

December 6, 2018

Dear AIR Awards Committee:

I am happy to nominate Dr. Richard (“Rick”) A. Voorhees for consideration for the Sidney Suslow Scholar Award for 2019. Rick has been a longtime member of the Association for Institutional Research, and is currently the Principal and Senior Scientist with the Voorhees Group LLC that he founded in 2002.

During his 30+ year career, Rick has made a number of sustained contributions to the field of institutional research through his scholarly work. As you will see from his CV, Rick has published a number of studies in edited books, monographs, and several journals since his entry to the field of institutional research. Rick’s scholarship has focused primarily on three main areas of inquiry: community colleges, institutional research, and strategic planning. Dr. Voorhees’ scholarship has always attempted to highlight how academic theories and models may be put into practice to inform those in the field of institutional research. He is a good example of the “practitioner-scholar” model that the Association holds up as important for the development and success of the profession.

It is important to note that many of Rick’s publications have been in outlets that are central to the field of institutional research. He is the editor / co-editor of three volumes of *New Directions for Institutional Research*, a contributor to the book *Handbook of Institutional Research*, and a contributor to other IR-related books such as *Institutional Research: More Than Just Data* (2008) and *Using Mixed Methods in Institutional Research* (2007). According to Google Scholar, as of today the NDIR volume on competency-based learning models has been cited 268 times, and his cumulative works have been cited 1,269 times.

In addition, Dr. Voorhees has contributed to the field of institutional research in other ways related to his scholarship. He served as chairperson of the Association’s Publications Committee, which was responsible for overseeing and coordinating the scholarly activities of the Association. Rick has been a regular presenter at the Association’s annual Forum, as well as a presenter of research at IR-related meetings and conferences around the world. Finally, through his consulting work Dr. Voorhees has applied his scholarly work to a variety of real-world problems and issues in institutional research.

In summary, I am pleased to nominate Dr. Richard A. Voorhees for the Sidney Suslow Scholar Award. Please let me know if you have questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert K. Toutkoushian". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Toutkoushian" clearly distinguishable.

Robert K. Toutkoushian
Professor, Institute of Higher Education
University of Georgia

Oscar T. Lenning, Ph.D.
Director, Lenning Consulting Services
and Senior Associate, PTB & Associates
5246 W. Flying Circle Street
Tucson, AZ 85713

Selection Committee
Sidney Suslow Scholar Award Selection Committee
Association for Institutional Research
1983 Centre Pointe Blvd. #101
Tallahassee, FL 32308

December 16, 2018

Greetings:

This is a letter of support for the nomination of Dr. Rick Voorhees to receive the AIR Sidney Suslow Scholar Award. Having been a member of AIR since 1968 and known Sid Suslow well (after being elected AIR president in 1969, Sid asked me to serve as the newsletter editor for the Association), I know he would see Dr. Voorhees as an ideal candidate for this scholarly applied impact scholarship award that he established.

Last April 18, the president of Paul T Bucci and Associates emailed the following message to all of us senior associates helping colleges and universities improve: "The attached Institutional Data Readiness Assessment tool, developed by The Voorhees Group (<https://www.voorheesgroup.org/tools/>), may be useful for our project evaluations." Examining this tool that Dr. Voorhees led the development of, I was really impressed about its quality/usefulness; and after going to the website I discovered that they had developed and made available to the public over a dozen very impressive tools that are useful for institutional research, plus several dozen published monographs that definitely advance the IR profession. In fact, the 39 published documents and more than 70 papers he has authored or co-authored are all scholarly, and every one of them "has made significant contributions to the field of institutional research and advanced understanding of the profession in a meaningful way."

Upon obtaining his Ph.D. in 1983, Rick became director of institutional research at Arapahoe Community College in Colorado, and a few years later was appointed to apply his research and scholarship skills as one of the deans there; later becoming dean of students at Black Hills State College, then back to Colorado to become director of research and planning for the Community Colleges of Colorado System, then associate VP for instructional and student services for the system. In each of those roles he contributed to the field of institutional research; which was recognized in: His election to be 1994-94 president of the Colorado Association of Planners and Institutional Research; In 1998 his selection to receive the National Council for Research and Planning "Practitioner Award"; In 2001 by his election to be president of AIR during 2002-03, in which role he served admirably; and His later selection in 2010 to receive the AIR Outstanding Service Award.

