



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

Dear Members of the Selection Committee:

It is a pleasure to nominate Trudy Bers for this year's Sidney Suslow Scholar award. Trudy has been an energetic contributor to higher education literature and to the field of institutional research. Her publications and scholarly output are of the first-rank. But, more importantly, they are widely read and applied. I did not have the pleasure of knowing Sidney Suslow personally, but I do know that in his storied career he was passionate about how applied research could make a fundamental difference for the practice of institutional research. He would undoubtedly see Trudy as the ideal candidate for his namesake award.

Many AIR members have read and interacted her scholarship for more than five decades. She is author or co-author of more than eighty published works including four editorships of *New Directions for Community Colleges* and one volume of *New Directions for Institutional Research*. She also has served on the editorial board for *Research in Higher Education*, AIR's flagship publication, as well as the *Community College Review*, the *Enrollment Management Journal*, and the *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*. Her contributions to professional practice also include more than fifty presentations at professional conferences throughout an intensely productive career.

The Committee might note that Trudy has been long recognized as a leader in evidence-based change in community colleges while simultaneously pursuing a focus on student learning outcomes. When student learning outcomes became pivotal to the health of institutions in the early 1980s, she found herself inventing and testing successful assessment practice and later using what was learned from that practice to provide scaffolding for institutions seeking practical guidance in uncharted waters. She continues to lead the way in student learning assessment as attested by co-authoring the recent book, *Learning Outcomes Assessment in Community Colleges* and other, recent writings that focusing on student critical thinking.

Always an energetic collaborator, Trudy has conceived and sought out active partnerships with individuals and organizations to promote evidence-based practice. Her publications and resulting credibility have led to consultancies with colleges, regional accreditors, and others operating in the institutional improvement arena. For example, she has coached more than 20 colleges engaged in the national *Achieve the Dream* initiative, an evidence-based effort to improve student success rates for low-income students and students of color. She also serves

as a mentor for the Higher Learning Commission's Persistence and Completion and Student Success academies. The ever present demand for her expertise defines a successful scholar-practitioner.

Dr. Bers served our Association as President, Chair of the Publications Committee, Board Member for the Professional File, and the Executive Board. In each role she was a consummate leader, seeking to bring people together to reach the highest possible level of excellence.

While I have presented the basis for my nomination above, I would be remiss if I didn't more clearly note Trudy's heart and passion for making things better. Her day job throughout her career has been the in the community college where publishing and placing wisdom in print is lauded but has little relationship to the promotion or reward structure. It is almost certain that the vast majority of her impressive and rigorous publications was created outside of the confines of workdays. She understands how colleges must work and enabled many generations of new practitioners to elevate their own practice through her written work. She's an inspiration and the best example of a scholar-practitioner that I know.

I give my wholehearted thanks to the Committee for your diligent work in identifying the Association's next Suslow recipient. In my opinion, you won't find a more deserving awardee than Dr. Trudy Bers. Best wishes in your selection process.

Truly yours,



Richard A. Voorhees, Ph.D.  
2019 Sidney Suslow Award Recipient

January 30, 2021

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

Dear Selection Committee Members:

I would like to support the nomination of Dr. Trudy Bers for the 2021 Sidney Suslow Scholar Award.

This award "Recognizes an individual who, through scholarly work, has made significant contributions to the field of institutional research and advanced understanding of the profession in a meaningful way". Dr. Bers has demonstrated her qualifications for this award by sustained excellence in scholarship for over four decades.

In terms of contributing to the field of institutional management almost one-third of her over 80 scholarly publications have been in the area of managing institutions. These have ranged from a heavy emphasis on finance and planning such as her work in *New Directions for Community Colleges* No. 168 [2014] to the use of data as in *New Directions for Institutional Research* No. 153 [2012]. Closely related to the area of institutional management has been the discussion of the methodology of institutional research such as her work on surveys and benchmarks in *New Directions for Institutional Research* No. 153 (2012).

