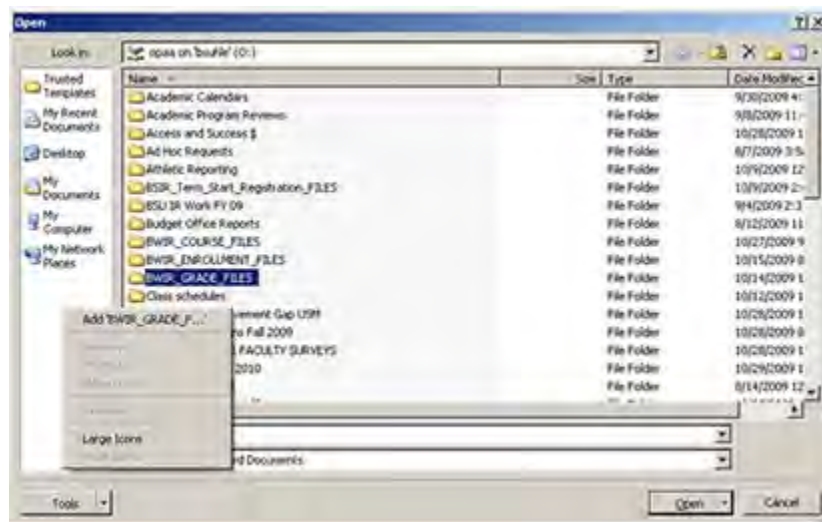
2. Navigate to and highlight the folder you want to move.

3. Right-click in the blank area of the folder short cut pane.

4. Select "Add" folder name.

Now you can right-click to move the folders up and down and change the size of the icons representing them. I found resizing of the icons helpful since I fail to acknowledge that my eyes are not as young as they use to be!

FYI – These folders will now be visible in Word, Excel and PowerPoint! Very cool!

Enjoy your holiday season!

Parting Thoughts

Thanks to Emily Dibble at Bunker Hill Community College (dibble@bhcc.mass.edu) who shared this humorous excerpt with the NEAIR listserv:

"You haven't told me yet," said Lady Nuttal, "what it is your fiancé does for a living."

"He's a statistician," replied Lamia, with an annoying sense of being on the defensive. Lady Nuttal was obviously taken aback. It had not occurred to her that statisticians entered into normal social relationships. The species, she would have surmised, was perpetuated in some collateral manner, like mules.

"But Aunt Sara, it's a very interesting profession," said Lamia warmly.

"I don't doubt it," said her aunt, who obviously doubted it very much. "To express anything important in mere figures is so plainly impossible that there must be endless scope for well-paid advice on how to do it. But don't you think that life with a statistician would be rather, shall we say, humdrum?"

Lamia was silent. She felt reluctant to discuss the surprising depth of emotional possibility which she had discovered below Edward's numerical veneer. "It's not the figures themselves," she said finally, "it's what you do with them that matters."

From the front of *The Advanced Theory of Statistics*, Vol. 2, by Maurice G. Kendall and Alan Stuart. They attributed it to the fictitious K.A.C. Manderville in *The Undoing of Lamia Gurdleneck*.

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