

December 30, 2017

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*

Dr. Coughlin is a past president of AIR and served a three-year term as Chair of the Professional Development Committee. (She currently is not serving in any elected position.) She has been an active member of AIR since the early 1990's and was recognized for her Outstanding Service in 2012. In both elected positions and her many volunteer activities, Dr. Coughlin's service to the Association has been continuous and significant. Teaching in various professional development programs sponsored by the Association, Mary Ann has enhanced the professional practice of literally hundreds (if not thousands) of institutional research professionals. In addition, Dr. Coughlin has served as President of the New England Association for Institutional Research.

Dr. Coughlin's professional contributions include authoring a number of publications addressing aspects of the practice of institutional research. These publications have primarily focused on the creation and use of statistics in institutional research. In addition, since 1993 she has consistently appeared on the AIR Forum agenda presenting research papers, serving on panels, and teaching workshops.

Her leadership in the development of curricula for IPEDS workshops, and recently for *A Holistic Approach to IR* are two examples of the leadership she has provided that has made the Association's professional development offerings so valuable. In addition, Mary Ann is known for her outstanding teaching. She consistently receives very high student ratings. In fact, as a faculty colleague in the Foundations Institute, I was always impressed with the energy and vitality she brought to her statistics classes and the positive reaction of her students.

While Dr. Coughlin's contribution to the professional development of AIR members has been outstanding, her leadership during her presidential terms truly distinguishes her contributions to the Association. During her vice presidential and presidential terms, the Association searched for and selected an Executive Director. Mary Ann served as Chair of the Search Committee during her VP term and then hired the new Executive Director as President. She provided consistent and measured leadership in the search for and eventual selection of the new Executive Director. Serving on the Board at an earlier time when the Association had turnover in this position, I am aware of many of the demands Mary Ann faced (and met) during this time.

Dr. Mary Ann Coughlin's contributions to the Association and the institutional research profession over the past 25+ years have consistently been a positive influence on the Association and its members.

I appreciate your consideration of Mary Ann Coughlin 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,

Richard D, Howard  
Director of Institutional Research, Retired  
University of Minnesota

Dear Colleagues

December 29, 2017

It is my pleasure to support the nomination of Mary Ann Coughlin for the John Stecklein Distinguished Member Award. This support is based on her distinguished and sustained contribution to the quality of methodology by Institutional Research professionals. She has advanced the practice of institutional research, she has contributed to widely-disseminated research and she has supported the training and development of IR practitioners;

She has done this in numerous ways.

She has taught the application of methodology to our colleagues. She taught statistics in the AIR Foundations Institutes for some fifteen years. She taught statistics on the Council for Independent Colleges institutes for some six years. She presented advanced statistics and research methodologies workshops at numerous forums.

She has presented workshops on statistics in various international venues to include multiple workshops in South Africa, in Lebanon, and in South Korea. She has provided instruction at various affiliated and associated professional groups such as American Association for Higher Education Outcomes Assessment and the Northeast Association for Institutional Research.

She has published several works on methodology, on both basic and advanced methodology. This included being editor of the monograph that is a key reference for IR practitioners – *Applications of intermediate/advanced statistics in Institutional Research* – and co-authoring the monograph *Case study applications of statistics in Institutional Research*.

As recognition of her ability and value to our association and to our discipline she was elected to serve for three years as the Chair of the Professional Development Board. She also serves on the AIR/IPEDS Advisory Board and leads the management and training of instructors for the IPEDS training conducted by the Association. She has served and is serving on various data and analytical groups for organizations such as the Association of Governing Boards, the National Survey for Student Engagement, the National Postsecondary Education Collaborative, and the Delaware Study Advisory Committee.

As you will see by reviewing her vita these are only some of the numerous contributions she has made to our discipline and to the practice of our profession. There are thousands of colleagues in our discipline who have a strengthened ability to use statistics and methodology because of her work. There are a multitude of our other colleagues who are more capable of using the research we do and the statistics we use because of her instruction on statistics and methodology.

I have no reservations and am delighted to be supporting her nomination.

Gerald W McLaughlin  
Emeritus Associate VP of Enrollment Management and Marketing  
DePaul University

December 27, 2017

Dear John Stecklein Distinguished Member Award Committee:

Please accept this letter of recommendation for **Mary Ann Coughlin** and include it in her application materials for the **John Stecklein Distinguished Member Award**. I have been acquainted with Dr. Coughlin for approximately ten years as a fellow IPEDS trainer, co-developer of IPEDS curriculum, collaborator on research, and colleague.

Mary Ann has been an active member of AIR throughout her higher education career, making substantial contributions to the field, including training and developing IR practitioners. Mary Ann's commitment to excellence contributes to her success as a professional and as a person. High quality standards, mentoring new IR colleagues, and constant willingness to take on challenging projects to perfection, has earned Mary Ann the respect of her colleagues in IR. *Simply put, Mary Ann is one of the most remarkable people and professionals I have had the privilege of learning from and working with in my entire career.* I would like to say that I have had a unique experience in working with Mary Ann – but she has left an indelible mark on many IR professionals over her 30+ year career.

I have had the opportunity to get to know Mary Ann in multiple settings and projects over our past ten years. Initially as a new IPEDS trainer, Mary Ann (a seasoned IPEDS trainer) mentors all new IPEDS trainers. I have been fortunate to have learned much from watching her teach and obtaining critical feedback of my own teaching in over 20 national trainings we have conducted together. Additionally, Mary Ann and I have worked together developing new IPEDS curriculum. Again, the opportunity to observe and learn from Mary Ann while developing new content and ideas has helped shape me as a professional, as well as the work I create. A final example in working with Mary Ann came when she invited me to be a lead author on a chapter in a *New Directions for Institution Research* volume that she was editing. Mary Ann had plenty of colleagues to choose from and I was honored that she selected me for a lead author role. Expanding my opportunity to learn from her, working with Mary Ann on a peer-reviewed document was a great learning experience.

Mary Ann's willingness to always help others – even if it requires a sacrifice on her part -- along with her long-term commitment and clear passion for institutional research make her a role model for other institutional researchers. I heartily recommend Dr. Mary Ann Coughlin for the **John Stecklein Distinguished Member Award**. She will continue to work hard to meet the high standards of this prestigious award.

Sincerely,

Kristina Powers, Ph.D.  
President