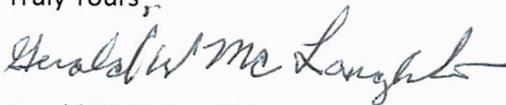
While the preceding focuses primarily on institutional management and methodology, she has also made major contributions in the area of research on learning and effectively assessing learning. More than one third of her publications have been in this area with examples including how students think critically in *Foundations for critical thinking* (2015) and measuring progress in *Developmental English in Developmental Education* (2018).

Linking together her work in institutional management and her research in assessing student learning has been her contributions on understanding student articulation between two and four-year institutions. This is one of the areas where I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Bers when I was at DePaul University in Chicago and she was at one of our primary Community College partners. I can personally attest to the quality of her scholarly activity and her persistent pursuit of learning and discovery.

I also had the good fortune to have Dr. Bers on my Editorial Board while I served as editor of *The AIR Professional File*. Her reviews were always thoughtful and made positive contributions to the development and quality of our publications. A final area where I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Bers was in the presentation of workshops at various AIR Institutes. She is a delightful and thoroughly professional colleague who is dedicated to building a strong professional association and is committed to mentoring her colleagues in our professional skills.

Based on these reasons I am fully convinced that Dr. Bers is a very deserving recipient of this award and I fully support her nomination and I encourage you to give her your most serious consideration.

Truly Yours,



Gerald W, McLaughlin

4991 Ridge Dr.  
Las Vegas, NV 89103  
January 31, 2021

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

Dear Committee Members:

This letter is in support Dr. Rick Voorhees' nomination of Dr. Trudy Bers for the Sidney Suslow Award for Scholarship. Trudy's scholarship in the study of higher education, learning assessment, and institutional research has been a continuous contribution to practitioners and scholars reflecting a career that has spanned nearly five decades.

My colleagues, in their letters supporting Dr. Bers' nomination, outline and discuss her impressive publication record in peer reviewed journals. I too want to recognize these works as important contributions to our understanding of the workings and productivity of the Academy, particularly at the community college level. However, in this letter, I focus on another aspect of Dr. Bers' scholarship, that of her instruction and leadership/mentoring.

As documented in Trudy's vita, she has authored and/or edited some 80 publications. I would argue that these publications provided an evidence basis for the leadership roles she has served as an editor and advisory committee member of scholarly and practitioner journals. Specifically, Dr. Bers service on editorial boards and association publications committees include: *Enrollment Management Journal*, *The Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, the Association for Institutional Research *Professional File*, *Research in Higher Education*, Publications Advisory Committee, Society for College and University Planning, *AACC Journal*, and the Publications Board of the Association for Institutional Research.

Dr. Bers' scholarship has also included teaching in formal classroom settings and workshops, professional presentations (locally, nationally, and internationally), and as a consultant/coach. While the specifics of these activities are documented in her vita, I would highlight that she coached at some 20 community colleges in the national *Achieve the Dream* initiative. Has made 80+ professional presentations and consulted at some 30 colleges and organizations.

I have had the opportunity to work with Trudy in service to the Association for Institutional Research. Trudy served as Vice President when I was President in 1994-95 and then the following year as President when I served as Immediate Past President. I found her be supportive of my initiatives as well as providing effective leadership to the Board. We also served as faculty in the Foundations Institute. My impression is that she

was an effective and well liked instructor. I found her to be a great colleague and enjoyed working with her.

I would like to point out an additional reflection of Dr. Bers' scholarship. Trudy's selection, as a consultant and to teach workshops and seminars nationally and internationally, as well as invited presentations, have been based, at least in part, on her substantive publication record reflecting original research. This form of recognition reinforces the value placed on her research by editorial review boards of the many journals in which she has published.

Finally, I would like to point out that Dr. Bers' substantive productivity was accomplished while working at a community college where scholarly research and publishing are not an institutional focus. While I am sure that her publications were appreciated by leaders at the College, I am equally sure that most of them were produced outside of her daily responsibilities.

I appreciate your consideration of Dr. Trudy Bers for the Sidney Suslow Scholarship Award. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

*Richard Howard*

Richard Howard

Director of Institutional Research and Professor  
University of Minnesota  
Retired



February 8, 2021

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

RE: Trudy Bers Nomination for Sidney Suslow Scholar Award

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

It is my unwavering belief in her worthiness that I nominate Trudy Bers for this year's Sidney Suslow Scholar award. It is from my experience in the field of higher education and my interactions with Dr. Bers over the years that I base this recommendation. Furthermore, my years of service to AIR as editor of AIR Professional Files, Forum presenter, Suslow Award reviewer, dissertation and research grant reviewer and National Data Institute facilitator that I base this nomination.