In 2002, Dr. Voorhees formed, and became Principal and Senior Scientist of, the Voorhees group that has become not only nationally but internationally known and respected for its outstanding assistance to

higher education institutions of all types; as well as to governmental agencies, and to systems of colleges and universities. Included in the more than 80 partners and clients of the Voorhees Group with which Rick has personally consulted in depth over an extended time frame are institutions in Australia, China (3), Dubai, South Africa, Taiwan, and of course the U.S.; plus the following: AIR; American Indian College Fund; Association for Collegiate Schools of Planning; Australian University Quality Agency; Board of Regents and state college and university systems in Ohio, South Dakota and Virginia; ; Council for the Advancement of Experiential Education; Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning; Economic Development Board of Bahrain; Gates Foundation; Government of Dubai; Lumina Foundation; Midwest Higher Education Compact; Research Evaluation Associates for Latinos; Sultanate of Oman; and the U.S. Department of Education.

Dr. Voorhees' over 20 years of graduate teaching and dissertation committee work at the University of Colorado-Denver, University of Northern Colorado, Denver University, University of Texas at Austin, and the Community College Leadership Program at National American University should also be mentioned. A number of times during the 1990s and beyond, prominent universities contacted and tried to hire him for full-time professorships in higher education, but he decided not to pursue those opportunities because he was interested in seeing his research be applied in places that he felt could make a major difference. But he continued to teach graduate courses on the side, serve on university dissertation committees for selected doctoral students, and to publish heavily after striking out on my own in 2002 with formation of what has become the very prominent and productive Voorhees Group that has advanced the field of IR in many important ways.

I heartily and without any reservation recommend that the AIR Sidney Suslow Scholar Award be awarded to Dr. Rick Voorhees! I cannot think of anyone who is more deserving of this award at this point in time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Oscar T. Lenning". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Oscar T. Lenning



December 24, 2018

Dear Sidney Suslow Scholar Award Committee:

I have known Dr. Rick Voorhees for over 20 years, meeting him for the first time when I was asked to serve on the AIR Publications Committee as the editor of the *Professional File* in the mid-1990s. At that time I had been a member of AIR for only a few years, new to institutional research and certainly not seasoned in terms of serving as an editor. Rick, as well as his colleagues on the Publications Committee, welcomed me as I absorbed as much as I could from this team of IR professionals who contributed so much to the scholarship of higher education.

Since this first introduction, Rick has served as a mentor and trusted colleague. I would like to accentuate three reasons why I believe Dr. Rick Voorhees is a deserving candidate for the AIR 2019 Sidney Suslow Scholar Award.

Accessible and available. First, Rick has always been welcoming and inclusive, especially to those who are beginning to build a scholarly career in institutional research. While many of us tend to join our colleagues for lunch or dinner at the forum, Rick frequently has other plans. Those plans include enjoying dinner with new colleagues to AIR, international attendees, or with colleagues who are interested in scholarly collaboration.

I think this is a rare quality among the majority of practicing scholars in our field. Rick's open door policy enables him to learn from others and expand his horizons—while at the same time, making himself available to colleagues across the globe. Further and most importantly, I believe his openness and availability has greatly enhanced the range, depth, and quality of his scholarly work.

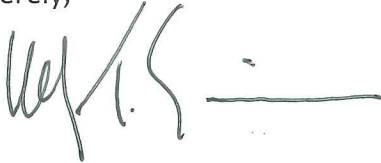
Reinforcing quality research. Second, Dr. Voorhees is a stickler for conducting fundamentally sound research and inquiry. At a time when fundamental research basics may be losing ground to big data, visualization, and so forth, Rick remains steadfast in reinforcing the importance of “doing things right” and championing a mantra of “even if you are not likely to engage in research yourself, you certainly must learn to become an effective evaluator of scholarly inquiry.” I have seen Dr. Voorhees on several occasions in AIR Publication Committee meetings, in forum sessions, and during the Editors' Panel reinforce the ability to evaluate research effectively as a means to becoming a complete IR professional. This is an essential reminder that has, I believe, lost some of its zeal among the profession; throughout Dr. Voorhees' career he has been quietly championing an effort to not let this become the norm.

