

Northeastern University

University Decision Support

December 28, 2018

To the Association for Institutional Research,

I am very pleased to nominate Lydia Snover for the AIR John Stecklein Distinguished Member Award. I have enclosed, along with this formal letter of nomination, letters of support, Lydia's bio, and Lydia's contact information.

I am nominating Lydia Snover because of her relentless dedication to the field of Institutional Research. In her lengthy career, she has mentored and encouraged countless IR professionals both at her home institution of MIT as well as at other institutions. Her goal has always been to advance the field of IR through better data, more transparency and access to information, and the sharing of good ideas. She has consistently shared her time and her resources to others in the IR field, making all IR offices better, especially those that don't have the resources of an MIT.

Lydia has been at MIT since 1971 and was the founder of the Institutional Research office at MIT in 1986, and has been its leader ever since. Lydia is dedicated to her office, her staff, and to MIT, but most of all to the field of Institutional Research.

I first met Lydia when I became the Director of Institutional Research (a relatively new one-person office) at Stanford University in 1999. At my very first consortium meeting for Stanford (COFHE: Consortium on Financing Higher Education), Lydia quickly introduced herself to me and asked if Stanford was going to join AAUDE. I had no idea what AAUDE (Association of American Universities Data Exchange) was or why I should join, but Lydia convinced me and I quickly discovered how beneficial it was. In one conversation, Lydia had improved my ability to serve my institution through comparative data, and improved AAUDE's data by adding another private university participant. AAUDE started out serving public flagship universities, but wanted to be inclusive of private universities, too. Lydia's tireless efforts to get all AAU institutions (63 of them!) involved in the AAU Data Exchange paid dividends with AAUDE taking on a larger role every year and providing invaluable service to IR offices throughout the AAU.

I've had many similar conversations with Lydia across the years – about the benefits of data transparency, what makes good survey research, and how to use data in novel ways. Lydia has always had a vision for how IR should be advanced, and she made things happen through her extensive network and convincing personality.

Lydia was involved in AIR (see Julia Carpenter-Hubin's nomination letter) and got others involved as well. She encouraged me to present my work, and got me involved in vetting Forum proposals. Without Lydia's encouragement, I would not have felt worthy or capable of either. And I know I am not alone in being convinced by Lydia to get involved.

Lydia knew that sunshine is the best disinfectant, and strongly advocated at MIT for data transparency. Although private institutions have no obligation to share their data publicly, Lydia convinced her Provost

that MIT's statistics and survey research results should be shared on the web for all to see. This was somewhat of a risk but Lydia's steadfastness proved prescient – the world didn't end, and MIT set a great example for all other institutions to follow.

While Lydia's contributions to the IR field are not measured in papers and citations, her influence has been one of sustained energy, positivity and leading by involvement, example, and encouragement. Lydia has been the go-to person to get ideas from, bounce ideas off of, and get things done. In these ways, Lydia is a true example of what an IR colleague should be – inclusive, always willing to help, and wise.

Thank you for considering this nomination.

Regards,

Rana Glasgal

Rana Glasgal
Associate Vice-Provost for Institutional Research and Data Administration
Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts

Contact information

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December 26, 2018

To: AIR Awards Selection Committee

I am pleased to recommend highly Lydia Snover for the AIR John Stecklein Distinguished Membership Award.

Lydia is a long-time active member of AIR and a frequent presenter at AIR Forums. She has served on various Forum committees and has reviewed applications for the Duckwall and Delaney Committee to make recommendations for the scholarships named in honor of Julia Duckwall and Ed Delaney. As notable as her service to AIR has been, her greater service has been as a mentor to many institutional researchers through AIR, the AAU Data Exchange (AAUDE), and other professional associations in which she is involved.

I recall vividly Lydia's first AAUDE meeting several decades ago in which she arrived like a tornado and quickly became a champion for persuading private institutions to become members of the exchange. At the time of her arrival, only a handful of private institutions were involved and she single-handedly secured the participation of virtually all privates to participate in this important data-sharing consortium. She simply did not take 'no' for an answer. She demonstrated the value of the organization, mentored new members on how to participate as fully as possible as a private institution was allowed, and engaged fully with the public members to create a more dynamic organization by virtue of it truly representing all institutions of the AAU. That was critical for the service AAUDE could contribute to the senior leadership of our respective institutions in support of the work of the AAU itself.