Dr. Bers served our Association as President, Chair of Associated Groups, Board Member for the Professional File, and member of the Executive Board. In each role she was a consummate leader, seeking to bring people together to reach the highest possible level of excellence.

Always an energetic contributor to higher education literature and to the field of institutional research. Her publications and scholarly output have and continue to influence the field. But, more importantly, they are widely read and applied. She is author or co-author of more than eighty published works including four editorships of *New Directions for Community Colleges* and one volume of *New Directions for Institutional Research*. She also has served on the editorial board for *Research in Higher Education*, AIR's flagship publication, as well as the *Community College Review*, the *Enrollment Management Journal*, and the *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*. Her contributions to professional practice also include more than fifty presentations at professional conferences throughout an intensely productive career.

The Committee might note that Trudy has been long recognized as a leader in evidence-based change in community colleges while simultaneously pursuing a focus on student learning outcomes. When student learning outcomes became pivotal to the health of institutions in the early 1980s, she found herself inventing and testing successful assessment practice and later using what was learned from that practice to provide scaffolding for institutions seeking practical guidance in uncharted waters. She continues to lead the way in student learning assessment as attested by co-authoring the recent book, *"Learning Outcomes Assessment in Community Colleges"* and other, recent writings that focusing on student critical thinking.

As an emerging scholar in the field of community college research I found Dr. Bers to always be approachable, always welcoming and always curious. She is committed to the study of community colleges and the people who study them. I can't think of an annual meeting where she was not there and engaged. Nor can I think of a short period of time that went by where her work did not come across my desk.

On a personal note, I am aware of the many ways he has supported the development of future scholars. She, Linda Hagedorn and I co-edited a volume of NDIR, where she served as a mentor for me as I honed my craft, for example. In many ways she reflects the sector of institutions she studies; being committed to the community, ready to respond, rigorous in her actions, and generous in her spirit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'C. Mullin' with a period at the end. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Christopher M. Mullin, Ph.D.  
Strategy Director for Data and Measurement  
Lumina Foundation  
30 S. Meridian St., Suite 700  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

January 29, 2021

2191 Blue Jay Lane  
Blacksburg, VA 24060

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

Dear Selection Committee Members:

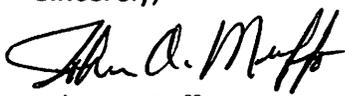
I would like to nominate Dr. Trudy Bers for this year's Sidney Suslow Scholar Award. It seems to me that Trudy epitomizes in many respects the kind of scholar-practitioner that this award was designed to recognize among the membership of the Association. She is truly a role model for our members in her long career of scholarship of the profession as well as service to it. The fact that she achieved it while employed at a community college, where the rewards for scholarship are recognized less than at senior-level institutions, makes her stand out even more.

Trudy's scholarly activities are well known to those familiar with the literature of higher education and institutional research over the past half century. She is author or co-author of more than eighty publications. She edited *New Directions for Community Colleges* four times and *New Directions for Institutional Research* once. She has made more than fifty presentations at professional conferences, often at AIR. Recently she co-authored a book, *Learning Outcomes Assessment in Community Colleges*. In addition, she has worked as a consultant with regional accrediting agencies and individual institutions to assist them in improving student learning and retention, among other things. In short, her research has had a positive, practical impact on students over the years.

One of Trudy's great strengths has been her ability to bring others along in their scholarship as well. She has been a great collaborator and leader in the Association serving as president and member of the Executive Committee as well as the Publications Committee. In her editorial roles she has sought out and nurtured others, assisting them to achieve the best they can be and thereby encouraging them to be scholars as well. That is a role that is seldom recognized but sorely needed.

I believe that Trudy Bers is more than worthy of this recognition and hope that the committee will give it serious consideration.

Sincerely,



John A. Muffo  
AIR Distinguished Member