Inquiry that makes a difference. Third, Dr. Voorhees explored higher education topics significantly before they became mainstream: community college student access and success, competency-based instruction, the impact of finances and financial aid on student success, and workforce development,

to name a few. As you follow Dr. Voorhees professional career and research interests, it is evident that his research is closely tied to his work at hand. *Research informed his practice and his practice informed his research.* From an institutional research perspective, this is the ideal marriage and represents the true research-centered IR professional. For the career IR professional, isn't this one of the paths many of us truly aspire to become and sustain? I think so.

In sum, I encourage the committee to strongly consider the candidacy of Dr. Rick Voorhees for the Sidney Suslow Scholar Award. He is certainly deserving in every way. Please do not hesitate to contact me if the committee has further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M.T. Eimers', followed by a horizontal line.

Mardy T. Eimers, PhD
Vice Provost for Institutional Research and Quality Improvement
University of Missouri
573 673 3099



Dec. 18, 2018

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

Dear Nominating Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter in support of the nomination of Richard A. "Rick" Voorhees for the Sidney Suslow Scholar Award. Since I was a longtime member of AIR, I have known and worked with Rick in a number of capacities for the association, as well as more recently in his support of a U.S. Department of Labor TAACCCT grant for direct assessment, competency-based education (CBE) which I directed at Lord Fairfax Community College the past four years.

When I think of Suslow, I can't help but think about the Induced Course Load Matrix and the evolution of computer-based simulation models to support decision-making, including the development of resource allocation models that drive federal, state, and local funding. When I think of Rick, I think of a peripatetic and tireless advocate of planning through consensus, promoter of sound data including the ICLM and performance-based assessment, and as an early visionary of that unique form of assessment called CBE.

My first assignment in AIR activities was as a member of the publications committee, which Rick chaired. From him, I learned the wide range and type of association activities to promote dissemination and diffusion of the literature and knowledge of IR, promoting publication vehicles which grew and blossomed under his leadership. The eventually led to work I did to build the association's first website, to create a searchable, online database of publications, and to build an online, searchable database of membership to promote networking. Later, as chair of the AIR Higher Education Data Policy Committee, I looked to Rick to help make sense of emerging models for the Common Data Set, ways to leverage NCES and NSF datasets, and insight on the checks and balances of being involved with federal initiatives such as the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) and IPEDS, while preserving institutional autonomy and supporting others in their use of data. He was one of the first AIR Presidents I got to know personally and in my 31 years of doing IR at the institution, state, and federal level, I consider him one of the most interesting, dynamic, kind, encouraging, and smartest people I've ever met.

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While I've always looked to Rick for deep conversations about authentic assessment, for me his most original and creative contribution has been in that special world of assessment known as CBE. Rick is considered the national expert on CBE, in part because of his early seminal contributions to the field with the 2001 NDIR volume *Measuring What Matters* and the 2002 NPEC volume *Defining and Assessing Learning: Exploring Competency-Based Initiatives*. These were some of the first publications about CBE that brought it into the lens of IR and the assessment community and these contributions are still relied upon as core literature. In participating recently in the Competency-Based Education Network and serving on its board, I was amazed at the number of CBE pioneers who knew Rick's work and used it in building their CBE models. More recently, he co-authored a chapter on "Principles for Competency-Based Learning" in the 2016 bible of instructional design put out by Routledge. Where there is a journal for CBE, a growing number of dissertations, and expanding institutional offerings, these all owe something to Rick's originality and vision, especially in using NPEC, NCES, and SHEEO to push out the CBE model in 2001.