Her specific and substantial contributions to a number of IR efforts are extensively detailed in Julie Carpenter-Hubin's letter in support of Lydia for the Stecklein award. Rana Glasgal's nomination letter provides a personal testimony to Lydia's engagement and mentorship in all manners of institutional research.

She is a model of service for her generous sharing of her expertise and for her mentoring others in their involvement in professional activities. I am pleased to add my endorsement of Lydia as richly deserving of the John Stecklein Distinguished Member Award.

Sincerely,

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Deborah J. Teeter
University Director
Institutional Research and Planning
University of Kansas

AIR Past President, 1988-89, John Stecklein Award, May 2006

December 18, 2018

Association for Institutional Research
Awards Selection Committee
1983 Centre Pointe Blvd. #101
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Re: Nomination for the John E. Stecklein Distinguished Member Award

Lydia Snover received a Bachelor's degree in philosophy and an MBA from Boston University. She established the Institutional Research group at MIT in 1986 and has led that group since that time. In 2017, the MIT Faculty Newsletter noted that "What was originally a group conceived as a branch within the Planning Office to provide accurate data and support to the academic budget process and the physical planning activities at MIT, Institutional Research (IR) is now a foundational and instrumental asset for staff, faculty, and students alike, with a reach far exceeding its initial purposes."

Lydia served on the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE) Council from 1996-1998, and was Chair of that body in 1997-98. Lydia was the driving force behind the creation of the AAUDE data warehouse and brought that organization firmly into the 21st century. Under her leadership, MIT has hosted and maintained the AAUDE data warehouse since 1999. The security afforded by MIT's infrastructure and the extraordinary expertise of MIT's Data Warehouse staff directly benefits the AAUDE member institutions and their senior officers by facilitating the use and analysis of shared data.

Lydia has served in multiple roles within the Association for Institutional Research. As a presenter, she has shared her work and ideas in at least fifteen AIR Forums. In 2006 and 2007, Lydia served as a Forum Track 5 member; in 2008 she chaired that body and served as a member of the Forum Planning Committee. In 2009, Lydia was a member of the Forum Track 3 Committee, and in 2010, a member of the Forum Track 6 Committee. In 2015 and 2016, she served on the Duckwall and Delaney Committee to review applications and make recommendations for the Julia M. Duckwall and Edward Delaney Scholarship awards.

Lydia served as a reviewer for the National Research Council's report, "A Data-Based Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs in the United States." She currently serves on the QS Advisory Board, which exists to advise QS on any aspect of university rankings, including the methods used to produce them, possible new rankings, and the effect and impact of rankings around the world. As a member of Academic Analytics' advisory group since that body's inception, Lydia has provided guidance to that organization about how best to make their data useful to institutions. Perhaps more importantly, she has provided insights to colleges and universities about how to use the Academic Analytics data most constructively within their institutions.

Lydia is known by all of her colleagues to be supportive, collaborative, and wise. She leads with humor and without hubris; she cares about doing important rather than being important. In 2009, e-AIR closed with these quotes taken from Lydia's e-mail signature at the time:

I was gratified to be able to answer promptly and I did. I said I didn't know. ~ Mark Twain

Our humanity is diminished when we have no mission bigger than ourselves. ~ Bono [

Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence. ~ John Adams

These quotes, recognized by the e-AIR editors as especially relevant for institutional research, represent Lydia's approach to her work. We are all better institutional researchers for being reminded to acknowledge what we don't know, understanding that we serve a greater mission than ourselves, and that facts are facts, no matter what we or others might wish. Lydia reminds us of these truths, not just through her email signature, but through her service and her leadership in institutional research as well.

Thank you for your consideration of Lydia Snover for the Association for Institutional Research's *John E. Stecklein Distinguished Member Award*. If you have any questions, or need additional information, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Carpenter-Hubin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Carpenter-Hubin
Assistant Vice President,
Institutional Research & Planning
The Ohio State University