It was his deep knowledge of CBE, planning, and assessment that brought him to work with me at Lord Fairfax Community College as third party evaluator and CBE guru for a 3.25M TAACCCT grant I received from the U.S. Department of Labor in 2014. With his extensive help at all levels, we created and ran the only direct assessment CBE program ever approved by a regional accreditor at a community college and the only such program approved by SACSCOC. Challenging a number of assumptions about time and cost and the metric of the credit hour, we shattered a number of barriers about the nature of the learning paradigm and put in place authentic, performance-based assessments, as well as peer-review and inter-rater reliability; working along the way to create new software for personalized learning tied to competencies and using OER; developing a new national portal for CBE and OER, and gaining tentative approval from the U.S. Department of Education and Veteran's Affairs for this radical new type of program.

In doing this work, I became critically aware of how much Rick brings to his institutional consultancies. He was enormously helpful to me and my institution in many contexts, from planning to design to grief counseling when some of my ideals about change didn't pan out. He worked at all levels, with the president to faculty workshops, while satisfying the requirements of the evaluation process required by USDOL. Some time ago, I wrote a 2008 NDIR chapter about "The Role of Consultants in Institutional Research." I must say that Rick is the epitome of leveraging this kind of broad IR portfolio. Reviewing his vitae, I see that he's worked in 81 different consulting relationships, ranging from institutions (community colleges and universities) to state systems, states, regional collaboratives, national associations, and initiatives in countries such as Australia, China, Taiwan, Oman, South Africa, and the U.A.E. The depth and spectrum of these projects and Rick's impact on planning in so many different IR contexts is truly outstanding. He is the very model of the scholar-practitioner, ever pragmatic, warm, and graceful in

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making the person he his working with feel valued and part of a team, while bringing the very best of the literature, research, and practice to bear on the situation at hand.

Rick has helped me and many others understand the vast array of non-credit, continuing education, and workforce offerings at our institutions. We co-authored *The Hidden College* (2005) as part of a Lumina grant at UVa and he helped pull things together in a cohesive whole of a monograph which continues to be read and cited for laying bare parts of higher education the IR community doesn't always acknowledge. Similarly, when I was reflecting on working with George Mason and UVa to usher in online courses and new ways to assess this medium, he helped me think about the context of this work and co-authored a 2004 NDCC chapter with me about "Assessment of Online Education: Policies, Practices, and Recommendations."

Rick's many conference presentations, publications, keynote speeches, and editorial contributions speak for themselves. For me, these and Rick's work on CBE, online learning, assessment, non-credit, and planning, along with his gentle demeanor, kindness, and rich background in IR and assessment at all levels paint the portrait of the scholar-practitioner which is dear to my heart. I feel grateful to have known and worked with him for many years. I appreciate your time spent reading this letter from a long-time AIR member who has worked with the association and Rick in different ways over time. Please do seriously consider this nomination of Rick Voorhees for the Sydney Suslow Scholar Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "John H. Milam, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "J" and a trailing "J" at the end.

John Milam, Ph.D.
Professor and Director, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
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December 12, 2018

Nominations Committee
Association for Institutional Research
1983 Centre Point Blvd. #101
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Dear Committee Members:

This letter is to nominate Rick Voorhees for the Sid Suslow Award. In looking at the criteria for the award, it appears to me that Rick perhaps more than anybody else exemplifies what it represents: scholarly work which significantly contributes to institutional research and an advanced understanding of the profession in a meaningful way. In fact, I would argue that there are few if any in the community college arena who come close to Rick's contributions.

Many people are familiar with Rick's accomplishments as a widely respected consultant, especially among community colleges. I myself have been all over the U.S. and to Oman and China several times with Rick and seen how well respected he is by institutional, state, and national leaders. His publication record, however, is less well known to some in that he has chosen to publish in both more traditional, respected higher education journals, such as *Research in Higher Education*, but also in a variety of other outlets aimed at practioners, such as the *New Directions Series: Higher Education, Institutional Research, and Community Colleges*. Other community college publication outlets include the *Community College Journal*, the *Journal of Applied Research in Community College*, the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, and a publication for the American Association of Community Colleges. He even wrote for the *Tribal College Journal* and the *Journal of Student Financial Aid* as well as the multi-state (SHEEO and WHICHE) and federal (NPEC) agencies. Truly Rick exemplifies the scholar-practitioner that the Suslow award seems to represent.

One of the things that is impressive is that this publication activity has occurred over a career in positions where publication is not necessarily rewarded. Rick has reached out to his institutional research colleagues, especially those in community colleges, often in his own time and sometimes at his own expense. It seems to me that this deserves our recognition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Muffo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Muffo" clearly distinguishable.

John A. Muffo



December 17, 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

It is with pleasure and conviction that I offer this letter in support of the selection of Richard A. Voorhees, Ph.D. for the Association of Institutional Research's prestigious 2019 Sidney Suslow Award.

I have observed and benefited from Dr. Voorhees' professional contributions since the 1980s and so have had more than ample opportunity to see the impact of his research on higher education. That impact has been on higher education research, certainly, through his innovative analytic approaches and his extensive scholarly publications. Very important, though, is the impact he has had, through data analysis and research, on *effective higher education practice*. For AIR to recognize and honor that link from research to practice would be both timely and exceedingly important.

As founding director and senior fellow at the Center for Community College Student Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin, I worked closely for many years with George Kuh, a former Suslow award winner and a colleague who shared and lived out the perspective that solid research, brought directly to higher education professionals, can provoke meaningful change in teaching and learning, in institutional policy and practice, and in the overall educational experiences of college students. This immediate relevance has been an important contribution of Rick Voorhees' body of work, time and time again.

He has impacted community colleges, universities, state systems and professional associations across the U.S. and internationally, while also supporting the development of both individual student scholars and professional education research groups. Dr. Voorhees is a researcher whose work has *mattered*, and many colleagues in higher education would be pleased to see it recognized.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kay M. McClenney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kay M. McClenney, Ph.D.
Senior Advisor to the President & CEO
American Association of Community Colleges

30 December 2018

Dr. Robert Toutkoushian
Institute for Higher Education
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602

Dear Dr. Toutkoushian,

It gives me great pleasure to write this letter to endorse the nomination of Dr. Rick A. Voorhees for the Sidney S. Suslow Scholar Award of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR).

When the Southern African Association for Institutional Research (SAAIR) was looking for a keynote speaker to address us on the theme "Closing the Loop in Institutional Research" at our Annual Forum in 2009, we decided to invite Dr. Voorhees, based, *inter alia*, on his unique and convincing integration of the roles of practitioner and scholar in the field of IR. Too often, sadly, excellent academic research goes unnoticed and un/under-utilized in policy-making and decision-making in higher education institutions and systems. This may be due, among other reasons, to a tendency in scholarly work to be sometimes too theoretical, too abstract, and too far removed from everyday practice in higher education. Equally so, too often, sadly, the outputs of IR practitioners working in the trenches, remain unnoticed and un/under-utilized in the publications of higher education scholars. This may be due to, among many other reasons, the fact that the majority of IR outputs end up in institutional document repositories (in grey literature) and are not published in the normal scholarly outlets (journals and scholarly books), and because the work of IR practitioners is often under-theorized and mostly pragmatic in orientation and purpose. In our search for a person of international reputation to be our keynote speaker on our theme, we found in the work, the track record and in the person of Dr. Voorhees the ideal candidate given his successful merger of the roles of practitioner and scholar. Due to his presentation at our conference in 2009, his ongoing engagement with our Association, his publications as well as his tools for IR practitioners, he has become and remains a well-known and influential international source and partner in the work of the SAAIR. His work is often cited in publications by our members (see, for example, the book *Institutional Research in South African Higher Education – Intersecting Contexts and Practices*, by Jan Botha and Nicole Muller, eds. Sunmedia 2016).

This endorsement, therefore, attests to the excellent contributions of Dr Voorhees over many years, to his international reputation, and to the high regard with which he is held in higher education, including in our part of the world. I believe he will be a worthy recipient of the Suslow Award.

Sincerely



Jan Botha, PhD
Professor
CREST



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner